A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

From Earliest Times to 1916

BY

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TO

MY BROTHERS

LEONARD ALLEN AND CHARLES ERNEST

IN REMEMBRANCE

OF SYMPATHIES IN COMMON

PREFACE

PERHAPS a justification may be found for this addition to the many literary histories that abound, in the particular emphasis laid on a social background. Literature is viewed not as a mere academic product, but as one expression of the many-sided activities of national growth. An historical sketch of contemporary social and political events is given as prelude to every important period in the development of English letters, in order that the inter-relation between Art and Life may be the more clearly appreciated, while in the more purely critical portions the author has attempted always to disengage the human element in the literary work under discussion.

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The author regrets if, through inadvertence, any matter has been used in this History without due acknowledgment being made, and wishes to offer his sincere apologies should such an omission be found.

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A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

PART I

ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE MAKING

Introduction—Formative influences in English Literature—The Anglo-Saxon at home—English Literature *before* and *after* the Saxon Conquest—Old English Heathen Poetry: its style, its origin, its historical value—Characteristics of Anglo-Saxon Poetry and Prose—Northumbria and Wessex: as intellectual centres—Alfred and his successors.

INTRODUCTION

"History's true object of study," says Fustel de Coulanges, "is the human mind." Whatever objections may be urged against this definition, it certainly possesses the merit of emphasizing the psychological bond that connects history with literature. Any account of a nation's march in bygone times must reveal to some extent its mental characteristics; just as any record of its literature must disclose some pulsings of its social life. While therefore a history of English Literature is a history of the inner life, a record of dreams and ideals, it needs to be limned on a background of its social activities, in order to be clearly seen and justly appraised.

Oliver Wendell Holmes once reminded us, that the human soul was an omnibus in which sit the shades of our ancestors. So the first thing to recognise in dealing with our imaginative life, is its complex inspiration.

Looking at the splendid fabric of English Literature, we realise in it a "coat of many colours"; for it is shot with the varying tints of racial characteristics. To its making have gone the prismatic fancy of the Celt, the sombre passion of the Teuton, the golden gaiety of France, Scandinavian greys, Italian purples. Yet for all its composite character it is not a thing of patchwork quality, but an harmonious blend, in which one element predominates. That element is the Anglo-Saxon. We have only to analyse some passage of representative modern poetry to realise how, despite our linguistic debts to France, to Italy, and to Greece, the Saxon tongue is the one outstanding feature in our speech.

The first indwellers of our Islands were a rude, primitive race, that we term Palæolithic. A devoted geologist, Mr. James Cross, has spent many years searching for evidence of Palæolithic culture in the tertiary deposits swept together by the Thames near Gravesend. The present river flows at least a hundred feet below the deposits of silt and gravel in which Mr. Cross' fine series of London palæoliths were found. They can be seen at the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh. The tomahawk is the weapon most generally met with—a flint or stone with a "butt" or bruising end, a cutting edge, a well-marked strengthening rib, and a "tang" to which the wooden shaft is bound. This was bound to a split stick with a fibre fastening. With these, hand daggers were found heavy at the base and sharply pointed, with a carefully hollowed place for the thumb and finger-tips. Strangely enough, all these palæoliths were found within a strictly limited area. All the evidence goes to show that the site of the Palæolithic finds was a ford *by* which the primitive Londoners crossed the Thames. If men lay there in wait for the game which might come to the ford to drink, or the traveller who might be passing that way, it is easy to see why weapons would be found in the river's silt at that spot and nowhere else. But however this may be, there existed the ford over the Thames in Palæolithic times. The dark, curly-haired, narrow-headed, dwarfish men who succeeded them, those of the Neolithic age, overran the country and possessed it until the Celts ran their keels ashore upon the gravels and sands of Kent. Doubtless, they cut their terraced fields, their long grave barrows, and communal earth-works where London now stands.[1]

Then came the first Celtic invasion; the Goidels, or the Gaels. These men drove the inhabitants to

[1] See the author's *London Life of Yesterday* (Constable).

the West and North, but thoroughly intermingled with them, and the Gael persists to this very day.

A second inroad of Aryan people came in about 300 B.C., and has been distinguished from the first by the term Brythons. These invaders did not spread so far as the Gaels, settling largely in the south-west and west, and becoming known later as the Cymri, or, as the English called them, the Welsh. Their spirit glows in the magical verse of Mr. W. B. Yeats, and the imaginative prose of Synge; it animates the fantasies of "Fiona Macleod," and by its spell George MacDonald achieved his highest flights of romantic beauty.

Thus Brythons, Gaels, and Neolithic were now closely intermingled. The Cymri had their own literature—a literature of war songs; serious legends with a stern and melancholy note, that mingled later with the gay and lively fancy of the Norman romancers, sobering its mercurial gaiety, and in the process, taking on itself more varied and plastic moods.

The Roman occupation of Britain affected our literature only in one particular; that is, in the indirect religious influence it brought to bear upon the inhabitants, first through the Christianised Cymri, secondly through the missionary priests in the seventh century.

Formative Influences in English Literature

From the foregoing sketch of our Literature, certain formative influences will have emerged—the Saxon, the Celtic, the Danish, and the Norman. It may not be amiss at this point to develop and clarify these.

The Saxon genius of the race voiced itself more readily in social and political life than in literature. It was essentially practical and orderly. Passion and imagination were not alien but subordinate qualities here; for the characteristics most insistent in the Saxon were those precisely that made for sound and efficient national life. Patience and perseverance, the capacity for obedience, an instinct for law and method, the spirit of adventure, power of endurance, and fidelity to a cause that has once touched the emotions: qualities such as these more easily and more naturally find congenial expression in political institutions and social initiative. In themselves they prepare the soil for great literature rather than directly create it. They act as fertilisers, giving strength and vitality to the vegetation, restraining wild luxuriance, and eliminating the weeds. To speak of the unimaginative Saxon, as some Celtic enthusiasts do, is absurd. It is not the quantity but the quality of his imagination that differentiates him from the Celt and Norman. His imagination is clear and intense, with a certain fierce simplicity and bleak directness, whereas the Celtic imagination is iridescent and exuberant, subtle and pervasive rather than simple and strong, allusive and mystical rather than direct and practical.

As against these diverse types, there is the equally distinctive imagination of the Norman, livelier and nimbler than the other two, lacking the solid tenacity of the Saxon and the ironic melancholy of the Celt, but excelling in gaiety, animal spirits, and a logical inventiveness derived from Latin sources.

In the making of our poetry, the Saxon imagination is seen to best advantage in simple love-ballads, in verse infused with strong yet tender piety, in the epic where its capacity for lucidity and repression is happily marked.

In the making of our prose, its influence is more emphatic, for reasons not hard to understand. Too rigid in texture, too prone to economy of effects, its inspiration in verse is necessarily circumscribed. Simplicity, temperance of expression, clarity, and high seriousness of purpose find happier medium in prose; and history, science, and speculative thought, owe much to its integrating power.

Turning to the influence of the Celt, we realise that if the Saxon brought intensity, the Celt as certainly brought variety. To our poetry he gave subtle shades of meaning, delicate nuances of humour and pathos, a wealth of rich fancies, like the network of tracery that adorns a Gothic cathedral. To our prose the Celt brought the gift of satire and ironic introspection, from mordant and savage to a mood of elfish mockery; fine graces of style; and to both prose and verse that passionate love of Nature and mystical interpretation of her phenomena, that differs widely from the half fearful, if stoical attitude of the Saxon in face of the primal facts of life.

There is a fundamental affinity between the Danish and the Saxon influence. The Dane merely repeated in somewhat cruder fashion the spirit of the Anglo-Saxon invaders. Directly, it was a negative influence on Literature, and retarded the progress of our tongue for some time; but indirectly in the long run, it welded the people more closely together, and infused into verse much of that compelling attraction for the sea, that meets us in early English Literature.

Neither the Saxon nor the Celt by himself would have made our literature the great heritage it is, but in conjunction the one happily supplemented the other; and our greatest poetry and finest prose is that in which the Celtic and Teutonic elements are the most closely intermingled. Where the one offered strength, the other gave grace. Saxon simplicity and orderliness straightened out the ebullient extravagances of the Celtic mind; and the plastic charms of the latter softened the stiffer outlines of the English genius. Without the driving power of the Saxon, the dreams of the Celt would have been like exquisite star dust, drifting ineffectually through the literary firmament.

The Norman influence, though less insistent than the Celtic and Saxon, is more complex. There was a Celtic element, of course, in the Norman, and with this he mingled something of the Latin South and the Norse.

The Normans were Northmen softened and modified by Southern intercourse. It seemed at first, after the Conquest, as if the Norman influence would be the paramount one, for it started a fresh era of literary history with a suppression of the native tongue. The cultured life of the day was ruled by French and Latin models.

An age of Latin writers was inaugurated. Latin of course was no new thing to the English clergy, it had been spoken and written by them for centuries, but the close contact with Rome inaugurated at the Conquest, extended its dominion to an extraordinary extent. French became the language of the well-born, and the English vernacular was deliberately disregarded.

France at this time was the intellectual centre of Western Europe. Quick and adaptable in her temperament, she set the pace, and others followed as best they might. France was by no means profoundly original, her body of literature was inferior in quality to that of England before the Conquest; but she had the gift of purloining the ideas of others, and transforming them into an especially acceptable form.

A remarkable illustration of this is furnished by the Arthurian Cycle, which was originally Celtic in its inspiration, but owing to French reduction and elaborations, became one of the most popular of European Romances.

We have sketched the chief formative influences in our Literature. At a later date, Italy, Spain, and France exerted a potent influence upon English Letters. Italy in the early Renascence, Spain in the late Renascence, and France during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. There was also, in the late Middle Ages, a touch of far Eastern thought, and during the Renascence, more than a touch of Greek idealism upon our literature. Notwithstanding these many influences, the two most considerable are the Celtic and the Saxon, that so closely commingled at the time of the Conquest as to be inseparable. The greatness of our Literature then is due to these two great formative influences.

I. The Anglo-Saxon at Home

When first we catch a glimpse of the Anglo-Saxon tribes they are leading a pastoral life on the shores of the Baltic and the North Sea, in a country bleak and low-lying. But the atmosphere of repose which the word "pastoral" suggests to most people, is not to be found here. Our forefathers shared the intense restlessness that characterised the Germanic people as a whole.

Tillers of the soil, and hunters by compulsion, they became also by force of circumstance fierce sea-rovers. Inured by long privation to the terrors of the sea, they made little of its dangers, and a Roman writer has told us, how that they would plunder the western coasts, sailing down upon them in their high-prowed warships in the midst of a storm so that their victims might be the less prepared. Truly enough were they likened to sea-wolves.

In appearance they were big, large-limbed men, with blue-grey eyes and ruddy faces; relentless, savage, and daring, yet courageous and faithful to one another, and among their women folk gentle and loyal. Infanticide was not infrequent, for valour was prized above all things, and a weakly child might survive only to bring shame and disgrace upon his kinsmen.

Naturally enough, this ingrained passion for action expressed itself most readily in fighting; this was peculiarly attractive, for not only did it provide an outlet for their physical energy but it afforded also an excellent chance of their gaining the Teutonic Paradise of Walhalla. A courageous death on the field of battle opened the entrance to those Halls in which a banquet of boar's flesh and ale was for ever being celebrated.

Moreover, war held out the prospect of material advantages. Energy does not necessarily imply industry; and the Germans were always ready to substitute plunder for labour, whenever it was possible to do so. Piratical expeditions first brought the Anglo-Saxons into contact with this Island. But the days were not long enough to satisfy these adventurous spirits; therefore, when night fell, gambling took the place of fighting as a means of varying the monotony of existence. According to Tacitus, it was "a serious occupation with them even when they were sober." While to such a pitch were these games of chance carried that sometimes even personal liberty was staked—and lost. No catastrophe was more bitter than this, for the love of freedom was one of the most marked characteristics of the Teutonic races. It was this intolerance of constraint which explains why they so long preferred to live in small communities. "They dwell scattered and apart," writes the Roman historian, "just as a spring, meadow, or wood has attracted them." Moreover, even in the village itself, the houses were always detached from one another. The same spirit recurs in their political institutions. All questions of common interest were discussed in the presence of the Freemen of the tribe who signified their dissent by a murmur, and their approbation by the clashing of spears; and it is quite characteristic that—in early times at any rate—business was delayed, perhaps for two or three days, by the casual manner in which the people assembled. With this pronounced individualism it is, therefore, not surprising to find that the warrior chieftains controlled their followers rather by the force of example than by military discipline. Positive, as well as negative reasons combined to make this the most effective method of control, for the Germans possessed a sense of personal loyalty in a marked degree. To support and protect a courageous leader on the battle-field was with them a point of honour; and to survive his death was to incur a lifelong disgrace. That this feeling of devotion was mutual, is well illustrated by the legend that has gathered round the name of the great Ostrogoth—Theodoric. It tells us how his enemy Ermenrich having captured several of his men, demanded the entire surrender of Theodoric's kingdom as the price of their lives, and how the Ostrogothic leader not only consented to, but actually fulfilled this condition of their safety; for he says "Even though all the empires of the world were mine, I would give them away rather than desert my dear faithful thanes."

Equally pleasing was their attitude towards strangers. Perhaps no race has ever been more renowned for its hospitality than the Teutonic

"Every German," to quote Tacitus once again, "receives his guest with a well-furnished table. When his supplies are exhausted he who was but now the host becomes the guide to further hospitality, and without invitation they go to the next house." Having washed his hands and feet the guest joined the family board, and using his fingers instead of a fork, helped to devour the vast quantities of meat which were always in requisition. The meal being brought to a lively, if somewhat hazardous conclusion by the practice of throwing the bones about the place, the more serious business of the evening began—namely the drinking. Around the blazing fire in the centre of the long Hall our ancestors sat far into the night consuming ale with which their women folk supplied them; and should this prove of inferior strength the feminine brewers suffered accordingly, for quality as well as quantity was deemed essential for these convivial gatherings. But though somewhat exacting in this respect the Teutons made ample amends by the high esteem in which they held their women.

In Anglo-Saxon times a woman possessed liberties which it has taken her centuries to recover. Not only were the rights of property and of taking judicial proceedings accorded to her, but she was also allowed to attend the meetings of the Township in which local politics were discussed, and, on occasions, even the national council of the Witanagemote.

Marital unfaithfulness was both rare and punishable; but though making good husbands, the Anglo-Saxon by no means favoured absolute equality of the sexes. Whilst a girl was still a "spinster" she was under paternal authority, and marriage merely effected a transfer of masters. Should she prove insubordinate, "three blows with a broomstick" were considered a wholesome corrective. Yet with all its limitations the Teutonic conception of womanhood was superior, not simply to Oriental ideas—that would not be saying very much—but even to the notions of such a highly civilised people as the ancient Greeks.

The Germanic people compared most favourably with the nations of the East in another particular, namely, in their capacity for progress.

The Teutons possessed to quite a remarkable extent the power of adapting themselves to strange surroundings and of assimilating a foreign civilisation. It is this aptitude which accounts for the absorption of Gothic customs and ideas that transformed Norsemen into Normans with such surprising rapidity, and explains the speed with which the antagonisms of 1066 were forgotten in this Island. Of all racial endowments there are perhaps none more valuable than this mental elasticity; and it would be difficult to over-estimate its influence upon the national history of the Anglo-Saxon people.

II. English Literature before the Saxon Conquest

The earliest English literature is unwritten. It consists of songs and legends, heroic and stirring in character, sung to the harp by the minstrel and gleeman, and handed down from one generation to another. Parents taught these tales to their children, and the younger learned of the elder singer. Our Saxon forefathers used an alphabet, just as the Scandinavians did, but it was used for inscriptions and not for distinctively literary purposes. It served to adorn a sword hilt, not to perpetuate a legend. So it is impossible to say by whom these old stories and myths were originally composed, for they come to us out of the dim past, with the accretions of years upon them, and with the impress of many a singer, each of whom has unconsciously added something to the ancient tale.

It is not until much later that these old stories were written down; and the blend of Christian and Pagan sentiment is due to the fact that many were first set down, after the introduction of Christianity, when the monk who took them in hand wished to infuse religious sentiment into the rough heathen saga.

But if in olden times the poetry was unwritten, this was not because it was lightly esteemed. The minstrel was the preacher and moralist of heathen times. His song stirred men to deeds of courage and endurance, he glorified the heroes of the past, offered solace to the chieftain whose fortunes had been marred, and renewed in him fresh hope for the future. No day was complete without the minstrel's aid. After the fighting and hunting, when the chieftain and his followers were refreshing their bodies with meat and drink, then came the gleemen to minister to their minds; and the songs sung then were stored up in the warriors' memories, so that in the stress of battle they might shout out as did the Israelites of old, some snatch of song which would at once inspire themselves and confound their enemies.

The minstrel was not the only singer, albeit the chief. So far as we can tell, the most important minstrel was the *scôp* or shaper of verse. He composed verses as well as sang them. The secondary minstrel and the gleeman (or Harper), merely repeated them. His was a less dignified post, and the very name suggests that he was not merely a singer but a maker of fun, from *glée* (A.-S.)=fun, amusement. In this personage, therefore, we may trace the early jester, who was to take such a prominent part in mediæval entertainments. Indeed, he lasted until Elizabethan times, and was inseparable from the earlier dramas of the age.

Our Saxon forefathers then, were, in common with other nations of the time, a singing folk. Not only did the chieftain have his own bard to cheer him, but he himself—witness Hrothgar in *Béowulf*—was a singer. He carried his song along with his sword into battle. His whole life was a chant. On his way to the fight, ploughing through the sea-storm, he sang; after the strivings were over, at the festive board, he sang again, and was sung to. In the moment of victory, he sang exultantly to his Gods, the sky and the earth, and their gracious son, the Summer. In the hour of death, he used his last breath to sing a farewell to his people.

The circling seasons, the alternate reign of day

and night, fed his imagination and found expression in the many Nature myths that served as his early religion. Then, on to these myths became grafted stories of the great men who had done mighty deeds; and soon the doings of the heroes became one with the doings of the gods. An early example of this is found in the poem *Beowulf*, that arose as an oral saga, made up of pagan songs celebrating the hero's prowess, long before it was written down and Christianised by the monks.

III. Old English Heathen Poetry

Beowulf

At the close of the eighteenth century, this poem was found in a manuscript written about A.D. 1000. It is essentially a mosaic of pagan tales, blent with a certain basis of historical fact. Possibly, Beowulf himself is not an integral part of the old legend, which is found associated with other heroes. About the eighth century this mosaic is placed in a Christian setting, with which it harmonises but ill. Pagan monsters and biblical allusions go oddly together. Probably a monk is the writer who dealt last with these legends; such an explanation would account for the moralising strain that runs throughout the poem. Beowulf praises God for His gifts to men. There is much to support the contention that this ethical and religious note is of quite late introduction.

The poem contains over three thousand lines, and is supposed to be the oldest surviving epic of the Teuton people, anterior to the Scandinavian sagas, and considerably older than the great mediæval romances of southern Europe.

Its importance for us lies in its emphatic indication that our literature is essentially Teutonic in origin.

The Story.—Beowulf has been not unfairly described as a knight errant before the days of chivalry. He is a mighty warrior of royal Swedish blood who has not only fought with men but has defied the fiercest storms that have swept over the seas, and grappled with the awful sea monsters that inhabit their depths.

To the help of the venerable King Hrothgar he comes, whose kingdom has been ravaged by a dreadful monster, Grendel by name. Beowulf meets this monster face to face, and after a terrible fight wounds him to the death. But the monster has a mother, even more fearsome than he. She inhabits the floods, and Beowulf has to descend into these chill and dark waters to find her. The conflict that ensued is more harrowing than the other, and is described with Homeric vigour. Just when he is about to succumb to the fury of her attack, he comes across a huge sword which does the work pretty effectually, and the subsequent proceedings interest this lady no more. Beowulf is not allowed to rest long without a further display of prowess. But he survives a reign of fifty years, well seasoned with valorous deeds, before he meets with a fiery dragon that has been having things all its own way. The dragon is killed, but not before its venomous poison has infected Beowulf. Knowing that his end has come, he speaks to his friend with fine stoical resignation.

"I have held the people fifty years; there was not any king of my neighbours, who dared to greet me with warriors, to oppress me with terror. . . . I held mine own well, I sought not treacherous malice, nor swore unjustly many oaths; on account of all this, I, sick with mortal wounds, may have joy. . . . Now do thou go immediately, to behold the hoard under the hoary stone, my dear Wiglaf. . . . Now I have purchased with my death a hoard of treasures; it will not be yet of advantage at the need of the people. . . . I give thanks . . . that I might before my dying day obtain such for my peoples . . . longer may I not here be" (xxxvii., xxxviii.).

The Literary Style.—The literary method is massive and sweeping rather than subtle and varied. The poem is akin to the old sagas, and like them excels in broad effects, and in impressive directness of speech. The crude savagery of the original legends has been transmuted through the various minds brought to bear upon the poem, into a fine appreciation of Beowulf's goodness of heart and unselfish devotion to others. He is not merely a man of great physical strength; there is a moral splendour about his character. Nor is this side ever lost sight of.

Its Origin.—How was the poem introduced into English literature?

It has been suggested that the poem is in its basis a Scandinavian saga. The poem, however, though Scandinavian in its setting, contains no Scandinavian words or phrases. Earle believes that the story of Beowulf was a piece of the prehistoric folk lore of which a fresh edition was made in Merovingian Gaul. From Gaul, the story, latinised by some Frankish scholar, passed over here and was worked up into the epic. The subject is still debated by scholars, by no means in agreement, but this, at any rate, affords one explanation to account for inconsistencies in the poem.

Its Historical Value.—The picture of social life given us in *Beowulf* is essentially primitive. To fight valorously, to eat and drink well, to be soothed by music after the day's labour and then—to sleep.

The men described are men of few words; brave and loyal where their affections are concerned, but cruel and implacable otherwise. There is no gaiety about them. Life to them is a sombre business; the melancholy of the North is about them.

Great emphasis is laid upon the splendour of Court life, and for this reason its historical value as a picture of aristocratic society in Saxon times has been commented on by some of the critics.

The scenic background is well suited for such men. It is bleak and cold, and the rough and rugged land is swept by storms. We realise here "the winds that would be howling at all hours." Whether on sea or land, Nature is always in her blackest and fiercest moods. There is no sentiment, no tenderness, to relieve the gloom. Fierce animal spirits dominate.

But if sombre, there is an austere grandeur about the poem, and a fine stoical resignation.

The scenes and people are Scandinavian, but the

one great, vital figure is that of Beowulf. He stands before us as the early English ideal of virile courage and nobility. What Achilles is to the Greek, Romulus to the Roman, Charlemagne to the French, Beowulf is to the Englishman. Beside him, King Arthur is but a shadowy figure.

Widsith and Deor

Widsith is the earliest of the poems made by our forefathers on the Continent. Widsith is the wide wanderer, or far traveller. He tells of his wanderings, speaks of the jeasal halls in which he sang, and how men loved his song, and gave him gifts: so that wherever he went he found a ready welcome. He sings of war, and not unfittingly, for had not he himself fought with the Huns.

At the close of his poem he praises his art, inasmuch as it has brought him joy. Adversity he has known at times, but not so grievous that his art could find no solace for it.

Another early poem is *The Complaint of Deor*. Deor also is a minstrel, but he is no wanderer. He belongs to the household of his chief, and is happy in his position until he finds himself supplanted by a rival. But the singer bids himself take heart and endure his misfortune, and the note of stoical resignation is the insistent note. The poem is lyrical in form, with a definite refrain, and may be called our *first English lyric*.

Deor gives the reverse side of the picture of the gleeman painted by Widsith.

The manuscript poem dates from the eleventh century, and, like *Beowulf*, has been Christianised. But it is clearly an old heathen saga, in origin.

In addition to these wandering songs, there are traces of a saga about Finn, King of the North Frisians, in the *Battle of Finnesburg*, a fragment of an old pagan tale about Walthere of Aequitaine: and some curious verses sung by the Teutonic peasant, while he followed his pastoral occupations, or sailed on some voyage of adventure. These were called *The Charms*, and though, like *Beowulf*, they became later infused with religious sentiment, they are primarily heathen songs, addressed to the Elements—to the Valkyrie and to Woden. They are genuine nature myths, filled with that mingled fear and love of the ancient earth that we find among primitive peoples.

IV. English Literature after the Saxon Conquest

(i) *The Poetry*

Hitherto the poetry, though written in the English language is not strictly part of the literature of England. The first native maker of English verse is Cædmon. He was a simple, unlettered man, an inmate of St. Hilda's Monastery, near Whitby, to whom fell the task of looking after the cattle. Leaving the feast and the singers, because he could not take part, he fell asleep among the cattle. And while he slept he dreamed that one came to him and commanded him to sing. "Of what am I to sing?" said Cædmon. "About the beginning of created things." He then fashioned a song about the Creation, and awakened from his dream. The song he remembered, and made many more like it. And after this he became a monk. The Bible was read to him because he could not read, and he would turn those passages that appealed especially to him, into verse.

These stories in verse—*Cædmon's Paraphrase*—were written about 670, and became very famous. Thus did the old paganism merge into the Christian sentiment of the time. Of these poems only a fragment has survived, quoted by Bede and carried from monastery to monastery. But the influence of Cædmon upon his successors was great. So we may say of Cædmon, that he founded a new school of religious poetry, and it is probable that his verse served as a model for many subsequent writers.

Cynewulf is in the line of succession from Cædmon. It is not improbable that he was the author of the *Christ*; possibly also of the *Juliana*; and the *Dream of the Rood*. He was a Northumbrian who lived at the close of the eighth century. We know little about his outward life, save that his youth was happy and irresponsible; and that he underwent suddenly a spiritual change, and regretted the careless pleasures of his earlier years. His view of life finds unpleasant expression in the *Christ*. The threefold coming of Christ is dealt with, and the last picture is that of the final Judgment. He gives a glowing picture of the Christian who has fought the good fight:

"A gladsome host of men; youth without age;
The glory of the heavenly chivalry; health without pain
For righteous workers; and for souls sublime
Rest without toil; there is day without dark gloom,
Ever gloriously bright; bliss without bale;
Friendship 'twixt friends forever without feud;
Peace without enmity for the blest in Heaven,
In the communion of Saints."[1]

Cynewulf's Riddles

Riddle I

My voice rest silent when I roam the earth,
Still, when I stay at home, or stir the waves;
Anon my pinions poise me up above
The high air o'er the homes of warriors.
Far o'er the folk the flood-force floateth me,
Mightily whirr my wings, make melody,
Sing wondrously, when I, a wanderer,
Touch neither world nor wave.

(*A. Smith.*)

Riddle VII

Lo, the wind wafts aloft these little wights
Over the mountain brows; full black are they,
Swart, sable-clad, yet solidly voiced in song.
They wander forth in clouds, and clearly wail,
Float o'er the forest heights, or fly above
The city dwellings of the sons of men.
Behold, they name themselves!

(*A. Cook.*)[2]

There is the note of passion in his verse, but a note also of joy and confidence alien to the old pagan melancholy. Like a true Saxon he sings of "the clashing of the sea waves," and "the rolling

[1] *Christ*, translated by I. Gollancz.
[2] *Oxford Treasury of English Literature*, vol. i.

of the waters," and of "foaming billows" that cover the earth.

During the following century the scattered poems of the past were gathered together into collections, and in the tenth century religious poetry is mingled with plentiful war songs, such as the *Song of Brunanburgh* (937), where the conflict between Saxon and Dane figures prominently.

Characteristics of Anglo-Saxon Poetry

1. It resembles Hebrew poetry, indulging in parallelism[1] and metaphorical phrases.

2. In metre it is marked by accent and persistent alliteration.

3. Rhyme is absent, and there are no definite number of syllables. The metre undergoes a good many variations, and responds to the nature of the subject.

4. The poetry was sung, for in early times poetry and music were one and indivisible, and the minstrel was free to modify the movement of the verse. Any modification introduced was, however, subject to certain rules. There were always four accented syllables and three alliterative syllables. Many changes were wrought later in the Middle English period through French influences, but the trick of alliteration has become an integral part of all English poetry; and though no longer a structural part of English prosody, is regarded to-day as an ornament, not an essential. It has been used with most remarkable effect by Swinburne.

5. There is a prevalence of compound words, by means of which the poet sought to condense the qualities of his subject. This characteristic also has survived.

For instance, when Rossetti speaks of "hoarse-tongued fire," or Keats of "leaden-eyed despair," they are using a poetical method derived from our earliest verse.

6. The style of this poetry is, on the whole, diffuse, though when the writer is greatly moved it becomes more simple and direct. And while there is force and vigour, and often the austere splendour of the Icelandic Saga about the work, there are no graces or subtleties, and the lyric note is extremely rare.

The form of poetry chiefly favoured by these elder writers is the epic; it suited both their manner and matter, and lent itself to the treatment of heroic deeds. William Morris' translation of the Scandinavian Sagas will give the modern reader a fair idea of the trend and character of this early poetry.

(ii) *The Prose*

The prose, unlike the verse, was not used as an emotional stimulant; it was for the most part educational. What Christianity did to inspire the maker of verse has been seen; it was responsible also for the creation of the monk scholar, an individual who did much to shape the literature of this formative period. The first Englishman to become famous as a scholar and teacher was Aldhelm; he did for the South what at a later period Bede did for the North. After a while he was made Abbot of Malmesbury, then Bishop of Sherborne. He died in 709, after many achievements both in prose and verse. As was the custom of the time he did much of his work in Latin, but his English verse was esteemed highly by no less an authority than Alfred himself. He was interested more in music and architecture, and a church at Bradford-on-Avon remains as a memorial of his work, while of his skill as a musician and of his power to touch the hearts of the common people, tradition is eloquent. His is the one name of significance in the history of Wessex, until the time of Alfred, two hundred years later. On the whole, the North was far more noted for intellectual thought and vigour.

Northumbria as an Intellectual Centre

The predominance of Northumbria in literary life was largely due to the activity of Irish missionaries, cultured and imaginative men, and to the greater influx of Roman civilisation into the North. The library at York was famous throughout Europe. The earlier phase of this intellectual vitality is seen in the religious verse of Cædmon and his successors; the later phase in the Latin prose of the monk scholar.

Of these, the first in importance is Bede. In these words did the orphan scholar epitomise his life at the age of fifty-five: "I wholly applied myself to the study of the Scripture; and, amidst the observance of regular discipline, and the daily care of singing in the church, I always took delight in learning, teaching, and writing." He studied eagerly every department of human thought—the philosophies, arts, and sciences; and to his *Ecclesiastical History* we are indebted for our knowledge of the England of his time. He wrote in Latin for the most part, but was quick to recognise the possibilities of the Saxon tongue, and when dying is said to have repeated to himself some of these old poems.

He owed much to the Abbot of his monastery, Benedict, a keen and brilliant man. Bede was a fine classical scholar, and his writings abound in quotations from classical poets. Much of his work was of the text-book order, and his reputation as a teacher was as considerable as that of his scholarship. He had a school at Jarrow, of European fame.

Wessex as an Intellectual Centre

With the coming of the Danes in the tenth century the seat of learning passed to Wessex. The Danish invasions were catastrophic to the progress of English literature. Attracted by the wealth of the great monasteries, they plundered and destroyed the finest. Worst of all, they burned the splendid libraries, until "there was not one house of learning left from the Forth to the Humber."

Happily a man arose at this time who rescued England from her sorry plight; and although too

[1] By *parallelism* is meant the repetition of the same *statement* or *idea* in different *ways*; by *alliteration* the repetition of the same *letter* at the beginning or in the body of different words, in close juxtaposition to one another.

late to save the North, yet Middle and South England were preserved from ravage by the valorous master mind of Alfred, "Lord of the harp and liberating spear."

ALFRED, grandson of the doughty Egbert, was born at Wantage in Berkshire (849), and whilst a boy, was taken by his father, Ethelwulf, to Rome. There, Roman civilisation and ecclesiasticism impressed him in the most plastic years of his life.

On his return to England, he became deeply interested in the songs of his native land and the love of Saxon verse, and the prowess of his ancestors never left him.

From the dream of studious youth he was roughly awakened by the onslaughts of the Danes, and his early years as king were spent in fighting hard against them. Mercia, already, had been ravaged and lost; Wessex itself was in deadly peril. Then did he prove that he was a great warrior as well as a keen student; that he could fight like his heroes as well as sing about them. Thus did he win peace for his people, and having won peace he sought to nurture their mental life. So, after fifteen years of incessant warfare (c. 886), he had made peace with the foe and looked around to repair something of their wanton work of destruction. He founded a monastery at Athelney, saw to the education of his nobles, and while seeing to the careful training of the Churchmen, was mindful also of the common people. He is the pioneer of popular education, for it was his wish that "all the youth now in England of free men who have the wealth to be able to set themselves to it be put to learning while they are not of use for anything else."

To effect this he set to work to increase the abundance of English literature, and superintend the translation of many Latin books for the benefit of the people at large. He prepared a handbook for the clergy, saw to the translation of much of Bede's famous history, and adapted the philosophy of Boëthius (a Roman patrician of the fifth and sixth centuries) for common use. "He took," said Mr. Frederic Harrison, "the *Meditations of Boëthius* as a standard text-book of moral and religious thought, and he uses it as the basis of his own musings upon man, the world, and God."[1]

Alfred may be remembered also as the first Englishman of letters who was not a churchman, and the first to encourage the making of English prose. He wanted to make it loved and known by the people at large; and this could not be done while it was written in the Latin language favoured by the Church.

During his reign the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* came into existence; and if not his own work, it probably owed much to his inspiration. This is the most important landmark of Anglo-Saxon prose, and continued beyond the Conquest down to the death of Stephen.

No English king ever did more for his people than he. He had a genius for kingship, and never abused that endowment.

This brief record of Alfred's work may close with a passage from *Boëthius*: "To be brief, I may say that it has ever been my desire to live honourably while I was alive, and after my death to leave to them that should come after me my memory in good works."

Of Alfred's greatness, there can be no question, but it was a greatness of personality rather than of Art. He was not a great poet, or a great prosaman in the way that he was a great fighter and organiser. None the less by his zeal and industry he did well by English letters. He had the rare merit of clarity in his writing, and something of that naïve charm which is often as delightful to the reader as literary skill.

ALFRED'S SUCCESSORS

Wessex continued to hold its own in intellectual matters until the coming of the Normans. The North never recovered from the ravish of the Danes. Among the most notable names are DUNSTAN, Abbot of Glastonbury (909–988), ETHELWOLD, EDGAR, and ELFRIC. Elfric especially concerned himself with the work of monastic reform. His writings were voluminous, the more important being his famous *Homilies*—excellent example of Saxon prose, and some metrical lives of the Saints.

But the tenth century saw a decline on the whole in literary impulse. The influence of Rome both in religion and scholarship, had done much to inspire the old Saxon writers. A fresh virile influence was now wanted. It came with the Norman Invasion.

MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

(1066–1400)

Introduction—Mediaeval Scholarship and the Latin Writers: Chronicles and Histories.

INTRODUCTION

LATIN was the language in which the cultured man of Norman times wrote, and French was the language spoken in polite society. The Saxon tongue languished, and there is little doubt that the Norman Conquest did for a time militate against the development of our literature. Many Saxons wrote in French, and, with the exception of the *Saxon Chronicle*, which went on until 1154, the bulk of the prose was written in Latin. English prose after the *Chronicle* practically slumbered until its remarkable awakening in the sixteenth century.

Yet, after all, the Norman Conquest was not the conquest of England by an alien race. The

[1] *The Writings of King Alfred*, by Frederic Harrison.

Normans were originally Northmen like the Anglo-Saxons and Danes, even though southern influences had greatly modified their character and outlook. And this affinity was ultimately felt by both Saxon and Norman. Consequently there was a real fusion of the two races. On the Saxon side we accepted the traditions of France in matters poetical. On the Norman side we finally chose the Saxon tongue in place of the French in which to express ourselves.

MEDIÆVAL SCHOLARSHIP AND THE LATIN WRITERS

Chronicles and Histories

Scholarship even before the Conquest had formed many links with the Continent. There was an exchange of students between the Universities of Oxford and Paris, Oxford being then in its infancy. French and Flemish ecclesiastics came to England, and Englishmen finished their training in French or Flemish monasteries. This intercourse received a powerful impetus with Lanfranc as Archbishop of Canterbury. A rich, learned ecclesiastical literature in Latin soon arose in England. There were many scholars who came to fill livings and stations of honour in the newly founded monasteries. They were far superior in many cases to the English clergy in their knowledge of the Latin writers, and in their style. The interests of the clergy were not confined to Biblical and theological subjects. The monasteries were great centres of hospitality and they entertained important statesmen and distinguished travellers. The abbots and monks, often scholarly, cultured men, took an interest in worldly affairs and in the statecraft of their age. Hence it is that the most important contribution to literature made by the Latin writers is the series of chronicles in which the chief aim of the writers was to give a faithful record of contemporary events. Many of these records breathe the charm of a personal narrative, and "though composed in a foreign tongue are written from a national point of view." Before dealing with the chronicles we may just briefly glance at the theological work of Lanfranc and Anselm, and other churchmen, which preluded the establishment of a more national literature.

Lanfranc wrote about 1080, a book defending the doctrine of transubstantiation, called the *Liber Scintillarum*.

Anselm, who died in 1109, wrote a number of theological tracts and treatises: *De incarnatione Verbi—Cur Deus Homo?—De Veritate*—and *De concordia præscientiæ et prædestinationis et gratiæ Dei cum libero arbitrio*.

Osbern of Gloucester (1150) wrote a commentary on the Pentateuch and the Book of Judges. He also translated some *Lives* of the native Saints from Early English into Latin.

Robert Pullus who lectured at Oxford, compiled a manual of theology entitled *Libri Sententiarum*.

Other writers who laboured in this field were Hugo of Rouen, who died in 1164—*Quæstiones theologicæ*; Robert de Melun (*d.* 1167), whose speculations were embodied in his *Sententiarum*. In addition to these purely technical theological works, there was also a mass of literature dealing with the lives of the Saints, especially Irish and Welsh saints—a number of English Saints were deposed by the more orthodox Normans.

The work of Ælred or Æthelred of Rievaulx, is distinguished for its spirit of mysticism. There is in it the same note of subjective religious intensity that is found later on in the works of Richard Rolle. Ælred wrote the *Speculum charitatis*, the dialogue *De spirituali amicitia*—A Rule for Nuns—*Liber de institutione inclusarum*—thirty-three homilies—A chronicle of the reign of Stephen, in which he describes the Battle of the Standard. He died in 1166 and twenty-five years later was canonised as a Saint.

Nor was the secular side of knowledge neglected by these Latin writers. Adelard of Bath studied at Tours and Laon and afterwards lectured at Laon, from whence he travelled Eastward, visiting Greece and Asia Minor, possibly even penetrating to Bagdad. On his return home, by his lectures and translations of mathematical and astronomical works he rendered the more advanced learning of the Arabs accessible to the West. Adelard had a passionate love of scientific knowledge and claimed the rights of reason as opposed to blind faith in authority. In his *Quæstiones naturales* he discusses with his nephew, who represents Western learning, having been trained at Laon, sixty-seven questions or problems in physical science. Adelard gives solutions according to the knowledge he has gained in the East, the nephew answering them according to the wisdom of the West. Adelard also wrote a treatise on the *Abacus and the Astrolabe*: he translated an Arabic work on astronomy, and introduced into England the first translation of Euclid; the latter remained a text book for generations. His treatise *De eodem et diverso* (the same and different) published before 1116, consists of a dialogue between Philosophy (Love of Wisdom) and Philocosmia (Love of the World). These under the guise of two women, appeared to him when he was a student on the banks of the Loire. They dispute as to which of them shall have most claim on his affection. He finally chooses Philosophy. The treatise is an allegorical expression of his passion for learning.

In 1140 Robert de Retines, an Anglo-Norman, and his friend Dalmation Hermann went to Evora in Spain in order to study under Arab teachers. During this period Robert at the desire of Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, produced a translation of the Koran.

Alexander Neckham (1157–1217), who was born and educated at St. Albans, afterwards taught at Paris, wrote a Treatise on Science, in Latin elegiac verse, in which he deals with Creation, the elements—fire, water, air—and the "seven arts," a number of other prose works and a commentary on Aristotle.

A number of Latin poems also belong to this period. Reginald of Canterbury (*fl.* 1120), wrote a long poem on the legend of St. Malchus, a poem

Compared with Eadmer and Ordericus, William is a greater historian than either. Milton said of him, "Both for style and judgment, William is by far the best writer of all." William's great forerunner was Bede, and he desires to follow him and tell the history of England artistically, and critically, and especially to fill in the period occurring between the ancient and modern history. William's work is in two parts: a *History of the Kings of England* (449–1127), and the *Historia Novella* or Modern History (1142). The second part was written to please his patron Robert of Gloucester, and gives a description of the struggle between Stephen and the Empress Matilda. William's other works were a *History of Glastonbury*, and a *Life of St. Wulfstan*. A man of sound judgment, William has also the artist's instinct for salient and significant features. A lover of books and a considerable traveller, his eager inquiring spirit carried him beyond the prejudices and narrow standards of the cloister. His fondness for anecdotes leads him to include in his writings many errors and fables, but he is able to invest his details with imaginative interest and his writings have therefore a value especially to the student of early English History.

As a historian, Henry of Huntingdon does not occupy such an important place as William of Malmesbury. Henry was a secular cleric, and lived under the patronage of Robert Bloet, Bishop of Lincoln, and afterwards under his successor Alexander of Blois. By command of Alexander he wrote his *History of the English*, which he extended to the year 1154. In the earlier portion he draws from Bede and the English Annals, but he also borrows from oral tradition and popular poetry. He gives from the Annals a metrical version of the *Battle of Brunanburgh*. Henry has been styled "a facile writer but a perfunctory historian."

"He was ambitious but not laborious, literary but not exact, intelligent but not penetrating, he formed large projects but was too indolent to exercise them satisfactorily."[1]

De contemptu Mundi, his last work, addressed to the friend to whom he had dedicated his youthful verses—"A youth to a youth I dedicated juvenilities; an old man to an old man I destine now the thoughts of age."

The Life of Thomas à Becket, written by William Fitz-Stephen, himself a Londoner, and a witness of Becket's death, contains some interesting references to the social life of the times. He testifies also to the popularity of the *Miracles*.

Benedict of Peterborough. Benedict's name has been associated with the most authoritative Chronicle of the reign of Henry II (begun 1172), but all that can be stated with any certainty is that the MS. was transcribed by his order. Benedict wrote the *Passion and Miracles of Becket*.

Ralph of Diceto occupied an important position, being Archdeacon of Middlesex, and from 1180–1202 he was Dean of St. Paul's. Ralph was consequently brought in contact with many of the public men of the day. His *Imagines Historiarum* is therefore of interest from this point of view. Ralph was a shrewd judge of character, and endeavours to analyse the motives and underlying causes of events.

Gervase of Canterbury may be mentioned as a writer who perpetuates the Brutus legend in his *Gesta Regum*.

The *Chronicle* of Jocelin of Brakeland, monk of St. Edmundsbury, affords a picture of monastic and social life of the twelfth century.

Giraldus Cambrensis (Gerald de Barri) (1146?–1220?), was born in Wales of Norman parents, and was distinguished throughout his life for his passionate love for his country. A scholar trained in Paris and an eminent churchman, he was twice elected by the chapter to the Bishopric of St. David's, but was kept out by the opposition of the king. A quick observer of men, with a ready facility for all kinds of curious knowledge, of which he has left a record in his *Topographia Hibernica*, an account of a tour in Ireland, which he undertook with Prince John, and in *Itinerarium Cambriæ*. He also wrote an autobiography.

Walter Map (Mapes), was born on the borders of Wales in 1143. Map studied at the University of Paris. An amusing sketch of the University at this time is given in Wireker's *Brunellus*, or *Speculum Stultorum* (Mirror of Fools), a satirical poem consisting of 3800 lines of Latin elegiac verse.

Map came to England in attendance on King Henry II. He held many offices at various times, being a judge, chaplain to the king; he also represented Henry at the court of Louis VII. He became a canon of St. Paul's, Precentor of Lincoln, and finally Archdeacon of Oxford. His *De Nugis Curialium* (Of Courtiers' Trifles), the title of which he borrowed from his learned contemporary John of Salisbury, Bishop of Chartres (1176), who produced a work entitled *Polycraticus, or On the Trifles of Courtiers and Tenets of the Philosophers* (1156–9). Map gave the title to his commonplace book, a medley of curious information and witty anecdotes. He gives an account of the various heretical sects of the twelfth century, together with reflections on the Norman kings and current opinions. His work might well be styled, Table Talk at the Court of Henry II.

Matthew Paris (c. 1195–1259), the greatest of all the mediæval historians, was a Benedictine monk of St. Alban's Abbey (1217). There arose at this Abbey an influential school of historical writers. St. Alban's Abbey was the chief centre of monastic culture in the tenth century. It possessed many advantages, it stood on the main road (Watling Street), and was therefore in constant intercourse with important men of the day, since the monastery entertained travellers of every degree. Moreover the writing of history had been carefully organised under Abbot Simpson (d. 1183), who established a regular office of "historiographer." Roger of Wendover was the first occupant of the office and Matthew Paris succeeded to the post on the death of Roger in 1236. He revised and continued the *Flores Historiarum* of Roger in his *Historia Major*, a work that gives a comprehensive and wonderfully skilful survey of

[1] T. Arnold, *Preface to the Rolls Series*.

English and Continental history down to 1259. In 1248 Matthew accepted the invitation of Hacon, King of Norway, to undertake a mission of reform to the monks of Holm. He was absent eighteen months. On his return he enjoyed the favour and intimacy of Henry III, who gave him information concerning matters of state which form a valuable element in his history. He also gave him a seat near the throne during the Feast of Edward the Confessor in 1247, in order that the event might be accurately recorded. Matthew was a man of wide sympathies, scholar, courtier, monk and man of the world, and in addition a born historian. He took much trouble to verify his facts and obtained information from many sources. He had numerous correspondents both at home and abroad. It has been said his work reads like a "stately journal of European events." He is at times an outspoken critic, not afraid to rebuke the king or denounce the rapacity of the nobles. Matthew stands at the head of the historians of Henry's day, and after his death the art of the historian entered on a period of decline. The literary distinction which marked the writers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, was not continued in their successors.

Henry of Bracton (*d.* 1268) wrote a treatise on the laws of England. In addition to his legal work he left a note-book containing two thousand cases taken from the Plea Rolls of his time with comments "which probably came from Bracton's hand and head." Bracton was not first in the field, for Ralph Glanville, who is said to have lent Richard I £15,000 for the Crusades, and to have been killed at the Siege of Acre in 1190, wrote a *Treatise on the Laws and Customs of England*. The difference between them is that whereas Glanville regarded his subject from the practical point of view, Bracton treated it from the standpoint of the theorist.

CELTIC LITERATURE

The Goidels: The Beginnings of Celtic Literature—Introduction of Christianity—Mythological, Heroic, Fenian, or Ossianic Cycles—Early Christian Literature—The Brythons: The Mabinogion.

THE GOIDELS

The connection between the Goidels (Irish Celts) and the Brythons, has been the subject of much discussion: one theory would suggest that the Goidels were the first immigrants from the Continent; they were followed by the Brythons, who gradually drove the Goidels into Ireland, those left behind being absorbed into the Brythonic race. These transmitted their legends to their adopted race, hence the similarity of Welsh and Irish legends; and although they were afterwards developed along independent lines, yet the substratum enables us to detect their essential identity.

Another theory maintains that the Goidels invaded Ireland and that the Welsh borrowed the stories from the conquerors.

A third theory, that perhaps presents fewer difficulties, would account for the community of ideas by supposing the stories to rest upon a mythological basis common to the Aryan family that have been developed along different lines by Goidel and Brython.

The Irish did not come under Roman influence until some two or three centuries after it had affected Wales, consequently, the early written literature of Ireland represents a more archaic representation of Celtic antiquity than even the Welsh. The fact that the Irish had no common foe to strive against resulted in the retention of the tribal divisions, and the glorification of the tribal hero and freebooter rather than the national hero.

The Beginnings of Celtic Literature

Till very recent times the wealth and extent of Irish literature had been very vaguely realised. Its very existence was denied by many who, ignorant of the language and prejudiced by political feeling, would not allow any good thing to be enshrined in Gaelic. The great Celtic revival stimulated and inspired by the publication of Macpherson's pseudo-Ossian in 1762–3, led to the recovery and investigation of many ancient MSS. Although much had already perished, enough remains to show the universal love of literature among the Irish people and the wide distribution of traditional songs and sagas. The studies of European scholars—Stokes, Windisch, Zimmer, Zeuss, Jubainville, as well as those of Irish scholars: O'Curry, Dr. Hyde; and Miss Eleanor Hull in England—have served to establish the close affinity of Celtic literature with Greek and the parent Aryan.

The dawn of Irish literature is veiled in the mists of antiquity; it probably arose in a period anterior to the Bardic schools of the Druids. The Bardic schools collected and handed on the oral race traditions and were the means also of their diffusion throughout Ireland. Cæsar speaks of the numbers who frequented these schools.

The training of a bard was an arduous one. It took from nine to twelve years to learn the 350 stories (250 greater and 100 lesser) with which the *ollamh* (*ollav*) had to be acquainted, and a man might spend twenty years ere he became proficient in his art and attained the highest dignity accorded to the bard. These stories might not be committed to writing, although it is not supposed that the bards actually memorised them in their entirety. They learned the sequence of the tale, and by long practice were able to give it poetic form, elaborating the incidents as the individual fancy of the reciter inclined him. In course of time this led to divergencies, and different versions of the same story became current. The *Ogam*, a runic alphabet

that has been found inscribed on wood and stone of which there are about three hundred known—two hundred being discovered in the south-west of Ireland—was possibly also used by the bards to assist them in memorising their tales. *The Dialogue of the Two Sages* tells that Diarmuid mac Fergus ordered the words of Caoilté and Oisian to be inscribed on "the headless staffs of poets."

These square staffs carried by the poets upon which they scratched or cut Ogam characters, O'Curry supposed to have been in the nature of a fan that would close up. Upon these they could carry the history and genealogy of a race, and the framework of their narratives.

The purely native schools of the Brehons and the Bards continued to flourish side by side with the monastic schools.

The most ancient poem in Ireland is attributed to a Milesian, Amergin, brother of Eber; and is perhaps the oldest surviving poem in any vernacular of any country in Europe with the exception of Greece.

One of the oldest prose treatises in Irish is the *Instructions to a Prince*, ascribed to King Cormac, and written in the form of a dialogue between Cormac and his son Cairbré.

These *Instructions* are interesting as containing an account of pagan ethics. The language is so ancient as to have required considerable glossing in the *Book of Ballymote*.

The Introduction of Christianity

With the conversion of Ireland to Christianity came the introduction of the Latin alphabet and Latin literature, and the establishment of monastic schools. These soon became famous. In A.D. 664, during a time of plague, numerous Anglo-Saxons who fled to Ireland were, according to Bede, given food, instruction and books to read, thus showing the extent to which books had already multiplied.

Great numbers of foreigners—Gauls, Teutons, Swiss, Italians—crowded to these schools in which a wonderful standard of scholarship was maintained. Greek, Hebrew, and Latin were taught in addition to grammar, philosophy, theology, &c. Moreover, this instruction was given to the foreign students through the native language. A number of the very oldest Irish texts are contained in the glosses to be found written in the margins or between the lines of a Latin Commentary on the Psalms, and a Latin Sermon written in the eighth century, now in the libraries of Milan and Cambray. The margin of the MS. of St. Priscian of St. Gall in the Milan Codex, contains these little Gaelic poems:

"A grove surrounds me,
The swift lay of the blackbird makes music to me.
I will not hide it.
Over my much-lined little book
The song of the bird makes music to me."

"Wild blows the wind to-night,
The white harvest billows rage,
The bold warriors from Norway
Fear not the path of a clear sea."[1]

[1] *The Literature of the Celt*, by Magnus Maclean (Blackie).

The variety of subjects dealt with in the Monastic schools has already been mentioned, and a further instance of this is to be found in a treatise on Gaelic Grammar, the first four books of which are assigned to Cennfaeladh, the poet (678), the others to prehistoric, mythical people, one of whom, Gennius Faisaid, composed the Gaelic tongue out of seventy-two languages, and whose son Niul is said to have visited Egypt to teach the language after the confusion of Babel!

The Continental glosses proved of the greatest value to Zeuss who by means of them was enabled to establish the connection of the Celtic language with the Aryan.

The real spirit of Celtic literature is to be found in the sagas. These contain the story of the growth of the race, the history of the tribe and family, the Celtic mythology—"the very essence of the national life of Erin" is embodied in them. There is little need to emphasize the considerable quantity of this literature that has survived in spite of the ravages of Dane, Norman, and English. O'Curry has estimated that sufficient remains to fill something like twelve thousand of the large pages of the *Four Masters*!

Three cycles occupy a prominent position, since a greater number of stories have gathered round them and a larger number preserved than is the case with the *Tuathal* and the *Dorn*, or *Conaire the Great* (cycles which have only one or two stories belonging to them). These are the *Mythological Cycle*, concerning the Tuatha de Danaan and the Milesians; the *Heroic* or *Red Branch Cycle* (Cuchulain), and the Cycle of Finn mac Cumhail, Ossian, and the High Kings of Ireland—this latter being generally known as the *Fenian* or *Ossianic*.

These cycles are contained in four ancient MSS.:

1. *The Book of the Dun Cow (Leabhar na h' Uidhre)*, so called after the original text of which this is a copy, transcribed about 1100. St. Ciaran wrote down, from the dictation of Fergus, the tale of the Tain Bo Chuailgné, in a book made from the hide of a favourite cow (called from its colour "dun").

2. *The Book of Leinster*, transcribed by Finn mac Gorman, Bishop of Kildare, from other books, about 1160. This contains the famous list of one hundred and eighty-seven romances required of the bard: *Destructions of Fortified Places, Cow Spoils* (cattle-raiding expeditions), *Courtships or Wooings, Battles, Cave Stories, Navigations, Tragical Deaths, Feasts, Sieges, Adventures, Elopements, Slaughters, Water-eruptions, Expeditions, Progresses*, and *Visions*. "He is no poet," says the Book of Leinster, "who does not synchronise and harmonise all the stories."

3. *The Book of Ballymote*, dating from the end of the fourteenth century.

4. *The Book of Lismore*, compiled in the early years of the sixteenth century, which is specially important for the Ossianic cycles.

The Mythological Cycle

This cycle of mythological tales is concerned with the people who, in dimly remote times, were sup-

posed to have first colonised Erin. An atmosphere of vagueness and unreality surrounds these stories, but they are of considerable value to the student for the light which they throw upon the early religious ideas of the people. Most of these stories are found only in brief digests which have been preserved in the *Leabhar Gabhála*, or The Book of the takings and holdings of Ireland, large portions of which exist in the Books of Leinster and Ballymote. The latter were rewritten by Michael O'Clery in 1630, who collected all the material he could find from the most ancient sources accessible to him.

The chief sagas belonging to this cycle are *The First Battle of Moytura*, *The Second Battle of Moytura*, *The Death of the Children of Tuireann*, *The Progress of Partholan to Erin*, *The Progress of Nemed to Erin*, *The Progress of the Firbolg*, *The Progress of the Tuatha de Danann*, &c.

We are told in the early history of Ireland how Partholan made a settlement. In course of time he and his people died of plague. After this the Nemedians or people of Nemed peopled the island; these were followed by the Firbolgs, Tuatha de Danann and last of all by the Milesians—thus bringing the record down to the Christian era. The Milesians are the ancestors of the modern Gaels.

On the arrival of the Milesians from Spain to Tara, they were met by the three kings and queens of the Tuatha. They complained that they were not ready for the battle. Their coming being a surprise visit, they entreated the Milesians to re-embark upon their ships and retire for "nine waves" on the sea. This they did, but on turning about, Ireland was not to be seen! The Tuatha de Danann by their enchantments had made the island "as small as a pig's back," and at the same time raised a violent storm. Many of the Milesian ships were wrecked and were only saved by the prayers of their leader, a Druid, addressed to the Tuatha. The storm ceased and they were able to land in peace. After a number of battles the Tuatha retired to the country of the *Sidh*, the fairy mound-dwellers.

There are many characteristics in these stories which point to a mythological origin. The Tuatha de Danann are the pagan gods of the Gaelic people, or personifications of the forces of nature; the Formorians, the bad spirits.

The mythological character of this cycle may be gathered from the story of the Dagda, at one time supposed to be King of the de Dananns, who is certainly more mythological than dignified.

The Heroic or Red Branch Cycle

This cycle deals with the Milesians during a certain period, and the stories open to us a window into the past, for in spite of a certain wildness and riotous imagination, there is a considerable amount of general and local history to be gleaned from this Ultonian saga. Light is thrown on the manners and customs of the people, and the stories exhibit the peculiar literary qualities of the Celt that are so difficult to define—the keen perception, the wealth of pictorial detail, the wonderful powers of description, and the Celtic love of colour.

The heroic cycle is sometimes known as the Ultonian, since it deals mainly with the heroes of the northern province of Ulster—Cuchulain, Conor mac Nessa, Fergus mac Roy, Naoise and Déirdre, Méve and Conall Cearnach.

A number of stories concern the birth, youthful exploits, and heroic prowess of Cuchulain, "the mightiest hero of the Scots,[1] by Lugaid son of Three Hounds, King of Munster, and by Ere, King of Tara, son of Carbre Niá Fer, and by the three sons of Calatin of Connaught. Seven years was his age when he assumed arms, seventeen was his age when he followed the driving of the kine of Cualgne, but twenty-seven years was his age when he died."[2]

It is impossible to deal at any length with the numerous stories surrounding this "Irish Achilles." One of the longest and greatest in the cycle is the famous *Táin Bó Cluailgne*, or *The Cattle Raid of Cooley*, in which Cuchulain guards the Marches of Ulster, and holds at bay, single-handed, the whole forces of Ireland.

The Táin opens with a conversation between Méve, Queen of Connacht, and her husband Ailill, in which the question arises as to which of them is the richer. The argument becomes so heated that it is at last decided to bring their goods together and actually compare them.

Accordingly they collect their worldly wealth and find them equal in value, except for a great bull, "the white-horned," that was calved by one of Méve's cows. This bull, considering it disgraceful to be under the rule of a woman, had gone over to Ailill's herd. Méve has nothing to compare with this bull, "and because she had not a bull of his size, it was as though she owned no penny-worth of stock." She discovers there is a similar bull in the district of Cualgne, in Louth, known as the Dun Bull of Cualgne, belonging to a chieftain named Daré.

Méve sends an embassy to Daré offering to purchase the bull. This would have been successful had not one of the men drunk too freely, and boasted that had the bull not been given it would have been taken. Daré hearing of this boast indignantly refuses to send the bull. Méve now swears to have the bull, and collects a vast army, and determines to make the attack at a time when the Ulster warriors are overcome by a sickness that overtakes them at certain periods—a punishment for a wrong done by one of Conchobar's ancestors upon a member of the Irish god-clan. Before starting she consults a druid who tells her that "Whosoever returneth or returneth not thou shalt return." On her homeward way she sees a maiden upon the pole of her chariot. Méve inquires, "How seest thou our hosts?"

"I see crimson over them, I see red," is the

[1] *Scots* first inhabited Ireland, settled in Western Scotland in the fifth century, and gave the name to the northern half of the island. Hence, down to the eleventh century, Scotia means Ireland and not Scotland.

[2] *Annals of Tigernach*, 1063.

answer repeated again and again to the queries of the queen.

Finally she prophesies the coming of Cuchulain.

Méve's army proceeds under the guidance of Fergus, who however is secretly giving warning to the Ulster men.

Cuchulain and Scathach, who are free from the sickness of the Ulster men, harass the invaders—Cuchulain slaying them a hundred at a time. Méve at last is driven to accept the terms of Cuchulain whom she is disappointed to find a mere boy. Every day Cuchulain is to meet a warrior in single combat. During the fight the invaders may proceed but must stop as soon as the fight is finished.

Combats follow in which Cuchulain is always victorious, but in spite of his efforts the Brown Bull is driven into Queen Méve's camp. Then follows more fighting, the most interesting episode being Cuchulain's *Fight at the Ford with Ferdia*. Finally Méve takes the Brown Bull back to Connacht.

Déirdre, or The Fate of the Children of Usnath

An extraordinary amount of interest has been displayed in this saga down to quite modern times.[1] It has been described as "the finest and best conceived in the whole range of Irish literature." A MS. copy is in the Belfast Museum.

King Conor and his Ulstermen had gone to drink and feast in the house of Felim, Conor's chief story-teller, and during their stay there, Felim's wife has a daughter of whom Cathba, the Druid, prophesies that much suffering and woe shall come upon Ulster. He names her Déirdre. The Ulstermen are smitten with horror, and desire that she shall be put to death at once. King Conor forbids this and commands that the child shall be brought to him and she shall be the woman he will marry. Déirdre is brought up in Conor's house. No one is allowed to see her except her nurse Lavarcam, her tutor, and a Danish magician whom they were afraid to keep out.

She grows up to be the handsomest maiden in Ireland, and in spite of all the precautions taken to keep her in seclusion she gives her affection to Naoise, the son of Usnach, whom she has by an accident seen playing games with his two brothers on the green. The time for marriage with King Conor draws near, and becoming desperate, Déirdre confides in her nurse and sends for Naoise. Déirdre entreats him to take her away, and they escape in the night without the knowledge of the nurse or the tutor. They go aboard a ship, and with thrice fifty champions sail for Western Alba. "Fifty with each of the three brothers—Naoise, Ainle, and Ardan." Here, the three brothers and Déirdre live for a long time quite happily.

It is at this point that the modern copies begin. King Conor is feasting with his warriors in his hall. He asks those assembled if aught is lacking to his palace at Emania. They reply that it seems perfect. "Not so to me," answered the king—he regrets the absence of the three noble sons of Usnach. Conor proposes to send ambassadors to Alba to solicit their return. Fergus and his two sons undertake the mission. On their landing in Alba, Fergus gives the "cry of a mighty man of chace." Naoise and Déirdre are playing chess in their hunting tent. Naoise says he hears the cry of a man of Erin. Déirdre declares it to be the cry of a man of Alba. The cry is twice repeated—Déirdre persists in denying it. Naoise recognises the cry of Fergus and sends his brother to meet him. Déirdre confesses that she had known it to be Fergus, and tries to communicate to Naoise her presentiment of coming evil. Her efforts are of no avail. Fergus persuades Naoise to return and the next morning they embark, and Déirdre laments bitterly the "Delightful land, you eastern Alba."

The fugitives land once more in Erin, but dangers surround them. Through the strategy of King Conor they are separated from Fergus and left with his two sons. Déirdre again tries to make her husband see the coming danger.

She makes one last attempt as they come in sight of the city. If they are lodged in King Conor's palace, all will be well, but if in the House of the Red Branch they may be certain of treachery. They are lodged in the House of the Red Branch, and begin to realise they are caught in a trap. Mad with drink and jealousy, King Conor sends a man to see if Déirdre is still as beautiful. The spy looks through a window at the two who are playing chess. Naoise throws a chessman at his head and breaks the eye that looks at them. Returning to the King the messenger declares that "it was worth losing an eye to behold a woman so lovely." King Conor is now furious and leads his troops to attack the Red Branch House. A desperate struggle ensues, lasting all night. The Sons of Usnach and Déirdre are still unteken. Conor's Druid, Cathba, consents to work a spell against them on condition that when Déirdre is taken, the Sons of Uenach shall not be harmed. Conor pledges his word, the spell is set, the Sons of Uenach are captured, and Conor has them at once beheaded. Whereupon the Druid cursed Emania—a curse that has been verified, for since the wars with Méve, "neither Conor nor any of his race possessed Emania from that time to this."

Déirdre is distracted, and wails for "the three sons of the breast of the Ulstonians."

After her keening she throws herself into their grave and dies.

The Fenian or Ossianic Cycle

Yet another cycle of stories centres round Conn of the Hundred Battles, his son Art, and his successors.

This cycle is sometimes known as the *Fenian*, since it deals to some extent with the exploits of Finn mac Cumhail and his Fenian militia; or, *Ossianic*, since Ossian, Finn's son, is supposed to have composed many of the poems belonging to it.

Finn mac Cumhail was the leader of a band of

[1] See *Déirdre of the Sorrows*, by J. M. Synge.

professional soldiers who are supposed to have lived in the third century. The Irish annalists record his death as taking place in A.D. 262 or 283, but there is possibly an historic basis for these stories in the gradual and increasing enmity that grew up between the High Kings of Erin and their Fenian bands, and in the battles that ensued.

The stories are set in a romantic atmosphere; gods and men, giants and monsters intermingle, transformations are frequent.

The men of the Fenian cycle lived some two hundred years later than the men of the Cuchulain period, but the stories of the two cycles have remained quite distinct. The Fenian tales and poems are very numerous in conception and general characterisation, and differ from those of the Red Branch. They have not the same breadth and vastness as the earlier cycle. The tone is more modern; the heroes fought on foot or on horseback; chariots have been superseded. Mention is made of helmets and mail coats.

The Fenian stories became in later times the most popular. They were interwoven with the life and thought and feelings of the Gaels of both Ireland and Scotland, and their subsequent development for nearly fifteen hundred years is a remarkable instance of literary evolution.

Subject to constant reductions these stories continued in circulation down to recent times, many of them never having been written down. Yet the names of Finn, Oisian, Oscar, Goll, and Conan have lived on, cherished in the traditions of the people, giving rise to fresh stories and new developments in the sagas. It was these floating traditions that Macpherson used in compiling the Ossian. Macpherson had no original Gaelic text as he maintained, the version that appeared years later being merely a translation into Gaelic of the original work. Macpherson's poems are of no value to the student of Celtic literature.

The literature of this cycle may be divided into three classes:

1. Poems in ancient MSS. ascribed to Finn mac Cumhail, to his sons Ossian and Fergus Finnbheoil, and his nephew Caoilté.

2. Tracts made up of prose and verse attributed to one of the bards, but related by some one else, e.g. *The Dialogue of the Ancients*, preserved in the *Book of Lismore*.

Caoilté, the poet, and Ossian, were almost the only men to survive the Battle of Gabhra, in which Cairbré, the High King, destroyed the power of the Fenians. Meeting in their old age, St. Patrick and the preachers of the new teaching, they recount to the Saint the legends and tales connected with the rivers and streams of Ireland. These are written down by Brogan, Patrick's scribe.

3. A number of miscellaneous poems attributed to Ossian.

Ossian was the son of Finn mac Cumhail, and was said to have lived in *Tir na n'og*, "the country of the ever-young," for three hundred years, surviving to hold converse with St. Patrick.

St. Patrick meeting the half-starved blind Ossian forbids him to speak of Finn or the Fenians. Later on St. Patrick, fired with curiosity, changes his tone and bids Ossian tell him how many deer were slain at Slieve-na-man-finn.

Ossian is quite ready to comply with the request, and recites the many battles and victories taken part in by Finn and the Fenians of Innisfail, and their pastimes afterwards.

Early Christian Literature

The introduction of Christianity into Ireland gave men new ideals not only in religion but also in literature.

The first figure that stands out in the dawn of Christian literature is that of St. Patrick. A number of Irish poems and works in Latin prose are assigned to him. Of the poems the *Fiadh Fiada*, or the Cry of the Deer, is known to be genuine.

This consists of eighty lines of verse—"Patrick made this hymn"—the cause of making it was to protect himself and his monks against his deadly enemies. The King had sent for St. Patrick to explain the new religion to the nobles at Tara. On his return an ambush was laid, apparently by the King's orders, to kill St. Patrick and his companions; they assumed, however, the form of deer in the eyes of the would-be murderers, and thus escaped.

St. Patrick's name is also associated with a codification of the Brehon Laws, called the *Cóin Phádraig*—(the Great Tradition Seanchus Mór). In this St. Patrick was assisted by a committee of three kings, three bishops, and three brehons, who drew up a revised code of laws, in harmony with Christian teaching. After St. Patrick had finished, Ros the bard "put a thread of poetry round it," and rendered it into verse in order that it might be better remembered.

Columkille is another celebrated Christian poet, who wrote a number of Irish poems and a Latin hymn called the *Altus*. Columkille is typically Irish in his love for his native country, his feeling for nature, his tenderness and impulsiveness.

In addition to poetry, a large number of lives of the Saints—e.g. *Life of St. Patrick* by St. Benignus; Adamnan's *Life of Columkille*: a *Life of St. Brigit* by St. Ultan; and the famous *Voyage of St. Brendan*—were all composed during this early period.

The great colleges and monasteries that flourished and carried on their missionary expeditions, led to a wide diffusion of Celtic influence, an influence that has perhaps always been exercised indirectly rather than directly.

"If I were asked," says Matthew Arnold, "where English poetry got these three things: its turn for style, its turn for melancholy, its turn for natural magic, for catching and rendering the charm of nature in a wonderfully near and vivid way, I should answer with some doubt, that it got much of its turn for style from a Celtic source; with less doubt that it got much of its melancholy from a Celtic source; and with no doubt at all, that from a Celtic source it got nearly all its natural magic."[1]

[1] *The Study of Celtic Literature*, by Matthew Arnold.

Though the influence of Celtic literature has been mainly indirect, the fusion of the races has led to the qualities and characteristics of Celt and Teuton becoming intermingled. The earliest direct influence of the Celtic spirit may have been exercised on the Northumbrian school of poetry—Northumbria was Christianised in the seventh century by Irish missionaries. Men from the Irish monasteries came to Whitby, and there is in the poetry of the Cynewulfian school a love of colour, and a feeling for nature, and the strong personal note that bespeaks the Celt.

We may note the Celtic love of nature in the beautiful poem of the *King and the Hermit*,[1] a colloquy between Guaire, King of Connacht in the seventh century, and his brother Marvan, a hermit.

The King, displeased at his brother's mode of life, remonstrates with him; Marvan thereupon recounts to Guaire the beauties and delights of his simple dwelling:

"I have a shieling in the wood,
None knows it save my God;
An ash-tree on the hither side, a hazel-bush beyond,
A huge old tree encompasses it.

Two heath-clad doorposts for support,
And a lintel of honeysuckle:
The forest around its narrowness sheds
Its mast upon fat swine.

The size of my shieling is tiny, not too tiny,
Many are its lintel or paths:
From its gable a sweet strain sings
A she-bird in her cloak of ousel's hue.

The stags of Oakridge leap
Into the river of clear banks;
Thence red Roiny may be seen
Glorious Muskerry and Moinmoy.

A hiding mane of green-barked yew
Supports the sky:
Beautiful soul! the large green of an oak
Fronting the storm.

A tree of apples—great its bounty!
Like a hostel, vast!
A prickly bush, thick as a fist, of tiny hazel nuts,
A green mass of branches.

A chaste pure spring and princely water
To drink:
There spring watercresses, yew-berries,
Ivy-bushes thick as a mast.

Around it tame swine lie down,
Goats, pigs,
Wild swine, grazing deer,
A badger's brood.

. . . . . .

A clutch of eggs, honey, delicious mast,
God has sent it;
Sweet apples, red whortle-berries,
And blackberries.

Ale with herbs, a dish of strawberries
Of good taste and colour,
Haws, berries of the juniper,
Sloes, nuts.

A cup with mead of hazel-nut, blue-bells,
Quick-growing rushes,
Dun nibblets, manes of briar,
Goodly sweet tangle.

. . . . . .

Swarms of bees and chafers, the little musicians of the world,
A gentle clamour;
Wild geese and ducks, shortly before summer's end,
The music of the dark harrow.

An active songster, a lively wren
From the hazel-bough,
Beautiful hooded birds, woodpeckers,
A vast multitude!

. . . . . .

Without an hour of fighting, without the din of strife
In my house,
Grateful to the Prince who giveth every good
To me in my shieling."

Guaire is impressed and sings:

"I would give my glorious kingship
With the storm of my father's heritage—
To the hour of my death I would forfeit it
To be in thy company, my Marvan."

The passionate love of colour we see in the curious personal description of Cuchulain:

"A handsome lad truly was he that stood there then: Cuchullin son of Sualtam. Three sets of hair he had: next to the skin of his head, brown; in the middle, crimson; that which covered him on the outside formed as it were a diadem of gold, seeing that comparable to yellow gold was each glittering long-curling splendid beauty-coloured thread of the same, as free and loose it fell down and hung betwixt his shoulders. About his neck were a hundred linklets of red gold that flushed again, with pendants hanging from them. His headgear was adorned with a hundred mixed carbuncle jewels, strung. On either cheek four moles he had: a yellow, a green, a blue, a red. In either eye seven pupils, as it were seven sparkling gems. . . . He dons his gorgeous raiment that he wore in great conventions; a fair crimson tunic of five plies and fringed, with a long pin of white silver, gold-enclosed and patterned, shining as it had been a luminous torch which for its blazing property and brilliance men might not endure to see. Next to his skin, a body vest of silk . . . which came as far as the upper edge of his russet-coloured kilt. A trusty special shield, in hue dark crimson, and in its circumference armed with a pure white silver rim."[1]

Finally, the purity and exalted moral tone of Celtic literature is especially marked; there is no license, no coarseness; and the high ideals aimed at by the Celt compare very favourably with all other literature.

THE BRYTHONS

The Celtic languages form one group of the Indo-European family of languages, occupying a position midway between the Italic and Teutonic branches. The various Celtic dialects may be divided as follows:

I. *Gaulish.*

II. *Goidelic*, which includes Irish and Scottish Gaelic and Manx. Old Irish being the parent of Scottish Gaelic and Manx.

III. *Brythonic*, which includes Welsh, Breton, and Cornish.

[1] Translated by Kuno Meyer, *Ancient Irish Poetry* (Constable).

[1] *Cuchullin Saga*, Eleanor Hull (Nutt).

It is with the third that we shall now deal. The remains of Celtic dialects found on monuments show a marked difference between the two groups, i.e. the Goidelic and Brythonic dialects, the Brythonic having gone farther in the process of losing inflectional endings than has the Goidelic.

The oldest Welsh literature consists of glosses belonging to the ninth and tenth centuries. Whilst these are of the greatest value to the philological student, they have no intrinsic interest. With the exception of two short verses written in Irish characters and preserved in the Juventus MS., at Cambridge, all the Welsh prose and verse from the tenth to the fourteenth century is preserved in four important MSS.

1. *The Black Book of Carmarthen.*—This is a small quarto vellum MS. of fifty leaves, written in Gothic letters by various hands in the reign of Henry II. It belonged originally to the Priory of Black Canons at Carmarthen, from whom it passed to St. David's.

2. *The Book of Aneirin.*—A small quarto MS. consisting of nineteen vellum leaves, written in 1250.

3. *The Book of Taliesin.*—A quarto MS., of thirty-eight leaves in Gothic, dating from the early part of the fourteenth century.

4. *The Red Book of Hergest.*—A folio of three hundred and sixty leaves, written by different hands, and is in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. In this MS. are found the stories of the *Mabinogion* —with the exception of *Taliesin*. It is from this book Lady Charlotte Guest obtained eleven of her stories.

The book takes its name from Hergest Court, the seat of the Vaughans, who at one time possessed the MS. It was probably begun in 1318, and finished in 1454. The book is a compilation of Welsh verse and prose of all periods from the sixth century to the middle of the fifteenth century. These are not the only compositions which date from a remote period. There are three other very notable works:

1. The *History and Epistle of Gildas*—a Latin treatise on the early history of the country, written about A.D. 560.

2. The *Ancient History of the Britons*, by Nennius.

3. The *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Wales.*

The Mabinogion

The Mabinogion is a collection of Welsh stories translated into English and published by Lady Charlotte Guest in 1840. These tales were taken from the fourteenth-century MS., known as the *Red Book of Hergest*, with the exception of the romance entitled Taliesin, of which the MS. dates from the seventeenth century.

The *Red Book*, like so many mediæval MSS., comprises a small library in itself, containing historical, devotional, legendary, and romantic materials, as well as translations from the Latin and French. In many cases the tales are transcripts of stories far older than the *Red Book*.

"The very first thing that strikes one," says Matthew Arnold, "in reading the Mabinogion, is how evidently the mediæval story-teller is plilluging an antiquity of which he does not fully possess the secret."

Four of these stories: *Pwyll, Prince of Dyfed*; *Branwen, daughter of Llyr*; *Manawyddan, son of Llyr*; and *Math, son of Mathonwy*, form a series. The story of Pwyll begins with the words "Dyma dechreu Mabinogi" ("Here is the beginning of the Mabinogi"). The succeeding stories are called branches of the Mabinogi.

The plural form of Mabinogi is Mabinogion, which was the title given by Lady Guest to the whole collection, although it really belongs only to the four tales mentioned above. The other stories included, differ in marked fashion from the Mabinogion proper. Two of them, *The Dream of Maxen Wledig* and *The Contention (?) of Lludd and Llevelys*, are evidently connected with material used by Geoffrey of Monmouth in his history.

Kulhwch and Olwen, and *The Dream of Rhonabwy*, are Arthurian stories not to be found in any of the French or German romances that have come down to us, whereas *The Lady of the Fountain*, *Geraint*, and *Peredur* are closely connected with the Arthurian romances of Chrestien des Troyes—*Yvain*, *Erec*, and *Le conte du Graal*.

Taliesin has much in common with the Four Branches of the Mabinogi, although the hero of the story is connected with the Arthur cycle.

Professor Rhys has shown that the Mabinogi is in reality the term applied to the subject matter of the Mabinog's course—the Mabinog being a scholar or apprentice to the bardic art. These stories, like the *Kilda Saoraz Sturlusonar* (a collection of Icelandic tales), had to be memorised by the apprentice bard as part of his stock in trade. The Mabinogion may therefore be regarded as the remains of a literature belonging in great measure to the mythic and heroic period, since the narratives concern people who possess at times certain supernatural qualities. "The Four Branches of the Mabinogi are nothing more nor less than degraded and adulterated mythological tales."[1]

The foundation of these stories rests upon the old Celtic tradition of the gods. The Welsh *Children of Llyr*, and *Children of Don*, correspond to the Irish Tuatha de Danann, or Folk of the goddess Dunn, among whom Lir (the Irish sea god) occupies an important position. The Caer Sidi, where neither age nor disease affects anyone, is the Sid of Irish mythology, the residence of the gods.

The Irish tales, however, are far more primitive than the Welsh. The latter have undergone many modifications and have been profoundly influenced by contact with the Viking invaders and the Gaimare romance cycle, so that it is no longer possible to give them any strict mythological interpretation. A comparison with the Irish tales shows the Welsh princes, warriors, and magicians to be the gods of the earlier tales, who have been euhemerised.

The Welsh tales, moreover, betray in various

[1] The *Mabinogion*, by Ivor B. John (*Popular Studies in Mythology, Romance and Folklore*), David Nutt.

indefinable ways their contact with the culture, manners, and customs of the Normans. Consequently, although they are not as useful as the Irish tales to the student of Celtic mythology, they are of greater value as stories.

Full of mystery, magic, and fantasy, they represent in supreme fashion the genius of the Celtic race, "that has worn itself out in taking dreams for realities and in pursuing its splendid visions. The essential element in the Celts' poetic life, is the *adventure*, that is to say, the pursuit of the unknown; an endless quest after an object ever flying from desire."[1]

The *Story of Lludd and Llevelys*, and *The Dream of Maxen Wledig*, whilst they still concern people belonging to the group of tales in the Four Branches are more definitely connected with British History and the Roman Conquest.

The *Dream of Maxen Wledig* embodies the attraction and fascination of Imperial Rome for the cultured Briton, and is a most delightful example of a certain type of story-telling.

Maxen Wledig, the Roman Emperor, while out hunting near Rome, overcome by the heat, lies down to sleep, protected from the sun by the shelter of his attendants. *And he saw a dream:*

"And this is the dream that he saw. He was journeying along the valley of the river towards its source; and he came to the highest mountain in the world. And he thought that the mountain was as high as the sky; and when he came over the mountain it seemed to him that he went through the fairest and most level regions that man ever yet beheld on the other side of the mountain. And he saw large and mighty rivers descending from the mountains to the sea, and towards the mouths of the rivers he proceeded. And as he journeyed thus, he came to the mouth of the largest river ever seen. And he beheld a great city at the entrance of the river, and a vast castle in the city, and he saw many high towers of various colours in the castle. And he saw a fleet, at the mouth of the river, the largest ever seen. And he saw one ship among the fleet; larger by far, and fairer than all the others. Of such part of the ship as he could see above the water, one plank was gilded and the other silvered over. He saw a bridge of the bone of the whale from the ship to the land, and he thought that he went along the bridge, and came into the ship. And a sail was hoisted on the ship, and along the sea and the ocean was it borne. Then it seemed that he came to the fairest island in the whole world, and he traversed the island from sea to sea, even to the farthest shore of the island. Valleys he saw, and steeps, and rocks of wondrous height, and rugged precipices. Never yet saw he the like. And thence he beheld an island in the sea, facing the rugged land. And between him and this island was a country of which the plain was as large as the sea, the mountain as vast as the wood. And from the mountain he saw a river that flowed through the land and fell into the sea. And at the mouth of the river he beheld a castle, the fairest that man ever saw, and the gate of the castle was open, and he went into the castle. And in the castle he saw a fair hall, of which the roof seemed to be all of gold, the walls of the hall seemed to be entirely of glittering precious gems, the doors all seemed to be of gold. Golden seats he saw in the hall, and silver tables. And on a seat opposite to him, he beheld two auburn-haired youths playing at chess. He saw a silver board for the chess, and gold pieces thereon. The garments of the youths were of jet black satin, and chaplets of ruddy gold bound their hair, whereon were sparkling jewels of great price, rubies and gems, alternately with imperial stones. Buskins of new cordovan leather on their feet, fastened by slides of red gold.

"And beside a pillar in the hall he saw a hoary-headed man, in a chair of ivory, with the figures of two eagles of ruddy gold thereon. Bracelets of gold were upon his arms, and many rings were on his hands, and a golden torque about his neck; and his hair was bound with a golden diadem. He was of powerful aspect. A chess-board of gold was before him, and a rod of gold, and a steel file in his hand. And he was carving out chessmen.

"And he saw a maiden sitting before him in a chair of ruddy gold. Not more easy than to gaze upon the sun when brightest, was it to look upon her by reason of her beauty. A vest of white silk was upon the maiden, with clasps of red gold at the breast; and a surcoat of gold tissue upon her, and a frontlet of red gold upon her head, and rubies and gems were in the frontlet, alternating with pearls and imperial stones. And a girdle of ruddy gold was around her. She was the fairest sight that man ever beheld."[1]

Henceforth the Emperor has no life nor spirit, nor existence in him. The sages of Rome counsel him to send forth messengers to seek for tidings of the maiden. Eventually they cross the sea to Britain. They traversed the island until they came to Snowdon. "Behold," said they, "the rugged land that our master saw." They go on their way and come to the castle and find everything as the Emperor had told them. They return to Maxen, who immediately sets out for Britain, conquers the Island and makes the Dream Lady his bride. Her father being made at her request ruler of Britain and the three adjacent islands, and three chief castles to be made for her—"And they brought thither earth from Rome that it might be more healthful for the Emperor to sleep and sit and walk upon."

Maxen after seven years returns to Rome, and receives assistance from the Britons in regaining Rome from the man who in the absence of Maxen had styled himself Emperor of Rome.

"Kilhwch and Olwen," and "The Dream of Rhonabwy"

These are fairy tales. The King Arthur of these stories is not the historic Arthur nor is he "Arthur, the Hope of Britain" one day to return from the isle of Avalon, but the subduer of magical and monstrous creatures, the prince of Faery.

Kilhwch and *Rhonabwy* betray the influence of

[1] *Celtic Race Poetry* (Renan), Scott Library.

[1] *The Mabinogion*, by Lady Charlotte Guest.

Irish romance upon the Welsh. The children of Don and Llyr, Conchobar the son of Ness, are associated with the companions of Arthur.

Three other stories dealing with Arthur: *The Lady of the Fountain*, *Geraint*, and *Peredur*, show the influence of chivalric ideals, and these stories have much in common with French and German romances, particularly those of Chrestien de Troyes—but as story-tellers the Welsh writers stand far above Chrestien. "The charm of the Mabinogion," says Renan, "principally resides in the amiable serenity of the Celtic mind; neither sad nor gay, ever in suspense between a smile and a tear. We have in them the simple recital of a child, unwilling any distinction between the noble and the common."[1]

Taliesin

Taliesin is one of the most famous of early Welsh poets. The existence of this poet sometime in the sixth century is testified by a number of tales found in Welsh medieval MSS., the most important being the so-called *Book of Taliesin*, which is ascribed to him. These poems belong to various periods, some of them dating from the ninth century and others belong to the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, the whole being a selection put together at the close of the fifteenth. In ascribing these poems to Taliesin, the Welsh bards were perpetuating the tradition of the earlier bards.

The story of the rebirth of Taliesin is connected with very early Celtic myths. The late form of the story renders it of less interest as literature:

"Primary chief bard am I to Elphin,
And my original country is the region of the summer grass;
Idno and Heinin call me Merddin,
At length every king will call me Taliesin.
I was with my Lord in the highest spheres,
On the fall of Lucifer into the depth of hell
I have borne a banner before Alexander;
I know the names of the stars from north to south;
I have been on the gallery at the throne of Hu the tributor;
I was in Canaan when Aberlleu was slain;
I conveyed the Divine Spirit to the level of the vale of Hebron;
I was in the court of Don before the birth of Gwdion.
I was instructor to Lli and Gwair;
I have been whipped by the genius of the splendid ocelot.
I have been loquacious prior to being gifted with speech;
I was at the place of the crucifixion of the merciful Son of God;
I have been three periods in the prison of Arianrod;
I have been the chief director of the work of the tower of Nimrod;
I am a wonder whose origin is not known.

I have been in Asia with Noah in the ark,
I have seen the destruction of Sodom and Gomorra;
I have been in India when Rome was built;
I am now come here to the summit of Troas.

I have been with my Lord in the manger of the ass;
I strengthened Moses through the water of Jordan;
I have been in the firmament with Mary Magdalene;
I have obtained the muse from the cauldron of Ceridwen;
I have been bard of the harp to Heim of Lochlin.
I have been on the White Hill, in the court of Cynvelyn,
For a day and a year in stocks and fetters,
I have suffered hunger for the Son of the Virgin.
I have been fostered in the land of the Deity,
I have been teacher to all intelligences,
I am able to instruct the whole universe.
I shall be until the day of doom on the face of the earth;
And it is not known whether my body is flesh or fish.
Then I was for nine months
In the womb of the hag Ceridwen;
I was originally little Gwion,
And at length I am Taliesin."[1]

THE MENDICANT FRIARS

The Religious Writers. Popular Theological Works: Homilies—Legends—Lives of the Saints. Popular Didactic Works: *Cursor Mundi*, &c. Non-Popular Devotional Works: Richard Rolle—*Ancren Riwle*.

THE MENDICANT FRIARS

The establishment of the various orders of friars in England that took place from 1221 onwards was not without its effect on the literature of the times. Many of the friars were the sons of poor men. Their early years made them familiar with the hardships of the labouring classes; their education enabled them to voice the aspirations and needs of the inarticulate crowd. Hence the friars became not only exceedingly popular, but also the medium whereby social grievances found expression. In addition to the members of the powerful preaching orders there were the Wyclif preachers, and mystics like Richard Rolle. These itinerant clergy had understood the needs of the people, hence the simplicity and naïveté of much of the religious writings. The introduction of the story and fable into the pulpit, the illustration of dogma by means of the moral tale, the use of picturesque details into their discourse invested them with vivid dramatic power. The popularity of the friars led to their downfall, they increased in numbers to such an extent that it was impossible for Pope or King to exercise any adequate control over them.

The notorious laxity of the friars in following their profession became a byword, and their corruption receives continual illustration in the works of Langland and Chaucer.

THE RELIGIOUS WRITERS

Introduction

The religious element predominates in Anglo Saxon poetry. Christianity received a warm welcome in England in the early days and inspired

[1] *Celtic Race Poetry*, Renan.

[1] *The Mabinogion: Taliesin*, ed. Alfred Nutt.

the great Northumbrian poets, Cædmon and Cynewulf. This religious bias is not checked by Anglo-Norman influence, for it found a ready expression in a body of Latin literature largely theological, already passed under consideration. A formidable rival, however, arose in the shape of Romance. The craze for story-telling spread through every class, and the clerics, wise in their generation, found it advantageous to make use of the tale-loving spirit, and supply the people with stories that should point a moral and adorn a dogma. So while among the religious writings of the day there are certain devotional documents that scorned this compromise with romance and appealed frankly to the limited few, such as the writings of Richard Rolle, and the *Ancren Riwle*, much was quite as frankly popular in its appeal.

The clergy realised the need more and more clearly of instructing the unlearned people in the duties and doctrines of religion—for the Bible was inaccessible to the masses, and it was imperative that they should be made acquainted with sacred history and legend. Human nature being what it is, they thought it expedient to sugar the pill of didacticism, and among these sugared pills may be reckoned such ingenious compilations as the *Cursor Mundi*.

As a rough classification of the religious writings of the time, the following may prove serviceable:

1. *Popular Theological Writings*: (a) *Homilies*.—These flourished mostly in the North. Twelfth and thirteenth century Homilies in English carry on the spirit of Alfred's earlier work, of which Orm's is the most considerable. (b) *Legends* and *Lives of the Saints*. These took the place of Homilies in the South of England.

2. *Popular Didactic Writings*.—Discursive histories and manuals such as the *Cursor Mundi*, and the *Handlyng Synne*.

3. *Non-popular Devotional Works*. These were written rather with a view to a select circle of readers, and are of a more subtle and spiritual character, *e.g.* Richard Rolle, and the *Ancren Riwle*.

1. Popular Theological Writings

(a) Homilies

"Poema Morale"—A Moral Ode (before 1200)

A sermon in verse that is interesting not only in itself but also for the influence it exercised on the development of English metre.

The form of the poem is the iambic septenarius—a Latin metre adapted by the poet to suit the native verse. By his adaptation he introduces a new principle of accentuation that has ever since left its impress on the development of English metre. The lines of the poem consist of two long lines to a strophe with end rhymes.

"I am older now than I was, in winters and in lore,
I wield more power than I did, were but my wisdom more."

The poet is lamenting his ill-spent youth and wasted opportunities. "We shall reap as we sow, therefore let us sow good seed, no evil shall go unpunished. What shall we do at the judgment? How shall we stand? Our works shall testify against us. In hell hunger and thirst, no sun nor moon shine there, but mirk smoke and darkness. Let us remember the shortness of life and fortify ourselves with fasting, alms, and prayers. Let us go by the bright and narrow way to heaven where there is rest and eternal peace. No man may tell of the joys of heaven. Christ grant we may go thither when we die."[1]

The *Poema Morale* is contained in the Jesus MS. (Oxford). The fact that seven MSS. of this poem have survived, testify to its popularity.

Orm's "Ormulum"

A book of homilies, similar in nature to the *Poema Morale*, was written some time in the early part of the thirteenth century. Orm, an Augustinian monk who lived in Mercia, probably near Lincoln, wrote his *Ormulum* (so called "because Orm made it"). Urged by his brother monk Walter to translate and explain the Gospels for the ecclesiastical year, Orm threw all his energy and industry into the task. He paraphrased the Gospel and the Homily (which is frequently taken from Bede) into blank verse. In order to fill out his verse, he adds much that is not in the original. "A diffuse paraphrase of the Gospel is followed by a still more diffuse commentary."[2] Although only one-eighth of the work has come down to us, this fragment contains ten thousand lines! The language used by Orm seems to indicate that the monastery was within the territory of the Danish invasion and settlements, possibly Orm himself was of Danish descent.

French literature and culture had not as yet penetrated to this district, and in the *Ormulum*, Norman French words are very rare. Orm knows nothing of the newer school of ecclesiastics such as Anselm, Bernard, and Abelard. He is content to follow the traditional school of Ælfric, Bede, and Augustine. Orm seems to have been imbued with a good deal of the spirit of Ælfric in his desire to foster the mother tongue, and teach the masses. Indeed he was an enthusiast on the correct use of the English tongue. He was both a precisian and a purist, and the *Ormulum* is immensely valuable as an example of the East Midland dialect.

The form of the verse is the "iambic septenarius" or iambic verse of fifteen syllables with a metrical point after the eighth. It is lacking in alliteration and rhyme and was probably written in imitation of some mediæval Latin poem, or Orm may possibly have used the form of the *Poema Morale*, written in the reign of Henry II, of which many copies were circulated. Orm keeps very strictly to the metre, the line always measures fifteen syllables, and the upbeat never fails. He aims at clearness, completeness, and simplicity, and in his endeavour to attain these qualities he is not afraid to repeat or to labour a point. It has been unkindly though not unfairly said, that he "has reduced monotony to a fine art."

[1] Morris' *Early English Miscellany*.
[2] Ten Brink.

The "*Genesis*" and the "*Exodus*"

These two poems are of importance in literary history, since they are the first attempt, after a long interval, to bring the Bible home to the people. They are, moreover, the oldest poems in which the style of the French clerics was used successfully.

(b) Legends and Lives of the Saints

Whereas the homily primarily dealt with goodness in the abstract, illustrated with concrete examples, the legendary poems deal primarily with the concrete, and illustrate with abstract moralisings.

These sacred biographies varied in literary value in proportion as they expressed real tribute to an inspiring personality or were written to order with the view of improving the occasion in general, rather than particular fashion.

The legends of the Saints help us to understand in some measure a mental attitude differing widely from that of the present age. "They represent Christian mythology as it has been formed in the course of centuries." The earliest of these legends, the lives of St. Juliana, St. Margaret, and St. Katherine, are written in rhythmical, alliterative prose. They manifest, in many respects, a return to Old English tradition, to which has been added richer colouring and more varied diction. These three Saints and many others had been commemorated in literature before the Conquest. Cynewulf has sung of St. Juliana.

The appearance of the lives of these three women Saints at this particular juncture, is not without significance. Ascetic ideals were being preached and practised; the exaltation of Divine Love in contrast to earthly love, the cult of the Virgin Mary, caused the ideal of virgin purity to be held in high esteem. This theme is discussed in somewhat coarse fashion in an alliterative homily on the text—"*Audi filia et vide et inclina aurem tuam*"—known as "*Hali Maidenhad*" (Holy Maidenhood), in which the writer dwells on the evils of the married state.

There is, however, a new note in the lyrical tone, and a new enthusiasm is found manifesting itself in these early legendaries. "Quite romantic in tone and colour are the very fine early poems of Katerine, Gregory, Margrete, Magdalen, all of which are unfortunately only preserved in later remodelled forms."

The Legend of the Assumption of the Virgin (not entirely unknown in early English, vide Blickling Homilies) belongs to this period. It is written in rhyming pairs and in the southern dialect. Other popular religious legends were the *Childhood of Jesus*, that goes back to very early times. On the flight into Egypt, dragons and lions pay homage to the child Jesus. The trees, beneath which the Holy Family rest, bend their branches to give fruit to Mary. Later on, when they return and are settled at Nazareth, Jesus performs wonderful miracles—making flies from the earth, &c.

A collection of legendary lore gathers round the *Legend of the Holy Rood*, a theme also dealt with by Cynewulf in his *Vision of the Holy Rood*. The Crusaders gave a new significance to the legend that the earlier poet had dealt with from a purely subjective point of view, and the story now begins in Paradise and is continued after the discovery of the Cross by St. Helena.

The Descent of Christ into Hell, *The Visio Pauli*, and *The Purgatory of St. Patrick* (the legend of Owan's) were widely known. The Story of Gregory stands out from the mass of legends by virtue of its poetic qualities. Gregory, immediately after his birth, is put into a boat and consigned to the sea. He lives to become the liberator of his country and, like Œdipus, to marry his mother, being ignorant of his parentage. When the terrible truth is discovered he does penance for seventeen years; he finally becomes the Pope and pronounces forgiveness on his mother for her sin.

This story was translated from the French into North Midland verse, about the middle of the thirteenth century.

The well-known Vernon MS. at Oxford contains eight or nine legends of the Virgin, that came into the West Midland dialect from French sources. It had long been the custom in France to recite rhymed lives of the Saints either during Mass or at the evening service. In England, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries the alliterative homilies prevailed, but the custom grew of reading on the special holiday the legend and office of the particular Saint whose festival was being kept.

In the North there already existed a collection of Sunday Gospels—*Festa Christi* (i.e. homilies), consisting of exposition and narration: to these were added the legends. But in the South, the legendary matter was formed into a complete *Liber Festivalis*, that eventually absorbed the homilies. During the last quarter of the fourteenth century, legendary poetry entered the service of the Church and was formed by the monks into great collections for the services; there was a considerable falling off in the quality and style.

"Never again has legendary poetry reached the same height of pathos, the same purity and beauty of form, as in these older legends. The period immediately following shows a decided falling off in poetic power and in talent for form. The tone loses in depth and warmth, the style in fulness and swing."[1]

The legend cycle of the South was compiled by the monks of Gloucester during the last quarter of the thirteenth century. They gathered their materials from various sources. A great number of them were translated from the Latin, French poems were also occasionally used.

About the same time, a similar legend cycle in Latin prose was written by an Italian, Jacobus a Voragine, Bishop of Genoa, the famous *Legenda Aurea* (Golden Legend). There is no evidence for supposing any of the English legends to have been derived from this work since Jacobus frequently copied from older texts and may therefore have used the same sources as the English writers. The

[1] Horstmann, *Southern English Legendary* (E.E.T.S.).

scope of these legend cycles is extremely wide. They have been gathered from the East, from Ireland, from English ecclesiastical legend. The collection of these stories took considerable time and labour, they grew slowly round a nucleus, and most likely took the joint labours of an abbey—probably the Abbey of Gloucester—although attempts to make collections were made in other places. Several very old poems were absorbed into the collection and adapted to the metre. In the South, the metre used consisted of Alexandrine lines of six, seven, and sometimes eight accents: *e.g.* The Assumption, old texts of Magdalen and Margaret and the collections underwent more than one phase before their completion. The style, moreover, exhibits a corresponding diversity. In some cases coarse and rude and adapted to the popular taste of the times, in others, vigorous and dramatic, occasionally displaying delicate poetic feeling. There is abundant wit and sarcasm which spares neither clergy, class, nor sex.

The *Lives of the Saints* cannot be justly appreciated if judged according to modern standards.

In course of time the power of famous legends atrophied—the naïve faith of the Middle Ages disappeared before increased knowledge. Indeed in the legends themselves there are not wanting signs of an awakening criticism.

St. Margaret.—In the life of Margaret, the devil comes to the Saint in the form of a dragon, enters her cell, and swallows her! St. Margaret makes the sign of the cross and immediately the body of the monster bursts and she steps forth unhurt. Whereupon the poet comments, "But I do not tell this for true, for I do not find it truly authenticated. If it is true or not who can know? It would be against nature that the devil should be brought to death, hence I cannot believe it."

St. Dunstan.—As an illustration of the humorous element in the *Lives* may be cited the story of St. Dunstan. The devil comes to the holy abbot in the form of a beautiful woman, while he is at work in his smithy. St. Dunstan talks in a friendly manner to his visitor and in the meantime heats his tongs in the glowing flames of the fire. When red hot, he suddenly seizes the devil's nose between them, until the fiend dances and howls with pain. When released he rushes off, exclaiming, "Out, what has the bald-head done, what has the bald-head done?"

St. Michael.—The legend of St. Michael gives a curious account of the origin and nature of bad spirits. This legend is connected with the shrines on Mont St. Michel, and was of Norman origin.

There was war in heaven, and the evil one is cast out of heaven into hell by the Archangel Michael. A discussion on the various orders of angels follows, and we are told how the bad spirits became the elves that live in the woods, and are seen at night on the hills dancing and playing. We are reminded of Chaucer's comment:

> "But now kan no man se none elves mo,
> For now by the grete charitee and prayers
> Of Limitours and other holy freres
> That serchen every lond and stream
> * * * * * *
> This maketh that there be no fairyes
> For there as wont to walken was an elf,
> Ther walketh now the lymytour himself."[1]

Before the birth of Christ the evil one was able to do what he liked, but Christ has bound him and his fury has grown like that of a dog tied up who growls and tries to bite everyone who comes near, so does the devil tempt man. His fingers are named just as ours are: the least, "little man"—by that he signifies the trivial nature of the sin he would have us do. "Leech"—the ring finger, so called because physicians tested medicine with it—this reminds man of God's mercy and forgiveness. Then he tries to draw us with "Longeuman"—a sign of the long life that lies before us in which to repent. Next the "Techere" points to the sins of others, especially the saints. Finally, he uses the thumb. "'Strongne'—then are strong enough to repent much greater sins than these." The poet next discusses the situation of hell, earth, and heaven. The earth is, of course, "the centre of the Universe." It is much smaller than the sun and fixed stars—165 times smaller than the sun and nine times larger than the moon. The earth is suspended in the midst of the heavens which move in eight spheres round it. Though a man travelled forty miles a day for eight thousand years he would not reach the highest heaven. Yet the soul of man if it be pure goes to heaven as quickly as a man's thought—still more quickly does it go to hell, if he be an evil-doer.

This legend is indeed a wonderful compendium of knowledge on most diverse topics. A kind of encyclopædia of the Middle Ages. The influence of the planets on the weather, and on man, the moon and its phases, the origin of thunder, lightning, hail, snow, dew, frost, and rime. The various kinds of men—choleric, melancholic, phlegmatic, and sanguine—and his three souls; these are some of the subjects dealt with by the author of what might be termed a text-book of popular science.

St. Brandan.—The legend of St. Brandan, with its account of the wonders of the ocean, stimulated the imagination of the people, and kept alive that mysterious presentiment of an unknown world, that in later times was fulfilled by the discovery of America.

St. Kenelm.—Historical and geographical elements are not lacking in these legends. The life of St. Kenelm (Chaucer refers to this story in his *Nun's Preeste's Tale*) affords opportunity for the introduction of a description of England at the time of the five kingdoms, and of the relation of the countries and bishoprics.

Kenulf died in A.D. 819, and his son Kenelm, although only seven years old, succeeded to the throne. By order of his sister Quendrida, Kenelm is taken to a wood and murdered. Quendrida then seizes the land and becomes queen of the March. One day as the pope was singing Mass, a dove, whiter than any snow, laid a writing on the altar with letters of gold in English, saying that Kenelm lay under a thorn at Coubach, bereft of his head. This writ was kept as a relic, and the pope sent to make inquiries of Woldred, Archbishop of Canterbury.

[1] Prologue *Wife of Bath*. Macmillan (Globe Ed.).

Search was made and the Saint's body was taken up; a spring of water flowed out of the place, which was henceforth named St. Kenelm's Well.

The men of Worcestershire and Gloucestershire strove for Kenelm's body, and the latter obtained it and carried it away. A well sprang up to give them drink, by this was built St. Kenelm's chapel. Quendrida came to a miserable end.

St. Thomas.—The legend of St. Thomas, by virtue of the brief period that elapsed between the death of Becket and the writing of the life, the mass of material that existed for the purpose, and his political importance, stands apart from the other legends. With the story of Gilbert Becket's pilgrimage to Palestine, and the episode of the admiral's daughter, the legend opens in orthodox romantic fashion, but the legend takes on a different spirit when the story of the relations of Becket and the king are being told; the examination of the laws; the opposition of the king and bishops; the approval of the people; the disputes between Henry and King Louis of France, who befriended Becket; the appeal to the Pope. The return of Becket to England. The last sermon at Canterbury in which all who denied the Church's rights were declared "excommunicate." The last scene in the drama; the entry of the four knights with Randolph de Broke; the murder in the Cathedral; the seizure of the papers and charters to be taken to the king. The grief of the people and the burial of the great bishop privately by the canons of the Cathedral. The penance of the king and the knights. The enshrinement of the body of Thomas in the reign of Henry III, all this is told in the detailed manner of the biographer who is living near enough to the events he is describing to give them actuality.

Mediæval touches are not wanting. The sanctity of Becket is insisted on. When struck on the head the blood formed a diadem. The life closes with the reminder that Tuesday is Becket's Day (29th December) and an injunction for it to be duly observed.

The Legend Cycle is written in Alexandrine couplets, and there is therefore a certain similarity in style due to the employment of the same metrical form in all the legends, although, as we have already noted, there is considerable diversity in the contents. In poetic quality they fall below the older alliterative lives of the saints. The legends move us more by their simple, loyal adherence to the truths of their religion, rather than by any great poetic gifts.

The formation of the Legend Cycles may well be compared with the School of English Chroniclers. Both are the result of the co-operation of a number of writers animated by the same spirit and working with the same end in view.

2. Popular Didactic Writings

Cursor Mundi (1320–30)

A comprehensive Scriptural record written for the laity—for those unlearned in the French tongue.

This book, though intended for instruction was deliberately made popular in character, that is to say, the idea of amusing its readers was never lost sight of. Then on the principle that it is a shame to let the devil have all the best tunes, the writer hints that as much pleasure and excitement may be derived from his work as from those dealing with "love paramours." So blithely he starts forth with the creation of the world, and with many fantastic flourishes continues up to the day of doom, with a few pleasant speculations as to the hereafter.

This poem, consisting of some 30,000 lines, is written chiefly in rhyming octo-syllabic couplets. The author, whose name is unknown, was most probably a Northumbrian cleric, since no layman of the period would have possessed the necessary scholarship. Indeed he refers to himself in one place as "an unworthy pastor."

> "Among those pastors I am one,
> Wretch so unworthy know I none."

Two impulses then animate the writer: a desire to write in English a book for Englishmen; and a desire to popularise religious instruction.

"Seldom," he says, "is the English tongue praised in France; he will give to each nation their own language and there is no outrage in doing so." He wished also to instruct the ignorant masses by making the Biblical stories and legends as entertaining and as accessible as the romances. To the popularity of the latter he testifies in the opening lines of the prologue. Men are eager to listen to "rimes and gestes" and to read stories of King Arthur and his knights; of the strifes of Greece and Troy; of Tristram and Isoude; of Charlemagne and his paladins. The wise man is drawn to wisdom, the fool to folly in these tales. He will teach idle triflers to be wise and amend their ways. Nowadays a man is not considered in the fashion unless he love "paramours." This earthly love is but a phantom which quickly passes away. The poet will undertake to write a work in honour of her whose love is sweeter than "honey from the hive" viz., Our Lady:

> "Lady she is of ladies all
> Mild and meek without (any) gall."

She is ever true, loyal, and constant, and he advises skilful rhymers to construct verses in her honour. As for himself, he will teach men of her kindred and relate some "gests" done in the Old Law. Briefly, his intention is a fairly comprehensive one, for he aims at giving a history of the world from the Creation to the Day of Judgment:

> "Cursor o world man sight it call
> For almost it over-rennes all."

The poet arranges his work in seven main divisions, and discourses in leisurely fashion of the fall of the Angels, the creation of man, and the loss of Paradise. He tells of the death of Adam and relates the history of the chief Old Testament characters. The prophecies concerning the birth of Jesus Christ lead him on to the New Testament, the parentage of the Virgin Mary, and the story of her life. Christ's birth, life, death, resurrection, and descent into hell is followed by an account of the ascension into heaven, the feast of Whitsuntide, the history of the Apostles, the description of the Virgin, and the discovery of the Cross by St.

Helena. Finally, the poet describes the coming of Antichrist, the terrible signs preceding the Day of Doom, the Day of Judgment, and the state of the world afterwards. He concludes by describing the agony of the Virgin Mary at the foot of the Cross and glorifies the miraculous conception.

The *Cursor Mundi* is the first attempt made in England to blend in one whole Biblical stories and mediæval legends. Incidents quite as marvellous as any to be found in the romances are related with an air of sober reality and with much circumstantial detail.

'There is the story of the three pipes—one of cedar, cypress, and pine—brought by Seth from Paradise, which are placed under Adam's tongue and from which grow three miraculous rods (wands). These wands stood an ell high and were always green. They lasted to the days of Noah, Abraham, and Moses.

David in a dream discovers the wands to be hidden in the grave of Moses. He journeys to this country and fetches back the wands. Their miraculous power is shown in many ways. They change black Saracens into shining white men; cure a sick hermit so that he became "as well as a trout"; and when placed in a cistern strike roots so deep that none can pull them out. Later the tree is enclosed within the temple and from its wood the Cross is made. From the thirty silver bands which enclose it come the thirty pieces of silver which are given to Judas. A lady once came to worship in the Temple and inadvertently sat upon the tree, when it immediately burst into flames. She prophesied that Jesus would hang upon it. The Jews were angry with her and beheaded her. An angel fetched her soul and called her a "Christian."

Much curious information is given by the author in the course of the poem. The distance between heaven and earth is stated graphically. A man may fall forty miles a day for seven thousand, seven hundred years, ere he reach it. Moses discovered the worshippers of the golden calf by making the people drink of the water in which the powdered remains had been thrown:

> "All those men that had the guilt
> They had their heards all over pilt."[1]

Solomon is put to learn "clergy lore and knighthood," and soon becomes proficient in the "seven arts."

Herod, on account of his wickedness, is afflicted with seven different diseases. He sends for his doctors and threatens to hang them if they do not cure him. The doctors order him a bath of pitch and tar in which he is drowned.

In writing of Isaac, there is a curiously vivid description of old age.

"When a man is old his blood grows dry and cold—his head shakes and his hand quakes, his bones creak, his hair falls off and his light is dim. His foot easily stumbles, he praises all things that are gone and is quickly angered. Nothing can make him glad, yet do the young yearn for age."

The poem ends (in the Göttingen MS.) with an exhortation to the readers "to pray for me John of Lindebergh who got this book made (i.e. transcribed). If it be lost, I will pay him who restores it, but will curse him who withholds it."[1]

The work, although not that of a great poet, was extremely popular. Many copies of it were made, of which four are still in existence. It must have exercised considerable influence on the *Collective Mysteries* that were being formed about this time, and in an indirect way led to the greater diffusion of Biblical knowledge, which assisted the development of the miracle plays among the people.

Robert of Brunne's "Handlyng Synne" (1303)

The *Handlyng Synne* by Robert Brunne is an adaptation of William Wadington's *Manuel des Pechiez*. The poet treats of the twelve articles of Faith, the Seven Deadly Sins, and the Seven Sacraments, finally, the Twelve Requisites of Shrift, and the Twelve Graces which flow from a Good Confession.

In the opening lines Robert laments the popularity of "tales and rhymings" amongst the unlearned men. For these he writes in the English tongue, that their time may be more profitably employed. Robert's work affords a striking contrast to that of Richard Rolle in its appeal to the ordinary folk. Robert is a pious ecclesiastic who does not disdain the innocent amusements of his day, and who possesses a ready sympathy with the poor. He had a fund of genial humour, and the theological discussions are enlivened and illustrated by stories gathered from various sources, the Lives of the Saints, Gregory, *Vitæ Patrum*, Bede, and also some orally communicated. Robert is no mystic living in the clouds of contemplation, but an acute observer of the world around him, and his work bears the impress of his observations. The *Handlyng Synne* has therefore a value for the sidelights thrown on the social life and customs of the times, a quality entirely absent from the work of Rolle. We can only give a few indications of these, *e.g.* swearing by the Virgin is worse than swearing by Christ, a sign of the extent to which the cult of the Virgin had advanced at this time. He speaks of the Saturday half-holy day, as a special English institution to be observed in preparation for Sunday, and tells the story of a man who was struck dead for working on Saturday afternoon. He exhorts his readers not to haunt taverns on holy days, or to gamble before noon on such days. Tournaments, jousts, and squire's games are bad, they involve the seven deadly sins. Dances, carols, summer games, and minstrels are denounced. There is the story of the minstrel who was killed for disturbing a bishop; as a set-off to this story there is given the tale of Robert Grosseteste of Lincoln and why he loved the harp. No miracle plays should be acted except the plays of Christ's birth and resurrection. The denunciations against the carols and games are chiefly because they took place in the churchyards—hence those who took part in them were guilty of sacrilege.

'Two stories are given as a fearful warning, the

[1] *Cursor Mundi* (E. E. T. S.).

[1] *Cursor Mundi* (E. E. T. S.).

Story of the Sacrilegious Carollers, and the *Story of the Curst Dancers*—the latter being compelled to dance for twelve months (the Latin writer saith "for evermore"), and at the end of that time went hopping about singly ever afterwards.

Another tale, calculated to impress women who chattered in church, tells of a deacon who laughed in a most solemn part of the service, and on being remonstrated with by the priest, explained that his mirth was due to having observed, during the service, a fiend standing behind two women who were chattering in church, writing down on parchment their conversation. The tale of the Suffolk man released from purgatory by two masses that his wife had sung for him, was not without point.

Lastly, the advantage of being well shriven is driven home by the story of how the devil came to be shriven, but it availed him nought since he came without repentance.

Little is known concerning Mannyng's life. He was born at Brunne (now Bourn) near Market Deeping in Lincolnshire. From 1288 to 1303 he belonged to the priory of Brimwake, in the Hundred of Kestoven, six miles from Sempringham; he was afterwards, in 1327, connected with the priory of Sixhill. He once visited Cambridge, and died somewhere between 1340–5. Besides the *Handlyng Synne*, he wrote a history of England, the main source of this being the rhyming Chronicle of Piers Langtoft (Peter Langtoft, Canon of Bridlington). Robert had read very considerably; he was familiar with French and English romances, the lives of the Saints, Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, besides Latin English and Anglo-Norman historians. His writings were the outcome of a desire to please and entertain people profitably rather than from any motives of personal ambition.

Dialogues and Debates

The Owl and the Nightingale

This poem, a debate between the nightingale and the owl, employs a device frequently used in literature. The troubadours had debates between one poet and another. The northern French had their *desbats*, *estrifs*, or disputations. They were sometimes dramatic in form, sometimes epic, and they are not without importance in the evolution of the drama.

From classical times, the dialogue or debate had proved a favourite means of instructing folk in some point of myth, ethics, philosophy, theology, and science. On one hand we have the dialogues of the Scandinavian *Edda*, such as the dispute between Odin and Thor; on the other, various points of doctrine discussed in this medium by the Latin Christians. Sometimes a conclusion is reached, as in those of a definitely dogmatic character; at other times, as in the poem under consideration, the issue is left open. Among the religious dialogues, the most popular is the remarkable *Debate of the Body and the Soul*, in which the two sides of human nature are well opposed.

The Owl and the Nightingale has no religious import, but is an interesting and arresting study in ethics. It is considered by most authorities to have been written not later than the reign of Henry III (1216–72), i.e. almost one hundred and fifty years before Chaucer, and from that point of view alone, is a remarkable piece of work, if we remember that English had scarcely yet regained its position as the medium of verse in polite society. The poem has been attributed to Nicholas de Guildford, the "Maistre Nichole" who is accepted by the two disputants to settle the quarrel. The name of John of Guildford, who wrote a few poems at this date, has also been mentioned.

This anonymous poem was evidently written by one well trained in Latin verse, skilled in argument, a scholar, possibly an ecclesiastic, who after much experience of the world, settled in Dorsetshire or a neighbouring county—the Maister Nicholas of the poem lived at Portesham in Dorset.

The poet has been an unseen witness to the dispute between the owl and the nightingale:

> "'Twas in a certain vale
> In a very secret recess
> I heard a great talk
> An owl and a nightingale
> The dispute was stiff and stark and strong."

Each said of the other the worst that they knew. The nightingale began the quarrel. Sitting upon a flowering twig she is disturbed in her singing by the sight of the owl seated on an old ivy-grown tree trunk. She saw the owl and despised her and abused her in unmeasured terms. The owl waited until evening and then replied. They attack each other in bitter speeches. Each criticises the manner of life and the singing capacities of the other. The owl scornfully inquires the value of the nightingale's song. The nightingale replies, "Why askest thou of my gifts? Better is my one than all of thine." Man is born for the bliss of heaven. For this reason men sing in church and clerks make songs, so that men may remember heavenly bliss and strive to attain it. "Clerks, canons, monks, rise at midnight and sing of the light of heaven, and priests sing in the country when the light of day springs and I help them, what I may. I admonish men for their good, that they may be blithe in their mood, and bid them that they may seek the song that is eternal."[1]

The owl then replies, "Thou sayest that thou singest to mankind and teachest them to tend to the song that lasts for ever. It is the greatest of all wonders that thou darest lie so openly." Man will not come into God's kingdom with singing only; he must remember his sins and repent of them with tears. "I sing him no follies. If right goes forth and wrong goes back better be my weeping than all thy singing."

It will readily be seen the dispute resolves itself into the eternal conflict between the æsthetic and moral ideals. The owl represents the side of duty and moral earnestness, of those whose one question is ever "Of what use?" The nightingale supports the Hedonistic view, claiming that it also advances religious and ethical aims. The nightingale finally gathers round her a number of song birds who declare her the victor.

[1] Ten Brink.

Her triumph irritates the owl, and the two seem as if about to proceed to blows. The wren reminds them of the agreement to allow Master Nicholas to decide the dispute. All agree in praising his wisdom, justice and prudence, and his right to settle the quarrel.

The poem is epic in form, and is written in short couplets. The author is one of the best lyrical poets of the period. "His smooth, melodious versification, his copious and redundant language, his frequent musical repetition of phrase and theme, betokens a poet who well knew how to make a strophic song."[1]

The scenes in the poem admirably depict the country life of the time; the poem contains much homely proverbial wisdom, and in the 1792 lines, the French element is exceedingly small. It is a notable return to native verse.

The psychological significance of the poem consists in it being essentially a contest between the religious type of poetry and the poetry of love, that abounded in the South, but found a less congenial soil in the severer North.

The more purely literary interest is found in the simpler and more natural diction, as compared with many Saxon poems; while there is an historical interest in the picture it gives of rural life, especially on its more sequestered side.

The author of *Cursor* and many another romance of the age paints the wilder sides of nature with a loving fidelity; the author of this poem is drawn, like Cowper, to the gentler aspects.

3. Non-Popular Devotional Works

Richard of Hampole.

Such works as the *Cursor Mundi*, the *Cycle of Homilies*, and other similar writings, together with the general condition of the times, pave the way for the most forceful mystical writer of mediæval England. Richard Rolle was born at Thornton, near the old town of Pickering in Yorkshire, about 1300. He was sent to Oxford under the patronage of Thomas Neville, Archdeacon of Durham. At the University, the Friars, with their ideals of poverty, still exercised a penetrating influence, that was doubtless felt by Rolle. Contests between the Nominalists and Realists formed the chief interest of the day. Scriptural studies were of the greatest importance. Rolle manifested an eager desire, not merely for religious knowledge, but also towards personal holiness. Fearing the dangers and temptations to sin, he suddenly left Oxford at the age of nineteen and returned to his father's house. He obtained from his sister two of her dresses, a white and a grey, and in the solitude of a neighbouring wood he proceeded to fashion from these a hermit's dress, using his father's rain cloak for a hood. Thus attired he attended a church near by and occupied the seat of Lady de Dalton, who would not allow him to be disturbed. Her sons, who had known him at Oxford, tell her who he is. On a second occasion he attends the church and is allowed to assist in the service and preach the sermon. Transported by the fire of the Spirit, he preaches a wonderful sermon, that greatly moves his audience. He is invited by Sir John Dalton to a banquet. Sir John is impressed with the silence and humility of Richard, and after a private interview, the knight, convinced of his sanity, gives him hermit's clothing and provides for his maintenance as a hermit on the estate.

Hermits, both men and women (anchoresses), were a common feature of mediæval life. They were under episcopal control and licence. Indulgences were granted to those who supported them. The hermits themselves frequently performed useful services in repairing roads, or keeping bridges. Rolle remained on Sir John's estate for at least four years, spending his time in meditation and prayer and in writing a number of his books.

Rolle next went to Anderby, near Northallerton (Richmond). Here lived Margaret Kirkby, an anchoress, who exercised considerable influence on Rolle's literary activity. He wrote for her a book entitled *The Boke maad of Rychards Hampole to an ankeresse*, a book similar in purpose to the *Ancren Riwle*. He also composed an English commentary on the Psalms at her request.

From Anderby, Richard moved to Doncaster, where he was kindly received by the Cistercian Nuns and where finally he died on September 29, 1349 (? or 1348) in the year of the Black Death. The place of his death attracted many pilgrims, drawn thither by his fame and the accounts of miracles which took place at his grave. So great was his popularity, that the Cistercian Nuns sought his canonisation, and an office was composed for his festival,—"*Officium et Legenda de Vita Ricardi Rolle*"—still in existence in the library of Lincoln Cathedral, and which has been printed by the Early English Text Society.[1] It is from this Office that many of the details concerning Rolle's life are obtained. The Nuns took much pains to preserve his works from mutilation, and copies of them were kept in iron chains.

The Lollards were suspected of having designs on Richard's works, and there was much in Richard's life and writings that leant towards the simpler teaching of the Lollards and inclined to heterodoxy rather than orthodoxy. Richard was neither a monk, nor a priest, yet he was both a preacher and spiritual adviser. He retired from the world, to obtain a knowledge of God by contemplation, and he set forth the various stages by means of which he arrived at the heavenly sweetness. Yet this prophet of the mystic, contemplative life, mingled and jested with the world although his true life was that "hid with Christ in God." Richard has a profound reverence for the teaching of authority. He does not speculate about dogmas, nor does he feel any need to reconcile dogmas and philosophy.

His chief work, upon which his position in English literature depends, is *The Pricke of Conscience* (*Stimulus Conscientiæ*). The book is full of quotations from the Fathers and ecclesiastical writers and shows the wide reading of Hampole, in spite of the early limitation of his studies. The

[1] Ten Brink, *Early English Literature* (Bell).

[1] See also *Prose Treatises of Hampole.*

situated next the church, or near the chapel connected with a religious house, with a window looking into the church from whence it was possible to behold the Blessed Sacrament in its place on the Altar, or the elevation of the Host as the priest each morning celebrated Mass. Hence the injunctions to the sisters not to talk out of the church window.

The parlour window, in which they might converse, was protected by a grille, inside being a black curtain and a shutter of wood.

"Wherefore, my dear sisters, love your windows as little as possible; and see that they be small—the parlour's smallest and narrowest. . . . See that your parlour windows be always fast on every side, and likewise well shut; and mind your eyes there, lest your heart escape and go out like David's, and your soul fall sick as soon as it is out."

Interesting instructions are also given concerning the "Out-sisters" whose duty it was to perform all the commerce with the outer world rendered necessary in the provision of food and supplies.

One of these sisters was to remain at home, the other to go out when necessary; "and let her cautions shrewdly—let her be very plain, or of sufficient age: and, by the way, as she goeth let her go singing her prayers; and hold no conversation with man or with woman; nor sit, nor stand, except the least possible, until she come home. Let her go nowhere else but to the place whither she is sent. Without leave, let her neither eat nor drink abroad. Let the other be always within, and never go out of the gate without leave. Let both be obedient to their dame in all things, sin only excepted. Let them possess nothing unknown to their mistress, nor accept nor give anything without her permission. They must not let any man in; nor must the younger speak with any man without leave; nor go out of town without a trusty companion, nor sleep out. . . . Let neither of the women either carry to her mistress or bring from her any idle tales, or new tidings, nor sing to one another, nor speak any worldly speeches, nor laugh, nor play, so that any man who saw it might turn it to evil."

The writer of the *Ancren Riwle* shows the fondness for parable and allegory characteristic of the age. The influence of the Scriptures and of the new school of preachers is apparent (*e.g.* chapter on penance follows teaching of St. Bernard); "His style is simple and dignified, and unites grace and graphic picturesqueness with the free movement of that period."[1]

There is a pleasant mingling of piety, common sense, and knowledge of human nature in the work.

There is a quiet touch of humour, moreover, that runs through these monitions to the Sisters: "God knows it would be more agreeable to me to set out on a journey to Rome than to begin to do it again."[2]

The Ayenbite of Inwyt.—About the same time that Richard Rolle the Hermit was writing the *Pricke of Conscience* for the use of his countrymen in the north of England, Dan Michel of Northgate, Kent, furnished the southern folk with a Manual bearing the quaint but thoroughly English title of the *Ayenbite of Inwyt* (the Remorse of Conscience). The *Ayenbite* is a very literal translation of a French treatise entitled *Le Somme des Vices et de Vertus*, composed in 1279 for the use of Philip II of France, by Frère Lorens of the Order of Friar Preachers. Two copies of Dan Michel's work are preserved in the British Museum. The manuscript states that the "*Ayenbite of Inwyt* was completed in the year of Our Lord's birth 1340, in the eve of the Holy Apostles Simon and Judas, by Dan Michel of Northgate, a brother of Saint Austin, Canterbury."

Considerable uncertainty attaches to most early English texts with regard to their date, authorship and dialect, but about this there is no doubt, and it is of great importance as a philological document.

WILLIAM LANGLAND

WILLIAM LANGLAND

Personality and Temperament

William Langland, or Langley (tradition is not unanimous on this point), was born about 1332 at Cleobury Mortimer in Shropshire. He was educated probably at Malvern, and certainly was familiar with the Malvern Hills. While yet a young man he came to London, living in Cornhill, poor and unhappy, with his wife Catherine and daughter Nicolette. It is said that he was in minor orders, and earned a precarious living by singing "the *placebo*, *dirige*, and seven psalms for the good of men's souls." Be that as it may, he was assuredly poor, and although his mental alertness had attracted towards him a few patrons at the outset of his career, these died, and he was left to shift for himself. And even putting aside his married state, it is easy to see why he never rose in the Church. He had the stuff of the reformer in him; and the reformer rarely gets promotion.

In person tall and lank—men dubbed him "Long Will"; in disposition proud and moody; Langland strode through the London streets, a sombre, melancholy figure, with his tonsured head and priestly robe. Sensitive and great-hearted, he was, at the same time, slow of speech, with few of those charms of manner which made his great contemporary, Chaucer, so popular. Like our own Thomas Hardy, he was more keen to note the ironies of life, the suffering and misery that lay about him, than to note those brighter aspects of mediæval life which Chaucer loved to paint.

But one solace he had, his book. One feels that into it was poured his life-blood; all his hopes and despair, sorrows and aspirations, anger

[1] Abbé Gasquet in Introduction to *Ancren Riwle*.
[2] *The Ancren Riwle*. King's Classics (Chatto and Windus).

and compassion went into *The Book of Piers the Plowman*. In addition to this unfinished work he wrote a poem called *Richard the Redeless*, i.e. devoid of counsel, which related to the expected deposition of Richard II in 1399. The shadow of obscurity hangs over his later years, but he died probably about the same time as Chaucer, in 1400.

THE BOOK OF PIERS THE PLOWMAN

This is the most correct name for the whole poem. *The Vision concerning Piers the Plowman* is the title of a portion only, and is sometimes referred to as *The Vision of Piers the Plowman*, suggesting that Piers is the author of the poem rather than the subject.

The poem is extant in various forms, but the chief forms have been called by Professor Skeat the A-text, the B-text, and the C-text. Of these the first version was written probably about 1362, and contains the Vision about Piers the Plowman, with a prologue and eight cantos; and the Vision of Do-wel, Do-bet, and Do-best in a prologue and three cantos. The second version (B-text), written about 1377 and probably in London, is of much greater length, and includes the fable of the rats and the cat. The third version (C-text) is the longest of all and the latest in date.

Characteristics of the Poem

The poem describes a series of remarkable visions, that pass before the dreamer, and in their general drift we are reminded of the great allegory of Bunyan. To the sound of murmuring waters the poet falls asleep. Maybe he was at Malvern when he wrote, maybe the fresh, rustic summer morn which he pictured was seen by the inward eye alone, in his impoverished home near St. Paul's; we do not know. Anyway, like another famous writer of allegory, he fell asleep, and in a "field full of folkes" he saw the men and women of his dream—knights, monks, preachers, peasants, cooks that cry out, "Hot pies, hot," and "mynstrelles" that sell "glee." And the object of their journey, like that of the more famous journey from the City of Destruction, was the search for Truth and Good.

The poem may be considered from a threefold aspect:

1. As a picture of contemporary life and manners in town and country.
2. As a satire upon ecclesiastical abuses, and the follies and vices of the age.
3. As an allegory of Life.

1. Considered under the first aspect, it throws interesting sidelights upon mediæval life. We gather, for instance, how the tradesmen's apprentices stood at the shop doors shouting out to possible customers and trying to tempt them in, much as the showman does in the country fair. At the tavern door could be heard, "White wine of Alsace!" "Red Gascony wine!" while the cook would insinuate, "Good dinners, come dine!" Cornhill, Tyburn, East Cheape, Smithfield, and other familiar London haunts are referred to by the poet; he speaks of the Law Courts at Westminster, alludes to the recent suppression of the Templars, and deals with considerable detail upon the habits of the clergy and merchant classes. We hear about the "pryvee parlour" and the "chamber with a chymenie" which was coming into fashion. Barlier, the hall was the hiding-place for the head of the house and the members of the family. "Chambres" were sleeping-places, and the "parlour" originally meant a place for private chat. It was often used for business purposes, but none thought of making it a living-room. In Langland's time, however, the hall was used less and less, and the parlour was no longer reserved for special parlances. All this meant less feasting and good-fellowship in the big hall; and so this innovation was looked upon as selfishness on the part of the rich man.

> "Now hath ech riche a rule
> To eten by hymselve
> In the pryvee parlour."

He reproaches

> "Brewers and bakers, and butchers and cooks;
> Such men, on this mould, can most harm work
> To the poore people, that piece-meal buy;
> For they poison the people, both privily and oft."

Also he condemns the rich people for "regrating"—that was the custom of buying up provisions and retailing them to the poor at great profit.

His mention of "breed" (bread) from "Stratforde" reminds us of the fame which Stratford-at-Bow enjoyed in mediæval times for supplying bread to the city. And the bakers were important men.

2. Regarding it as a satire, we find Langland bitterly upbraiding those who shirk honest work, the drunkard and the oppressor, the tradesman who cheats, and the preacher who counsels one thing but follows another. Many of the sins and frailties he decries are common to no one age. Moralists of all ages have dealt with them, from Langland and the Elizabethan Puritan, Stubbes, William Harrison, the Kingsley of Shakespeare's day, down to Carlyle and the still more modern castigators of society. Some of the abuses he speaks of, however, are necessarily connected with the breaking up of feudalism and the corruption of the Church. Two things are clear from the tenor of his strictures: he desires better social conditions for the people, and less corruption in the Church. Yet, though the spokesman for the labouring classes favoured the old class divisions and reviled the insurgents of 1381, in these matters he is reactionary. He wants reform, but within the Church. He is less drastic in his proposals for clerical reform than Wyclif. Though satirising pardoners and friar confessors, he expresses belief in penance and absolution, and sighs for the obedience of an age that has passed.

Wyclif disbelieved in the doctrine of penance and absolution—in this matter being in accord with the Reformers of the generation that succeeded. In fact, he scarcely realised that in the desperate picture which he drew of corruption in Church and

State, and in the oppression by the rich, he had stated a case for reform far more drastic and thorough than those measures which he advocated.

On some points, however, Langland was thoroughgoing, viz. in his dislike of Jewish bankers, and his conviction that the great wealth of the Church was harmful to her. The knaves who traffic in "pardons"; the friars who make a pretence of religion; knights to whom fighting was merely an excuse to express their lust for blood; the countless men and women, both in town and country, whose lives were dominated by no great principle or ideal—all these he hated. The brilliant insincerity which, despite its superficial charm, makes the haunting fourteenth century in England compare so unfavourably with the two centuries preceding; the rottenness which was breaking up all the real strength and greatness of the Middle Ages, Langland saw with marvellous clearness. Where can truth be found? This is his cry. And so the Messengers—Reason, Repentance, and Hope—help in the search for Truth, guided by Piers himself. Piers insists upon manual labour as the first essential, and extols this with the enthusiasm of a Thoreau.

The World is at hand to wheedle and bribe the honest worker; the World in the person of Lady Meed, attractive but heartless, whose name itself savours of bribery. Both Lady Meed and her doings, and the revelations of the Knight's Conscience, there is no need to dwell in this brief sketch. We are more concerned with the picture of the crowd hurrying through the streets of London, and the vivid picture of the revellers in the City tavern. Here we have quarrels or discussions, and heavy drinking, and the noisy ritual of mirth for which taverns in every age are renowned; the hermit, the cobbler, the clerk of the church, the hangman, and the harlot met together.

We may note how "Clyo" is made welcome by the merchants, and serves in their shops; how that the pardoners take pity on "Lyer," and send him to church to sell pardons.

The scene shifts constantly and unexpectedly from town to country, from London to Malvern; vigorous and pungent homilies break in upon the action of the story, and the upshot of all is that the poet bids us "learne to love" as the one cure for the ills of life.

It will be seen, therefore, that though a reformer, he is a Conservative reformer, desiring neither with Wyclif a radical reorganisation of the Church, nor with John Ball a transformation of society upon the lines of equality. He did not realise that feudalism was a spent force, and that beneath all the crude violence of the Insurrection of 1381 lay a perfectly just demand. Langland's counsel was to do your duty in whatever state of life it pleased God to call you. Class divisions were to remain, but the rich were to give protection; the poor, service. Then all would be well. But though his moderation may not appeal to some minds, none would dispute the earnestness and passionate sincerity of the man. He wrote, as Bunyan did, under compulsion to deliver his soul and to redeem his countrymen.

3. In its form the poem is an allegory. The good and bad qualities of human nature strive for the mastery, and among them moves Piers himself; externally a labourer, working with his hands; essentially a symbol for the Christ. He was meant to typify righteous living—a life of action in the world. Such places as the Field, the Tower, the Dungeon are clearly as allegorical as the Slough of Despond, Doubting Castle, or the Valley of the Shadow. The personages are, for the most part, abstractions, with such names as Warren Wisdom, Witty, the fascinating Lady Meed (*i.e.* Bribery), the more gracious figure of Holy Church. Some of the names excel Bunyan's in length. There is Suffer-till-I-see-my-time, and another rejoicing in the amazing appellation of Tom-true-tongue-tell-me-no-tales-nor-lying-stories-to-laugh-at-for-I-loved-them-never.

The Substance of the Poem

In his sleep the poet dreams of the world as a Field Full of Folk, each at his self-appointed task. A motley crew assuredly—merchants, pilgrims, friars, ploughmen, anchorites, and spendthrifts, a King and an Angel. The Field is situate between the Tower of Truth (God the Father) and the Dungeon (the Abode of Evil Spirits). Clerical characters predominate, and for none of them has Langland a good word save the ploughman and the hermits. Suddenly there comes a host of rats and mice, bent upon "belling the cat"; from this they are dissuaded by a wise old mouse, who warns them

> "Though we killed the old cat, yet another would come
> To catch all our kin. . . ."

Then the scene shifts to another part of the Field, where may be heard cooks and taverners touting for custom. And so the Prologue ends.

The *First Canto* deals with the Vision of Holy Church. A lovely lady approaches the dreamer, and tells him that the Tower is the abode of the Creator, while the Dungeon belongs to the Father of Falseness: her name she discloses as Holy Church, and in the course of a good vigorous homily she instructs him upon the value of Truth and Love to mortal men who wish to go to Heaven:

> "Give of your goods, and to you shall be given (Luke vi. 38);
> 'Tis the lockgate of love, that letteth out grace
> To comfort the careworn encumbered with sin.
> Love, next our Lord, is the leech of man's life,
> The right road that runneth directly to heaven.
> So I say of the texts, as I said before,
> When all treasures are tried, then Truth is the best.
> I have told thee what Truth is; no treasure is better;
> I may linger no longer; the Lord be thy guide!"

The homily is, in the original text, interspersed with Latin sentences from the Bible, far more familiar to Langland's readers (even though understood by few) than the English version.

Canto II deals with the Lady Meed and Falsehood. Holy Church points out the gorgeously adorned Lady Meed, who is about to wed Falsehood. She then leaves the dreamer. Theology strongly objects to the Wedding, and so all the parties set off for London, so that the dispute may

be heard at Westminster. Those Meed is taken prisoner, while the others make their escape.

Cantos III and IV.—The tactful Lady Meed tries to make her peace with both worlds. She confesses to a friar and is duly shriven, and advises judges to take bribes. The King, before whom she has been brought, counsels a marriage with Conscience. But Conscience objects, and exposes her character. Meed leaves Westminster Hall in disgrace and passes out of the story. Throughout the scene the King had listened to the advice of Reason, who agrees at the close to stay with him always. At this point the first Vision comes to an end.

Canto V.—When next he falls asleep, we have the Vision of the Seven Deadly Sins, and of Piers the Plowman. Once more we are in the Field, where Reason is exhorting the people, and using recent plagues and tempests to point the moral. The sermon impresses the hearers; Pride vows humility; Luxury pledges himself to drink water; Envy, Wrath, Avarice, Gluttony, and Sloth also repent. And Piers the Plowman offers to help them in the Quest for Truth. In the course of this canto the poet gives a vivid sketch of a London alehouse and its occupants, whither Gluttony has gone. It is one of the social vignettes which give the poem its historical interest.

Canto VI.—Piers advocates hard manual work, for which many are disinclined. Hunger, however, makes them submit. Then follow some passages in which he deals with the food of the poor and of their general condition.

Canto VII.—Truth gives Piers a Bull of Pardon for almost every kind of sinner. False beggars, however, are excepted, and the author emphasizes what a formidable class they are. A Priest wishes to see the Bull, and finds in it only these lines: "Those who do well, shall have well; those who do evil, shall have evil." Whereat he scoffs at Piers and the dreamer awakes. The poem concludes with a declaration as to the superiority of a good life above all the Bulls of the Pope at the Day of Judgment.

A supplementary poem to this is that of "Do-wel, Do-bet, Do-best," but although Langland gave thirty years to the writing of this, it falls far below the earlier poem in grip and vitality. Here Love, the Good Samaritan, takes the place of Piers. There is much religious discussion, but little story; and although there are striking lines, the poem as a whole is too diffuse and discursive. Langland is no theologian, and he feels at times that he is wading in water too deep for him.

The Style of the Poem

Sincerity, dignity, and passion mark Langland's work throughout. He is no artist, as Chaucer was, nor had he, save on rare occasions, Chaucer's power to visualise character. The bad characters are more vitally drawn than the good. Langland gives most attention to them, and paints them with detailed touches, such as he does not accord to his virtuous. A comparison of Lady Meed with Holy Church will convince the reader on this point.

Undoubtedly, he had remarkable powers of observation, but he had as little self-criticism as Wordsworth, and, like Wordsworth, will follow up lines of elemental beauty with verse of the dullest and most trivial kind. But he had an arresting personality, and the task he essayed was a task of great difficulty. Compared with Chaucer, we realise his manifold limitations; but compared with his predecessors, he is, among the religious poets of mediæval England, a veritable giant. His outlook is constricted, and his pictures have too little light and shade. But they have a Rembrandt-like power, and he did a noble work as a spiritual irritant in rousing his generation to a sense of its shortcomings and weaknesses.

THE ROMANTIC ELEMENT (COURTLY POETRY)

Matter of Britain · Arthurian Cycle and Celtic Origin—Evolution of Arthurian Cycle—Arthurian Romance and English Literature. Matter of Rome: (a) The Story of Troy—(b) The Story of Alexander, &c. &c. Matter of France: The Charlemagne Romance. Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight—Pearl—Cleanness—Patience

THE ROMANTIC ELEMENT

"Saddle the Hippogriffs, ye muses nine,
And straight we'll ride to the land of Old Romance."
WIELAND.

The very word "romance" conjures up to the vagrant fancy, visions of battlemented castles, of fair ladies waving wistful adieux to the bravely accoutred knights, ere they ride forth in search of gloriously impossible adventures.

Reading these old romances we enter a new world, where damsels are always beautiful, sometimes even learned, *e.g.* the Fair Felice in *Guy of Warwick*; where the men are prodigies alike of valour and muscular might and properly contemptuous of wounds that heal conveniently by miraculous interposition; where disappointed ladies find consolation in ministering to the poor and afflicted; where men repent and found monasteries or become hermits and pilgrims; where true lovers overcome insuperable obstacles, and are eventually united to live happily or die together.

Now, mediæval English romances, like the word romance itself, were French in origin. The legendary tales of the Celt were told often in prose, but both the Norman and Teuton elected verse, and we have to pass to the time of Malory before we find this verse form, whether of alliteration or rhyme, superseded by prose. It is easy to understand why this preference is given to verse, inasmuch

as most of the story-telling was done by the minstrel: romance was cradled in song; it is literature's lullaby for children of all ages.

Such was the origin of English romance. What of its nature?

Roughly speaking, our romances were all fashioned from four big cycles of romance that centre round Alexander, Troy, Charlemagne, Arthur; embroidered by successive poets and minstrels, with material gathered from every source of popular tradition.

The romances therefore are by no means similar in colour and texture. Some, like *Guy of Warwick*, immensely popular for its patriotic and religious note, are rich in extravagance; others, like the *Song of Roland*, are severe and simple in their telling. Yet the tendency, as time went on and the demand for these things grew, was for all of them to become elaborate and high-flown; while most of the tales that are Teutonic in origin, such as *Havelok* and *King Horn*, sound an insistent ethical note. We are already shown the overthrow of craft and the triumph of virtue.

The Romantic element has always existed in English literature from the very earliest times. It is found in the *Beowulf* and in the poems of Cynewulf; but the term "*romaunt*" or romance is usually restricted to a class of literary composition which was first written in languages derived from the Latin, but especially the French. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the largest and most popular part of the vernacular literature consisted of adventure stories in which love and religion came gradually to occupy a more and more important position. These stories were sometimes written in prose, more commonly in verse.

After the Norman Conquest, a Norman French literature began to spring up in England. The English language fell into the background; Norman French was the language of the court and of polite society. The English tongue underwent changes; it was a period of transition at the end of which the native language began to reassert its ascendancy. Gradually the Norman French lost its dominant position; the two nations began to intermingle. The growing needs of business and family life, court life and chivalry, new discoveries in the industrial and fine arts, the clergy, the itinerant monks and the cosmopolitan orders did much to increase this growing intercourse and exchange of ideas. Of the influence of the mendicant friars we have already spoken. They came in close contact with the poor of the cities. But a still more important part was taken by the "*discours goliours*," or as they were called in English, the "*seggers* or *gleo-men*."

It was the professional "gleeman" who made the French literature translated either by himself or others (clerks) accessible to the ordinary people. Year by year the audience of the gleemen grew larger. The aristocrat still preferred French to English poetry, but the rich burgesses, the knights and squires, the yeomen, and throngs of meaner folk welcomed the professional story-teller, and the romances were easily first in popular estimation.

Now, in the French poetry, which came over hero and so profoundly influenced our literature, there were three important story-cycles: the matter of Rome, the matter of France, and the matter of Britain.

The first includes the story of Troy, and the adventures of Alexander of Macedon. The Trojan story inspired Virgil, and was popular in France during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. More than one nation fancied descent from Pius Æneas, in an age when to have descended from some fabulous person was looked upon as a guarantee of national respectability. The Greeks themselves claimed Trojan origin, and Geoffrey of Monmouth, in his *History of the Britons*, described with gusto and particularity their descent from Brutus, great-grandson of Æneas.

Curiously enough this tale, which greatly took the popular fancy, was translated into French, and re-translated later on by the priest Layamon under the title of *Le Brut* (1205). A striking feature about Layamon's work is the introduction of rhyme into English verse in parts of his work, and the use of similes.

The adventures of Alexander had found an earlier ingress, but there are very few English poems dealing with it, though Chaucer says that everyone had heard of Alexander's fortunes.

The matter of France is more important as a literary influence. It deals with Charlemagne, and started in France with the *Story of Roland*. The groundwork of this cycle is historical, and the struggles depicted between the feudal nobles and their over-lord are based on fact; though such an hero as Huon de Bordeaux is a figment of the imagination.

This cycle was wonderfully popular in mediæval times, and greatly influenced European literature —for example, the stories of Ariosto. In our own time William Morris drew upon its romantic treasures.

This cycle reached its height of development in the eleventh century. It appealed to the Southern nations more than to us, because it was concerned so particularly with the struggles of Christendom and Mohammedanism.

The matter of Britain is, for Englishmen at any rate, by far the most important of these cycles.

Why was this?

It was a cycle of stories of French origin, written partly in prose, partly in verse, dealing with the old Celtic legend of King Arthur. We are so accustomed to regard Arthur as a national hero, that we do not realize readily how largely the literature around him is in a foreign tongue. For the height of its popularity in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was the height also of French influence. And it was in the form of a French Romance that the stories became known in England.

It is somewhat curious that we should have adopted as our national hero the chief of the defeated Britons rather than a Saxon leader. But such is the fact; other epic heroes we passed aside, and took to our hearts the Celtic conqueror of the "Demon Cat."

We do not know what was precisely the character of the original Welsh legend, but we do know

that it was mainly concerned with fighting, and that the Launcelot story and the legend of the Grail, together with other tales of King Arthur's knights, were afterthoughts—French graftings on to the original stem.

Sir Thomas Malory finally blended the Arthurian literature—prose and verse—into one prose version.

Differences in the Nature of the Cycles

The matter of Britain and of Rome differed from the matter of France in one fundamental point. These were essentially aristocratic in origin, the Charlemagne cycle democratic. The Arthurian cycle, for instance, came into being as a deliberate artistic shaping of old stories, to amuse and interest; the Carlovingian epic started as a piece of patriotic propaganda, to encourage national sentiment. This difference in nature and interest is reflected in the character of the respective cycles, as will be seen from a detailed consideration of them.

While these romantic stories came in a French guise, they cannot be regarded as essentially the productions of the French genius. The tendency of the French spirit in literature is ever towards a symmetrical and harmonious unity of form. This is well illustrated by the *Song of Roland*, which formed the basis of later Charlemagne romances. The national epic is inspired by two motives: the love of France, and the struggle for the propagation of Christianity. Roland, the true vassal of his great uncle Charlemagne, the champion of the Christian cause and of France, falls a victim to foul treachery, and his own high sense of honour; but his death is speedily avenged and the enemies of the faith overthrown. The life-long struggle of the hero is vindicated and the cause triumphant. The spirit of the poem, which exhibits the union of the Teutonic heroic ideal with that of a Christian knight, may be shown by the following passage—

"And when the count Roland saw his dear friend and comrade stretched upon the earth, with his face towards the east, he could not stir for grief, but softly to himself he began to sorrow for him: 'Noble comrade to thy hurt wast thou so valiant. Years and days have we been together and never hast thou lifted hand against me, nor have I done thee harm. And now thou art dead, what right have I to live?' And from too great grief has he swooned upon his saddle, and the golden stirrups hold him on his courser's back, so that he cannot fall whichever way he goes." An appeal for help from his friend Gualter, who is sorely wounded, arouses Roland and "amongst the heathen once more he plies his sword. Twenty of the foe has he laid in the dust, and Gualter has slain seven, and the Archbishop (Turpin) five. And the heathen spake one to another: 'Terrible men are these. Beware barons lest they escape alive, for such men deserve not to be taken. Cursed be the vassal who shrinks from fighting with them, and a vile coward is he who lets them go unhurt.' Now has the hue and cry begun again, and from all parts of the field the heathen pressed around them. . . .

"Nobly still fights Roland, though he is bathed in sweat and his blood is all on fire. Great was the pain he felt in his head, and his temples were red with blood from the sounding of the horn. But he would know for sure if Charles would come and aid him, and once more he sounded his horn but feeble was the noise thereof. Now as the Emperor halted to listen to the sound, and thus he spake in anguish: 'Ah God, what evil has befallen us, for surely shall my nephew Roland fail us to-day. By the sound of this horn can I tell that he is nigh to perish, and quickly must he ride who would help him ere he fall. Now let each man blow his trumpet, that the sound thereof may be heard afar off.' And thereupon might one hear the sound of sixty thousand trumpets, so that the hills resounded, and all the valleys echoed. And the heathens, too, have heard it, and small is their desire for laughter."

Death of Roland—"High was the hill and very lofty were the trees, and four steps of shining marble were there amidst the grass, in the place where Roland fell. . . . And there as he lay upon the summit of a hill, looking o'er the land of Spain, he beat his hand upon his breast, and thus he spake: 'Ah, God! grant me thy pardon for the sake of Thy great mercy! Absolve my sins both small and great which I have ever committed from the hour that I was born till this day on which I perish.' And he extended his right glove toward the God of heaven. And lo, the angels from heaven descended to where he lay."[1]

Compare the *Song of Roland* with the Charlemagne romance which sprung up before the close of the eleventh century, and which was falsely attributed to Archbishop Turpin. In this poem the Charlemagne story is associated with popular traditions, oriental extravagances and legendary matter of many kinds. Charlemagne visits the Holy Sepulchre and returns from the east bringing the Holy Grail—the chalice which Christ used at the Last Supper. At once we perceive that new influences were at work, destined to entirely change the character of the earlier romances.

The Charlemagne cycle, owing to the alienation and subsequent rivalry of the Normans and French after the Conquest, did not receive much attention in England until a later period. The Celtic note dominates the history of the romance literature after the Conquest, and before dealing with this it is necessary to sketch quite briefly its growth and development.

THE MATTER OF BRITAIN

The Arthurian Cycle and its Celtic Origin

A close, if not always peaceful, connection had existed between the Bretons (the Bretons and Welsh both belonged to the Brythonic division of the Celtic race) and the Normans from the tenth century onwards. Many of the Breton *lais* were sung or recited by the French "*jongleurs*." In addition to this there is evidence of the transmission of the Arthurian legend through the medium of Welsh texts into Brittany. These two tributary streams of Celtic tradition, the Welsh and the

[1] *The Song of Roland*, translated by Jessie Crosland. King's Classics.

Breton, had found their way into Norman literature previous to the Conquest. Afterwards they are again united to the main stream in Britain where the traditions had flowed deeper and purer, and many causes contributed to its rapid rise in volume and power. The Norman Conquest was followed by a Celtic revival which found expression in literary activities of various kinds. It is probable that the *Mabinogion*, which contains the only Welsh Arthurian romance antedating French influences (*Kilhuch and Olwen* and *The Dream of Rhonabwy*), was redacted during the last quarter of the eleventh century.

Moreover, King Arthur was adopted by the Anglicised Normans in place of Charlemagne, the French national hero. This aristocratic adoption of Arthurian legend led to its assuming new importance. It received an infusion of courtly and chivalric ideals in the hands of the Norman poets. The rapid diffusion of the legend on the Continent was possibly due to the fact that the Celtic legend was capable of receiving the new courtly and religious elements that were drawn into the cycle, whereas the Charlemagne cycle, as we have said, was specially concerned with the struggles of Christianity and Mohammedanism. This phase had passed away, and in the Crusades new aspects came into being, new ideals of knighthood. The patronage of literature came to be very often in the hands of women, and to this may be attributed the increasing regard paid to the love interest of the story.

Evolution of the Arthurian Cycle

The romantic personality of Arthur is like a composite photograph, made up of three distinct figures. (1) There is the Historical figure. In the *Historia Britonum* by Nennius—written about A.D. 800, a skilful redaction of material from various sources—we learn that Arthur was a military leader of the Britons, who fought successfully against the Saxons and became a name with which to conjure. This led naturally to (2) the Mythological figure. Arthur here has attracted towards his person many myths and legends, and become a kind of god, with heroic attributes and a band of followers almost as wonderful as himself. But mediæval chivalry demanded some figure that should symbolize its graces, its knightly achievements; and the legendary, mysterious figure of Arthur seemed created for the purpose. They knew too much about Charlemagne, with his strenuous activities and devout temper. Arthur came from a distant clime, only dimly perceived through the mists of legend. Him therefore they took, so we have (3) the Romantic Arthur, the incarnate spirit of chivalry; and it was from Geoffrey of Monmouth's book that they took this figure. He virtually created the Arthur of Romance. He retains in his person the successful leader, and the Saga hero, adding to these, fresh qualifications as an adventurous knight.

Among the writers who contributed to the literary evolution of the Arthurian cycle the first place must be assigned to Geoffrey of Monmouth. Slight references to Arthur's heroic deeds as "a leader and conqueror of the Saxons in twelve battles" occur in a Latin history by Nennius, but Geoffrey in his *Historia Regum Britanniæ* brings together materials drawn from ancient poets and prose writers, possibly also oral traditions, and with the aid of imagination he welds the scattered legends into an harmonious whole. For the first time astonished historians were presented with a genealogy of British Kings deriving their descent, not from Woden and Seth, but from the famous Trojan leader, Brutus. The legends of *Locrine*, of *Gorboduc*, *King Leir* (Lear) and his daughters were incorporated with much accurate chronological and historical matter. The whole fabric was professedly based on a British (Cymric) book which Geoffrey was supposed to have received from Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford—"a man learned not only in the art of eloquence, but in the histories of foreign lands," and it is this book which he flaunts in the faces of historians like William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon, when he bids them "be silent as to the Kings of the Britons, since they have not that book in the British speech which Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford brought over from Brittany."

Arthur is here depicted as the great king and hero guarded by supernatural powers; surrounded by brave warriors; a man of marvellous life and tragic death.

The popularity of Geoffrey's work is due to its being a piece of realistic fiction. Geoffrey is essentially a story-teller and not an historian. He achieves the apotheosis of the historic Arthur in the region of romance; his work fostered the chivalric and kingly ideals; it ministered to the desires for the mysterious and marvellous. Moreover, it appeared just at the right time. The Anglicised Normans were prepared to accept a British hero in preference to the French Charlemagne. In addition, romance was in demand and Geoffrey made the most of it. He is the story-teller *par excellence*; but it must be remembered that the air of historic reality with which Geoffrey contrived to invest these inventions was sufficient to deceive his own none too critical age. Two notable exceptions must be made: William of Newburgh, writing in 1190, says:

"It is manifest that everything which this person wrote about Arthur and his successors, and his predecessors after Vortigern, was made up, partly by himself, and partly by others, whether from an inordinate love of lying, or for the sake of pleasing the Britons."

Giraldus Cambrensis tells of a Welshman at Caerleon, named Melerius, who had dealings with evil spirits and was enabled by their assistance to foretell future events. "He knew when anyone spoke falsely in his presence for he saw the devil, as it were leaping and exulting on the tongue of the liar. . . . If the evil spirit oppressed him too much, the Gospel of St. John was placed on his bosom, when like birds they immediately vanished; but when that book was removed and the *History of the Britons* by Geoffrey was substituted in its place, they instantly reappeared in greater numbers, and remained a longer time than usual on his body

and on the book." Since Giraldus himself was a writer of fiction, this little story may be merely the outcome of a piece of professional jealousy!

In spite of these criticisms, Geoffrey's *Chronicle* was accepted as a veracious history, by his own and succeeding generations. Its importance as an inspiration in English literature can scarcely be estimated. The series of *Brute*, or Chronicles, which followed Geoffrey, will be dealt with in some detail. The influence of Arthurian romance suffered somewhat in the time of Chaucer. Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* gave new life to the Arthurian stories, and in spite of the protests of grave moralists like Ascham, the Elizabethans seized with avidity on these legends of early Britain. One consequence of which was, that Geoffrey's *Chronicle* was one of the many printed during the patriotic period of patriotism that arose in this reign. Spenser in his *Faerie Queen*, Drayton in his *Polyolbion*, William Warner in *Albion's England*, drew inspiration from these sources. In 1588, a play called *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, by Thomas Hughes, was acted before the Queen, but apart from this solitary instance, and Dryden's opera *King Arthur or the British Worthy*, Arthurian stories have made a greater and more enduring appeal to the poet than to the dramatist.

Milton meditated writing his great epic on the national hero, but finally chose a more "universal theme." Lastly, Tennyson in modern times has once more surrounded the coming and passing of Arthur with the mystery and magic of romance when "From the great deep to the great deep he goes."

Of Geoffrey himself all that can be definitely said is that he was ordained a priest and almost immediately afterwards appointed Bishop of St. Asaph in 1152. He died at Llandaff in 1155. The *History* was certainly begun in 1130, and had attained its complete form in 1148. There is no evidence that Geoffrey was a Welshman, although he lived at Monmouth, and claimed the patronage of a Norman prince, Robert, Earl of Gloucester, who was overlord of a tract of Welsh country. To this Robert, William of Malmesbury, the distinguished historian, dedicated his *History of the Kings of England*. Geoffrey commends him as "one nurtured in the liberal arts of philosophy and called unto the command of our armies by his own inborn prowess of knighthood, one whom in these days Britain haileth with heartfelt affection, as though she had been vouchsafed another Henry."

The popularity of Geoffrey's work is testified by the large number of manuscript copies that were made—there are, for instance, thirty-five copies in the British Museum, and sixteen in the Bodleian—and by the number of translations, adaptations, and continuations. Some of the most important will now be dealt with.

In 1160, five years before the death of Geoffrey, an Anglo-Norman poet named Gaimar wrote the first French metrical chronicle. It consisted of two parts: the *Estorie des Bretons*, and the *Estorie des Angles*. The former has not come down to us, but is known to have been a rhymed translation of Geoffrey's work. Gaimar was succeeded by Wace, a Norman poet who produced the *Roman de Brut* (*Brut*, i.e. Chronicle). Wace occupies an important position not only on account of his poetic gifts and his contribution to the Arthurian story, but also because the metrical chronicle forms a link between the prose chronicle and the metrical romance. The latter had received a powerful stimulus from Chrestien de Troies, the most distinguished of the *trouvères*. The French poet wrote for courtly circles and the metrical romances were a convenient method of setting forth the code of chivalrous conduct and recounting adventures of love.

Wace lived about 1100–75. He gives the following information concerning himself in the *Roman de Rou*:

"If anybody asks who said this, who put this history into the Romance language, I say and I will say to him, that I am Wace of the isle of Jersey, which lies in the sea, toward the west, and is a part of the fief of Normandy. In the isle of Jersey was I born, and to Caen I was taken as a little lad; there I was put at the study of letters; afterwards I studied long in France. When I came back from France I dwelt long at Caen. I busied myself with making books in Romance; many of them I wrote, and many of them I made."

Before 1136 Wace was a "reading clerk," and his writings won for him the favour of Henry II, who advanced him to the canonry of Bayeux. He composed a number of *Lives of the Saints*, but his two most important works are the *Roman de Brut*, and the *Roman de Rou* (*i.e.* Rollo)—the latter a chronicle history of the Dukes of Normandy that Wace had begun in obedience to Henry's command, but which for some reason or other he was not allowed to finish; Henry transferring his patronage to "Master Benoit" (Benoît de Sainte More).

"Since the king has asked him to do this work I must leave it, and I must say no more. Of old, the king did me many a favour, much he gave me, more he promised me, and if he had given all that he had promised me, it had been better for me. Here ends the book of Master Wace, let him continue it who will."

Wace had completed the *Roman de Brut*, or *Geste des Bretons*, in 1155. The *Brut* can in no sense be termed a translation of Geoffrey's work, for Wace has impressed upon it the stamp of his own individuality. To begin with, the French octosyllabic couplet with its swift movement forms a striking contrast to Geoffrey's stately Latin prose. Wace tells us he had heard tales of Arthur, but he is not willing to give credence to many of these fables. He will only set down that which he believes to be true.

Wace's narrative betrays distinct evidence of the influence of the courtly school. He gives place to descriptions of love, and embodies two elements of Celtic origin when he gives us the first literary record of the Round Table, and of Arthur as the "Hope of Britain."

"He is yet in Avalon, awaited of the Britons, for as they say and deem he will return from whence he went and live again."

"Wace is not to be regarded as one of the great contributors to our knowledge of the Arthurian legend, but without a familiarity with his work, later French romance can scarcely be appreciated, so important is his place as a delicate transformer of the story, the humbler elements of which he veiled with the courtliness familiar to him, while he diffused throughout it the indefinable spirit of French romance; and this he did with the naïve simplicity and grace that were his by birth and temperament."[1]

The Social Value of Arthurian Romance

It served to inspire the Welsh with an imaginative ideal in their bitter struggle for Independence. The Scot, at a later date, found in it similar elements of inspiration; for some of the legendary characters (e.g. Mordred) symbolised Scottish rights, while the Saxon used Arthur as a weapon to confound the French and the alien generally.

Finally, in Caxton's day, the Arthurian Cycle resigns its political effulgence, and becomes merely a luminous literary beacon to cheer all kinds who love to read of "gracious knightly deeds."

Arthurian Romance and English Literature

Layamon.—Layamon, a priest of Arley Regis, in Worcestershire, is the first poet to sing of King Arthur in English verse, and his poem has therefore a special significance. He tells us in the introduction to the *Brut*, which was written in the first half of the thirteenth century, the following particulars concerning himself:

"There was a priest in the land who was named Layamon; he was son of Leovenath—may the Lord be gracious to him!—He dwelt at Ernely, at a noble church upon Severn's bank—good it there seemed to him—near Radestone, where he books read (*i.e.* read the services in church). It came to him in mind, and in his chief thought, that he would tell the noble deeds of the English, what they were named, and whence they came, who first possessed the English land after the flood that came from the Lord. . . . Layamon began to journey wide over this land, and procured the noble books which he took for pattern. He took the English book that Saint Beda made; another he took in Latin that Saint Albin made, and the fair Austin, who brought baptism in hither; the third book he took and laid there in the midst, that a French clerk made, who was named Wace, who well could write; and he gave it to the noble Eleanor who was the high King Henry's queen. Layamon laid before him these books, and turned over the leaves; lovingly he beheld them: may the Lord be merciful to him! —pen he took with fingers and wrote on book-skin, and the true words set together, and the three books compressed into one. Now prayeth Layamon—for love of the Almighty God, each good man that shall read this book and learn this counsel, that he say together these noble fair words, for his father's soul, who brought him forth, and for his mother's soul, who bore him to be man, and for his own soul that it be the better. Amen."

Layamon lived in a district which still retained a strong hold on the life and customs of the past. The Danes established no permanent settlement, nor were there any great cities to open up a commercial intercourse with other countries. It is true Normans had settled here, and Ordericus Vitalis was born not far from Arley, but there were probably few men in Worcestershire who possessed even Layamon's small knowledge of French culture. But the closest association existed between the English of this district and the neighbouring Welsh. In this way many of the Celtic stories found their way into English tradition. Layamon was probably familiar with a mass of sagas and folk songs. The past exercised a strong fascination for him and in mind and spirit he belongs to an earlier age. Although Layamon mentions three books which he obtained after some trouble, he does not appear to have made much use of either Aelfred's *Beda*, or of St. Albin's book which is apparently the Latin original of Aelfred's *Beda*. Wace's poem therefore forms the main basis of Layamon's work. Wace had translated Geoffrey's stately Latin prose into the French short couplet; Layamon turns to the old national verse as he knew it from the folk songs of Worcestershire. The *Brut* is written partly in alliterative lines and partly in rhymed couplets of unequal length. The stirring scenes in the life of a Saxon warrior, grim battles, the life of the woods and fields, have a greater attraction for Layamon than the chivalry and romance of the Norman court. Layamon invests the story of Arthur with an entirely different atmosphere. The narrative gains simplicity and force, and is clothed with the dignity and splendour of the old English epic.

Layamon writes with intense interest in his subject; he lives and moves and has his being among the events with which he is dealing, investing his narrative with dramatic force, while he is at his best in the portrayal of battle and strife, and of the combat with the sea. Indeed hardly any metrical chronicle approaches him in poetic worth.

His account of the death of Arthur is finely poetical.

"All the brave ones were slain, Arthur's warriors high and low, and all the Britons from Arthur's Table, and all his wards, from many kingdoms. And Arthur himself was wounded by a broad battle spear; he had received fifteen bloody wounds; into the smallest one might thrust two gloves. Then there survived in the battle of two hundred thousand men who lay there slaughtered none, save Arthur alone and two of his knights. . . .

"I will go to Avalon, to the most beauteous of all maidens, to the queen Argante, the splendid elf. And she will heal all my wounds and make me quite well with a healing drink. And afterwards I will come again to my kingdom and dwell among the Britons in great bliss."

"While he was saying this a little boat came from the sea borne by the waves, with women therein of marvellous figure. And they at once took Arthur and brought him to the boat, laid him in it and sailed away.

[1] Lucy Allen Paton, Introduction *Arthurian Romances*. (Everyman.)

"Then was fulfilled what Merlin said of yore, that there should be mighty grief at Arthur's demise. The Britons still believe that he is alive and dwells in Avalon with the most beautiful of all elves, and the Britons still watch for his return. Never was the man born or chosen by woman who could with truth say more of Arthur. But of yore there was a prophet named Merlin. He announced with words—his sayings are true—that an Arthur should yet come to the help of the Britons."[1]

The Religious Element in the Arthurian Cycle

The diffusion of the Arthurian story led to many other elements being drawn towards it. Legends, traditions, love interests, and religious mysticism, these all group themselves round the story with which they seem to be mysteriously connected, although the connection is not always apparent, and oftentimes difficult to establish. In this way the Graal saga, that seems to have been first associated with the legend of Joseph of Arimathea, eventually became part of the Arthurian cycle. For testifying to the resurrection, Joseph is imprisoned by the Jews, but he is released by Christ who provides the prisoner with food and light, by bringing to him the communion chalice used at the Last Supper—(i.e. The Graal = dish).

Robert de Borron, a knight who probably lived in the Vosges district, wrote somewhere about 1160, a poem on the Graal called "Le petit saint Graal," which was later put into prose. This legend flourished in England in the reign of Henry II, undergoing various modifications and additions, embodied in a prose version called *Le grand S. Graal*. St. Joseph and his son come to England, Joseph is consecrated a bishop by Christ himself, and they convert the land to Christianity; both die and are buried there. St. Joseph possesses a marvellous shield. The dynasties founded by the missionaries who wedded daughters of the native kings are carried down to Arthur. The mystery of Transubstantiation and the Graal play an important part in this story—the latter is kept in a Northumbrian forest, and a "pure youth," Galahad, the son of Lancelot, is at last to find it. A martial and chivalric element has been added to the religious, and the Graal saga has thus linked itself to Arthurian legend.

Still another prose romance, *La Queste del Saint Graal*, concerns the search for the Holy Graal by King Arthur's knights. Galahad alone succeeds and takes the Graal to the Orient, which on the death of Galahad is taken up to heaven.

Walter Map, who lived in the reign of Henry II, is credited, although on uncertain evidence, with having translated these romances from the Latin.

Chrestien des Troyes, the French courtly poet, wrote his *Conte del Graal* towards the end of the twelfth century, which he, however, never finished. In this, Parzifal and not Galahad, is the hero of the story.

So much for the religious element in the Arthurian cycle: it is now necessary to consider the intensely interesting but tragic love story of *Tristan and Isold*, a Celtic story, that for a long time remained independent of the Arthurian cycle. This is probably one of the court romances which was composed from ancient Breton *lais*.

The Love Element in the Arthurian Cycle

Tristan is conducting Isold from Ireland to Cornwall to be the bride of King Mark. Her mother, to preserve her daughter from a loveless marriage, has distilled a magic potion which ensures that the two people who drink of it shall have an enduring passion for each other. She entrusts the golden cup containing the magic potion to Brangwaine, Isold's maid, who places it in a cupboard on board the ship. During the voyage, Tristan, who has been entertaining Isold with all the songs and stories he knew, declares he is thirsty. Isold takes from the cupboard the magic cup and unwitting its power, places it first to her own lips and then hands it to Tristan who drained it greedily. At once there sprang up in their hearts a passionate love destined to last as long as they lived. After the first few hours of rapture, they realise their guilt and resolve to perform their compact at whatever cost.

They arrive at Tintagel, and Isold is at once married to King Mark. Isold is unhappy, and the lovers, impelled by the irresistible force of fate, drift together. King Mark is warned by his knights that Isold is false to him, and eventually Tristan goes to Brittany. Here in a moment of weakness he weds Isold of the White Hand, only to repent in a short time, since he cannot conquer his unhappy passion for Isold of Cornwall. Tristan is wounded in one of his combats so that even Isold of the White Hand cannot cure him. He sends his faithful steward to beg Isold to come to him and save him by her skill. Her presence in the ship is to be signalled by a white sail—her absence by a black sail. A vessel bearing a white sail appears; Isold of the White Hand is filled with jealousy at the approach of her rival. Tristan inquires eagerly of her, "For the sake of God, what sail does it carry?" "The sails are black." Despair at the supposed faithlessness of his beloved seizes Tristan, and he dies with her name on his lips. Isold lands, she is told of his death. Her agony is too great for expression. "Silently she steps through the crowd gazing at her beauty, to the hall where lies the corpse. There she flings herself on the bier and dies in a last embrace."

The story has been retold by Matthew Arnold and Swinburne, and made the subject of an opera by Wagner. Swinburne has made the wind and the waves sing an accompaniment to the tragedy that harmonises so well with the rocky, storm-driven coasts of Brittany and Cornwall in which the principal scenes are enacted.

Sir Tristrem is a translation from a French version of the Tristan story, and is considered by certain authorities to be the first real English romance in the *Matter of Britain: Arthur and Merlin* being later. It has been attributed to Thomas of Ercildoune or Thomas the Rymer, a

[1] Layamon's *Brut*, iii. 140.

Scottish poet who lived about 1280, but there is no evidence to connect the romance with this poet. *Sir Tristrem* was edited by Sir Walter Scott.

The poet of *Sir Tristrem* condenses his story owing to gaps in the French version; the verse moreover is experimental in character, and the poem forms a good illustration of the manner in which a ballad might arise from the metrical romance.

"Tristrem tok his stede,
And lepe ther on to ride:
The quen bad him her lede,
To schip him biside;
Tristrem did as hye bede;
In wode he gan hir hide;
To th' erl he seyd in that nede:
Thou hast ytent thi pride,
Thou dote
With thine harp, thou wonne hir thus tide,
Thou tint[1] hir with mi rote."[2][3]

THE MATTER OF ROME

(a) The Story of Troy

The Troy saga, although extremely popular, is of least importance from the literary point of view. Homer's work was almost unknown even to the most classically educated writers of the twelfth century; but there existed two Latin prose versions of the Troy saga, one the work of the Cretan Dictys, who fought on the Greek side in the Trojan war; the other and shorter version was written by the Phrygian Dares, who fought on the Trojan side. The *Ephemeris belli Troiani*, of Dictys, dates from the beginning of the third century and is much closer to the ancient tradition than the *De excidio Troiae historia* of Dares, which has been characterised as a "wretched piece of work in bad Latin." Dares, however, was much preferred by the writers of the Middle Ages, probably because the shorter work could be more readily adapted and expanded and also on account of his association with the Trojans, especially when popular legends sought to establish the descent of the British people from Brutus the famous Trojan leader. Dares' work is notable for the prominence assigned to Troilus. The Story of Troilus and Cressida was used by numerous mediæval poets, and finally by Chaucer and Shakespeare. Two poetical Troy books based on Dares appeared during the second half of the twelfth century. One was written in Latin verse by Joseph of Exeter in 1188, and is remarkable for its highly cultivated and brilliant form. The other was composed by the French poet Benoît de Sainte More (in 1160), who had completed Wace's Chronicle of the Dukes of Normandy. Benoît has the usual mediæval fault of too great discursiveness. He likes to begin at the very beginning of all things; he adds to his narrative long descriptions, and learned geographical and mythological information. In Benoît the Troilus episode, whilst retaining the outlines as we find them in Dares, receives the courtly colouring and imaginative invention of the French poet. Benoît's work was of great importance in the development of the Troy saga. It was translated into Latin prose in 1287 by Guido de Colonna. Boccaccio then uses the story in his *Filostrato*; Cressid becomes, in the hands of the poet-novelist, a more vital and interesting figure. Chaucer adopts the story from Boccaccio, softening the character of the heroine somewhat and adding the figure of Pandarus. The Scottish poet Henryson wrote *The Testament of Cresseid* in the fifteenth century. Shakespeare in the sixteenth century dramatised it. Dryden in the seventeenth century rewrote Shakespeare's play. Truly a remarkable sequence in the literary development of a story.

(b) The Alexander Romance

This saga was the first to find access to Western literature. It seems to have assumed a definite form about the third century in the Greek narrative of Callisthenes. The work of the pseudo-Callisthenes was in time circulated in the West in several Latin versions which were generally based on recensions of the original text. Two of these texts are important; that of Julius Valerius for its age, and that of the Neapolitan arch-presbyter Leo. The latter received poetic form at the hands of Alberic of Besançon in the second half of the eleventh century. Other French Alexander poems followed, the most notable in the second half of the twelfth century by a monk of Chateaudun, Lambert the Crooked. To this poem the twelve-syllabled line owes the name of Alexandrine. It was translated and revised by Alexander de Paris of Bernay, and it is difficult to distinguish the work of Alexander from that of Lambert.

Alexander is presented to us as a mediæval rather than an ancient hero. The career of the mighty conqueror is sketched from his marvellous birth to his final end by poisoning. The description of Alexander's expeditions in the East affords opportunity for introducing all sorts of extravagant stories.

The oldest English Alexander romance, and also one of the best, dates from the reign of Edward I. It probably originated in the North of Mercia. The unknown writer followed a French version, supplemented by a Latin text; but he is no mere translator, he handles his material with great skill and renders it into "pithy verse and forcible, animated, and picturesque language."

"The spirit of chivalric poetry breaks forth most strongly when the writer leads us to the battle-field, when he presents to us the picturesque advance of the troops, the glittering weapons, the neighing of the war-horses; the roaring onset, the tumult and the slaughter, the war cry of the fighters, and the lamentations of the wounded; or when he describes brilliant festivals, gorgeous garments, and beautiful women."[1]

The value of the work is enhanced by the many details which are drawn from English common life and by the lyrical passages that introduce the separate divisions of the poem. These have no connection with the narrative and may have been inserted to arouse the attention of the audience.

[1] Lost. [2] A stringed instrument. [3] *Sir Tristrem.*

[1] Ten Brink.

They illustrate the English love of nature and tendency to reflection:

"Whan corn ripeth in every steode,
Mury hit is in feld and hyde
Synne hit is and schame to chide
Knyghtis walleth on huntyage ride
The deor galopith by wodis side
He that can his time abyde
Al his wille him schal bytyde." (457–463.)

THE MATTER OF FRANCE

The Charlemagne Romance

Jean Bodel, a French poet, writing in the twelfth century, says there are three themes which are worthy of the poet's attention: "The matter of France—of Britain, and of Rome the Mighty."

"Ne sont que trois matières à nul home entendant
De France, et de Bretagne, et de Rome le grant."

Of *The Matter of Britain* (Arthurian legends), and *The Matter of Rome* (Troy and Alexander romances), we have already spoken. Something has also been said of the early history of the Charlemagne romance. It merely remains for us to deal with two later products of this cycle.

The poem of *Otinel*, which was very popular in the reign of Edward II, was twice translated during this period. The story has no connection with the older Charlemagne saga, and has very little value. Other romances which group themselves around this cycle are the *Roule Coilyear*, an alliterative romance; *Huon of Bordeaux* (in prose); *Sir Ferumbras, The Soudone of Babylon, The Siege of Milan*, and *Roland and Otinel*. Lastly, the beautiful and pathetic story of *Amis and Amiloun*, made so familiar to us through the medium of Walter Pater and Andrew Lang. This is the story of two men so closely resembling each other that they cannot be told apart. So great is their friendship that one assumes the place of the other in a trial by combat, and thus incurs the guilt of perjury. For this, Amis is punished by leprosy. He is carried to the house of Amiloun who heals him with the blood of his own children. After Amis is healed the children awake as from a dream. "And he took them in his arms and carried them to his wife and said, 'Rejoice greatly, for thy children whom I had slain by the commandment of the angel, are alive and by their blood is Amis healed."

The mediæval ideal of friendship, which does not shun the greatest sacrifices of life and conscience for a friend, is here embodied, and the story attained a wide circulation.

"The early English romance did not, as a whole, reach the level of its French model. Not only must the honour of invention be ascribed to the French (invention in composition, not in material), but also that of a more delicate execution and more harmonious presentation. The frequently abridged English versions are, as a rule, poorer, ruder, and of a less complete logical structure; and their excellent qualities, a more popular tone, a more vigorous painting within narrower compass, do not make good these defects. But we are charmed by the joy they manifest, in the green forests, and in hunting, and we contemplate not without satisfaction, this rude primæval force that does not exclude deep feeling, even if it often indulges in coarseness. Thus the English muse, if less delicate and dainty than her French sister, was less artificial; if more passionate, was less lascivious; and in her enthusiasm for what is grandly colossal, her joy in the actual, she showed, even when repeating foreign romances, many of the features that were to characterise her in the time of her full splendour."[1]

Legendary Accretions around the Arthurian Romance

Not the least curious feature of the Arthurian cycle, is the way in which it became inextricably entangled with legends and myths quite alien in inspiration. For instance, one of the earliest and most intimate of these myths is the Celtic tale of Merlin; a wizard bard, first associated with Arthur by Geoffrey of Monmouth.

Passing through the fertile and inventive imagination of France, Merlin emerges into a romantic English romance, early in the fourteenth century. This is the story of *Arthur and Merlin* translated from the French into Saxon verse: a more important and better known version in prose appeared about a hundred years later. Another figure associated with Arthur is the Knight Gawain. Originally pictured as one of his doughty companions, he becomes the centre of a cycle of stories as imposing as that of Arthur himself; more than any other of Arthur's companions does he dominate romantic legend, and the finest of English metrical romances is that of *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight*.[2]

The tale of Launcelot is, as we have said, non-Celtic in origin, and is an illustration of the influence of chivalric ideals upon these early romances; just as the *Quest of the Grail* exemplifies the incursion of ascetic monasticism.

The hero of the "Quest" is the Knight Perceval. The Grail saga, in its origin, is probably pagan and Celtic, the Quest being one for a magic talisman as in certain old fairy stories; but during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, this pagan search becomes transformed by religious writers into the quest for the Cup of the Last Supper.

One other important legend remains to be noted, that of *Tristrem and Iseult*. This is certainly Celtic in origin; it is supposed to be the oldest of the supplemental Arthurian tales. Remarkable for its note of sombre and tragic passion, it is one of the great love-tales of the world, in whose magic many of the greatest poets have sought inspiration.

ORIENTAL ROMANCES

There are certain romances that fall properly speaking outside the scope of the four great bodies of romances, recently passed in review. Some of

[1] Ten Brink, *Early English Literature*.
[2] See *post*, p. 48.

these are legends, obviously inspired by the struggle between Paladin and Saracen, and the spirit of the Crusader interwoven with curious tales of magic. In one, *William of Palerne*, there is the were-wolf motif; in another, one of the most agreeable, *Robert of Sicily*, an angel for a while takes the place of the king, in order to chasten his pride;—Longfellow made delightful use of this story; another deals with *Richard Cœur de Lion*.

Richard Cœur de Lion

The exploits of so renowned a warrior as Richard were not likely to be overlooked by the poets, who saw in the national hero the counterpart of the famous hero of antiquity, Alexander. This romance was translated from the French, near the time of Edward I, and is thus introduced by the author:

"In French books is this rhyme written. Unlearned men know it not; unlearned men know no French; among a hundred there is not one. And yet many of them would hear with glad cheer, of the noble jousts, of the doughty knights of England. In sooth now I tell of a king, doughty in deed, King Richard, the best warrior that one may find in any tale."

The future greatness of Richard is indicated by his mysterious birth; he is the son of an enchantress named Cassodorien, who becomes the wife of Henry II but afterwards disappears in a magical manner. Richard, according to the legend, embodied in this romance, is named "Lion-heart" because he robbed the lion of his heart—a tradition referred to by Shakespeare in his *King John* (i. 1 and ii. 1). Richard's warlike expeditions to the East give plenty of scope to the imagination of the poet, and he recounts numerous adventures which the history books have omitted. The characteristics assigned to Richard may be readily gathered from the following episode in his career, which is related by the poet with evident gusto.

Saladin's ambassadors have arrived, bearing ransom for the prisoners. Richard entertains them to a banquet at which the heads of their nearest kinsmen are served up on a dish. Enjoying their terror and dismay, Richard helps himself heartily. "This is the Devil's brother," the Saracens whisper among themselves, "that slays our men and eats them." Richard with a threatening glance at his guests says to them, "For my love be all glad, and look ye be well at ease! Why serve ye nought from your food and eat fast as I do? Tell me, why glare ye so?" Speechless and trembling, the ambassadors sit expecting certain death. Richard has other dishes served accompanied with good wine, and calls upon his guests to be merry; but appetite is wanting, mirth does not respond. Then the king says: "Friends, be not squeamish. This is the manner of my house, that Saracens' heads be first served right hot. But I know not your customs. As I am a king, Christian, and true man, ye shall certainly return in safe conduct. For I would not for no thing that word of me should go forth into the world that I would make messengers."[1]

[1] *Richard Cœur de Lion.* (Weber, Chap. IX.)

The Richard romance consists of about seven thousand lines and is notable for its expression of English patriotism in spirited verse. Besides the Alexander romance of which we have already spoken, there are two others which belong to this period (*i.e.* beginning of the fourteenth century), viz. *Arthour and Merlin*, and *The Seven Sages*.

Other romances come from further East. There is the old Greek story of Apollonius of Troy, dealing with incest and strange enchantments. The most interesting feature about this story is that Gower took it for one of his stories in the *Confessio Amantis*, for which he was taken to task by Chaucer, and at a later date it was used again by the author of *Pericles*. More interesting as a romance, is the tale of *Floris and Blanchefleur*.

Floris and Blanchefleur

The story of Floris and Blanchefleur concerns the all-absorbing passion of two lovers who overcome difficulties and desperate perils, and in the end are united. It was one of the most popular stories of the Middle Ages. Originating in the East, it attained a wide circulation in Western Christendom, probably through the agency of the Crusades, and the history of the story is almost as interesting as the story itself. It seems to have been introduced into France about 1160, and was connected by the *jongleurs* with the French cycle (Charlemagne). There were two versions, an "aristocratic" or courtly version, and a "popular." In the popular version the hero is transformed from a love-sick youth into a man of knightly courage. The English translation made by a poet in the reign of Henry III some hundred years later reproduces from the earlier French version the Oriental air of softness and luxury, but condenses the sentimental element. The poem is written in short, well-constructed rhymed couplets.

Blanchefleur is the foster sister of Floris, and the two children have been brought up together. The time has come when Floris, who is the king's son, must be educated, but he refuses to learn without Blanchefleur. They are put to school together and both make good progress. After a time the king again desires to separate them, and he proposes to put the maiden to death. The queen however suggests that Floris should be sent away to stay with his aunt at Montargis, and that Blanchefleur shall follow in fourteen days' time. Floris spends the interval in grieving over the loss of his companion, and his grief is reported to the king. The king is very angry and again desires to put Blanchefleur to death. The queen dissuades him, and the maiden is sold instead. She is taken to Babylon and sold to the Admiral.

The king and queen cause a tomb to be erected for Blanchefleur, and when Floris on his return persists in his inquiries for her, he is conducted by the mother to the tomb. Floris reads the inscription and swoons seven times! He weeps and sighs and laments, and finally attempts to take his own life. His parents then tell him the truth; the grave is opened and found to be empty.

Floris then declares his resolve to find Blanche-

fleur. The king gives him a retinue, and the magnificent cup which had been given in exchange for Blanchefleur. Floris then sets forth on his journey. He obtains news of Blanchefleur at an inn, and taking ship he arrives in the country of his beloved. Again an innkeeper is able to help Floris, and he learns that Blanchefleur has been sold to the Admiral. The innkeeper moreover is able to give him a ring to introduce him to the bridge porter of Babylon. Arriving at the gate, Floris is hospitably entertained, but sits with mournful countenance. Daris inquires the reason, and Floris hints at his trouble. Daris then enlarges on the size of the city, the strength of the Admiral, and tells of the forty-four maidens who are kept on a high tower. He describes the beautiful orchard which contains a wonderful tree and a spring with magic powers. Floris implores the aid of Daris, who eventually tells him to go disguised as a mason to the Tower and induce the porter to play draughts. "During the game, show him the cup, and tell him your desire, and ask his aid." The porter at first reproaches Floris, but at length promises to help him. He conceals him in a basket of flowers and he is borne up to the Tower. Floris mistaking another maiden for Blanchefleur, leaps forth too soon, but discovering his mistake, again hides himself. The maiden goes to fetch Blanchefleur to see "a well fair flower." Floris springs forth and they embrace one another. Both beg Claris not to betray them. She promises not to do so and they rejoice. Each morning two of the maidens have to go to the Admiral. Twice does Blanchefleur fail to appear, and although Claris makes excuses for her, the Admiral goes to seek her himself, and discovers Floris and Blanchefleur together. The Admiral summons his councillors to decide their fate. One suggests that they should be burnt. Floris begs Blanchefleur to take the ring which should preserve her from death. She thrusts it upon him; the ring falls to the ground and is picked up by another councillor. The fairness of the children excites compassion, and the Earl who had picked up the ring steps forward to plead on their behalf. Floris implores the Admiral to spare Blanchefleur. She begs for mercy to be extended to Floris. At length the Admiral, touched with pity, promises to pardon them if Floris will tell how he gained admission to the Tower. Floris tells the story after the king has exonerated the porter. The Admiral, at the conclusion of his story, dubs Floris a knight, and gives permission for the faithful lovers to be married in church with a ring. Messengers arrive, bringing the news that Floris' father is dead. He therefore returns to the kingdom to reign with Blanchefleur as his queen. The Admiral is married to Claris. Thus ends in a truly satisfactory manner this "court romance"—a story in which there is much to remind us of the charming twelfth-century French romance, *Aucassin and Nicolette*, and Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

These Oriental romances differed from the Saxon romances in their more fantastic and sentimental treatment. In their inception at any rate, they are fanciful, allusive, whimsical, tender rather than stern, and passionate. Some of them became Westernised, to suit the fiercer taste of the Saxon, and the more vigorous inclination of the Norman. Few of them were ever so popular as the Arthurian Romances, yet they played a part in modifying our literature, and tinging with softer outline our own romance.

ROMANCES OF SAXON ORIGIN

Havelok the Dane

Both *Havelok*, and *King Horn*, although they have been preserved through French versions, appear to be based on stories which had their origin in England. Both have a distinctly Teutonic spirit.

The Lay of Havelok was probably composed in the reign of Edward I about 1280. It exists in a unique manuscript known as the Laud MS., and was discovered in a very curious fashion after having been given up as lost.

Tyrwhitt, in an *Essay on the Language and Versification of Chaucer*, laments the loss of the "Rime concerning Grymc the Fisher," the founder of Grymesby. It was found by accident bound up with a manuscript in the Bodleian which was described as the *Vitæ Sanctorum*, a large portion of it being occupied with legends of the Saints. It was edited in 1828, by Sir Frederick Madden, for the Roxburgh Club.

From the fact that it is called a *Lai*, and also since the poet tells us "qe un lai en firent li Breton" ("whereof the Britons made a lay"), we are justified in concluding that the story belongs to British or Welsh tradition. An abridgment of the story was made by Geffrei Gaimar in 1141 or 1151, and in one place Gaimar quotes Gildas as his authority. He mentions a feast given by Havelok after his defeat of Hodulf "si sim mes dit la vera estoire" ("as the true history tells us"). An account of this feast does not appear in the fuller French version, but is included in the English version, whence we may argue that some additional source of information was open to the poet. The poem opens in spirited fashion:

> "Hearken to me good men,
> Wives, maidens, and alle men,
> Of a tale that I you will telle,
> The tale of Havelok imaked.
> First fill me a cup of good ale"—

and we may be sure the listeners hastened to supply his demand: his thirst quenched, the *segger* begins his tale.

There was once a king who made good laws—he hated traitors and robbers. In his days men could carry gold in safety and boldly buy and sell. Then was England at peace, for the king made his foes hide themselves. He befriended the fatherless and punished those who wrought shame. His name was Æthelwold—he had but one young daughter to succeed him on the throne. The king feels that death is drawing near and is troubled concerning his daughter who is not yet of age. He summons to his bedside his lords from Roxburgh to Dover. All come to Winchester, in great sorrow at the ill news. The king prays them to tell him

who can best guard his daughter. They answer, Earl Godrich of Cornwall. The king sends for the chalice and paten and the Earl swears a solemn oath to the dying king to protect the interests of his daughter and to marry her to the best and fairest man that can be found. Shortly afterward the king dies and the Earl takes possession of the kingdom. He appoints justices and sheriffs, and soon becomes so rich and powerful that he is feared by all.

Goldborough, the king's daughter, grows up to be very beautiful, and Goldrich is vexed: "Shall I give England to a foot—a girl! My son shall have the country." He sends Goldborough to Dover and shuts her up in a castle.

"May Christ release Goldborough from prison!" interjects the *reggar*.

The story now moves to Denmark, whose king, Birkabeyne, is also dying. He commends his three children to the care of Earl Godard, who swears to take care of them and surrender the kingdom to the boy. No sooner is the king dead than the wicked Earl shuts up the three children—Havelok, Swanborough, and Helfled—in a castle. "He cares not for oaths, he is a traitor, may he be accursed! Cursed be he by the north and south." Godard goes to the Tower in which the children are imprisoned. Havelok complains that he is hungry; Godard cares nought; he cuts the throats of the two little girls and Havelok, seeking to avoid the fate which has befallen his sisters, begs Godard to spare him and he will flee from Denmark. Godard relents for a short space, but reflecting that if Havelok is dead his children will be the heirs, he sends for Grim, a fisherman, and orders him to throw Havelok into the sea. The frightened lad is gagged, put into a sack and carried to the house of Grim. His wife sees a bright light shining round Havelok and tells her husband, who finds the mark of kingship on his shoulder. He begs Havelok to forgive him and promises that Godard shall know nothing about him.

The starving boy is given bread and cheese and butter by Dame Leve, Grim's wife, which he eats up greedily. He then goes to bed.

In the meanwhile, Grim goes to Godard, says he has killed Havelok, and asks for his reward. The Earl sends him away telling him he has done wickedly and shall be hung. Grim, in fear for his own safety and that of Havelok, makes preparations for leaving the country. He sells his stocks, fits up his ship carefully, and taking his wife, his three sons, two daughters, and Havelok, he sets sail. A north wind arises and they are driven to England, they land at Lindesay, up the Humber. There Grim built a house—"that place was called Grimsby after Grim."

Grim was a good fisherman, he caught sturgeon, turbot, &c. He and his sons carried the fish in baskets round the streets. He also sold lampreys at Lincoln and brought home linnets, meal, meat, and hemp to supply their needs. Thus they lived for twelve years.

Havelok having now grown to manhood, thinks it is time for him to work, and earn what he eats. He too will carry a pannier and sell fish. Later, a dearth arises, and they cannot get enough to eat. Grim advises Havelok to go to Lincoln to seek work, and made him a coat out of an old sail. Havelok tramps barefooted to Lincoln where he eventually obtains service with the Earl's cook. Havelok draws water and cuts wood. He is always laughing and blithe. He becomes a general favourite and the playmate of the children. The cook buys him a new suit of clothes. Havelok is the tallest and strongest man in Lincoln.

Earl Godrich has summoned a Parliament to meet at Lincoln. There are games and sporting contests. Some begin "to put the stone," but few are strong enough to lift it. Havelok stands looking at the others. His master tells him to try, and he succeeds in putting the stone twelve feet beyond the rest. His achievement is everywhere discussed and at last comes to the ears of Earl Godrich. The Earl remembers that Athelwold had told him to marry his daughter to the strongest man alive. Havelok shall be the man. He thinks that Havelok is only a thrall. The Earl sends for Goldborough to come to Lincoln to marry Havelok. Goldborough declares she will marry none but a king. Havelok also refuses, but consents when Godrich threatens to hang him. Goldborough also gives way and the two are married by the Archbishop. They both go to Grim where they receive much kindness. At night Goldborough retires to rest very sorrowful. She sees a great light come out of Havelok's mouth and notices a red cross on his shoulder. She hears an angel's voice saying, "Goldborough, be not sad, Havelok shall be king and thou queen." She rejoices and kisses Havelok, who awakes from a dream in which he is urged to cross the seas and win back Denmark once more.

Havelok takes Grim and his sons and they sail across the seas to Denmark. On landing he asks Ubbe to give him permission to buy and sell, and presents Ubbe with a gold ring. Ubbe admires Havelok for his size and strength, and thinks he ought to be a knight and not a pedlar. He invites them to his house, where they have a great feast. They are then sent to the house of Bernard Brown.

At supper, sixty-one thieves attack the house. Havelok performs prodigies of valour, kills twenty men and receives the same number of wounds. The sixty-one thieves are slain, and in the morning Ubbe comes to see what is the matter. They are then taken to Ubbe's castle. During the night Ubbe wakes and sees a great light, "Light enough to choose a penny by"—like toy candles. The light comes from Havelok's mouth. They see also a bright cross on his back—the kingly sign. They know he is Birkabeyne's son and heir.

So great is their joy that Havelok is awakened, and they do him homage. Ubbe sends for the lords of the kingdom, tells them the story and bids them swear fealty to the rightful king. Godard is seized, bound to an old mare and taken to Havelok—"Old sin makes new shame." He is judged by the Earls and condemned to be flayed, drawn, and hung. Havelok then returns to Grimsby, and after much fierce fighting, Godrich is taken prisoner and awarded a similar punishment by the English, who accept Goldborough as their queen. Havelok

rewards all who have befriended him in the days of his adversity. The Danes return home but Havelok remained in England sixty years. He and Goldborough were never apart:

"Such is the *geste* of Havelok and Goldborough.
Each of you say a puter noster for the author.
Amen."

Guy of Warwick

Guy of Warwick is one of the oldest, the most popular and at the same time one of the most tedious of the romances. The story has three main divisions and is probably a combination of two or three romances. The first part tells the love-story of Guy and Felice.

"Since the time that Jesus Christ was born, many adventures as yet unknown are worth knowing." This story concerns a rich and powerful Earl of Warwick and his daughter Felice. Felice was not only very beautiful

"A fair visage lovely in sight
Her skin was white of bright colore,
To kiss it often was gratte lÿst
With grey eyen and nekke white";

but she was also learned in the seven arts. She had famous teachers from Toulouse who had instructed her in "Astronomy, Ars-meetrik, geometry, sophistry, rhetoric, music, and clergy"!

Dukes and earls wooed her in vain.

Guy was the son of the Earl's faithful steward. He is handsome, courteous, and well taught, and strong and proficient in woodcraft, the arts of the chase, and chess. The Earl has a great feast and Guy is sent to wait on Felice. He bears himself so well that thirty maidens fall in love with him:

"And thereof he reddest nought
For upon another was his thought."

Guy is consumed with a passion for Felice and at last, after much secret torment, resolves to confess his love.

Felice speaks to him quite plainly:

"Should I take you a mere garsoun, forsaking earls and dukes and lords, that were dishonour. If I should tell my father you would be hewn in pieces for your folly. Go hence and come no more."

Guy returns home, cursing his fate and longing for death.

He goes a second time to plead with Felice and swoons at her feet. Felice begins to pity him and promises that if Guy becomes a knight he shall have her love.

The Earl dubs Guy a knight, but Felice refuses to have anything to do with him until he has proved his valour. This forms the prelude to the series of adventures which Guy goes through, winning renown in many lands: but on his return Felice is still not satisfied, he must prove himself the best knight under heaven. Guy almost despairs, but again departs, visits Normandy, Spain, Germany, Lombardy, everywhere winning much love and praise. The hatred of a rival, Duke Otoun, almost finishes Guy's career. He is severely wounded and his faithful companions slain. One of them, Herhaud, is however miraculously restored, and after further vicissitudes, Guy and Herhaud meet, to their mutual joy.

It would be far too wearisome to follow the history of the battles, sieges, and tournaments in which Guy is involved, assisting Greek and Turks against the Saracens. In one fierce battle the dead bodies of the Saracens covered fifteen furlongs! The Soudan is so angry at the defeat that he ordered his gods to be brought to him. He reproached them with ingratitude, flouted them, broke their legs and arms, and ordered them to be cast out!

Moreover Guy, sent as a messenger to the Soudan, strikes off his head and runs away with it. Another time he kills a dragon to help a lion with whom the dragon is fighting. Guy's marriage with the Emperor's daughter is arranged, Guy and his friends go to the church—the princess is also there. The Archbishop is ready to marry them. He then suddenly remembers Felice; he would rather have her than any other maiden with all good things!

Guy solves the difficulty by conveniently fainting away. Recovering, he asks the Emperor to put off the marriage. Eventually Guy bids them all farewell and starts on his homeward journey. Many adventures happen on the way, but he finally reaches England, staying a short while with King Athelstan. Ere proceeding to Warwick, news reaches the king of a terrible dragon which has come over from Ireland and is devouring men and cattle. Guy offers to go to Northumberland and kill the dragon. His sword has no effect upon the dragon, which is thirty feet long, but Guy manages to kill it and the head is taken to the king.

"May God reward those who listen to my tale!" ejaculates the minstrel.

Guy at last reaches Warwick, and his marriage with Felice is accomplished with much feasting and rejoicing, which goes on for a fortnight.

One night Guy, having returned from hunting, is standing on a turret looking at the stars. He is suddenly filled with remorse on account of his past life. God has given him so much; he has done nothing in return; he thinks he is lost body and soul. He thereupon determines to devote the rest of his life to penance. He will go on a pilgrimage. Felice takes a more practical view of the matter and suggests that he can quite as well atone for his sins at home, by alms, by founding churches and abbeys. Guy will not be turned from his purpose. He gives Felice a ring, his sword and various instructions concerning the education of his son to Herhaud, and departs.

The usual adventures follow. Guy takes part in several fights in spite of his palmer's weeds. In the meantime Raymbron, Guy's son, is stolen away, and Felice consoles herself for her double loss by acts of piety, feeding the poor, &c. Finally Guy returns and, habited as a pilgrim, receives alms from his wife. Unwilling to distract her in these pious pursuits, he lives the rest of his life as a solitary hermit.

When dying, he sends the ring by a page to Felice, and urges her to come and give directions for his burial. She arrives, and having received

his last words, survives him only fifteen days and was buried in the same grave.

Another long addition to the romance describes the search for Raynbron, &c.

> "Now is the story brought to an end
> Of Guy, the bold baron of fame
> And of the fair maid Felice.
> . . . . . .
> And ye that have heard this story,
> God give you all his blessing,
> And of his grace to your ending
> And joy and bliss, that ever shall be!
> Amen, Amen, for charitee!"

KING HORN

The beginning of the thirteenth century witnessed a revival of the English element. The epic stories seem to have been lost or preserved only in oral tradition. These earlier epic tales had been replaced by a new set of stories imported from France. The popular stories of *Guy of Warwick* and *Sir Davis*, that were supposed to contain a kernel of genuine tradition, are, as we have seen, elaborately embroidered with the materials of mediæval romances. *Havelok* and *King Horn* stand apart from these.

The story of *King Horn* is known in several versions, and the oldest and most archaic was evidently intended to be sung by the gleemen. Its origin may be traced back to the turbulent times of the Danish invasion. The *Song of King Horn* is a metrical romance, in which an old story has received a fresh impress.

Horn is the son of King Murry or Allof of South Daneland and Queen Godhild. He is exceedingly beautiful and has twelve noble youths as companions—among them two whom he loved more than the rest, Athulf and Fikenhild, who proves a traitor. One day as King Murry is riding along the strand he sees fifteen ships have arrived filled with Saracens. After a brave defence the king and his companions are slain, and the enemy begin to lay waste the country. The churches are destroyed and the people massacred. Queen Godhild retires to a cave, where she continues to practise the Christian religion. Horn's beauty arouses the pity of the pagan king and he and his companions are cast adrift in a boat. "The sea began to flow and Horn-child to row, the sea drove the ship so fast that the children were afraid. They saw a sure fate before them all day and all night, till the daylight sprang, till Horn upon the strand saw men walking on the land. "Comrades," he spoke, "youths, I will tell you tidings. I hear birds sing and see the grass spring. Let us be blithe in life, our ship is on the shore." They meet King Aylmer on the land, who asks Horn his name, and on hearing it speaks thus: "Enjoy thou well thy name, Horn, sound loud over hill and dale, resound over valley and down." The king entrusts Horn to Athelbrus, his steward, to be educated. He is to be instructed in hunting, fishing, playing the harp, and serving the cup. Horn learns readily and becomes a general favourite, but most of all he is loved by Rymenhild, the king's daughter. Rymenhild bids Athelbrus bring Horn to her bower, but he, fearing some evil consequence, takes Athulf instead. Rymenhild in the darkness of the storm mistakes Athulf for Horn, embraces him and declares her love. Athulf declares his identity and Rymenhild is angry with Athelbrus, who then promises to bring Horn. He finds the latter in the hall serving the king. He bids Horn go to the bower of Rymenhild, bidding him be discreet. Horn goes to Rymenhild's bower. She tells him of her love and bids him plight his troth to her. Horn refuses on account of his low estate. Rymenhild faints away when she hears his reply. Horn takes her in his arms and caresses her, and promises to marry her if she will help him to become a knight.

The next day Athelbrus asks the king who readily accedes to the request, and Horn and his companions are knighted.

Rymenhild again sends for Horn. He comes with Athulf to bid her farewell. Before he makes her his wife, he must win honour and deserve her by knightly deeds.

Rymenhild gives Horn a ring which he is to wear for her love, which will protect him if he looks at it and thinks of her. Horn then takes his leave and rides forth on his black steed in search of adventures. He finds at the seashore hosts of Saracens. He slays the Saracen leader, and then looking on his ring, a hundred more. He returns to King Aylmer bearing the Saracen leader's head on the point of his sword. On going to Rymenhild he finds her weeping. She has had a dream which fills her heart with fear. These fears are soon realised, for Fikenhild tells the king that Horn is plotting to kill him. King Aylmer angrily banishes Horn from the kingdom. Horn bids Rymenhild a tender farewell, telling her not to wait for him longer than seven years. "Farewell, Rymenhild, longer dare I not stay. I go to a strange country. If I come not again at the end of seven years, or send thee no message, take a husband and wait no longer for me. Fold me into thine arms and kiss long."

The seven years are filled with adventures and combats with the Saracens. During this time he does not communicate with Rymenhild. Athulf sends a letter to Horn telling him that a king is suing for the hand of Rymenhild. While Horn is out hunting he receives a letter telling him that Rymenhild is to be married to King Mody of Reynes, on Sunday. Horn replies that he will return on Sunday before Prime. The messenger is drowned, and Rymenhild looks in vain for the answer to her letter. Horn tells King Thurston who he is and asks his aid in carrying out his plans. The king consents, and Horn levies men and sets sail for Westerneese accompanied by Irish knights. Landing, he leaves his followers behind, and meeting a pilgrim he learns that the wedding has already taken place. Horn changes clothes with the pilgrim and goes to the castle where Rymenhild dwells, not yet having become the wife of Mody. Athulf from the Tower awaits his coming, dreading he will be too late. Rymenhild bears wine to the guests. Horn asks Rymenhild to serve the beggars. She fills a gallon bowl with brown beer and offers it to Horn. He refuses it, saying he will have nothing

but "a coppe of white"; that he is no beggar, but a fisher. He further alludes to her dream of the fish net, and bids her drink to "Horn of horne."

Rymenhild looks at him and trembles, not understanding. She fills the horn with wine and bids him drink his fill and tell her if he knows aught of Horn. He drinks and then throws the ring into the horn. Rymenhild finds the ring after she has returned to her bower and sends for the pilgrim to inquire how he got the ring. He tells her that in his wanderings he met Horn on the strand and goes on to say that Horn fell ill on the ship and as he was dying, charged him to deliver it. Rymenhild raves with grief and attempts to stab herself with a knife. Horn prevents her, and stripping off his disguise, tells her who he is. Rymenhild is overcome with joy. Horn tells her he has armed men at the "wodes ende," who will prevent the wedding. Later, Horn with his men break into the hall, kill many of the guests, and Rymenhild and he are married. Horn addresses the king and exposes the treachery of Fikenhild.

The story does not end here, for Horn is determined to avenge his father's death and win back his kingdom ere he takes Rymenhild for his wife. With the help of his Irish followers and the faithful Athulf he succeeds in regaining his kingdom, and to his great joy finds his mother still alive. He causes churches and chapels to be built, bells to be rung, and masses celebrated for his father's soul. During his absence the traitor Fikenhild gains a great following, seizes Rymenhild whom he wishes to compel to be his wife, and shuts her up in a strong castle which he has built in the sea. Warned by a dream, Horn returns at the critical moment. He is informed by Arnoldin, Athulf's nephew, of all that has happened, and hastens to the castle which he and his companions enter, disguised as harpers, with their swords under their garments.

"They stepped over the gravel to the castle. They began merrily to sing and play. Rymenhild heard it, and asked who they were. They answered that they were harpers, and some of them were fiddlers. They let Horn in at the portal of the hall. He seated himself upon the bench and began to play the harp. He sang before Rymenhild and she answered with wailings. Rymenhild fell into a swoon; none laughed there. Bitter pain smote Horn's heart. He looked upon his ring, and thought of Rymenhild; he stepped to the board, and with the edge of his good sword he struck off Fikenhild's head and he overthrew all warriors, one after another. When they were killed he caused Fikenhild to be torn to pieces." [1]

He rewards his faithful followers. Horn now takes Rymenhild to be his queen, and they live in true love and cherish God's law.

Many traits in this story suggest its primitive origin. The relationship existing between Horn and his followers; the manner of wooing—in the duel scene—in the formal challenge on the part of an invading host to a duel upon the result of which shall depend the marriage of a princess or the fate of a kingdom.

Bevis of Hampton

Bevis of Hampton and *Guy of Warwick* are both romances which professedly deal with the time of Athelstan and Eadgar. It is possible that in *Guy of Warwick* the poet used English local traditions. There are many elements in both that suggest folk-lore material: the story of the dragon reminds us of the slaying of Grendel and Grendel's mother.

Guy, Earl of Southampton, marries late in life the beautiful daughter of the King of Scotland. The Emperor Almaine or Devoun had desired to marry her, but her father refuses her hand to Devoun and gives her to Sir Guy. They have one son named Bevis. After his birth the lady regrets her marriage, and resolves to encompass the death of Guy and marry her former lover. She sends a messenger to the Emperor requesting him to come to England on the 1st of May and go into a forest near the seaside and kill her husband whom she will send there.

The messenger finds the Emperor and delivers the message. He receives a rich present, and the Emperor promises to perform her request. On the 1st of May, Lady Guy pretends to be ill and sends her husband into the forest to get the flesh of a wild boar which she hopes will cure her.

Thither her husband rides, and is met by the Emperor who has a large retinue with him. Guy is slain and his head despatched to his lady, who promises to become the Emperor's wife the next day.

Bevis grieves at the death of his father and reproaches his mother with murder. She commands his foster-father, Saber, to murder the boy. Saber pretends that he has done it and sends the garments of Bevis sprinkled with pig's blood to his mother. He dresses the boy as a poor herdsman and sends him to mind the sheep, intending to send him later on to an Earl to be educated. Out in the fields Bevis hears the sound of rejoicing. He cannot refrain from going to the hall and demanding admission. He strikes the Emperor three strokes with his staff and then escapes, thinking he has killed the Emperor. His mother sells him for a large sum to heathen merchants who sail with Bevis to Armenia. There he becomes the king's chamberlain, and in the usual way, the princess having witnessed some of his brave deeds, falls in love with him. Bevis becomes a brave leader in the king's army.

Josian presents him with a magic sword Morgelai, and a horse Arondel, but in consequence of jealousy of courtiers he is forced to depart. In the meantime Saber sends his son Terri to search for Bevis. When Terri makes inquiries he is told that Bevis has been hanged by the Saracens.

Bevis now proceeds to Damascus, where he meets with many adventures and is imprisoned for seven years. Bevis has progressed in Christian virtue, has received a visit from an angel who cures him of an adder's bite. He renews his prayers to

[1] Ten Brink, *Early English Literature*.

heaven for deliverance, and finally escapes by means of a miracle and rides off into the forest.

Bevis finds his way to Jerusalem and confesses to the patriarch; he then sets out for King Ermin's court. On the journey he meets a knight who informs him of Josian's marriage.

Disguised as a palmer, he is received by Josian and placed at the head of the board and requested to say whether he has seen or heard aught of Sir Bevis in his travels. He professes to be an intimate friend of Bevis who has sent him in search of the steed Arondel. The queen leads him to the stable, and at the sound of the stranger's voice Arondel burst the *seven chains* that bound him and ran to the stable door:

> "Bevis himself in the saddle threw
> And thereby Josian anon him knew."

Boniface, Josian's confidential chamberlain, suggests a plan whereby the two can escape, unknown to the king. The plan is successful, in spite of pursuits, attacks by lions, and an encounter with a formidable giant Ascapard who, after being vanquished in fight, becomes the page of Sir Bevis. The three proceed to Cologne in Germany—the bishop of Cologne quite providentially is the brother of Sir Guy and Sir Saber, and uncle to Bevis. He hears their story and at the desire of Sir Bevis consents to baptize Josian and the page Ascapard.

> "The bishop christened Josian
> That was white as any swan
> For Ascapard was made a tun,
> And when he should therein be done
> He leapt out upon the bench (*brink*)
> And said, 'Churl, wilt thou me drench? (*drown*)
> The devil of hell mot fetche thee!
> I am too much (*for big*) christened to be!'"[1]

This little scene sorely grieved the bishop, the author tells us, although it afforded much amusement to the spectators.

Bevis now asks the bishop for assistance to avenge his father's death, and is readily given a hundred knights.

Leaving Josian in the care of Ascapard, he sets sail for England, landing at Southampton. In the meantime a powerful Earl named Sir Mile determines to make Josian his wife. By means of a forged letter, he gets rid of Ascapard. The lady, in great alarm, sends a message to Bevis, but herself invents a way out of her difficulty by hanging Sir Mile to the roof-beam with her girdle.

The Barons and workpeople wonder at the long sleep of the Earl, and they break open the door. Josian informs them

> "His head wol ake never more.
> . . . . . .
> Yesterday he wedded woe with wrong
> And all night I did him hang."

Josian is condemned to be burnt to death. Sir Bevis and Ascapard return in time to rescue her from the stake. Bevis afterwards returns to Southampton and after a fierce struggle avenges his father's death.

Here, one might imagine the story would end, but no; Bevis is involved in a further series of adventures.

King Edgar's son tries to steal Arondel, receives a sudden kick and is killed. Edgar swears to be revenged on Sir Bevis and he is expelled from the country. His return with Josian and his two sons is not accomplished without great slaughter:

> "The blood fell on that pavement,
> Right down to the Temple Bar it went,
> As it is said in French romance,
> Both in Engelonde and in Fraunce,
> So many men at once were never seen dead,
> For the water of Thames for blood wax red;
> From St. Mary Bowe to London Stone,
> That like time was homing rume."[1]

Sixty thousand men were slain in this battle ere Sir Bevis and his sons returned to their camp at Putney.

King Edgar made overtures for peace and offers his only daughter to Mile, the son of Bevis, in marriage. Bevis with Josian and his other son go to Ermony. Soon after Josian is seized with illness and dies in the arms of her husband. At the same moment he receives news that the faithful Arondel had died in his stable—a few minutes later he himself breathed his last. Their remains were buried under the high altar of a church dedicated to St. Lawrence:

> "God on their souls have pity,
> And on Arondel his good steed.
> Gif men for lucse shoulden sing or read!
> Thus endeth Sir Bevis of Hampton
> That was so noble a Baroun."

Whereat the modern reader who attempts to wade through the romance will heave a sigh of relief.

[1] Ellis, *Early English Metrical Romances.*

ENGLISH ALLITERATIVE ROMANCES

A revival of the Old English alliterative verse occurred about the middle of the fourteenth century. The victories of Edward III in France resulted in a re-awakening of the national self-consciousness which found vent in a new enthusiasm for the English tongue. English displaced French in the schools and law courts, and in 1362 Parliament was opened in the English language.

During the preceding period, the various dialects had been undergoing a process of simplification. Inflections had been disappearing, the language was tending towards forms which could become universal. It is not strange, therefore, that this revival should be accompanied by a reaction on the part of the poets to earlier and more truly national forms of verse. Under French influence rhymed verse had gained the ascendency in English poetry, although alliteration still remained in numerous phrases and conventional formulas. Alliterative poetry never entirely disappeared, and in Laurence Minot, lyric or courtly verse joined forces with the more popular forms.

This accounts in some measure for a series of romances that arose in the district of the Welsh Marches, and which borrowed the Old English epic verse and invested the romances with a certain dignity and stately splendour.

[1] Ellis, *Early English Metrical Romances.*

"The archaic cast of the form, combined with the thoroughly modern subject-matter (that is, modern in the fourteenth century) at first has an odd and startling effect. But this impression is soon overcome; one grows accustomed to the novel style and yields voluntarily to its mysterious spell, a spell that is, nevertheless, broken in protracted works, or in mediocre poets by monotony."

Two poems of which fragments only remain are the oldest specimens of this alliterative verse; one being part of a romance on the Holy Grail, or Joseph of Arimathea, and two parts of an Alexander romance. The first is a condensed version of a long work in French prose. The serious style of the writers is admirably in keeping with the mystical character of the narrative. The Alexander fragments contain graphic and forcible descriptions and several brilliant passages. The work of this poet is important, since it influenced "William" the translator of a French romance, *William of Palerne*.

The romance of *William and the Werwolf* has been printed from a unique manuscript in the library of King's College, Cambridge. Jacob Bryant and the Rev. Jeremiah Milles, Dean of Exeter, in an attempt to defend the Rowley poems by Chatterton as being genuine Old English poems, cite portions of this romance in support of his claims. The quotations made from this manuscript attracted the attention of George Stevens, who desired permission to inspect it. Dr. Glynne, Senior Fellow of the College, a strong supporter of the Rowleian theory—(Dr. Glynne bequeathed to the British Museum the original parchments fabricated by Chatterton)—thinking that an examination of the book might not assist the claims of Chatterton, had the book locked up where it remained until 1824, when they were once more brought to light.

The story of this *roman d'aventures* concerns a Spanish prince who is transformed into a werewolf through the sorcery of his wicked stepmother. The werewolf carries off to Rome a Sicilian prince, whose uncle seeks to kill him. There the youth is discovered by the Emperor who makes him a page to the Princess Melior, his daughter. Melior and William become lovers, and the two escape from Rome in bear-skins and deer-skins, pursued by knights. Eventually, all the actors in the extravaganza meet at Palermo—disenchantments and reconciliations take place—and the *roman* concludes with the various weddings.

William excels in his portrayal of the tender and pathetic themes. He excuses himself for adopting the alliterative metre—(the original was written in short couplets)—and in this form the poet feels he does not possess sufficient skill.

"In thise wise hath William all his werke ended,
As fully as the Frenssche fully wold aske,
And as his witte him wold serve though it were febul."

Another alliterative poem, remarkable for its freshness and force, that dates from the reign of Edward III, is *A treatise and good short Refreyte* (Dispute) *betwixt Winner and Waster*. It is a satire on the social conditions prevalent in England at this time (c.1360). The poet in his vision sees two rival hosts ready for angry conflict. They agree to submit the case to the king for settlement. Winner and Waster, the two leaders, then address the king in turn. The king stops their wrangling and tells each to live where he is loved most. Winner is to go to Rome and dwell with the Pope and Cardinals; Waster to the busy streets of London until he shall accompany the king on his Continental wars.

The poem is incomplete, only five hundred lines remaining, but it affords a striking commentary on the miseries of the country at the time; the scarcity of labour, the result of the Black Death. The economic conditions are discussed, and it is possible the poet was influenced by the revival of chivalry in the institution of the Order of the Garter (1348)—*vide* description of rival knights. Moreover the concluding page of the manuscript has the motto of the Order written in Old English:

"Scorn have the man that any harm thinketh."

Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight

"*Pearl*," "*Cleanness*," and "*Patience*"

Each poem in the MSS. is preceded by four illustrations; those to *Sir Gawayne* are as follows:

(1) Illumination of a headless knight on horseback, carrying his head by its hair in his right hand and looking benignly at an odd-eyed hill-man before him; while from a raised structure above, a king armed with a knife, his queen, an attendant with a sabre, and another hill-man looks scowling on.

Here and elsewhere the only colours used are red, yellow, and blue and green. At the conclusion in a *later hand* is written "*Hony soit q mal pense*," which may perhaps allude to the stolen interview between

(2) Sir Gawayne and the Wife of the Green Knight. Above the lady's head is written:

"Mi mind is mukel on one that wil me noght amende,
Sum time wes trew as ston and ito schame coutho her defende."

(3) Gawayne is seen approaching the Green Chapel, whilst his enemy appears above wielding his huge axe.

(4) Sir Gawayne fully equipped in armour is represented in the presence of King Arthur and Queen Guenevere after his return to court.

Characteristics.—The metrical romances were in most cases meant to supply amusement and entertainment to the listeners. They performed the part of picture palaces in the Middle Ages. With the return of alliterative verse a more serious view was given to the romance.

Among the many heroes of British romance, Gawayne holds the place of honour, for attractiveness of personality. To those who know of him only from Tennyson's unpleasing picture of a false, irre-

[1] Ten Brink.

verent knight, it comes as a surprise to find that the Gawayne of mediæval romance is "gay, gracious, and good." He was the best beloved of Arthur's comrades, and we are told "ever he was wont to do more than he agreed, and to give more than he promised." In the work of Malory, for the first time these characteristics are presented in a less favourable light.

True that he does not dominate any romance in the way that Tristram and Launcelot do, but there is scarcely a story in which he does not appear, and does not fail to grace, and one of the most remarkable and most arresting of the romances is that of *Gawayne and the Green Knight* (*c.* 1374); a romance that has no superior save in the pages of Chaucer.

About its author, unhappily, practically nothing is known, save that he lived probably in Cheshire. In his romance he uses both alliteration and rhyme.

In Sir Gawayne, the poet holds up a "mirror of knighthood." The ideal is the ideal knight "truest of speech and fairest of form," in "cleanness and courtesy was he never found wanting"; a prototype of Chaucer's "verray parfait, gentil knight." The story is borrowed from the *Perceval* (*Roman de Perceval*, by Chrestien de Troyes), with interpolated passages that are original and throw light on the customs and manners of our ancestors.

The Story.—King Arthur holds Christmas festival that lasts fifteen days, at Camelot, surrounded by his knights and ladies. They celebrate the New Year by a religious service in chapel and the distribution of gifts. The king and his lords and ladies take their seats at the Round Table, but Arthur jumps up and down like a child, declaring he will not eat until he has beheld some marvel—heard some strange tale, or witnessed an encounter of arms.

The first course is served with the noise of trumpets and drums. Then another sound is heard and there rushes in at the hall door a knight of gigantic stature, the greatest on earth. He is clothed entirely in green and rides upon a green foal. Fair wavy hair fell about his shoulders and a beard like a bush hung upon his breast. The knight carried no helmet, shield, or spear, but in one hand he held a holly bough and in the other an axe, the handle of which was encased in iron curiously graven in green with gracious works. Thus arrayed, he enters the hall without saluting anyone. He casts his eye round, looking for the most renowned of the knights who sat marvelling, not daring to speak.

"Not all from fear, but some from courtesy."

Then Arthur salutes the Green Knight, and entreats him to stay awhile at his court. The knight replies that he has come to satisfy himself respecting the fame of Arthur's court. He comes in peace and has but one request to make.

He then challenges any among the assembled knights to give him one stroke with the axe, provided that he come to him in a year and a day's time to receive the return stroke. The knights are still more astounded at this speech, and sit silent. The knight righting himself in his saddle, rolls his eyes fiercely about, bends his bristly green brows and strokes his beard awaiting a reply, but finding none accept his challenge he exclaims, "What! is this King Arthur's house, the fame of which has spread through so many realms? Forsooth, the renown of the Round Table is overturned by one man's speech, for all tremble for dread without a blow being struck." He laughed so loud that Arthur blushed for very shame and waxed as wroth as the wind. Arthur himself will accept the challenge and seizes the axe. Sir Gawayne, the king's nephew, at this steps forward and beseeches the king to allow him to undertake the encounter.

Sir Gawayne takes the axe, the Green Knight bends himself to the ground and bares his neck for the blow. Gawayne raises the axe on high and quickly it falls upon the neck of the Green Knight. The head is severed from the body and rolls near the feet of the knights who turn it aside with their feet. The knight does not falter, but seizing the head, he mounts his horse, and holding the head by the long fair hair, he turns the bleeding trunk in the saddle and the head lifted up its eyelids and the mouth spoke to Sir Gawayne, charging him to seek him out at the Green Chapel in a twelvemonth's time and receive the return stroke.

With a fierce start he turns the reins, rushes out of the hall door, his head in his hand—so that the sparks flew out of the hoofs of his foal. King Arthur then declares himself ready to have his meat, for he has that day seen a wondrous adventure. The axe is hung upon the wall, and conversation flies quickly.

The year soon passes away.

After Christmas comes the "crabbed Lenten" time; the spring with its soft showers, the earth is covered with green and the flowers begin to blossom forth, then cometh summer "with soft blowing winds":

"When zephyr sighs sweetly on seeds and herbs,
Most winsome is the wort that then groweth wild,
When the damp drops drip from the dewy leaves,
A blissful blush to bide of the bright beaming sun." [1]

Harvest soon approaches, and drives the dust about. The leaves drop off the trees, the grass becomes gray, and all ripens and rots. Winter comes round again, and it is time for Sir Gawayne to start on his journey.

On All Hallows Day, Arthur makes a feast for his nephew, and there is much sorrow at his departure. "Much was the warm water poured from eyes on that day," says the poet.

Sir Gawayne passes from Camelot, through Gloucestershire into Montgomeryshire, thence through North Wales to Holy Head adjoining the Isle of Anglesea, from whence he passes into the narrow peninsula of Wirral in Cheshire, where dwelt few that loved God or man.

The knight pursues his journey by strange paths, climbs many cliffs, crosses many fords, finding many foes, and encountering many adventures with serpents, wolves, wild men, and boars; but the sharp winter troubled him more than anything. Thus he travels until Christmas is near at hand. He

[1] Ten Brink, translated by H. M. Kennedy (Bell).

prays to the Virgin Mary that she will guide him to some abode. On the morrow he finds himself in a deep forest where there were many hundreds of oaks. "Many sad birds upon bare twigs piped piteously for the cold."

Through many a mire he goes that he may celebrate the birth of Christ. He beseeches the Virgin—He says "Cross of Christ speed me"—and scarcely has he crossed himself thrice when he saw a dwelling set on a hill. Gawayne rides to the gate, but the drawbridge is raised and the gates shut. At the call of the knight the porter opens the gate. Gawayne rides into the castle, he is received with great honour. His horse is led into the stable and knights and squires hasten to relieve him of his weapons. The lord of the castle then appears and bids Gawayne a cordial welcome.

He is led into a chamber in which a fire is burning, and gorgeous robes are placed ready for him to wear. A feast is made ready in the hall, fish cooked in a variety of ways—baked and broiled and seasoned with spices. Bear and spiced wine is also served. Trumpeters announce the entry of the courses, and during the repast, music and carols are furnished by minstrels.

After dinner they go to the chapel for service, at the conclusion of which the lady leaves her seat and approaches the knight, accompanied by an old and withered crony. The lady herself is young and beautiful. By permission of his host, Gawayne goes to meet them—he bows to the old lady and kisses the younger. The evening quickly passes in cheerful conversation, all rejoice that Gawayne "the father of nurture" is there. Now they may expect to see "courtesy." The feasting and revelry go on for three days.

On the evening of St. John's Day many of the guests depart and Gawayne also desires to go, but his host on being informed of the object of his journey promises that Gawayne shall reach the chapel in time, since it is only two miles distant from the castle. He begs him to stay longer.

Relieved by the assurances of his host, Gawayne is nothing loth. The host proposes that Gawayne shall keep his hostess company on the morrow while he goes out hunting, and that they shall present to each other what the day brings them. The compact is renewed twice. Each day the lord of the castle goes to hunt; on the first day deer, the second boar, the third the fox. The hunting is described in the minutest detail, even to the manner in which the deer and boar are cut up and carried home to the castle. Lest these technical matters should prove too tedious, Sir Gawayne's experiences are related in between. Each morning the lady visits Sir Gawayne's room. Her advances are rejected by Sir Gawayne respectfully and courteously, her kisses he returns to the lord of the castle in exchange for the hunt. The third morning, having declined a gold ring which the lady wishes to bestow upon him, he relents so far as to accept a silken girdle that will preserve the owner from death and wounds. Gawayne, mindful of his coming encounter with the Green Knight, keeps the gift a secret. Thus withstanding sensual temptation he is a victim to fear of death.

At last New Year's Day dawns, the weather is stormy, snow falls, the dales are full of drift. Gawayne, lying sleepless, hears each cock that crows. He rises ere daylight, dresses himself, buckles on his armour, placing beneath it the silken girdle. Gringolet is led forth, and with words of gratitude he bids them all farewell.

Gawayne rides forth accompanied by a servant to show him the way. They "climb the cliffs, where each hill had a hat and a mist cloak." Here they halt and the servant tries to dissuade Gawayne from proceeding further, since the Green Knight kills everyone who passes the chapel. "Therefore, noble Gawayne, let this man alone, and go, for God's sake, some other way. I shall his me home and I shall swear by God and all his saints to keep the secret. Never will I say thou didst flee before any man!"

Gawayne answers with sternness, that if he were to fly for fear he should be a coward knight. He pursues his journey and reaches the valley, but looks in vain for the chapel, being surrounded by high rocks on all sides.

At last he sees a smooth hill on the bank of a stream. He dismounts, ties his steed to a bough and proceeds to examine the hill. He finds that it has three entrances—the inside is hollow.

"Can this be the Green Chapel?" says the knight; "the devil might say mass here at midnight." While climbing the hill he hears the noise of someone grinding an axe. He thinks the sound may proceed from the enemy, and calls, "Who dwells in this place to hold discourse with me? Now goes here the good Gawayne, if any man will hurry hither to have his wish now or never."

"Abide," is the reply, "and thou shalt speedily have what I once promised thee."

With these words the Green Knight springs forth, bearing a new Danish axe in his hand. He tells Gawayne to get ready for the blow he has covenanted to receive. Gawayne bends his head and bares his neck. The Green Knight raises the weapon and raises it for the blow. As the axe falls, Gawayne shrinks slightly. The Green Knight reproaches him with cowardice. "I flinched once," says Sir Gawayne, "but will no more; if my head falls on the stones I cannot restore it."

The Green Knight raises the axe again. "Now that thou hast thy heart whole, I must hit thee; look to thy neck, if so be it recover from my stroke!"

Gawayne replies angrily: "Thrash on, proud man, thou dost threaten too long. I believe thine own heart fails thee."

"Forsooth! thou answerest so bold I hinder thy fate no longer." Wrinkling his lips and brows, he lets the axe fall on Gawayne's neck, but only slightly wounds him. The blood flows over the hero's shoulders to the earth. Gawayne at once springs up, arms himself with helmet and shield, and drawing his sword and speaks, "Hold now with thy blow, offer me no more, one stroke I have taken in this place without strife. If thou give me any more I will readily requite it. For according to our covenant but one falls to me."

The Green Knight, resting on his axe, surveys the hero with a pleased look. "Bold knight, be not so angry, no one has done thee unmannerly wrong here. We acted only according to our agreement. I promised thee one stroke, thou hast it, I release thee from the rest. If I had been more wrathful, I could have dealt thee worse harm. At first I menaced thee with one stroke, without striking thee, on account of the agreement we made the first night; thou didst keep it faithfully, and gavest me all thy gain. The second feint was for the second day; thou didst kiss my wife and gavest me the kisses again. But the third time thou failedst, and therefore hadst thou that tap. For mine it is, that woven girdle which thou wearest, my own wife wove it, I know it well. I know well thy kisses and thy virtues and the wooing of my wife; I wrought it myself, I sent her to tempt thee, methinks, the most faultless hero, in sooth, that ever trod the earth. As pearls are of more price than white peas, so is Gawayne of more price than other gay knights. But here thou hast sinned a little; a little thou brakest faith. But that was not for amorous wooing; it was because thou lovedst thy life, hence I blame thee the less."

At these words Gawayne stands silent, and the hot blood rushes to his face. "Cursed be cowardice and covetousness both; cowardice taught me to accord with covetousness, and to forsake my nature; the generosity and loyalty that belong to a knight." He throws the girdle to the Green Knight, bitterly lamenting his failure. The knight presents Gawayne with the girdle, saying he has atoned for it by the wound he has received. He invites him to return to the castle and be reconciled to his wife. Gawayne, however, declines the offer:

"... deceived by a woman!"

Did not the same thing happen to Adam, Solomon, Samson, and David? How could a man love woman and not believe them?

Gawayne then takes the girdle. He will wear it as a sign of his guilt. In answer to his request to know his name, the Green Knight tells Gawayne he is Bernlac de Hautdesert. Arthur's half-sister, Morgan the Fay, the pupil of Merlin, has planned the whole affair, in order to frighten Queen Guenevere. She was the old dame whom Gawayne had seen with the lady. The two knights bid each other farewell, and Gawayne returns to Arthur's court. Gawayne relates his adventures with shame and shows the girdle. The king and knights comfort Gawayne, every knight of the Round Table resolving to wear a green girdle in his honour.

Characteristics of the Romance

1. Written with the alliterative measure of the epic, and combined with a lyrical element (cf. *Pearl*).

2. This romance shows close acquaintance with the courtly life of the age, and the writer was evidently a lover of the chase; it has therefore an historical value.

3. It is remarkable also for the deep and tender love of nature displayed throughout the poem, and some of its most delightful passages describe the charms of wild scenery.

4. It displays an intimate knowledge of mediæval craftsmanship and art.

5. It shows literary power in its treatment of the story, avoiding monotony and repetition with great skill.

6. It is, in essence, didactic, being a study of chastity. Gawayne, beset by St. Anthony's temptations, triumphs over them.

In the romance of *Gawayne and the Green Knight*, the poet for the first time breaks away from tradition, and while using a romantic tale he tells it with force and individuality, so that the attention of the reader is held throughout. He avoids the besetting sins of the romancers; their diffuseness and the repetition of stock phrases and episodes. The incidents in the story are subordinated to the main purpose the writer has in view; viz. to produce a work of art dominated by a high ethical ideal; and as a piece of literary craftsmanship the romance occupies a place in the front rank. This same earnest moral purpose expresses itself in *Pearl*, and in the two less considerable poems, *Cleanness*, and *Patience*.

Pearl (1360–1400).—In its external loveliness, and even more in its deeper spiritual beauty and truth lies sufficient reason for most patient and devoted study of *Pearl*, "The *Vita Nuova* of our language."[1]

That this beautiful Middle English poem is not more widely known is due to the difficulty of the language in which it is written, a dialect of the extreme North-West Midland, with a large mixture of Northern, Scandinavian, and romance words.

The writer of *Pearl* also wrote *Cleanness*, *Patience*, and the romance of *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight*. His identity is a matter of conjecture; attempts have been made to associate the authorship of these poems with Huchown of *Awle Ryale*—

"He made þe gret gest of Arthure,
And þe Awntyre of Gawayne"—[2]

and with Ralph Strode, who is described in an old Merton College catalogue as "*Radulphus Strode, nobilis poeta fuit et versificavit librum elegiacum vocatum Phantasma Radulphi.*" The theory advanced in the latter case being that *Phantasma* is identical with *Pearl*.

From the internal evidence of the poems, the author would seem, from his wide reading and clerkly lore, to have been educated at Oxford or Paris. He has a knowledge of French and Latin, and intimate acquaintance with the Bible.[3] He is also familiar with the *Roman de la Rose*, Boccaccio, and Dante.

That he was an ecclesiastic seems doubtful, although he has strong sympathy with the religious life. He is cultured, experienced in the ways of the court, and in knightly breeding. The details of life in a feudal castle, the tapestries, the knights'

[1] *Pearl* (*Belles Lettres*).
[2] Wyntoun's *Chronicle*.
[3] Note large Scriptural element in *Pearl*, *Cleanness*, and *Patience*.

armour, the episodes in the three days' hunting described in such realistic fashion in Sir Gawayne, seem to indicate the author's close association with such matters. The four poems, *Cleanness*, *Patience*, *Pearl*, and *Sir Gawayne* exhibit the same passion for purity, the same moral earnestness, enthusiasm for beauty and goodness in man and nature, although it is perhaps in the last poem that the writer attains the highest expression in art and technique.

The writer adopts the allegorical convention of his day, laments the loss of his little child (Margaret), under the image of the *Pearl*:

"Pearl, pleasant to prince's pay,
So daintily dight in gold so clear!"

He describes the loss of his precious Pearl in an arbour, his entry into the arbour in the "high season of August," probably the Feast of the Assumption (August 15th).

"To that sweet spot of sad renown
I entered, to that arbour green,
In August, at the summer's crown,
When corn is cut with sickles keen.
The earth where once my Pearl rolled down
Was shadowed with herbs full clear and sheen,
Gillyflower, ginger, and gromelion,
And peonies powdered all between."[1]

He slid into a sleeping dream; his spirit wandered forth and he found himself where steep cliffs gleam.

"High crown'd is all that steep hillside
With crystal cliffs so steep of kind!"

No tongue could describe the beauty of the "sweet sight that God me sent."

"This glorious sight of down and dale,
Of water, wood, and noble plain,
Stirred in me bliss, allayed my bale,
Soothed my distress, destroyed my pain;
Beside those waves that softly steal,
I went in bliss, with teeming brain;
The farther I followed that watery vale,
The mightier joy did my heart constrain,
As fortune faces when she is fain,
Send she solace or sadness sore,
The wight on whom her gifts may rain
Must chance to receive aye more and more."[2]

Beyond the brook he sees the glories of Paradise, but "the water was deep I durod not wade." As he walks along the bank, hoping to find a ford, he sees at the foot of the cliff, a child:

"A gracious maid, full debonair:
Her dazzling robe was undefiled;
I knew her well, I had seen her ere.
As glistening gold, pure and sincere,
So shone she on that shining shore:
Long gazed I eagerly on her there:
The longer, I knew her more and more.

The more I gazed on her fair face,
And saw her make so sweet a show,
The more I felt such gladdening grace
As seldom had been mine ere now.
I yearned to call her, but, alas!
Amazement dealt my heart a blow
To see her in so strange a place,
And made my reason bend and bow.
When lo! she raised her ivory brow,
That such a look of sweetness wore,
As stung my heart with numbing woe,
And ever the longer the more and more."[3]

[1] *Pearl*. G. G. Coulton. [2] *Ibid*. [3] *Ibid*.

His attempts to reach her are vain. The maiden talks with her father from the opposite banks, telling him of her great joy and honour in the heavenly kingdom. She solves his doubts and difficulties. Finally, he beholds her in the throng surrounding the Lamb in the New Jerusalem. His grief is transformed into joy and wonder; his "rebel mood" is changed into submission to the divine will.

"The Prince's yoke is ever light
To those who love His peace divine,
For I have found Him, both day and night,
A God, a Lord, a Friend full fine.
Thus mused I, stretched on earth outright,
Pleining my Pearl with bitter brine,
Committing to God that Jewel bright,
In Christes dear blessing and mine,
That in the form of bread and wine
The priest us showeth every day.
Lord make us servants true of Thine
And precious pearls unto Thy pay!"[1]

Pearl consists of one hundred and one twelve-lined stanzas (ababababab-bcbc), with four stresses to a line. This form is not found outside English poetry, but occurs in some of the religious poems of the fourteenth century.

The poet of the *Pearl* is a connecting link between the East Midland School represented by Chaucer and the West Midland School that later found expression in Langland. The author of *Pearl* has greater poetic power than Langland, he possesses moral earnestness combined with greater artistic skill. He is the real literary predecessor of Spenser in his use of allegory and alliteration; and moral seriousness united to the beauty of romance.

It has been suggested that the lines written above the picture of Sir Gawayne in the MSS. (see description, p. 48) point to some domestic trouble, and that the author after the loss of his child may have retired to a monastery. There is no reference to the mother throughout the poem.

Cleanness.—A collection of Bible stories in which the writer endeavours to enforce purity of life, by showing how greatly God is displeased at every kind of impurity and how sudden and severe is the punishment meted out for offences against the Divine Laws.

Patience.—This poem is in reality a poetical paraphrase of the Book of Jonah, exalting the virtue of patience.

"Patience is a noble point though it displease oft"—The writer exhorts his readers to practise this virtue in the introductory lines:

"For he that is too rash to rend his clothes
Must afterward sit with worse ones
To sew them together."

The poem contains some fine descriptive passages—*e.g.* the storm at sea:

"Anon out of the north-east the noise begins
When both breezes did blow upon blue waters;
Rough clouds there arose with lightning thereunder,
The sea sobbed full sore, great marvel to hear
The winds on the wan water so wrestle together
That the waves full wild rolled so high—
And again bent to the abyss that bred fishes."[2]

[1] *Pearl*. G. G. Coulton.
[2] *Early English Alliterative Poems*, edit. Richard Morris, 1869.

THE ROMANTIC ELEMENT (POPULAR POETRY)

Lyrics—Ballads—Folk Songs, &c.

POPULAR POETRY

The outburst of lyric song which began about 1300, and lasted for nearly two hundred years, may be regarded in many ways as the expression of popular feeling. Both the ballad and the lyric arise in response to the same need, both are associated in their origin with the communal dance, but while the ballad has remained a wayside flower, the lyric gradually became an exotic product of conscious art. Elements of genuine folk songs survive in the refrains, repetitions, and interjections contained in some of these old songs.

King Canute's Boat Song

"Merrie sungen the muneckes binnen Ely
The Knut king rew therby:
Roweth, knihtes, ner the land
And her we thes munekes sing:"

and *The Hymns of St. Godric*, the hermit of Finchale, are generally cited as the earliest examples of rhymed English song. Godric's *Hymn to Our Lady* and to *St. Nicholas* were set to music, and these instances together with other references are useful, since they testify to the early diffusion of song and music amongst the people. Giraldus Cambrensis in his *Gemma Ecclesiastica*, tells the story of a priest who, having been kept awake through the night by the dancing and singing in the churchyard, could not forget the refrain which the dancers had repeated, and instead of saying "Dominus Vobiscum" said "Sweet leeman thin are" ("Sweet heart, have mercy!"). The Bishop henceforth forbade the song to be sung anywhere in his diocese. This dancing in the churchyards—a heathen survival—was a source of much trouble to the clergy, who frequently denounced it.

The new lyric poetry developed mainly in the South and Midlands. Two manuscripts—the Harleian, which is as important in the study of songs as the Auchinleck manuscript is in the study of the romances, and the Bodleian manuscript are both in the Southern dialect, although all the songs do not belong to that district. The movement was associated at the commencement with the expression of religious feeling. *A Good Orisoun to Our Lady*, or prayer to the Virgin—a religious love song—appeared soon after the beginning of the thirteenth century.

"Christ's mild mother, St. Mary light of my life, my dear lady, to thee I vow and bend my knee, and all my heart's blood offer thee."

Mary has redeemed him from the power of the devil, she is the source of life. She dwells on her throne high above the cherubim, the angels make joyful music in her presence, and are never weary of looking upon her beauty. He implores her to have pity upon him, to shield him from sorrow and heal his wounds, for in her "is all his trust after her dear Son."

The metre of the poem is very simple. The poet charms by his enthusiasm rather than by any great poetic gifts.

Several other religious songs betray the influence of the *Poema Morale*. One in which the monk laments with bitterness his former worldly life, and confesses that he has "often drunken wine and ruddy from the spring."

But a new influence was beginning to set on the religious verse; this was the influence of the wandering scholars—(*scolares vagantes*) "the main intermediaries between the learned and vernacular letters of the day."

These were men educated at the Universities, who knew Oxford and Paris life as well as the Schools. Some of them were men who had taken minor orders, they were familiar with missal and breviary. They came in contact with all classes, and this intercourse with the people kept their minds alert. Equally at home in cloister, hall, market-place, or tavern, frequently careless and dissolute, they would sing with equal spirit a hymn to the Virgin, or a religious parody. They knew by heart the drinking songs and love songs in French or English and Latin.

The national lyric betrays the influence of the Latin strollers, of French love poetry and English religion, and beneath them all ever and again peep out remnants of the folk song.

In consequence of this, the rude folk songs were made to conform to the metre of the Latin Hymns, popular refrains were introduced into lyrics of all kinds. There was no hard and fast distinction between forms.

The Love Rous

This poem shows how lyric form might be used for serious experiments in verse. It was written by Brother Thomas de Hales, a Franciscan monk, at the request of a maiden. The request for a love song affords opportunity for instruction:

"A maid of Christ entreated me
A love song for her to indite,
That thus she may instructed be
To choose a lover true aright.
The best to guard a woman free
Of all men born, most loyal knight,
Nor shall her wish refused be,
To teach her this be my delight."[1]

The poet enlarges on the transitoriness of earthly affection—worldly affection is false and fickle—famous knights have passed away like the wind's blast—they have fallen like the meadow grass. He who loves this fleeting world is blind. Man fades as a leaf on a bough—his love is inconstant and untrue.

"Where is Paris? Where Ydeyne?
That were so bright of air of blee,
Tristam, Amadas, Ydeyne?"[2]

[1] Morris' *Old English Miscellany*. [2] *Ibid.*

It is as if they had never lived, all their heat is turned to cold. There is a lover who offers himself, who is kind and true and loyal. He is the richest, fairest, and best lover in the world. He is greater than Henry on his throne. He will bestow all upon her and asks no dowry in return.

"Maiden, oh hear his sweet command,
For to thee now his love he troweth."[1]

He has given her a precious jewel to guard, which shall shine brightly in heaven's bower. The writer begs her to learn this song by rote and teach it to other maidens.

This contemplative lyric, with its note of warm, religious feeling blended with lyric fancy, exemplifies the gradual and imperceptible union of various forms. No hard and fast line was drawn between the various forms. The monk would borrow from the courtier, the minstrel from the wandering scholar. Sermons even might adopt poetic "form and in one the spirit of Piers, seems already present:

"All these deceiving chapmen, the devil yet will get them,
The bakers and the brewers, to cheat all men do set them.
They hold low down the gallon and thus with foam they spill,
And very poor they make their bread and eke their ale,
For if they take the silver in they never tell a tale.
Good people for God's love, believe such things are sin,
And at the last will lose you the heaven you would win.
All the wives of priests shall then, I wot, be most forlorn,
And of the priests themselves, all sins shall not be borne,
Nor of those proud young men that love their Malekin,
Nor yet those maidens bold that dote on danekin,
At church and at the market, when they together rove
They quickly gather whispering and speak of secret love.
When to the church they come on any holy day,
Each one but goes to see his love there if he may,
Then she beholdeth Watkin, as glad as she can be,
But home she leaves her rosary, locked up full carefully,
For masses and for matins she certainly cares nought;
To Wilkin and to Watkin she gives her every thought."[2]

Another poem, which gives an account of the Passion, begins thus:

"Here is a little story I will tell to you, as we find it written in the Gospel. It is not of Charlemagne and the twelve peers, but of Christ's passion which he suffered here. Now beginneth our tale—it's no leasing."

The influence of the secular love poetry is seen in the beautiful *Easter Song*:

"Summer is come and winter gone,
The days begin to grow long,
And the birdes everyone
Make joy with song.
Still strong care hindeth me
Despite the joys that's found
in land
All for a child
That is so mild
of hand."[3]

[1] Morris' *Old English Miscellany*.
[2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*

The religious lyric loses nothing of its depth and seriousness, but it gained directness in expression. The feeling for nature and joy in the singing of birds are derived from the folk song.

Carols

The carols were brought from France, and there are Norman carols extant which were sung in the later part of the twelfth century. Most of the carols are written in simple Latin metres and hence they probably date from the thirteenth century, when the greatest dependence was placed on the Latin metrical system. Many of the refrains are familiar lines taken from the hymns and canticles:

"Now sing we right as it is
Quod puer natus est nobis."

"When Christ was born of Mary free
In Bethlehem that fair city,
Angels sang loud with mirth and glee
In excelsis gloria."

Another quaintly introduces the shepherd's pipes:

"Tyrly, Tyrlow, tyrly, tyrlow,
So merrily the shepherds began to blow."

Still another reminds us of the *Mystery*—

"When Wat to Bedlem cum was
He swet, he had gone faster than a pase;
Lull well Jhesu in thy lape,
And farewell Joseph with thy rownd cape."[1]

In addition to the carols treating of the Christmas, and the Lullabies of Mary, there were secular carols that dealt with various customs connected with the feasting and sports of Yuletide.

The bringing in the boar's head was accompanied by the singing of a well-known carol:

"The boar's head in hand bring I,
Caput apri differo."

Others concern the contest between the Holly and the Ivy, a survival probably of heathen festival games. The lads took the part of the Holly, the lassies that of the Ivy:

"Here comnys holly, that is so gent,
To please all men is his intent."

Religious lyrics, as we have already seen, frequently took the form of a Dialogue. *The Complaint of Mary*, based on the Latin Hymn, *Stabat Mater*, and *The Debate of the Body and the Soul* were favourite themes in English poetry in the thirteenth century.

It is impossible to enumerate the many and varied forms of lyric songs during this period. Some of the most rollicking drinking songs survived as the convivial songs that Elizabethans sang with joy in their taverns.

Proverbial Poems

Instead of the proverbs of Alfred, a middle English collection of proverbs appeared bearing the name of Hendyng.

"Men that wish to hear wisdom, they may learn of the wise Hendyng, that was Marcolf's son, good thoughts and many manners for the instruction of many vicious ones, for that was ever his custom.

[1] *Cambridge History of English Literature*

"The wise man holds back his words; for he does not begin to play ere he has tempered his pipe. A fool is a fool and that is seen; for he will speak green words before they are ripe. A fool's bolt is soon shot quoth Hendyng."

The Cuckoo Song, which dates from the middle of the thirteenth century, is frequently considered an example of genuine folk song. The music to which this song was sung has been transmitted, having been preserved in a codex (*Harl.* 978). It was written in 1226 by John of Fornsete, a monk of Reading, who was the founder of the first English School of Music. But the music—a canon or round in six parts—and the form of the poem are relatively advanced, yet it is probable that elements in this and other songs are traditional, since there is little doubt that whole forms and verses passed from the folk song to the songs of the clerics. We quote a verse, although the song is familiar:

"Summer is y-comen in—loude sing cuckow!
Groweth sed and bloweth mead, springeth the wodde now.
Ewe bleateth after lamb, loweth after calfe cow,
Bullock starteth, buck verteth, merrye sing cuckow!
Cuckow! Cuckow!
Well singest thou cuckow, he swich[1] thou never now."

Another love song has the following refrain, evidently inserted by the poet, and which he did not invent:

"Blow northern wynde,
Send thou me my suetying[2]
Blow northern wynd, blou, blou, blou."

The poet tells to "Love how this Beauty had seized a heart that was mine, how her knights Sighing, Sorrowing, and Thought had sought me. . . . Sorrowing sore threatened that he for this Beauty would lead me in baleful bands until the end of my life in spite of every right."[3]

An East Mercian poet, who fashioned his love plaints on the model of the religious lyrics in single rhymed strophes of four long lines, has all the simple directness and warmth of feeling that is usually associated with later lyric poets:

"My death I love, my life I hate, all for a lady fair,
She is as bright as the daylight, none can with her compare.
I fade, I droop, as doth green leaf in summer's sunny air,
If all my thought me helpeth nought, what can I but despair?

Sorrow and sighs and dreary mood hold me enthralled me fast,
That now meseems I shall go mad, if it much longer last;
My pain, my care, all with a word, she might forth from me cast,
What helps it thee, sweetheart, to see my life thus long harassed?

Away thou clerk, thou art a fool, with thee I will not chide;
The day I give my love to thee, thou never shalt abide;
If in my bower thou art caught, then shame may thee betide,
'Tis better far on foot to go, than wicked horse to ride!

. . . . . .

O sweet, relent, thou grievest me, thy pity I implore;
For now I am as sad a man as blithe I was before.

In window's shelter we could kiss full fifty times and more;
A fair behest oft makes a man forget his troubles store.

Alack-aday why wakest thou old pain thus ruthlessly?
I loved a clerk once faithfully, and true he was to me;
He was not glad on any day, until he could me see;
I loved him better than my life; what boots a lie to thee?

When I a clerk was in the school much did I know of lore;
From the deep wound dealt by thy love, sharp ache I've felt and sore;
Far from men's haunt, in pilgrim's garb I've roamed the wide world o'er;
Have pity on me, lady sweet, alas, I can no more!

Thou seemest well to be a clerk, for so thou speakest still,
No longer vexing dole shalt feel from my love-wounds nor ill;
Not father, mother, all my kin, shall hold me from my will,
For thou art mine, and I am thine, thy bidding to fulfil."[4]

A contrast in tone and spirit to the above is found in the exquisite *Song of Alysoun*:

"Between soft March and April showers
When sprays of bloom from branches spring,
And when the little bird 'mid flowers
Doth song of sweetness loudly sing.
To her with longing love I cling,
Of all the world the fairest thing,
Whose thrall I am, who bliss can bring
And give to me life's crown.
A gracious fate to me is sent,
Methinks it is by Heaven lent;
From women all, my heart is bent
To light on Alysoun.

Her sheeny locks are fair to see,
Her lashes brown, her eyes of black,
With lovely mouth she smiles on me;
Her waist is slim, of fissom make.
Unless as mate she will me take,
To be her own, my heart will break;
Longer to live I will forsake,
And dead I will fall down.
A gracious fate to me is sent,
&c. &c.

All for thy sake I restless turn,
And wakeful hours sigh through at night;
For thee, sweet lady, do I yearn;
My cheeks wax wan in woeful plight,
No man so wise that can aright
Her goodness tell, her beauties bright:
Her throat is than the swan's more white,
The fairest maid in town.
A gracious fate to me is sent,
&c. &c.

Weary as water in the weir
With wooing I am spent and worn;
Lest any reave me, much I fear,
And leave me mateless and forlorn.
A sharp, short pain is better borne
Than now and evermore to mourn.
My love, O fair one, do not scorn,
No longer on me frown!
A gracious fate to me is sent,
Methinks it is by Heaven lent,
From women all, my heart is bent,
To light on Alysoun."[2]

[1] Deceive. [2] Sweetheart. [3] Ten Brink.

[1] Ten Brink, *Early English Literature*.
[2] Wright's *Specimens of Lyric Poetry*, quoted in Ten Brink, *Early English Literature*.

THE BALLAD

Meaning of the Term.—The term ballad[1] is used now to cover a wide variety of verse, but the word originally signified a dance song; and many ballads eloquent of love, youth, and the springtide were sung by the villagers at their feasting times to a rhythmic measure.

What we have are the product of Saxon intensity of feeling, softened and lightened by Norman sentiment and grace; though the ballad measure is of ancient origin, and probably dates from early mediæval times.

Its History.—Thus the ballad is a narrative poem, associated in its origin with the communal dance, possessing no marks of authorship, and the outcome of tradition among people free from literary influence. As in the case of the lyric, one more gifted member of the tribe would compose the verses of the song, while the rest would chant the refrain. The bard would recite the exploits of the hero in battle or the leader himself might even do this, and the surrounding warriors join in the primitive chorus. Such is the history of the ballad not only in England, but as recent investigations have shown, it can be paralleled in the unwritten literature of every savage race.[2]

The term ballad has, however, been loosely applied to *all* poems written in what is known as "ballad metre"; that is, four-lined stanzas technically described as iambic tetrameter and iambic trimeter—hence the term often includes poems that are really "artificial ballads," inasmuch as they imitate the artless, simple, narrative form of their original literary prototypes, but which, since they are not the outcome of the conditions which produced them, are not to be classed with them. "Conditions favourable to the making of such poetry ceased to be general after the fifteenth century."

The charm of the ballad lies in its naïve simplicity and primitive feeling. To call it artless, as some do, is a mistake, for it has its own rules of diction, its tricks of phrasing, and conventional refrains. But it has the ease and sincerity of genuine poetry, and is deep-rooted in its love of Earth and primal human qualities.

"And the birk and the broom blooms bonnie"—

There is poignancy in the cry of Margaret to her dead lover in *Clerk Saunders*;

"Is there ony room at your head, Saunders?
Is there ony room at your feet?
Is there ony room at your side, Saunders?
Where fain, fain I wad sleep."

Homely pathos, old-time magic, a fierce love of independence, and a brooding sense of tragedy—these are the things that pervade such pieces as *Chevy Chase*, *The Bonny Earl of Murray*: while the love of outdoor life and the changing seasons meet us in the *Robin Hood* Ballads, and the well-known "*Sumer is icumen in, Lhude sing cuccu.*"

The ballad differs from the lyric in being descriptive rather than impressionistic, the telling of a tale not the expression of a mood; while technically it is simpler, more primitive, less wrought upon as an art form.

Ballads were current in great numbers in Early England, but only two were written down earlier than the fifteenth century. *Judas* exists in manuscript in the handwriting of the thirteenth century. *St. Stephen and Herod*, which is considered to be quite as old, dates from 1450. Langland, in his poem of *The Vision concerning Piers the Ploughman*, mentions the ballads of *Robin Hood*, and of *Randulph*, which shows these at any rate were current before 1377.

"*Paternoster* I know not, as priests intone it,
But rhymes of Robin Hood, or Randolph of Chester;"[1]

The Battle of Otterburn was fought August 19, 1388, and the ballad was probably sung soon after.

It is easy to understand how popular among the people, outlaws like Robin Hood and Hereward the Saxon would become in the early days of the Norman rule, the hatred of the Normans being accentuated by the harsh forest laws.

A Latin life of Hereward was compiled from ancient stories; and there exists a number of ballads dealing with the life and adventures of Robin in the Green Wood, his encounter with the Sheriff of Nottingham, of Robin Hood and the Monk; finally of his death through the treachery of a woman, and his burial by Little John. All these in their present form are of late date, but the *Geste of Robin Hood* may have been put together in 1400, and printed by Wynkyn de Worde possibly as early as 1492.

It is a popular epic divided in eight fyttes. It tells how Robin lent the knight Sir Richard Lee money to pay his debts, and how Sir Richard in return ran risks for Robin.

The opening verses transport us at once to the green forest:

"In summer when the shawes be sheen
And leaves be large and long,
It is full merry in fair forest
To hear the fowles[2] sing.

To see the deer draw to the vale
And leave the hillis high
And shadow 'em on the leavés green
Under the greenwood tree."[3]

The Ballad of the Nut-Brown Maid

(*About* 1500)

Be it right or wrong, these men among, on women do complains,
Affermyng this, how that it is a labour spent in vaine
To loue them wele; for never a dele they loue a man agayne;
For lete a man do what he can, their fauour to attayne,
Yet yt a newe to them purse, that furst true louer than,
Laboureth for nought, and from her thought he is a banniſshed man.

I say not nay, but that all day it is both writ and sayde
That womans fayth, is as who sayth, all vtterly decayed;
But neuertheles, right good witnes in this case might be layde

[1] From *ballare*, to dance.
[2] Vide *Evolution of Literature* (Mackenzie).

[1] *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, Professor Skeat.
[2] Birds. [3] *Robin Hood Ballads.*

That they loue trewe, and contynew; recorde the Nut-browne maide,
Whiche from her loue, whan, her to proue, he cam to make his moone,
Wolde not departe, for in her herte she loued but hym allone.

Than bet wene ye lete vs discusse, what was all the maner
Be-twene them too; we wyl also telle all the peyne in-fere
That she was in; now I begynne, soo that ye me answere,
Wherefore alle ye, that present be, I pray you gene an eare:—
I am the knyght, I cum be nyght, as secret as I can,
Saying:—"alas; thus stondyth the case, I am a banyshed man."

And I, your wylle for to fulfylle, in this wyl not refuse,
Trusting to shewe, in wordes fewe, that men haue an ille vse
To thre owne shame, wymen to blame, and causeles them accuse;
Therfore to you, I answere now, alle wymen to excuse:
"Myn owne hert dere, with you what chiere? I pray you tell anoon,
For in my mynde, of all mankynde, I loue but you allon."

"It stondith so, a dede is do, wherfore moche harme shal growe,
My destiny is for to dey a shamful dethe, I trowe,
Or elles to flee; the tone must bee, none other wey I knowe
But to withdrawe, as an outlaw, and take me to my bowe;
Wherfore adew, my owne hert trewe; none other rede I can,
For I muste to the grene wode goo, alone, a banyshed man."

"O Lorde, what is this worldis blisse, that chaungeth as the mone?
My somers day, in lusty may, is derked before the none;
I here you saye 'farwel'; nay, nay, we departe not so soone;
Why say ye so, whether wyl ye goo, alas! what haue ye done?
Alle my welfare to sorow and care shulde chaunge, yf ye were gon;
For in my mynde, of all mankynde, I loue but you alone."

"I can beleue, it shal you greue, and somewhat you distrayne;
But afterwarde, your paynes harde within a day or tweyne
Shal soone aslake, and ye shal take comfort to you agayne.
Why shuld ye nought? for to take thought your labur were in vayne.
And thus I do, & pray you, loo: as hertely as I can;
For I muste too the grene wode goo, alone, a banyshed man."

"Now syth that ye haue shewed to me the secret of your mynde,
I shalbe playne to you agayne, lyke as ye shall me fynde;
Syth it is so, that ye wyll goo, I wyl not lefte behynde,
Shal neuer be seyd, the Nutbrowne mayd was to her loue unkind;
Make you redy, for soo am I, all-though it were anoon,
For in my mynde, of all mankynde, I loue but you alone."

"Yet I you rede to take good hede, what men wyl thinke & sey;
Of yonge and olde it shalbe tolde, that ye be gone away,
Your wanton wylle for to fulfylle, in grene wood you to play,
And that ye wyght from your delyte noo longer make delay.
Rather than ye shuld thus for me be called an ille woman,
Yet wolde I to the grene wodde goo, alone, a banyshed man."

"Though it be songe of oldo and yonge, that I shuld be to blame,
Theirs be the charge, that spoke so large in hurting of my name;
For I wyl proue that feythful loue, it is dowyd of shame,
I your distresse and heynesse, to parte wyth you the same;
And sure all thoo, that doo not so, trewe louers ar they noon;
But in my mynde, of all mankynde, I loue but you alone."

"I counsel you, remembre how it is noo maydes lawe
Nothing to dowte, but to renne out to wod with an outlawe;
For ye must there in your handa bere, a bowe redy to drawe,
And as a theef thus must ye lyue, ever in drede and awe,
By whiche to yow gret harme myght grow, yet had I lever than
That I had too the grene wod goo, alone, a banyshyd man."

"I thinke nat nay, but as ye saye, it is noo maydens lore;
But loue may make me, for your sake, as ye haue said before,
To cum on fote, to hunte and shote to get vs mete and store;
For soo that I your compeny may haue, I aske noo more;
From whiche to parte, it maketh myn herte as colde as ony ston,
For in my minde, of all mankynde, I loue but you alone."

"For an outlawe this is the lawe, that men hym take & binde
Without pytee, hanged to bee, and wurer with the wynde.
Yf I had neede, as god for-bede, what rescous coude ye finde?
For sothe I trowe, you and your bowe shul drawe for fere behynde;
And noo marueyle, for lytel auayle were in your counsel than;
Wherfore I too the woode wyl goo, alone, a banyshd man."

"Ful wel knowe ye, that wymen bee ful febyl for to fyght,
Noo womanhed is it in deede, to bee bolde as a knight;
Yet in such fere yf that ye were, amonge enemys day and nyght,
I wolde wythstonde, with bowe in hande, to greue them as I might,
And you to save, as wymen haue, from deth men many one;
For in my mynde, of all man-kynde, I loue but you alone."

"Yet take good hede, for ever I drede, that he coude not sustein
The thornes wayes, the depe valeis, the snowe, the frost, the reyn,
The colde, the hete; for drye or wete, we must lodge on the playn;
And, vs above, noon other roue, but a brake, bush, or tweyne;
Whiche sone shulde greue you, I beleue, and ye wolde gladly than,
That I had too the grene wode goo, alone, a banyshyd man."

"Syth I haue here ben partynere with you of loy & blysse,
I muste also parte of your woo endure, as reason is;
Yet I am sure of one plesure, and shurely it is this,
That where ye bee, me semeth, perde, I coude not fare a-mysse;
Without more speche, I you beseche, that we were soon a-gone;
For in my mynde, of all mankynde, I loue but you alone."

"Yet ye goo thidyr, ye must consider, whan ye haue
lust to dyne.
Ther shal no mete be for to gete, nor drinke, bere, ale,
ne wine,
Ne shetis clene to lye betwene, made of thred and twyne;
Noon other house but leuys and bowes, to kouer your hed
and myn;
Loo! myn herte swete, this ylle dyet shuld make you
pale & wan,
Wherfore I to the wood wyl goo, alone, a banyshid
man."

"Amongs the wylde dere suche an archier as men say
that ye bee
Ne may not fayle of good vitayle, where is so grete
plente;
And watir swete, of the ryuere, shalbe ful swete to me,
Wyth whiche in hele I shal right wele endure, as ye shal
see;
And or we goo, a bed or twoo I can prouide a-noon,
For in my mynde, of all mankynde, I loue but you
alone."

"Loo yet, before, ye must doo more, yf yo wyl goo
with me,
As ruthe your here vp by your ere, your kirtel by the
knee,
Wyth bowe in hande, for to withstonde your enemys,
yf nede be:
And this same night, before day-lyght, to wood-ward
wyl I flee;
And yf ye wyl all this fulfylle, doo it shortely as ye
can,
Ellis wil I to the grene wode goo, alone, a banyshyd
man."

"I shal as now do more for you than longeth to womanes-
hede,
To short my here, a bowe to bere, to shote in tyme of
nede.
O my swete moder, before all other for you haue I most
drede;
But now a-dieu; I must ensue where fortune doth me
leade:
All this make ye; now lete vs flee, the day cometh
fast vpon;
For in my mynde, of all mankynde, I loue but you
alone."

"Nay, nay, not soo, ye shal not goo, & I shal telle you
why;
Your appertyte is to be lyght of loue, I wele aspie;
For right as ye haue said to me, in lyke wyse hardely
Ye wolde answere, who-so-euer it were, in way of
company.
It is sayd of olde, 'soone hote, soone colde,' and so is a
woman;
Wherfore I too the woode wyl goo, alone, a banyshid
man."

"Yef ye take hede, yet is noo nede such wordis to say
bee me;
For ofte ye preyd, and longe assayed, or I you loued,
pardee;
And though that I, of auenture, a barons doughter bee,
Yet haue you proued how I you loued, a squyer of low
degree,
And euer shal, what so befalle, to dey therfore a-noon;
For in my mynde, of all mankynde, I loue but you
alone."

"A barons childe to be begyled, it were a cursed dede;
To be felow with an out-lawe, almyghty god for-bede!
Yet better were the pore squyer alone to forest yede,
Than ye shal saye, another day, that by my wyked dede
Ye were betrayed; wherfore, good maide, the best rede
that I can,
Is, that I too the grene wode goo, alone, a banyshed
man."

"Whatso-euer-be-falle, I neuer shal of this thing you
vpbraid,
But yf ye goo and leue me noo, than haue ye me be-
traied;
Remembre you wele now that ye dede, for yf ye, as ye
sayde,
Be so vnkynde, to leue behynde your loue, the not-
browne maide,
Trust me truly that I shal dey, sone after ye be gone,
For in my mynde, of all mankynde, I loue but you
alone."

"Yef that ye went, ye shulde repent, for in the forest
now
I haue purueid me of a maide, whom I loue more than
you.
Another fayrer than euer ye were, I dare it wel awowe;
And of you bothe, eche shuld be wrothe with other, as
I trowe
It were myn ease to lyue in peace: so wyl I, yf I can;
Wherfore I to the wode wyl goo, alone, a banyshid
man."

"Though in the wood I vnderstode ye had a paramour,
All this may nought remeue my thought, but that I
wil be your;
And she shal fynde me soft and kynde, and curteis
euery our,
Glad to fulfylle all that she wylle commaunde me, to
my power;
For had ye, loo! an hundred moo, yet wolde I be that
one;
For in my mynde, of all mankynde, I loue but you
alone."

"Myn owen dere loue, I see the proue that ye be kynde
and trewe;
Of mayde and wyf, in al my lyf, the best that euer I
knewe.
Be mery and glad, be no more sad, the case is chaunged
newe;
For it were ruthe, that for your truuth you shuld haue
cause to rewe.
Be not dismayed; whatsoeuer I sayd to you, whan I
began,
I wyl not too the grene wod goo, I am noo banyshyd
man."

"Thise tidingis be more glad to me, than to be made
a quene,
Yf I were sure they shuld endure; but it is often seen,
When men wyl breke promyse, they speke the wordis
on the splene.
Ye shape some wyle, me to begyle, and me to shame, I
wene;
Than were the case wurse that it was, & I more woo
begone;
For in my mynde, of al mankynde, I loue but you alone."

"Ye shal not nede further to drede, I wyl not disparage
You, god defende, sith ye descende of so grete a lynage:
Now vnderstonde, to Westmerlonde, whiche is my
heritage,
I wyl you bringe, and wyth a ringe, be wey of maryage
I wyl you take, and lady make, as shortly as I can;
Thus haue ye wone an erles son, and not a banyshyd
man!"

Here may ye see that wymen be in loue meke, kinde, & stable,
Late neuer man repreue them than, or calle them variable;
But rather pray god that we may to them be comfortable,
Which sometyme prouyth suche as be loueth yf they be charitable:
For sith men wolde that wymen sholde be meke to them echeon,
Moche more ought they to god obey, and serue but hym alone.

THE NUT-BROWN BOURNE

Lord Thomas and fair Annet
Sate a' day on a hill;
When night was come and mirth was gone
They had not talked their fill.

Lord Thomas said a word in jest,
Fair Annet took it ill:
"Ah, I will never wed a wife
Against my ain friends' will."

"Gif ye will never wed a wife,
A wife will ne'er wed ye;"
Sae he is hame to tell his mither,
And knelt upon his knee.

"O rede, O rede, mither," he says,
"A gude rede gie to me:
Oh shall I tak the nut-brown bride,
And let fair Annet be?"

"The nut-brown bride has gowd and gear,
Fair Annet she has gat nane:
And the little beauty fair Annet has,
Oh it will sune be gane."

And he has till his brother gane:
"Now, brother, rede ye me,
Ah, shall I marry the nut-brown bride,
And let fair Annet be?"

"The nut-brown bride has oxen, brother,
The nut-brown bride has kye;
I wad bid ye marry the nut-brown bride,
And cast fair Annet by."

"Her oxen may die i' the house, billie,
And her kye into the byre;
And I shall hae nocht to mysel'
But a fat fadge by the fire."

And he has till his sister gane:
"Now, sister, rede ye me,
Oh, shall I marry the nut-brown bride,
And set fair Annet free?"

"I'se rede ye tak fair Annet, Thomas,
And let the brown bride alane,
Lest ye should sigh and say, alas!
What is this we brought hame?"

"No, I will take my mither's counsel,
And marry me out o' hand;
And I will take the nut-brown bride
Fair Annet may leave the land."

Up then rose fair Annet's father
Twa hours or it were day,
And he is gane into the bower
Wherein fair Annet lay.

"Rise up, rise up, fair Annet," he says,
"Put on your silken sheen;
Let us gae to St. Marie's kirk
And see that rich waddin'."

"My maids, gae to my dressing-room,
And dress to me my hair;
Whare'er ye laid a plait before,
See ye lay ten times mair.

"My maids, gae to my dressing-room,
And dress to me my smock;
The one half is o' the holland fine,
The other o' needle-work."

The horse fair Annet rade upon,
He amblit like the wind;
Wi' siller he was shod before,
Wi' burning gowd behind.

Four and twenty siller bells
Were a' tied till his mane,
And as tift o' the norland wind
They tinkled ane by ane.

Four and twenty gay gude knichts
Rade by fair Annet's side;
And four and twenty fair ladies,
As gin she had been a bride.

And when she cam to Marie's kirk,
She sat on Marie's stane;
The cleeding that fair Annet had on,
It shinkled in their een.

And when she cam into the kirk,
She shimmered like the sun;
The belt that was about her waist,
Was a' wi' pearls bedone.

She sat her by the nut-brown bride,
And her een they were sae clear,
Lord Thomas he clean forgat the bride
When fair Annet drew near.

He had a rose into his hand,
He gae't kisses three,
And reaching by the nut-brown bride,
Laid it on fair Annet's knee.

Up then spak the nut-brown bride,
She spak wi' meikle spite,
"And where gat ye that rose-water
That does mak ye sae white?"

"Oh, I did get the rose-water
Where ye will ne'er get nane,
For I did get that very rose-water
Into my mither's wame."

The bride she drew a long bodkin
Frae out her gay head-gear,
And strak fair Annet unto the heart
That word she never spak mair.

Lord Thomas he saw fair Annet wax pale,
And marvelit what might be;
But when he saw her dear heart's bluid,
A' wud-wroth waxed he.

He drew his dagger that was sae sharp,
That was sae sharp and meet,
And dang it into the nut-brown bride
That fell dead at his feet.

"Now stay for me, dear Annet," he said,
"Now stay, my dear," he cried;
Then strak the dagger intil his heart,
And fell dead by her side.

Lord Thomas was buried without kirk-wa',
Fair Annet within the quire;
And o' the tane there grew a birk,
The other a bonnie brier.

And aye they grew, and aye they threw,
As they would fain be near;
And by this ye may ken right weel
They were twa lovers dear.

Clerk Saunders

Clerk Saunders and may Margaret
Walked ower yon garden green;
And sad and heavy was the love
That fell thir twa between.

"A bed, a bed," Clerk Saunders said,
"A bed for you and me!"
"Fye na, fye na," said may Margaret,
"Till anes we married be.

"For in may come my seven bauld brothers,
Wi' torches burning bright:
They'll say, 'We hae but an sister,
And behold she's wi' a knight!'"

"Then I'll take the sword frae my scabbard,
And slowly lift the pin;
And may you swear, and save your aith,
Ye never let Clerk Saunders in.

"And take a napkin in your hand,
And tie up baith your bonny een;
And you may swear, and save your aith,
Ye saw me up since late yestreen."

It was about the midnight hour,
When they asleep were laid,
When in and came her seven brothers,
Wi' torches burning red.

When in and came her seven brothers,
Wi' torches shining bright;
They said, "We hae but ae sister,
And behold her lying with a knight!"

Then out and spake the first o' them,
"I bear the sword shall gar him die!"
And out and spake the second o' them,
"His father has nae mair than he!"

And out and spake the third o' them,
"I wot that they are lovers dear!"
And out and spake the fourth o' them,
"They hae been in love this mony a year!"

Then out and spake the fifth o' them,
"It were great sin true love to twain."
And out and spake the sixth o' them,
"It were shame to slay a sleeping man."

Then up and gat the seventh o' them,
And never a word spake he;
But he has striped his bright brown brand
Out through Clerk Saunders' fair body.

Clerk Saunders he started, and Margaret she turned
Into his arms as asleep she lay;
And sad and silent was the night
That was atween thir twae.

And they lay still and sleeped sound,
Until the day began to daw';
And kindly to him she did say,
"It is time, true love, you were awa'."

But he lay still, and sleeped sound,
Albeit the sun began to sheen;
She looked atween her and the wa',
And dull and drowsie were his een.

Then in and came her father dear,
Said, "Let a' your mourning be:
I'll carry the dead corpse to the clay,
And I'll come back and comfort thee."

"Comfort weel your seven sons;
For comforted will I never be:
I ween 'twas neither knave nor loon
Was in the bower last night wi' me."

The elinking bell gaed through the town,
To carry the dead corse to the clay;
And Clerk Saunders stood at may Margaret's window,
I wot, an hour before the day.

"Are ye sleeping, Margaret?" he says,
Or are ye waking presentlie?
Give me my faith and troth again,
I wot, true love, I gied to thee."

"Your faith and troth ye sall never get,
Nor our true love sall never twin,
Until ye come within my bower,
And kiss me cheik and chin."

"My mouth it is full cold, Margaret,
It has the smell, now, of the ground;
But if I kiss thy comely mouth,
Thy days of life will not be lang.

"O, cocks are crowing a merry midnight,
I wot the wild fowls are boding day;
Give me my faith and troth again,
And let me fare me on my way."

"Thy faith and troth thou sall na get,
And our true love shall never twin,
Until ye tell what comes of women,
I wot, who die in strong travelling?"

"Their beds are made in the heavens high,
Down at the foot of our good Lord's knee,
Weel set about wi' gillyflowers:
I wot sweet company for to see.

"O, cocks are crowing a merry midnight,
I wot the wild fowls are boding day;
The psalms of heaven will soon be sung,
And I, ere now, will be missed away."

Then she has ta'en a crystal wand,
And she has stricken her troth thereon;
She has given it him out at the shot-window,
Wi' mony a sad sigh, and heavy groan.

"I thank ye, Marg'ret; I thank ye, Marg'ret;
And aye I thank ye heartilie;
Gin ever the dead comes for the quick,
Be sure, Marg'ret, I'll come for thee."

It's hosen and shoon, and gown alone,
She climbed the wall, and followed him,
Until she came to the green forest,
And there she lost the sight o' him.

"Is there ony room at your head, Saunders?
Is there ony room at your feet?
Or ony room at your side, Saunders,
Where fain, fain, I wad sleep?

"There's nae room at my head, Marg'ret,
There's nae room at my feet;
My bed it is full lowly now,
Among the hungry worms I sleep.

"Could mould it is my covering now,
But on my winding-sheet;
The dew it falls nae sooner down,
Than my resting-place is wet.

"But plait a wand o' bonnie birk,
And lay it on my breast;
And shed a tear upon my grave,
And wish my saul gude rest.

"And fair Marg'ret, and rare Marg'ret,
And Marg'ret o' veritie,
Gin e'er ye love another man,
Ne'er love him as ye did me."

Then up and crew the milk-white cock,
And up and crew the gray;
Her lover vanish'd in the air,
And she gaed weeping away.

Fair Annie

"It's narrow, narrow, make your bed,
And learn to lie your lane;
For I'm gaun o'er the sea, fair Annie,
A braw bride to bring hame.
Wi' her I will get gowd and gear;
Wi' you I ne'er got nane.

"But wha will bake my bridal bread,
Or brew my bridal ale?
And wha will welcome my brisk bride
That I bring o'er the dale?"

"It's I will bake your bridal bread,
And brew your bridal ale;
And I will welcome your brisk bride
That you bring o'er the dale."

"But she that welcomes my brisk bride
Maun gang like maiden fair;
She maun lace on her robe sae jimp,
And braid her yellow hair."

"But how can I gang maiden-like
When maiden I am none?
Have I not borne seven sons to thee,
And am with child again?"

She's ta'en her young son in her arms,
Another in her hand;
And she's up to the highest tower,
To see him come to land.

"Come up, come up, my eldest son,
And look o'er yon sea-strand,
And see your father's new-come bride
Before she come to land."

She's ta'en her seven sons in her hand;
I wot she didna fail!
She met Lord Thomas and his bride,
As they came o'er the dale.

"You're welcome to your house, Lord Thomas;
You're welcome to your land;
You're welcome, with your fair lady,
That you lead by the hand.

"You're welcome to your ha's, lady,
You're welcome to your bowers;
You're welcome to your hame, lady,
For a' that's here is yours."

"I thank thee, Annie; I thank thee, Annie;
Sae dearly as I thank thee!
You're the likest to my sister Annie,
That ever I did see.

"There came a knight out o'er the sea,
And steal'd my sister away;
The shame scoup in his company,
And land where'er he gae!"

She hang se a napkin at the door,
Another in the ha';
And a' to wipe the trickling tears,
Sae fast as they did fa'.

And aye she served the lang tables
With white bread and with wine;
And aye she drank the wan water,
To hae her colour fine.

And aye she served the lang tables
With white bread and with brown;
And aye she turned her round about,
Sae fast the tears fell down.

And he's ta'en down the silk napkin,
Hung on a silver pin;
And aye he wipes the tear trickling
Adown her cheek and chin.

And aye he turned him round about,
And smiled amang his men;
Says, "Like ye best the old lady,
Or her that's new come hame?"

When bells were rung, and mass was sung,
And a' men bound to bed,
Lord Thomas and his new-come bride
To their chamber they were gaed.

Annie made her bed a little forbye,
To hear what they might say:
"And ever alas!" fair Annie cried,
"That I should see this day.

"Gin my seven sons were seven young rats,
Running on the castle wa',
And I were a grey cat mysel',
I soon would worry them a'.

"Gin my seven sons were seven young hares,
Running o'er yon lily lea,
And I were a grew-hound mysel',
Soon worried they a' should be."

And wae and sad fair Annie sat,
And dreary was her sang;
And ever as she sobbed, and grat,
"Wae to the man that did thee wrang!"

"My gown is on," said the new-come bride,
"My shoes are on my feet,
And I will to fair Annie's chamber,
And see what gars her greet.

"What ails ye, what ails ye, fair Annie,
That ye make sic a moan?
Has your wine barrels cast the girds,
Or is your white bread gone?

"Oh, whist! wist! was your father, Annie,
Or was't your mother?
And had you ony sister, Annie,
Or had you ony brother?"

"The Earl of Wemyss was my father,
The Countess of Wemyss my mother;
And a' the folk about the house,
To me were sister and brother."

"If the Earl of Wemyss was your father,
I wot nae was he mine;
And it shall not be for lack o' gowd,
That ye your love sall tyne.

"For I have seven ships o' mine ain,
A' loaded to the brim;
And I will gie them a' to thee,
Wi' four to thine eldest son.
But thanks to a' the powers in heaven,
That I gae maiden hame!"

Binnorie

There was twa sisters in a bower,
Binnorie, O Binnorie:
There came a knight to be their wooer,
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

He courted the eldest wi' glove an' ring;
But he loved the youngest abune a' thing.

He courted the eldest wi' brooch and knife;
But loved the youngest as his life.

The eldest she was vexéd sair,
And much envied her sister fair.

Into her bower she couldna rest;
Wi' grief and spite she almost brast.

Upon a morning fair and clear,
She cried upon her sister dear:
"O sister, come to yon sea-strand,
And see our father's ships come to land."

She's ta'en her by the milk-white hand,
And led her down to yon sea-strand.

The youngest stood upon a stane,
The eldest came and threw her in.

She took her by the middle sma',
And dash'd her bonnie back to the jaw.

"O sister, sister, tak my hand,
And I'se mak you heir to a' my land.

"O sister, sister, tak my middle,
And ye'se get my gowd and my gowden girdle.

"O sister, sister, save my life,
And I swear I'se never be nae man's wife."

"Foul fa' the hand that I should tak,
It's twined me and my warld's mak.

"Your cherry cheeks an' yellow hair,
Gars me gae maiden for evermair."

Sometimes she sank, sometimes she swam,
Till she came down yon bonnie mill-dam.

Oh, out it came the miller's son,
And saw the fair maid swimmin' in.

"O father, father, draw your dam;
Here's either a mermaid or a swan."

The miller quickly drew the dam,
And there he found a drowned woman.

You couldna see her yellow hair,
For gold and pearl that were so rare.

You couldna see her middle sma',
For gowden girdle that was sae braw.

You couldna see her fingers white,
For gowden rings that was sae gryte.

An' by there came a harper fine,
That harpéd to the king at dine.

When he looked that lady upon,
He sighed and made a heavy moan.

He's ta'en three locks o' her yellow hair,
And wi' them strung his harp sae fair.

The first tune he did play and sing,
Was "Farewell to my father the king!"

The nextin tune that he played syne
Was "Farewell to my mother the queen!"

The lasten tune that he played then
Binnorie, O Binnorie,
Was "Woe to my sister, fair Ellen!"
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

WALY, WALY

O waly, waly, up the bank,
O waly, waly, down the brae,
And waly, waly, yon burn-side,
Where I and my love were wont to gae!
I leant'd my back unto an aik,
I thocht it was a trustie tree,
But first it bow'd and syne it brak',
Sae my true love did lightlie me.

O waly, waly, but love be bonnie
A little time while it is new!
But when it's auld it waxeth cauld,
And fadeth awa' like the morning dew.
O wherefore should I busk my heid,
Or wherefore should I kame my hair?
For my true love has me forsook,
And says he'll never lo'e me mair.

Noo Arthur's Seat sall be my bed,
The sheets sall ne'er be press'd by me;
Saint Anton's well sall be my drink;
Since my true love's forsaken me.
Martinmas wind, when wilt thou blaw,
And shake the green leaves off the tree?
O gentle death, when wilt thou come?
For of my life I am wearie.

'Tis not the frost that freezes fell,
Nor blawing snow's inclemencie,
'Tis not sic cauld that makes me cry;
But my love's heart grown cauld to me.
When we cam' in by Glasgow toun,
We were a comely sight to see;
My love was clad in the black velvet,
An' I myself in scarlet reid.

But had I wist before I kiss'd
That love had been so ill to win,
I'd lock'd my heart in a case o' gould,
And pinn'd it wi' a siller pin.
Oh, oh! if my young babe were born,
And set upon the nurse's knee;
And I myself were dead and gane,
And the green grass growing over me!

POLITICAL BALLADS OR LYRICS

The political lyric was fostered in the middle of the fourteenth century, by the gleemen who took sides with the people, and by the clergy who levelled their satire against abuses in the church and government.

A Song on the Battle of Lewes, 1264, pours scorn on the court party and especially on King Henry's brother, Richard of Cornwall, who was hated by the people as being a foreign king, and also for his corrupt life.

The poem describes how Richard and his men, after the battle, escaped to a mill which they defended as if it had been a castle.

The refrain exults on the downfall of the traitor:

"Richard thaun thou be ever trichard
Trichen shalt thou never more"

("Richard, though thou be ever a traitor, thou shalt treason never more").

Another gleeman, in the reign of Edward I, celebrates the great victory of the Flemish burghers over the French knights at Courtrai (1302).

"Listen, Lordings, both young and old, of the Frenchmen that were so proud and bold, how the Flemish men bought and sold them upon a Wednesday. Better it had been for them at home in their land, than to seek Flemings on the sea-strand, wherefore many a French woman wringeth her hands and singeth, wel-a-way."[1]

Peter de Langtoft in his Chronicle has handed down many songs that were sung by the soldiers and peasants, and which were inspired by the wars with Scotland.

A long ballad tells of the capture and execution of Sir Simon Fraser (1306), whose head was set up on London Bridge near that of Wallace:

"Prut! Soon for thy strife
Haue up thy hatches and thy knife,
While him lasteth the life
With the long shankes."

The social evils of the time, the corruptions in the church, served as materials for satire:

"Hwou holy chirche is onder fote."[2]

This poem bitterly laments the rule of Nammon in the Church:

"Then Simon was here and now is simony, that hath marred a great part of the clergy. . . . Now holy church is in evil hands. All war against her that live in the land; bishops and clerks, knights and knaves, kings and earls have malice towards her. And the Pope himself, who should defend her—if he have his gifts of silver and gold, marks and pounds, with right and wrong, he lets them all do their will, who are so very strong."[3]

A Song of the Husbandman voices the grievances of the husbandman, who in spite of bad harvests and dearth must pay heavy taxes and enable the king, Edward I, to carry on his wars. He lives in constant anxiety from the extortions of foresters, rangers, and bailiffs, who hunt him as the hound does the hare. He is forced to sell his grain while it is as green as grass. He is compelled to lose all he has saved during the year.

An illustration of the proverbial, aphoristic style is afforded by *A Poem on the King's breaking his confirmation of Magna Charta* (1311).

In this poem occurs the statements of the four sages:

(1) "For might is right, the land is lawless, for night is light, the land is lordless, for fight is flight, the land is nameless.

(2) "For one is two, the land is strengthless, for weal is woe, the land is ruthless, for friend is foe, the land is loveless.

(3) "For lust hath leave, the land is thewless, for theft is reave, the land is penniless, for pride hath sleeve, the land is shameless.

(4) "For will is rede (counsel), the land is wreakful, for wit is quel (wicked), the land is wrongful, for good is dead, the land is sinful."

Still another satire, dealing in a more detailed fashion with the sufferings of the people, appeared about this time (1316–17).

War, murder, famine and pestilence—they are the punishments inflicted by God for the wickedness of the nation. Truth and righteousness have fled from the land. Deceit and treachery are rife. Truth fears to enter the palace of the pope, for the

[1] Thos. Wright, *Political Songs.*
[2] Morris, *Early English Metrical Romance.*
[3] Morris, *Old English Miscellany.*

clerks have plotted his destruction. Nothing can be accomplished without gold, with it the most evil man can attain his ends. "Covetousness and Simony rule the whole world." From Archbishop to curate the clergy are open to bribery, and many of them lead evil lives.[1]

"The monks suffer heavily for the love of God; they wear socks in their shoes and felt boots over them; they are well nourished with flesh and fish, and when the roast is good they leave little in the dish; so kill they their bodies to keep Christ's commandment." The mendicant friars, the Knights Templars, counts, barons, doctors, sheriffs, judges, bakers, brewers, merchants, all come beneath the lash of this satirist, whose heart was hot within him as he mused on the evils of his day and generation.

Political ballad poetry reaches its highest point during the early part of the reign of Edward III, in the patriotic songs of Laurence Minot.

Minot was a Northumbrian gleeman, who aspired to the rank of minstrel: that is, he desired the patronage of a great nobleman. He wrote in all ten poems, between 1333 and 1352, commemorating King Edward's wars. He afterwards collected and arranged them in chronological order.

Minot's songs are full of ardent patriotism for England and of hatred of her enemies. Like his predecessors among the gleemen, he pours contempt upon the French and the Scots. He prays for the welfare of his king and country and exults in their victories. The victory of Halidon Hill, the sea fight on Sluys, the siege of Tournay, the Battle of Crécy, Neville's Cross, the capture of the Castle of Guisnes, 1352, are celebrated in songs which combined in an original fashion the art of the gleeman with that of the clerical lyric.

Minot uses end rhyme and alliteration, although he does not conform quite strictly to the Old English rules in his use of alliteration.

> 'Bot sen the time that God was born,
> Ne a hundredth yere biforn,
> Wer never men better in fight
> Than Inglis men, while thai had myght.
> Bot some all maistri gan thai mis;
> God bring thaire saules untill his blis!
> And God assoyl tham of thaire sin,
> For the gude will that thai war in! Amen."

THE AGE OF CHAUCER

Chaucer: His Writings—French, Italian, and English Periods—Position in English Literature—The *Canterbury Tales*: Characterisation, &c. Gower: His Life and Writings, &c.

THE AGE OF CHAUCER

The Age of Chaucer was essentially an age of unrest and transition. We usually regard the discoveries of Columbus as marking the beginning of the modern era in history. It must be remembered, however, that these geographical achievements are only the culmination of a movement which had started more than a hundred years earlier. Broadly speaking, the process of transition dates back to the second half of the fourteenth century; then for the first time it is evident that men are becoming dissatisfied with mediæval ideas and practices. But before entering into any details, it may be well to take a brief glance at the England of *The Canterbury Tales*.

In the religious world there was a serious outburst of unorthodoxy. Wyclif and his followers were making an organised attack upon the Church. In town and country alike, doctrines were being preached which a future age was to familiarise under the name of Protestantism. Nor was the Church the only mediæval institution attacked. The working classes were stirring and had begun to display a spirit of independence hitherto unknown. A period of economic discontent is followed by an open revolt—a revolt which marks the downfall of the manorial system. But there were constructive as well as destructive forces at work. Political and military events were contributing to the growth of a National consciousness, the former in a negative manner by minimising the extent of Papal influence in this country, the latter, more positively, by stimulating the pride of the English people. Yet one must not exaggerate the change taking place in the life and thought of the Age, noticeable though it is. In some respects Chaucer's England is still characteristically mediæval, and nowhere is the conservative feeling more strongly marked than in the persistence of chivalry. This strange amalgam of love, war, and religion so far from exhibiting any signs of decay, reached perhaps its fullest development at this time. More than two centuries were to elapse before it was finally killed by the satirical pen of Cervantes.

Nevertheless, even when all reservations are made, the most insistent feature of the period is an impatient, progressive spirit, alien to the mediæval mind. Let us now retrace our steps to fill in the picture thus rapidly sketched.

Among the great contemporaries of Chaucer, few deserve more attention than John Wyclif, for he was one of the first Englishmen to challenge the authority of the Catholic Church; and in so doing he anticipated Martin Luther by nearly one hundred and fifty years. Like his famous successor, he came to the conclusion that clerical pretensions had raised a barrier between man and God; and both by pen and in pulpit he endeavoured to break it down. Free access to the Bible was what the spiritual life required.

This view of religion admirably illustrates the critical attitude which was slowly coming into existence. The Lollard movement was the first opposition of importance to Catholicism in England. Ever since the memorable council of Whitby, seven centuries distant, Roman Christianity had received the obedience which its tenets demanded.

[1] Vide Wright's *Political Songs*, p. 210.

Heresy there may have been, but it was confined for the most part to individuals. Not that the Middle Ages marked a time of intellectual stagnation, far from it. The schoolmen possessed great subtlety of mind; they delighted in debating problems such as: "How many Angels can stand on the point of a needle?" or "What happens when a mouse eats the consecrated Host?" These questions may not appeal very strongly to us, but the fact that they were seriously discussed argues a remarkable appetite for mental gymnastics. But this alertness of intellect was always at the service of the Church; it was engaged in explaining and justifying the orthodox faith. Scholasticism, for example, never thought of disputing the doctrine of Transubstantiation, it was quite content to produce philosophical reasons for believing in its truth. With William Occam, however, the long succession of famous schoolmen came to an end. "The Invincible Doctor" died whilst Chaucer was still a child. The next great theologian, as we have seen, repudiated the whole system which his predecessors had so ingeniously sought to make secure.

The prestige of the Church was, in truth, beginning to decline. Politically, intellectually, and spiritually its influence had diminished. Until the reign of John it was the clergy more than any other class who ensured good government. For they had held the balance between the despotic inclinations of the King on the one hand and the anarchical tendencies of the nobility on the other. But for reasons which we need not here discuss, this patriotic policy had been hindered during the thirteenth century. Then came the birth of Parliament, and the people began to fight their own political battles.

Culture was spreading beyond the Church. Hitherto she had practically monopolised the intellectual life of the nation. Philosophy was in the hands of the schoolmen, and they were drawn mainly from the Dominican and Franciscan Orders. For scientific knowledge the Middle Ages were never conspicuous, but what little existed was possessed by the Church. The one great English scientist of the period—the famous Roger Bacon—was a friar; though it is true that many of his contemporaries held him "to be in league with the Devil." The monks, too, had been the nation's chroniclers from the time of Bede onwards. But their accounts were always marred by a lack of proper perspective. It is, therefore, not surprising to find that this literary activity was at any rate now being shared by the layman. Froissart was writing his memorable work. And, of course, Chaucer himself has left us a document which is historical in all except the technical sense of the word.

But these points are, after all, only of subsidiary importance. The Church was first and foremost a spiritual body; and it was not so much the decrease in her political and intellectual utility which angered Wyclif, as the failure in extending her own peculiar functions. To this degeneration many causes contributed; and any discussion of them would lead us too far afield. But one factor must at least be mentioned. The clergy had been too successful. Material prosperity long continued had made them both arrogant and lax. For we must remember that in mediæval times they experienced no difficulty in amassing wealth. Gifts to the Church obtained Masses for the souls of the dead, procured the remission of penances, soothed the uneasy conscience and secured her good-will. Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, stands as a type very prevalent in Wyclif's day. He was one of those ecclesiastical politicians who owed their position less to spiritual than worldly qualifications. He recommended himself to Edward III by his diplomatic ability, and his reward was a series of promotions which culminated in the office by which he is remembered. Nevertheless, though the Age of her Glory had passed, the Catholic Church was still a power in the land; and Wyclif had been in his grave a century and a half before her pre-eminence came to an end.

The fourteenth century opened brightly for Industrial England. There had been no repetition of the anarchy of Stephen's reign when so barren was the land that—to use the words of a contemporary writer—"you might as well have tilled the sea." The material prosperity of the working classes had steadily increased. Both with regard to food and clothing the English labourer was better off than his fellows on the Continent. He had, moreover, another and important reason for self-congratulation which requires a word or so of explanation. For one cannot follow the trend of economic events during this period without referring, however briefly, to the curious mediæval system of land tenure.

Under this system the rent which a man paid for his land was decidedly complex in character. This is especially true of the payments which the peasantry made. On occasions it must have necessitated the tenant possessing a painful sense of mathematical accuracy when "a hen and a half" was taken as a partial settlement of his obligations. Most of the rent, however, was discharged, not in kind, but in personal services. In return for a holding the villein was obliged to work for a certain number of days in the year on the land which his lord had not chosen to sublet. The duties were multifarious and need not be detailed. The main point here is the fact that for a long time past they had been gradually converted into money payments. This change made for greater liberty, for the old methods had compelled a man to remain on the manor to which he belonged. But now he was frequently allowed to take his labour where he could find a market for it. Such was the encouraging state of affairs in 1348. Then in the August of that year came the Black Death.

This terrible pestilence, with which the medical science of the time was powerless to cope, carried off no less than one-third of the population, even when full allowance is made for the mediæval powers of exaggeration. A vivid account has been left us by Henry Knighton, a canon of Leicester. "In Bristol," he says, "almost the whole strength of the town died." Sometimes death ensued in the course of a few hours.

One result of this prodigious mortality was a

sudden scarcity of labour and a corresponding demand for higher wages. Nor were the men alone in taking advantage of the changed conditions. Women, who had hitherto been contented with a penny for the daily work, now regarded double the amount as their rightful due. Some of the new requirements, such as the desire to have "fresh flesh or fish fried or baked," may not sound hopelessly audacious to modern ears, but Edward III, and his Parliament, took a very different view. A series of Statutes were enacted, increasing in severity, until at last imprisonment was the penalty for those who refused to conform to the old standards of payment. Many of the labourers thought to indulge in "passive resistance" by simply deserting their masters, but when captured they suffered for their temerity with a heavy fine.

Not only were the emancipated villeins prohibited from asking for a rise in wages, but their newly gained freedom was also threatened. The landowners endeavoured to compel them to resume the personal services from which they had been exempted. Consequently, those who still remained unfree saw little chance of ever gaining their liberty, if it was to depend on the will of their lords. To a people smarting under the sense of injustice came the Kentish priest, John Ball, preaching the doctrine of social equality. Referring to the nobility, he asked, "Whereby can they say or shew that they be greater Lords than we?" The spirit, if not the letter of the answer, is contained in the witty remark of Beaumarchais' Figaro, they have "taken the trouble to be born, nothing more."

How the peasantry were stirred by this gospel to march on London with the purpose of redressing their grievances, how Richard promised reform, and how he broke his promise, are events related in every history book.

To a superficial observer, the Peasants' Rising may seem to have failed in its object, but we know, of course, that this was not the case. The revolt had, for the first time, given significant suggestion of the strength which the working people in this country possessed when they took concerted action. It is a dim foreshadowing of those industrial troubles that lay in the distant future. So far as villeinage was concerned no further appeal to force was necessary, for the governing classes profited by the hint which had been given them; and whilst loudly proclaiming a policy of "no surrender," in point of fact surrendered. During the succeeding century, the system by which the labourer was tied to the soil rapidly ceased to be of importance in the economic life of England.

A final illustration of the progressive spirit animating society at this time may be found in the growth of national sentiment. What were the conditions which favoured this development? It will perhaps be remembered that in dealing with the psychology of the Teutonic people, a prominent trait was found to be their power of adaptation. Since this pliability enabled them to readily absorb the characteristics of races wholly alien to themselves, it is not surprising that this fusion was still more rapid when different branches of the parent stock encountered one another as they did at Senlac. As we have seen, the men who invaded our shores in 1066 were foreigners not by blood but through environment. Barely a hundred and fifty years had elapsed since their ancestors left a Scandinavian home. Long, therefore, before Chaucer was born, the men of England could say with some truth, "Saxon, Norman, and Dane are we." One must not, however, be misled by a phrase. Unity there was both of customs and temperament, and of language also in some degree. But a national life requires more than this, it requires consciousness of unity. To produce this state no forces are more potent than a native literature and a foreign war, for each of them in differing ways intensifies a nation's individuality. Of these two factors the former, in the fourteenth century, was only just coming into existence, but the latter had already begun to exert its stimulating influence.

The Accession of Edward III marked the beginning of that struggle with France always known as "The Hundred Years' War"—a title which explains itself. To narrate the causes which occasioned this mighty conflict would be unnecessary, for we are only concerned with historical events in so far as they have some direct bearing on the literature of the period. What does call for notice is the brilliant start which England made.

In the very year in which Chaucer was born occurred the great sea-fight off Sluys. This battle has a twofold interest. It is the first of an almost unbroken series of victories which lasted nearly twenty years and included the familiar names of Crécy and Poitiers; further, it is one of the earliest of those naval successes which in the years to come Blake and Nelson were to make so typically English. But in the importance of its results, Sluys cannot, of course, compare with Crécy—the battle which Froissart has described in such vivid and picturesque language.

From the standpoint of national development, the fight is memorable not merely for stimulating the pride of Englishmen—this effect it shared in common with all the great victories of the war such as Poitiers and Agincourt—but because of the manner in which it was won. The Archers were chiefly responsible for our gaining the day: "They let fly their arrows," says the French Chronicler, "so wholly together and so thick that it seemed snow." Hitherto our successes on the battle-field had been achieved by the aristocracy, by the lance of the knight; now the humble bowmen played the most prominent part, and in so doing broke down the barrier of military inequality between the upper and middle classes.

But these events on the Continent were not alone in making for the growth of national consciousness. At home, legislation was working towards the same end. In a manner at once successful and unmistakable, it was displaying a long-felt resentment at the Papal interference in the temporal affairs of this country. To thoroughly appreciate the significance of this policy one must remember that throughout the Middle Ages the Pope was for ever

aspiring to be not only "World Priest" but "World King." The earthly jurisdiction of princes, he argued, comes from the supreme spiritual authority just as the Moon derives its light from the Sun. Naturally enough this pretension was a great hindrance to the national life of England. A strong king invariably refused to play the inferior rôle so thoughtfully assigned him, with the result that the clergy in particular were placed in an anomalous position; they could not be patriotic without being in some measure disloyal to the Head of their Church. And when the weakness of John induced him to hold his kingdom as a fief from the Pope and pay an annual tribute of one thousand marks, the element of disunion was still greater. For this act of submission gave Rome a right of political interference more plausible than any she had hitherto possessed. But time was on the side of England.

In the fourteenth century the Papacy met with a series of misfortunes, of which the English kings were not slow to avail themselves. The temporal overlordship of the Pope was definitely repudiated. Nor was this all. He lost also the important advantage of being able to fill the bishoprics with his own nominees. By these and other measures the Parliaments of Edward III and his successors began that process of separation from Rome which the work of Henry VIII completed.

Such then, briefly, are the main political and social tendencies of the time in which Chaucer and Langland lived and wrote—a transitional age, with the old feudalism slowly losing its pristine vigour and utility, with a great Church rich in its traditions of intellectual and moral guidance, exhibiting signs of decadence and enfeeblement; yet with no clear ideals as yet, or only dimly limned ideals, as to what form of social reconstruction was to take their place. But the weaknesses are clearly enough perceived, and no one has assayed them more bitterly than the conservative minded Langland. The moral aspects of the time touch Chaucer more lightly. It is sufficient for him to see what rich material for his moralising power lay in the newly awakened democracy. Both the Knight and the Yeoman are numbered among his Canterbury Pilgrims. So he paints for us, with the joyful impartiality of the literary artist, every class in the community; less concerned than Langland in reprimanding us, but as quick as he to detect the frailties and imperfections of human nature irrespective of class.

Chaucer's world is mediæval; but beneath the mediævalism the leaven of the Renascence is already at work.

CHAUCER

Chaucer symbolises, as no other writer does, the Middle Ages. He stands in much the same relation to the life of his time as Pope does to the earlier phases of the eighteenth century, and Tennyson to the Victorian era; and his place in English literature is even more important than theirs, for he is the first great English writer—the first man to use "naked words" in English; the first to make our composite language a thing compact and vital.

Frank, virile, and tolerant, he is amused rather than angry with the little kinks in human nature; and in his intellectual vision he has a wider sweep than most of our writers. The poet most akin to him in his general outlook is Robert Browning. Certainly he would have endorsed that poet's line:

"And the need of a world of men for me."

Neither Browning nor Chaucer were insular poets; nor despite certain qualities which we look upon as distinctively English—bluffness, geniality, and restless vitality—was he wholly English in mould. His religious temper had nothing of the Saxon's narrow intensity, and his imaginative sympathies were clearly cosmopolitan. The name itself, it has been shown,[1] stands for *chaufe cire* (*i.e.* a "chafe wax"), and suggests a foreign lineage. It is probable that his grandfather was one Robert le Chaucer, collector of wine dues in the Port of London. On his death the widow remarried Richard le Chaucer. His stepson John was a vintner like his stepfather, acting also as King's Butler to Edward III, whenever that monarch crossed the water. John Chaucer married Agnes, niece of Hugo de Compton; and it is probable that Geoffroy Chaucer was their son. The exact date of his birth is uncertain, but most scholars fix it for 1340. Geoffrey's early life was spent in London during his most plastic years, and the impressions of the city and its teeming life were likely to make an ineffaceable impress upon his imagination. In 1357 Chaucer was appointed to the household of Elizabeth, Countess of Ulster, and wife of Lionel, third son of Edward III, and from items of her expenditure that have survived, we gather that she provided the youth with red and black breeches, and shoes. Two years later he was captured by the French, while on a military expedition to France, and the King paid a ransom equivalent to £240 of our present money for his release. He became subsequently a personal attendant of the King's—a "beloved valet," as he was called, or as we should say to-day, a gentleman in waiting. From this position he ascended to that of esquire, where he was concerned with helping to entertain the Court and any strangers that might come along. In this way his social qualities were sharpened, a characteristic that left ample impression on his later poetry.

From 1370 to 1378 he went on diplomatic missions abroad—during the later part of the time to Italy. These journeys, especially the Italian ones, affected in marked fashion his literary work. During this period he obtained from the Corporation of London a life lease of the Gatehouse at Aldgate, where he lived for a number of years. Later he became Comptroller of Customs in the Port of London.

We pass now to the last period of Chaucer's life. His fortunes at this time declined. He lost Court favour in 1388 and became relatively poor. For the next few years he was however more free to turn to literary work. A slight improvement in his position occurred in 1389 when he was made Clerk of the Works; looking after the repairs and alter-

[1] Mr. Edward Scott in *The Athenæum*, February 1899.

tions at the Palace of Westminster, the Tower, and St. George's Chapel, Windsor. In 1391, however, he was superseded in these activities, and lived on pensions for the remaining years of his life. A literary hint sent to Henry IV, entitled *Complement to his Purse*, had facilitated matters in this direction. His great work *The Canterbury Tales* was written almost entirely during the later years of this period, when he made splendid use of his knowledge of men and affairs. He died in 1400 and was buried in St. Benet's Chapel in Westminster Abbey. During the last few months of his life he had taken a house in the garden of St. Mary's, Westminster. In 1868, a stained glass window, symbolising his life and work, was erected by Dean Stanley, over against his grave.

The Work of Chaucer

The writings of Chaucer may be divided for purposes of convenience into three periods: the French, the Italian, and the English; though it should always be remembered that he was nurtured on French literature, and remained to a large extent French in his literary methods to the very end. Unlike Langland, he showed no liking for English alliterative verse; and despite his admiration for Italian poetry, he refrained (with one trifling exception) from following their metrical patterns. None the less, there were these three distinct influences in his literary life, which left well-defined marks upon his work;

(1) *The French Period*

While an esquire to Edward III, he first began to write, and a prayer to the Virgin, *A. B. C.*, is declared by many to be his first extant poem. He read the famous *Roman de la Rose*, and was profoundly impressed by it. Of this voluminous poem he made a translation, probably at a later date.

Before 1369 he had struck out a line of graceful and tender sentiment in the *Complaynt to Pite*; which was followed by the *Book of the Duchesse* in 1369—the Duchesse being the wife of Chaucer's patron, John of Gaunt.

(2) *The Italian Period* (c. 1372–1384)

This covered the time of his mission abroad. Two of these missions were to Italy, to Genoa, Pisa, Florence, and Lombardy. It was the Italy of the Early Renascence—the Italy of Petrarch, of Boccaccio, of Giotto. And just as French chivalry had inspired his earlier work, so did the glory of Italian literature colour his writings of this period. He read Petrarch, possibly met and talked with him also, and studied the stories of Boccaccio. On returning to England, he wrote *Troilus and Cressyde*, 1380–3, founded on the *Filostrato* of Boccaccio. It was Boccaccio, chastened by English reticence and religious feeling. He wrote also *The Story of Griselda* (*The Clerk's Tale*). The story of the patient Griselda had fascinated Petrarch, and became immeasurably popular. Indeed it had been seized upon by the ballad writers, in the same way as *Guy of Warwick*; and the unhappy fortunes of this peasant girl excited the widest interest. Like King Cophetua, Walter, Marquis de Lelune weds a peasant girl whom he had met while on a hunting expedition. The marriage turns out unhappy, the Marquis treats her with brutality; and ultimately, shorn of her rich clothes, she is sent back to her father. The Marquis proceeds to enter into another alliance, and with calculated cruelty, requires Griselda to help him in making the wedding preparations. Griselda, with native goodness and freedom from jealousy, had praised the bride, but pleads she should be well treated. Walter then admits it is a trick to try her; that this girl is no other than Griselda's own daughter, who had been brought up by an uncle. Griselda is overjoyed, she is taken back as Walter's wife, and they live happily ever after—according to the tale, despite the psychological improbability of such a termination.

Griselda is somewhat of an abstraction—womanly patience personified; and if she does not prove a shade "too good for human nature's daily food," it is because of the beautiful little touches of tenderness and sweetness with which Chaucer embellishes her portrait. This story of Griselda is *The Clerk's Tale*. He wrote also at this time, *The Story of Constance*, *The Man of Law's Tale* (from an Anglo-Norman Chronicle of 1334); *The Complaynt of Mars* (founded on classical legends); *The Complaynt to his Lady*; the exuberant *Parliament of Fowls*; *To Rosamond*; *Lines to Adam Scrivener*; *The House of Fame* (inspired by Dante), and *The Legend of Good Women*, influenced also by Dante, or derived from Boccaccio.

The Legend of Good Women deals with the poet as wishing to make reparation for past errors. He regrets having translated the *Romance of the Rose*; he upbraids himself for the stigma he has cast on women in his picture of Cressida. So here he vows he will treat of true and good women.

His choice of good women is not free from critical exception, as he elects to lead off with Cleopatra, who despite her charms and brilliance can scarcely pose as "a model of all the virtues!" Yet perhaps he realises this. Anyhow, he adds this whimsical comment:

> "Now, ere I find a man so true and stable,
> And will for love his Death so freely take,
> I pray God let our heades never ache."

(3) *The English Period* (1384–1390)

Largely as his work has been affected by Italian subjects, he had never, save with one trifling exception, attempted to copy Italian verse. Boccaccio's octave stanzas did not attract him; he had a stanza ready to hand, which he deemed fully as good.

Some of *The Canterbury Tales* had been written during the earlier period, but those most characteristically English were written at this time—those of the Miller, the Reeve, the Cook, the Wife of Bath, the Merchant, the Friar, the Nun Priest, and the Pardoner. The Prologue is supposed to have been written in 1388.

Chaucer's Position in English Literature

The first thing to strike the reader is the number of translations and adaptations made by Chaucer, and from these we may infer that he had little gift of original creative imagination. On this point, Emerson's words may serve as the best comment:

"A great poet, who appears in illiterate times, absorbs into his sphere all the light which is anywhere radiating. Every intellectual jewel, every flower of sentiment, it is his fine office to bring to his people, and he comes to value his memory equally with his invention. He is therefore little solicitous whence his thoughts have been derived; whether through translation, whether through tradition, whether by travel in distant countries, whether by inspiration; from whatever sources, they are equally welcome to his uncritical audience. . . . But Chaucer is a huge borrower. . . . He steals by this apology—that what he takes has no worth where he finds it, and the greatness where he leaves it. It has come to be practically a sort of rule in literature, that a man, having once shown himself capable of original writing, is entitled therefore to steal from the writings of others at discretion. Thought is the property of him who can entertain it, and of him who can adequately place it. A certain awkwardness marks the use of borrowed thoughts; but, as soon as we have learned what to do with them, they become our own."

This is sound criticism. The supreme question after all is, not where does the tap-root of genius draw its nourishment, but what is the culminating expression of that nourishment? what blossom is forthcoming? Genius has an alchemy of its own that can transmute the baser metals, it may steal on occasion, into pure gold. Such was the way of that other splendid borrower, Shakespeare; and Chaucer is less unblushing in his literary thefts than he.

The Canterbury Tales place us in the heart of London.

It is not many years ago since the old Tabard Inn at Southwark could still be visited, and the visitor taste of that London Ale of which Chaucer speaks, and see in imagination the little band of pilgrims.

Beer was found in other places than inns in the fourteenth century. At the cross-roads of frequented highways houses were erected where beer was to be had. And the Pilgrim in the Tale dismounts at a house of this kind, where the Pardoner before starting on his story deemed it desirable

". . . at this Ale-stake
Both drynke and byten cake."

It is to be hoped that the Pilgrims did not light upon a house such as a fourteenth-century writer describes: "The servant of a traveller, sent forward to engage the rooms, utters the warm wish that there are no fleas, nor bugs, nor other vermin. 'No, sir, please God,' replies the host, 'for I make bold that you shall be comfortably lodged here, save that there is a good peck of rats and mice'!"

The French of "Stratforde-atte-Bowe" spoken by the Prioress implied possibly no reflection on the worthy lady:

"And French she spake ful fair and fetisly
After the scole of Stratforde-atte-Bowe,
For French of Paris was to her unknowe."

The Prioress spoke "the usual Anglo-Saxon French of the English Law Courts, and of English ecclesiastics of the higher rank." Chaucer had been to France and knew the difference between the two dialects, but he had no special reason for thinking more highly of the Parisian than of the Anglo-Saxon French. This Anglo-Saxon French was taught by the nuns at the Nunnery of St. Leonard, Bow—an ancient Benedictine foundation.[1] It seems however, that Anglo-Saxon French was giving way even at the Court to the fashionable Parisian French.

We can guess from the food consumed at the Tabard hostelry how the middle classes fared; was not the cook accomplished in these matters?

"To boil the chicken and the marrow bones,
And poudre marchant tart and galingale:
He could roast and seethe and boil and fry,
Maken mortrewes and well bake a pie."

"Poudre marchant tart" seems to have been a kind of mediæval curry powder; "galingale," the root of the sweet cypress, was aromatic and pungent; "mortrewes" were soups which contained a variety of ingredients—fresh pork, chicken, eggs, saffron, or sometimes fish, bread, pepper, and ale. These ingredients were bruised first in a mortar—hence their name. The Londoner approved evidently of strong seasoning.

While on the subject of dinners, it is interesting to note that the "goliardey" referred to by Chaucer in describing the Miller was a professional diner-out who, in return for his dinner, was supposed to amuse the company by his jests and anecdotes.

There is a disquisition on table manners in the Prologue. Each guest brought his own knife, but for common use there were no forks. At the beginning and end of dinner every one washed his hands—an obviously desirable proceeding. On to the rush-strewn floor the guests flung the bones and scraps of meat. The difficulties presented by gravy were met by the meat—which was served by a carver at a side table—being laid upon thick slices of bread which absorbed the gravy. Every guest had a napkin, and the proper use of the napkin was an elaborate ritual in itself.

This picture of the average merchant has a familiar ring about it:

"A Marchant was ther with a forked berd,
In motteleye, and hye on horse he sat;
Upon his heed a Flaundrysh bevere hat;
His bootes clasped fair and fetisly;[2]
His resons he spak ful solempnely,
Sownynge[3] alway thencrees[4] of his wynnyng.
. . . . . .
This worthy man ful wel his wit biseette[5]
Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette."

The beaver hat still survives in the "topper," and the business instincts of the gentleman express themselves with no radical difference to-day.

Chaucer accepts the current class divisions between "genrles" and "churls." Neither he nor Langland ignore distinctions of rank; and although rich and poor, cultured and rude jostle one

[1] See Note by Professor Skeat to Chaucer.
[2] Neatly. [3] Tending.
[4] To the increase. [5] Emphasized.

another in the procession, yet he is well aware that some of the Tales might displease the "gentles" among his readers as they offended the "gentles" in the poem. Yet he adds with the tolerance of the artist:

". . . I must reherce
Their tales all, be they better or worse,
Or elles falsen some of my matter."

In Chaucer's Doctor of Physic, we have an excellent picture of the mediæval medicine man, with his herbal remedies and his knowledge of astronomy—or what we should call astrology. In common with the physicians of the day, he was a priest, but Chaucer indicates that his medical studies had drawn him away from his profession: "His studie was but litel on the Bibel." Chaucer gives a sly dig at him for his fee-loving propensities:

"For gold in physick is a cordial,
Therefore he lov'ede gold in special."

The supposed medicinal value of the metal, so common not only in the Middle Ages but a century or so later, is here touched upon.

Such was the London in which Chaucer was brought up.

The Form of the Canterbury Tales

Of this work about 17,000 lines are in verse; with two stories—the tale of *Melibeus* and the *Parson's Tale*—in prose. The verse consists of rhymed couplets. It forms a compromise between the old and new prosody. He does not care for alliteration or doggerel rhyme, and chooses the form of "heroic" verse, with rhymed couplets and five accented syllables.

The tales themselves are of astonishing variety. Some are drawn from the romances of chivalry—e.g. *The Knight's Tale*. Others deal with moralising scriptural stories—e.g. *The Monk's Tale*. Some are fine adaptations of romantic stories of ancient France. There are, between the stories, prologues, where Chaucer's gift of sharp and vivid characterisation is best seen—e.g. *The Discourse of the Wife of Bath*.

The wealth and variety of the Tales, give us as in a *camera obscura*, not merely a faithful picture of differing sides of mediæval life in England, but a vitalised epitome of all that is interesting in mediæval literature.

In the *Knight's Tale*, we have much more than a typical romance; we have a presentment with rare artistic skill of all the finer elements in mediæval romance, avoiding, as the author of Gawayne does, many of the vain repetitions and dull meanderings found in so many of them, and the whole clarified and sharpened by that sure sense of character, of which Chaucer alone of his Age possessed the secret.

We have in Sir Thopas the baser and more foolish kind of romances, burlesqued; the coarse, the pungent humour of the *Fabliau*; and the wrangle with the Summoner jostles with tales of pathos, such as the Clerk's.

The Characterisation.—When the prevailing tendency of the age to deal in allegory and abstractions is taken into consideration, it is astounding how alive these Chaucerian types are.

For he had in the course of his life come into contact with them all. The Knight, the Squire, the Merchant, the Sailor, Scholar, Doctor, Monk, Labourers, Saints, and Knaves—he knew them intimately and drew them from personal observation. He knew the Court folk, he knew the People, and he draws them for us with all their little tricks and mannerisms and external peculiarities. We recognise one by the raucous tone of the voice, another by his rubicund face, another for her sensitiveness—she was so "pitous" she wept to see a mouse caught. We see the parchment face of the Knave, the jolly countenance of mine host, he became acquainted, in a word, with the mediæval Englishman as he moved and lived, depicted with a breadth of vision and a rich tolerant humour unsurpassed in our literature. The poignant note that we find in Langland is absent, for Chaucer takes rather the comedy view of life; but this must not be held to imply any lack of sympathy with the poor and suffering. There is a large-hearted charity in his treatment of the labouring class, as his picture of the Ploughman will testify.

There is an open-air atmosphere about it all. His people are always on the move. Never do they become shadowy or lifeless. They shout and swear, and laugh and weep, interrupt the story-teller, pass compliments, and in general behave themselves as we might expect them to in the dramatic circumstances of the narrative. It is never possible to confuse the story-teller; each is distinct and inimitable, whether it be the sermonising Pardoner, the hot-tempered Miller, or the exuberantly vivacious Wife of Bath, who has had five husbands, but experience teaching her that husbands are transient blessings, she has fixed her mind on a sixth!

There are tragedies as well as comedies in the Tales; some are grave and subdued, others ablaze with colour and merriment; but the thread of honest and kindly laughter runs through them all, serious and gay alike.

There is nothing of the dreamer about Chaucer—nothing of the stern moralist and social reformer. Like Shakespeare, he makes it his business, in *The Canterbury Tales*, to paint life as he sees it, and leaves others to draw the moral.

Langland's mordant pictures of contemporary life gave an actuality to poetical literature which removed it far from the old heroic stories with which the name of poet hitherto had been connected. Chaucer realised what those who followed him for many years to come were too blind to see: that the genius of the English people did not lie in high-flown tales of sentiment, but in homely stories of everyday life, illumined by shrewd observation, tolerant humour, and occasional moralising. Indeed, for all his considerable powers of pathos, his happy fancy, his lucid imagination, it is as a great humorist that he lingers longest in our memories, with a humour, rich, profound and sane, devoid of spite and cynicism, irradiated by a genial kindliness, and a consummate knowledge of human life.

The Knight's Tale

(Palamon and Arcite first see Emelye from the Prison Window)

This passeth yeer by yeer, and day by day,
Til it fel oones, in a morwe of May,
That Emelie, that fairer was to sene
Than is the lillie on hir stalkë grene,
And fresscher than the May with flowrës newe—
For with the rosë colour strof hire hewe,
I not which was the fayrere of them two—
Er it were day, as was hire wone to do,
Sche was arisen, and al redy dight;
For May wol have no sloggardye anight,
The seson priketh every gentil herte,
And maketh him out of his sleep to sterte,
And seith, "Arys, and do thyn observaunce."
This makeda Emelye han remembrance
To don honour to May, and for to ryse.
I-clothed was sche fresshe for to devyse.
Hir yelwe here was browded in a tresse,
Bihynde hir bak, a yerdë long, I gesse.
And in the gardyn at the sonne upriste
Sche walketh up and doun, and as hir liste
Sche gadereth flowres, party whyte and rede,
To make a sotil gerland for hire hede,
And as an aungel hevenlyche sche song.
The grete tour, that was so thikke and strong,
Which of the castel was the chief dongeoun,
(Ther as the knightës weren in prisoun,
Of which I tolde yow, and tellen schal)
Was even joynant to the gardyn-wal,
Ther as this Emelye hadde hire playynge,
Bright was the sonne, and cleer that morweninge,
And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
As was his wone, by leve of his gayler,
Was risen, and romede in a chambre on heigh,
In which he al the noble cité seigh,
And eek the gardyn, ful of braunches grene,
Ther as this fresshë Emelye the shene
Was in hir walk, and romede up and doun.
This sorweful prisoner, this Palamon,
Goeth in the chamber, romyng to and fro,
And to himself compleynyng of his wo;
That he was born, ful ofte he seyde, alas!
And so bifel, by aventure, or cas,[1]
That through a wyndow thikke, of many a barre
Of iren greet, and square as any sparre,[2]
He caste his eyen upon Emelye,
And therwithal he bleynte[3] and cryede, a!
As thogh he stongen were unto the herte.
And with that cry Arcite anon up-sterte,
And seyde, "Cosyn myn, what eyleth the,
That art so pale, and dredly on to see?
Why cridestow? Who hath the doon offence?
For Goddës love, tak al in pacience
Our prisoun, for it may non other be;
Fortune hath yeven us this adversité.
Som wikke aspect or disposition
Of Saturne, by som constellacioun,
Hath yeven us this, although we hadde it sworn;
So stood the heven whan that we were born;
We moste endure it: this is the schort and playn.
This Palamon answerde, and seyde ageyn,
"Cosyn, for soothe of this opynyoun
Thou hast a veyn ymaginacioun,
This prisoun caused me not for to crye.
But I was hurt right now thurghout myn eye
Into myn herte, that wol my bane be.
The fairnesse of that lady that I see
Yond in the gardyn romë to and fro,
Is cause of al my crying and my wo.
I not whether sche be womman or goddesse;
But Venus is it, soothly as I gesse."
And therwithal on knees adoun he fil,
And seyde: "Venus, if it be thy wil
Yow in this gardyn thus to transfigure,
Biforn me sorweful wrecchë creäture,
Out of this prisoun help that we may scape.
And if so be my destinë be schape
By eternë word to deyen in prisoun,
Of our lynage have som compassioun,
That is so lowe y-brought by tyrannye."
And with that word Arcite gan espye
Wher as this lady romede to and fro,
And with that sighte hir beautë hurte him so,
That if that Palamon was wounded sore,
Arcite is hurt as moche as he, or more.
And with a sigh he seyde pitously:
"The fresschë beautë sleeth me sodeynly
Of hir that rometh in the yonder place;
And but I have hir mercy and hir grace,
That I may seen hir atté leste weye,
I nam but dead; ther nys no more to seye."

[1] Accident. [2] Bolt. [3] Started.

The Nun's Priest's Tale

. . . A cock, named Chanticleer;
Of crowing had he in the land no peer.
His voice was merrier than the organ's tone
In church on solemn mass-days loudly blown.
His crowing more exactly told the hour
Than did the great clock in the Abbey-tower.
By nature each ascending point he view'd
Of th' equinoctial in that latitude;
For when degrees full fifteen had ascended,
Then crew he, that it could not be amended.
His crested comb was coral-red and tall,
Embattled as it were a castle-wall;
His bill was black, like shining jet to view,
His legs and eke his toes were azure-blue.
His talons whiter than the lily showed.
And like new-burnished gold his colour glowed.
This gentle cock had in his government
Hens seven, which were kept for his content,
That were his sisters and his lovers too,
And wondrous like to him in splendid hue.
Of which the brightest-coloured in the throat
Was rightly named "fair damsel Part-e-lote."
Courteous she was, discreet, and debonair,
Companionable, and bare herself so fair
E'en since the day that she was seven nights old,
That certainly she held the heart in hold
Of Chanticleer, fast-locked in every limb;
He loved her so, that well therewith was him.
But such a joy it was to hear him sing,
When that the rising sun began to spring,
In sweet accord—"My love's far away!"
For at that time, as I have heard men say,
Both beasts and birds could plainly sing and speak.

And so befell, that once, ere morn did break,
As Chanticleer amongst his spouses all
Sat on his perch, that stretched across the hall,
And next him sat this fair dame Part-e-lote.
This Chanticleer gan groan within his throat,
As one that in his dream is troubled sore.
And when that Part-e-lote thus heard him roar,
She was aghast, and said—"O husband dear,
What eileth you, to groan as if in fear?
Ye be a very sleeper! Fie! for shame!"
He answered straight, and thus he cried: "My dame,
I pray you, moderate your grief and dread!
Alas! I dreamed I was so ill bestead
Right now, that yet my heart is sore with fright.
May God"—quoth he—"my dream expound aright,
And keep my body out of prison base!
I dreamt, that up and down I walked apace
Within our yard, where that I saw a beast,
Was like a hound, who would have made arrest
Upon my body, and would have had me dead.
His colour was betwixt a yellow and red,
And tipped his tail was, as were both his ears,
With black, unlike the remnant of his hairs.
His snout was small, with eyen that glowed severe,
Still, for his look, I almost die for fear;
This caused me all my groaning, quod he also."
"Away!" quoth she, "fie on you! spiritless!

Alas!" quoth she, "for, by yon heav'n above,
Now have ye lost my heart and all my love;
I cannot love a coward, by my faith.
For truly, what so any woman saith,
We all desire, if 't're it so may be,
To have our husbands hardy, wise, and free.

. . . . . .

A day or two repaste digestive make
Of worms, before your laxative ye take
Of laurel, fumatory, centaury,
Or else of hellebore, that groweth nigh,
Or spurge, perchance, or of the cornel-berry,
Or ground-pine growing in our yard so merry!
Go, pick them up this grow, and eat them in;
Be merry, husband, for your father's kin,
And dread no dreams! I cannot tell you more."
"Madam," quoth he, "gramercy for your lore! . .
We know how men in old books oft have read . . .
And have discovered by experimen,
That dreams have their significations
As well of joy as tribulations.

. . . . . .

And therefore, lady Pert-o-lote so dear,
By such examples old thou seest full clear
That no man should too heedlessly dismiss
His dreams of warning; for I tell thee this,
That many a dream is such as one should dread."

. . . . . .

A fox, renowned for sly iniquity,
That in the grove had dwelt for years full three,
Impelled by bold imagination's light,
Had broken through the hedge that very night
Into the yard, where Chanticleer the fair
Was, with his seven wives, want to repair;
And in a bed of pot-herbs still he lay,
Till it was passed the earlier hours of day,
Waiting his time on Chanticleer to fall . . .
From his contrárjy, if he may it see,
Though ne'er before he saw him with his eye.

This Chanticleer, when he the fox did spy,
He would have fled but that the wily foe
Said, "Gentle sir, alas! where would ye go?
Be ye afraid of me, that am your friend?
Now surely, worse were I than any fiend
If e'er I wished you harm or villainy! . . .
Forsooth, ye have a voice as merry and soft
As any angel hath, that dwells aloft; . . .
But, when men speak of singing, let me say,
As ever I hope my eyes will welcome day,
Save you, I never heard a man so sing
As did your father on a May-morning. . . .
Now sing, my friend, for sweet saint Charity!
Let's see, can ye your father counterfeit?"

This Chanticleer began his wings to beat,
As man that could his treason not espy,
So was he ravished with his flattery!

Alas! my lords, what flatt'rers oft ye keep
Within your courts, and many a traitor deep
That pleases far more surely, by my faith,
Than he who veriest truth unto you saith.
Go, read Ecclesiast on flattery;
Beware, my lords, of all this treachery!

This Chanticleer stood high upon his toes,
Stretching his neck, and held his eyes all close,
And gan to crow our loudly, for the nonce;
The fox—Sir Russell—stirred up at once,
And by the throat he caught Sir Chanticleer,
And on his back towards the wood him bare,
For no pursuit or outcry yet was made.
O destiny, that no man may evade!
Alas! that Chanticleer flew from the beams!
Alas! his wife had no belief in dreams!
And on a Friday fell this sad event!
O Venus, that art goddess of content,
Since Chanticleer had vowed to thee his faith,
Why wouldst thou suffer on thy day his death?

. . . . . .

Lo! how that fortune changeth suddenly
The hope and boasting of the enemy!
This cock that lay upon the fox's back,
In all his dread, unto the fox he spake,
And said—"Good sir, if that I were as ye,
I yet would say—and so may heaven help me—
'Turn back again, ye churls and peasants all
A very pestilence upon you fall!
Now I am come unto this forest-side,
Despite you all, the cock shall here abide!
I'll eat him up, in faith, and that anon!'"
The fox replied, "In faith, it shall be done!"
And as he spake that word, right suddenly
The cock brake from his mouth full cleverly,
And high upon a tree he flew anon.
And when the fox perceived that he was gone,
"Alas!" quoth he, "alas! good Chanticleer,
I have to you done great offence, I fear,
In so far as I made you so afeard,
When I you caught, and carried from the yard.
But sir, I did it to no ill intent;
Come down, and let me tell you what I meant;
I'll tell you all the truth, God help me so!"
"Nay then," quoth he, "a curse upon us two,
And first I curse myself, both blood and bones,
If you beguile me oftener than once!
Thou nevermore shalt, by thy flattery,
Cause me to sing, while winking with mine eye
For he that winketh, when he ought to see,
All wilfully, thrive nevermore may he!"
"Nay," quoth the fox, "God grant he thrive anfas
Who knows so little self-command as this,
To talk aloud when he should hold his peace!"

Lo! such it is to be so cautionless,
So negligent, so fain of flattery!
But ye that think this tale a mere folly,
As of a fox, or of a cock and hen,
Take the morality thereof, good men!
For saint Paul saith, that all that written is
For our instruction written is, y-wis.
Then take the corn, and let the chaff be still.
Now, gracious God, if that it be Thy will,
As saith our Bishop, make us all good men,
And bring us to His heavenly bliss!—Amen.

Here is ended the Nun's Priest's Tale.[1]

JOHN GOWER

His Life.—John Gower was a man of Kent, born of good stock during the earlier years of the fourteenth century. He seems to have been a person of shrewd business instincts with a large amount of landed property in East Anglia. Some authorities have inclined to picture him as a lawyer, but Mr. G. C. Macaulay, his latest and most exhaustive biographer, suggests that he made his money as a merchant; judging by the way in which he speaks of our "City," and the number of merchants with whom he was in personal communication. However that may be, it is clear that about middle life he is concerned entirely with the management of his estates and the writing of books. His sympathies were aristocratic and conservative, and the Peasants' Revolt horrified him exceedingly, not merely as an upholder of law and order, but as a landlord with vested interests. It may be that the youthful Richard's diplomatic harangue to the mob at Smithfield disgusted him, but it is certain that he transferred his allegiance from Richard II to his rival, Henry of Lancaster. Late in life there is a record of his marriage, whether his first or second marriage, is not quite free from doubt. In 1400

[1] *Chaucer*, Professor Skeat (Chatto & Windus).

he became blind, but lingered on for a few more years and was buried in St. Mary Overies (now St. Saviour's), Southwark.

His Writings.—His chief works were *Speculum Hominis*, written in French; the *Vox Clamantis*, written in Latin; and the *Confessio Amantis*, written in English. The first is a poem of some 30,000 lines, somewhat in the nature of a Morality. The Vices and Virtues are classified, and a picture of society is drawn. For its improvement Gower looks to the intervention of the Blessed Virgin. Historically, the work is of small value, but, as in Langland and Chaucer, there are interesting side-lights on city life.

The *Vox Clamantis* was occasioned by the Rising of 1381. It consists of seven books; the first book describing the wilderness in which this mediæval Baptist cries. In later books he pictures the common people as having lost their reason and being transformed into wild beasts. Poor Tyler is suggested as an elephantine boar, later on as a jay who has just learnt to speak (*Wat=a jay* in A. S.).

Throughout the poem, politics and theology are intermingled, the later books dealing with man's responsibility towards man. The author divides people into three classes: clerk, soldier, and ploughman; he criticises the clergy as freely as Langland does—a significant testimony to the corruption of the Mediæval Church. And the satirical touch that wealth and wisdom for them are not synonymous, is worthy of Carlyle. On the other hand, he has little to say for the serf. And here again his attitude reminds one of the peasant prophet of Ecclefechan. Gower distrusts the people; yet claims to speak for them: the voice of the people is the voice of God! He believes in an aristocratic government and disapproves strongly of the vacillation of Richard II.

The *Confessio Amantis* was completed about 1390, and was written in the days when he believed in Richard. Later on, he substitutes the name of Henry IV for Richard II.

> "This book upon amendement
> I sende unto mine owne lord
> Which of Lancaster is Henry named;"

It is clear, from the drift of the poem, that the writer is opposed to social reform. He uses a number of stories with the definite intention of telling the people what are the rudiments of good morality. In telling the stories he is clear and straightforward, more so than Chaucer, whose delight in humanity causes him to dally with certain sides of his subject. Gower points the moral "to adorn a tale"; and if the result is less satisfying, less rich in dramatic material, than with the author of *The Canterbury Tales*, yet the poem has a merit all its own—like the merit of Pope's didactic verse.

His last writing, his *Traite*, deals with love and marriage, and consists of a number of ballads exhibiting many of the qualities shown in his earlier work, with greater power of technique though perhaps less imagination in treatment. It was written about 1397, possibly on the occasion of his second marriage, and is addressed to married people.

PART II

THE ENGLISH RENASCENCE

(*c.* 1400–*c.* 1660)

Introduction. Dawn of Renascence: Early English Verse Writers—Scottish Literature—Caxton, his Work and Successors—Malory and the *Morte d'Arthur*—More and the *Utopia*, &c. &c.

INTRODUCTION

Chaucer died in the dawn of the fifteenth century, leaving behind him the realisation that a great force in English letters had passed away. "The master dere and fadir reverent," as his devoted friend Occleve called him. His successors in England did little but copy him, and we enter on an era of mediocrity in Saxon verse that continues up to the time of the Renascence.

Among English verse-makers of the time, there is Thomas Occleve (*c.* 1368–*c.* 1460), a personal friend of Chaucer and a clerk in the Exchequer. Of a hopeful turn of mind, and a moderate amount of brains, he was always on the look-out for some generous dispensation by Fate, that should provide him with less to do and more to get. Meanwhile he applied himself to his work of copying documents, with as much relish as possible, and by way of recreation went to the tavern where by his own account he indulged in mild amorous adventures. In order to attract attention in high quarters he wrote a long and tedious poem on the Government of Princes. There is no duller dog in literature than Occleve, but he has claims on our consideration other than his work. He loved and respected Chaucer, and has perpetuated a portrait of Chaucer, which we have every reason to believe to be a good and faithful one.

LINES ON CHAUCER

Symple is my prose, and scars my letterure,
  Unto youre excellence for to write
Myne inward love, and yit in aventure
  Wol I me put, though I can but lyte;
  My dere Maister—God his soule quyte—
And fader, Chaucer, fayne wold have me taught,
But I was dulle, and lerned lyte or naught.

Allas! my worthy maister honorable,
  This londes verray trescur and richesse,
Dethe by thy dethe hath harme irreparable
  Unto us done: hir vengeable duresse
  Dispoiled hath this londe of the swetnesse
Of retheryk, for unto Tullius
Was never man so like amonges us.

. . . . . .

She might han taryed hir vengeance a whyle,
  Tyl sum man hadde egal to the be;
Nay, let be that; she wel knew that this yle
  May never man forth bringe like to the,
  And hir office nedys do must she;
God bad hir so, I truste as for the beste,
O maystir, maystir, God thy soule reste!

More important than Occleve is John Lydgate (*c.* 1370–1451), a scholar, and monk at the Benedictine Monastery of Bury St. Edmunds, in Suffolk. His learning overweighted his muse, and the naïve admission of Occleve, "But I was dulle," might well have been uttered by Lydgate also. He imitated with more labour than skill, Chaucer's favourite metres, and his treatment of romantic themes, but he floundered about disastrously in his cadences, admitting ruefully, "I took none heed neither of short nor long." Perhaps his most interesting piece of work is his *London Lackpenny*, an agreeable and lively set of verses describing the woes of a poor man in Westminster Hall and about the London Streets, where he sees much to attract him, but can avail himself of no allurements or purchases for lack of funds.

LONDON LYCKPENY

(*About* 1430)

To London once, my steppes I bent,
Where trouth in no wyse should be faynt;
To Westmynster ward I forthwith went,
To a man of law to make complaynt.
I sayd, "For Mary's love, that holy saynt!
Pity the poore that would prosecute";
But for lack of mony I cold not spede.

And as I thrust the prese amonge,
By froward chaunce my hood was gone;
Yet for all that I stayd not longe,
Tyll to the Kynges bench I was come,
Before the judge I kneled anon,
And prayd hym for God's sake to take heede,
But for lack of mony I myght not spede.

Beneath them sat clarkes a great rout,
Which fast dyd wryte by one assent;
There stoode up one and cryed about,
Ryebard, Robert, and John of Kent;
I wyst not wele what this man ment;
He cryed so thycke there indede;
But he that lacket mony myght not spede.

Unto the common place I yode thno,
Where sat one with a sylken houde;
I dyd hym reverence, for I ought to do so,
And told my case as well as I cold,
How my goods were defrauded me by falsehood.
I gat not a mum of his mouth for my mood,
And for lack of mony I myght not spede.

Unto the Rolls I gat me from thence,
Before the chekes of the chaunscrye,
Where many I found carrying of pence,
But none at all once regarded mee;
I gave them my playnt uppon my knee;

They lyked it well when they had it reade,
But lackyng mony I cold not be sped.

In Westmynster hall I found out one,
Which went in a long gown of raye;
I crouched and kneled before hym anon:
For Marye's love, of help I hym praye.
"I wat not what thou meanest," gan he say;
To get me thence he dyd me bede,
For lack of mony I cold not spede.

Within this hall, neithere ryche nor yett poor,
Wold do for me ought, although I shold dye;
Which seeing, I gat me out of the doore,
Where Flemynges began on me for to cry,
"Master, what will you copen us by,
Fyne felt hattes, or spectacles to rede?
Lay down your sylver, and here you may spede."

Then to Westmynster gate I presently went,
When the sonn was at hyghe prymme;
Cokes to me, they tooke good entente,
And profered me bread with ale and wyne,
Rybbs of befe both fat and ful fyne;
A fayre cloth they gan for to spreade,
But wantyng mony I myght not then spede.

Then unto London I did me hye,
Of all the land it beareth the pryse;
Hot pescods one began to crye,
Strauberry rype, and cherryes in the ryse:
One bad me come nere, and by some spyce,
Peper and saffyron, they gan me bede;
But for lacke of mony I myght not spede.

Then to the Cheape I began me drawne,
Where much people I sawe for to stande;
One offred me velvet, sylke, and lawne,
And other he taketh me by the hande,
"Here is Parys thred, the finest in the lande,"
I never was used to such thynge indede,
And wantyng mony I myght not spede.

Then went I forth by London stone,
Throughout all Cannwyke streete;
Drapers much cloth me offered anone:
Then comes me one, cryde hot shepes feete,
One cryde makerell, ryshes grene, another gan greete,
One bad me by a hood to cover my head;
But for want of mony I myght not be sped.

Then I hyed me into Estchepe;
One cryes rybs of befe, and many a pye;
Pewter potts they clattered on a heape,
There was harpe, pype, and mynstralsye:
"Yea by cock!" "nay by cock!" some began crye,
Some songes of Jenkon and Julyan for there mede;
But for lack of mony I myght not spede.

Then into Cornhyll anon I yode,
Where was much stolen gere amonge;
I saw where hange myne owne hoode,
That I had lost amonge the throngе;
To by my own hood I thought it wronge,
I knew it well as I dyd my crede;
But for lack of mony I cold not spede.

The Taverner took me by the sleve;
"Sir," sayth he, "wyll you eat your wyne assay?"
I answered, that can not much me greve,
A peny can do no more than it may;
I dranke a pynt, and for it dyd pay;
Yet sore a hungerd from thence I yede,
And wantyng my mony I cold not spede.

Then hyed I me to Belyngate;
And one cryed "hoo, go we hence!"
I prayd a barge man for God's sake,
That he wold spare me my expence.
"Thou scapst not here," quod he, "under ij pence,
I lyst not yet bestow my almes dede";
Thus lacking mony I cold not spede.

Then I convayed me into Kent;
For of the law wold I meddle no more,
Because no man to me tooke entent,
I dyght me do as I dyd before.
Now Jesus that in Bethlem was bore,
Save London, and send trew lawyers there mede,
For who so wants mony with them shall not spede.[1]

Possibly, no unfair description of Lydgate would be to call him an accomplished scholar with a fair knack of verse-making, and a fluency that considerably outruns the knack.

Stephen Hawes (d. 1523?), was a man of culture with a taste for travel, and a remarkable memory. He wrote loyal verse to congratulate Henry VII on his accession. He had a gift for phrases which lighten up his prolix muse from time to time, for instance these lines:

"Be the day weary, or be the day long,
At length it draweth to Evensong."

And an aptitude for allegory, less happy in pleasure-conferring qualities. The French aspects of Chaucer's genius attracted him chiefly, and he follows the author of the *Romaunt of the Rose* rather than that of the *Canterbury Tales*.

Occleve, Lydgate, Hawes, affect one all in the same way. Their work has literary merit of a fitful kind, but it is sadly lacking in spontaneity, original impulse, and sincerity.

A decided improvement is seen in the work of that vigorous personality, John Skelton (c. 1460–1523), a Norfolk cleric, and a remarkable scholar, at one time tutor to Henry VIII. There is no advance in beauty of workmanship. In fact, Skelton neglects beauty quite openly, striving for some fresh metrical form of expression to suit his subject matter.

But at any rate we are outgrowing the imitative period, for Skelton is an original force, albeit a rough and undisciplined one. Beginning as most young poets do in the conventional and imitative vein, he soon broke away, and his later work, despite all its uncouthness, has an individual flavour, refreshing to meet with after the tameness of his predecessors. He is a moralist, with a message for his generation, that he determined to make as effective as possible:

"For tho' my rime be ragged,
Tattered and jagged,
Rudely rain-beaten,
Rusty and moth-eaten:
. . . .
Yt hath in it some pith."

Characteristics.—He attacked abuses of the day, both in the Church and Court, with an uncompromising rigour worthy of John Knox. When Wolsey was at the height of his power, Skelton did not hesitate to criticise him severely, as in his satire *Why Come ye not to Court?*

His most popular work was the quaint *Boke of Philip Sparrow*, celebrating the death of the pet bird of Mistress Joan Scrope; his most outspoken was the Hogarthian sketch *The Tunning* (brewing) *of Elynor Rummynge*—recounting the brewing and subsequent ritual of a certain brosch of ale by a rural alewife and her friends. He had a liking for brief, jerky metres: *e.g.*

"Mistress Gertrude with womanhood endued."

[1] John Lydgate: *Minor Poems*.

Significance and Influence of his work.—Skelton was a pioneer inasmuch as he broke up old conventions of verse, suggesting new forms, and infusing life and vigour in English poetry at a time when it was needed. All great poetry is marked by beauty and vitality, and no genuine poetry can dispense with one or other of these elements. Beauty and grace, Skelton assuredly had not. But he had something of Butler's gift of grotesquerie, something also of his genius for doggerel, and his work therefore is not without a beneficent influence on the poetry of his age.

COLYN CLOUTE

I Colyn Clout
As I go about
And wandryng as I walke
I heare the people talke;
Men say for sylver and golde
Mitres are bought and sold;
There shall no clergy appose
A myter nor a crosse
But a full purse.
A strawe for Goddes curse!
What are they the worse?
For a cummiake,
Is but a hermoniake,
And no more ye make
Of symony men say
But a childes play.
Over this, the forsayd laye
Report how the pope mayo
A holy anker call
Out of the stony wall,
And hym a byschopp make
If he on him dare take
To kepe so hard a rule,
To ryde vpon a mule
Wyth golde all betrapped,
In purple and paule belapped,
Some hatted and some capped,
Rychely be wrapped.
God wot to theyr great paynes,
In rochettes of fine raynes;[1]
Whyte as morowes[2] mylke
Their liberties of fine silke,
Their stirops of mixt golde begared
There may no cost be spared.
Their moyles[3] golde doth eate,
Theyr neighbours dye for meat.
What care they though Gill sweat,
Or Jacke of the Noke?
The poor people they yoke
With summons and citacions
And excommunications
About churches and market?
The bysshop on his carpet
At home full soft doth syt,
This is a fearefull fyt,
To heare the people iangle!
How warely they wrangle,
Alas why do ye not handle,
And them all mangle?
Full fatsly on you they lye
And shamefully you scory,
And say as untruly,
As the butterfly
A man might say in mocke
Ware[4] the wetherocke
Of the steple of Poules,
And thus they hurt their soules
In sclaunderyng you for truth,
Alas it is great ruthe!

Some say ye sit in trones
Like prynces *apostonis*,
And shryne your rotten bones
With pearles and precious stones,
But now the commons grones
And the people mones
For prestes and for lones
Lent and never payde,
But from day to day delaid,
The commune welth decayed,
Men say ye are tunge tayde,
And therof speake nothing
But dissimuling and glosing,
Wherfore men be supposing
That ye gene shrewd[1] counsel
Against the commune wel,
By pollyng[2] and pillage
In cities and village,
By taxyng and tollage,
Ye have monks to have the culerage
For couerying of an old cottage,
That committed is a collage,
In the charter of dottage,
Tenure *par service de sottage*,
And not *par service de socage*,
After old segnyours
And the learning of Litleton tenours,
Ye have so ouerthwarted
That good lawes are subuerted,
And good reason peruerted.

[1] Linen made in Rennes.
[2] Morning.
[3] Mules.
[4] Beware.

[1] Evil.
[2] Plundering.

SCOTTISH LITERATURE IN THE 14TH AND 15TH CENTURIES

Despite its quasi-barbarism and internal troubles in the fourteenth century, Scotland had at any rate accomplished one great thing. She had won, hardly and desperately, her independence, and this fact had served as trumpet call to the imaginative minds of the age. JOHN BARBOUR leads the way with his patriotic poem—*Bruce* (c. 1376), a poem recalling, in its noble apostrophe to Freedom, the famous lines of Shelley in the *Masque of Anarchy*. The rough material of poetry is there, all that is needed is something of the fine culture that had already made its way into England, to fashion and grace it.

About this time JAMES I (1394–1437) returned from his years of captivity in England, a cultured and accomplished prince, and the influence he exercised on national verse was just what was needed. His own poem, *The King's Quair*, is one of no small beauty and power. Imitative, it is true, of Chaucer and of French Romance, but animated by genuine imagination and feeling, it is a work of the heart and not of the head. He writes with power because he loved Lady Jane Beaufort, not because he fancied himself a versifier of Chaucer's school.

ROBERT HENRYSON (1430 ?–1506 ?), the "schoolmaster in Dunfermline," though like his royal predecessor a faithful admirer of Chaucer, shows real first-hand observation of nature and an insight born of no mere literary accomplishment into the simple and ordinary aspects of lowly life. There is a quaint charm about his description of why he added to Chaucer's story of *Troilus and Cressida*. One winter's night, he tells us, he sat by the fire reading Troisse, and comforting himself with some hot drink. But neither fire nor drink could reconcile

him to the leniency of Chaucer, and so he adds his mite to the poem with a dismal account of Cresseida's death—thus appeasing his sense of justice.

He is at his best, however, when dealing with rustic scenes, whether it be to recount the eternal (poetic) squabbles of shepherd and shepherdess, or to deal in popular allegorical vein with the town mouse and the country mouse. Perhaps there is more human nature than mouse nature about Henryson's rodents, but in their way they can hold their own with the "wee, sleekit . . . tim'rous beastie" of the poet's great successor.

Robbin and Makyne

Robene sat on gude green hill,
Keipand a flook of fe;
Merry Makyne said him till,
"Robene, thou rue on me;
I haif thee luvit lang and still,
Thir yearis two or three;
My dule in dern bot gif thou dill,
Doubtless but dreid I die."

Robene answerit, "Be the rude,
Nathing of lufe I knaw,
Bot keipis my sheep under yon wud,
Lo quhere they raik on raw;
Quhat wes merrit thee in thy mude,
Makyne, to me thou schaw;
Or quhat is lufe, or to be lo'ed?
Fain wald I leir that law."

"At luvis lair gif thou will leir,
Tak thocht ane a b c:
Be kynd, courteous, and fair of feir,
Wise, hardy, and free;
Sa that no danger do thee deir:
Quhat dule in dern thou dree;
Press thee with pain at all power,
Be patient and privie."

Robene answerit her againe,
"I wait nocht quhat is lufe;
Bot I haif marvel in certain
Quhat makis thee this wanrufe;
The woddir is fair, and I am fain,
My sheep gois haile abufe:
An we wald play us in this plain,
They wald us baith reprufe."

"Robene, tak tent unto my tale,
And work all as I rede,
And thou sall haif my heart all haill,
Eke and my maidenhed.
Sen God sendis bute for bale,
And for mourning remead,
In dern with thee bot gif I deal,
Doubtless I am bot deid."

"Makyne, to-morne this ilka tide,
An ye will meet me here,
Peraventure my sheep may gang beside,
Whill we haif liggin full near;
Bot maugre haif I, an I bide
Fra they begin to steir;
What lyis on heart I will nocht hide
Makyne, than mak gude cheer."

"Robene, thou reivis me roif and rest;
I luve bot thee alane."
"Makyne, adieu, the sun gois west,
The day is near hand gane."
"Robene, in dule I am so drest,
That lufe will be my bane."
"Ga, lufe, Makyne, wherever thou list,
For lemman I lo'e nane."

"Robene, I stand in sic a stylt:
I sich, and that full sair."
"Makyne, I haif been this while:
At hame God gif I were."

"My honey, Robene, talk ane while,
Gif thou will do na mair."
"Makyne, some other man beguile,
For hameward I will fare."

Robene on his wayis went,
As licht as leaf of tree;
Makyne mournit in hir intent,
And trow'd him never to see.
Robene braid attour the bent;
Than Makyne cryit on hie,
"Now may thou sing, for I am shent!
Quhat gifis lufe us me?"

Makyne went hame withouttin fail,
Full weary eftir couth weep;
Than Robene in a full fair dale
Assemblit all his sheep.
Be that some pairt Makynis ail
Outthrow his hairt coud creep;
He fallowit her fast there till assail,
And till her tuk gude keep.

"Abide, abide, thou fair Makyne,
A word for ony thing;
For all my lufe it sall be thine,
Withouttin depairting.
All haill thy heart till haif mine
Is all my coverting;
My sheep to-morne whill hours nine
Will need of no keeping."

"Robene, thou has heard sung and say,
In gestis and sermls auld,
The man that will nocht when he may
Sall haif nocht when he wald.
I pray to Jesu every day
Mot eke their mirrie cauld,
That first presses with thee to play,
Be firth, forest, or feild."

"Makyne, the nicht is soft and dry,
The woddir is warm and fair,
And the green wud richt near us by
To walk attour all where;
There may na janglour us espy,
That is to lufe contrair;
Therein, Makyne, baith ye and I
Unseen we may repair."

"Robene, that waild is all away
And quite brocht till ane end,
And never again thereto, perfay,
Sall it be as thou wend;
For of my pain thou maid it play,
And all in vain I spend;
As thou has done, so sall I say,
Murne on, I think to mend."

"Maykne, the hope of all my heal,
My hairt on thee is set,
And evermair to thee be leal,
While I may lift but let;
Never to fail, as others feill,
What grace that ever I get."
"Robene, with thee I will nocht deal;
Adieu, for thus we met."

Makyne went hame blyth anewch,
Attour the holtis hair;
Robene murnit, and Makyne leuch;
Scho sang, he sichit sair;
And so left him, baith wo and wreuch,
In dolour and in care,
Keepand his herd under a heuch,
Amangis the holtis hair.

After Henryson, comes Willie Dunbar (1460?–1520), a poet of striking if undisciplined power, and one of the great names in Scottish literature. He is the Burns of the fifteenth century, with something of that poet's passion for beauty, native humour, and force of expression. He was not unlike Burns, moreover, in character; sensual and head-

strong, with a lively and bitter appreciation of the paltriness of life of the senses.

He started as a Franciscan friar, but this did not harmonise with his pleasure-loving nature, and being with all his family a man sincere and straightforward, he left the Order, and became one of the Scottish Court.

LONDON

London, thou art of townes A-per-se,
Soverain of cities, seemliest in sight,
Of high renoun, riches and royaltie;
Of lordis, barons, and many goodly knight;
Of most delectable lusty ladies bright;
Of famous prelatis, in habitis clerical;
Of merchantis full of substance and might:
London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

Gladdeth anon thou lusty Troynovant,
Citie that some time cleped was New Troy,
In all the earth, imperial as thou stant,
Princess of townes, of pleasure and of joy
A richer reputh under no Christian roy;
For manly power, with craftis natural,
Fourmeth none fulyer with the flood of Noy:
London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

Gem of all joy, jasper of jocundrie,
Most mighty carbuncle of vertue and valour;
Strong Troy in vigour and in strenuitie;
Of royal cities rose and gemflour;
Empress of townes, exalt in honour;
In beautie bearing the crown imperial;
Sweet paradise precelling in pleasure:
London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

Above all rivers thy River hath renoun,
Whose bersall streamis, pleasant and preclare,
Under thy lusty wallis runneth down,
Where many a swan doth swim with wingis fair;
Where many a barge doth sail, and row with aer,
Where many a ship doth rest with top-royal.
O! town of townes, patron and not compare:
London, thou art the flour of Cities all,

Upon thy lusty brig of pillars white
Been merchantis full royal to behold;
Upon thy streetis goeth many a seemly knight
All clad in velvet gownes and chains of gold.
By Julius Cæsar thy Tour founded of old
May be the house of Mars victorial,
Whose artillery with tongue may not be told:
London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

Strong be thy wallis that about thee standis;
Wise be the people that within thee dwellis;
Fresh is thy river with his lusty strandis,
Blith be thy churches, well-sounding be thy bellis;
Rich be thy merchantis in substance that excellis;
Fair be their wives, right lovesome, white, and small;
Clear be thy virgins, lusty under kellis:
London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

Thy famous Mayor, by princely governance,
With sword of justice, thee ruleth prudently.
No lord of Paris, Venice, or Florence
In dignitie or honour goeth to him nigh.
He is exemplar, lode-star, and guye;
Principal patron and rose original,
Above all Mayors as maister most worthy:
London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

Dunbar's work is varied and voluminous, and exhibits him as an amorist, a moralist, and a satirist. Mention has been made of Burns, but it is not as a love poet or as a moralist that he suggests the analogy. It is rather in his rough and vigorous humour that we find the kinship. Dunbar's love poetry is undistinguished; he writes here as a courtier, and relies contentedly on most of the literary conventions of the time; nor are his moral or religious efforts anything but experiments in the orthodox Chaucerean School. When we examine his satirical verse, we realise a breadth, a vigour, and a vitality that clearly show the real bent of his genius. In his spirited attack on the law courts—*Tidings from the Sessions*; in his anathemas on the dirty condition of the city in the *Satire on Edinburgh*; in his boisterous ridicule of the thirsty alewife in the *Ballad of Kynd Kittok*, we realise a genuine force, a Rabelaisean relish for the grotesque, that is something new in our literature. This gift it was that made him seek out fresh prosodic forms, and do for Scottish much what Skelton did for English verse. He has indeed been called "the Scottish Skelton," and of the two he is perhaps the greater power. He is a typical transitional writer, mediæval in many ways, yet helping to break up the old mediæval methods, and to pour fresh life into English poetry. There is no breadth of the Renascence in his work; only by his restlessness and experimentalising does he show that a new era is about to dawn.

Of his contemporary, GAVIN DOUGLAS, it is less easy to speak. By some he has been claimed as a child of the New Age, while others regard him as essentially belonging to the Chaucerean school, and mediæval in his outlook. Douglas was well born, and rose to preferment in the Church. Letters for him was but an episode in a busy life. First and foremost he was a political churchman, his literary work being done while he was a young man. Of this, the *Palace of Honour* and the translation of the *Æneid* of Virgil take the chief place.

In the *Palace of Honour* we are in the familiar realm of mediæval allegory. We start with the usual dream in May time, and find ourselves in a mixed company of Old Testament worthies and Pagan deities. There is more moralising than art, and it is directly inspired by Chaucer's work. His interest in the Latin writers, Virgil and Ovid, suggest for the moment the inspiration of the new learning; but there is no trace of humanism in the poem. The Roman poets serve only as moral tags.

The translation is a far more interesting piece of work; it is not epoch-making, it has little merit as a rendering of a classic into English dress; none the less it is the first translation of a great writer into English, and the philological import of the writing is of no slight interest, with its strange minglings of Chaucerean Saxon, ancient alliterative verse, and snippets from alien tongues both North and South. There is a pictorial quality about some of the writing, that faintly adumbrates the rich imagination of Spenser. But it is as the last of the Mediævals, not as the child of the New Age, that we must regard Douglas.

THE DAWN OF THE RENASCENCE

The fifteenth century dawned upon an England that had outlived the energising idealism of the twelfth century. The vigorous vitality of that era had been paralysed by the wasteful futilities of the Hundred Years' War with France, and divided counsels at home. Feudalism that had been a power

in Norman times in evolving order and solidarity out of anarchy and confusion, survived now only as a spent force. No longer did it suit the needs of the nation. The plaint of Langland, the anathema of Wycliff, bear witness to the general unrest and disorganisation. The sterility of English literature after Chaucer testifies to the lowered vitality of the time. Yet once again is the old saying justified that it is darkest before the dawn. There has been a stirring of fresh life, a kindling of new desires in Italy and Germany. In each country the horizon is aglow with promise—a promise that speaks according to the personality of each nation. In Italy the Renascence thrills through the senses; in Germany it speaks through the intellect. Thus is it that from the first the awakening assumed in Germany a religious character; it merged at once into the Reformation. In Italy it was different; the old ecclesiasticism became paganised. "The Gods descend from Olympus and live once more amongst men." Pagan influences were needed; though the sudden transition from a starved asceticism to a rich, pulsing life could not be accomplished without moral disasters. Perhaps no more significant illustration of difference in outlook can be given than in the attitude towards nudity. The mediæval artist at the portal of the Cathedral at Basle had depicted the dead rising from graves and donning hurriedly their garments, so as to appear decently clad at the Last Judgment. After the Renascence, as Jusserand has reminded us, a naked woman was wrought in bronze upon the tomb of a Pope. All that was beautiful was, through the eyes of the Renascence, also divine. The human body, so long despised and ill-treated, came into its kingdom and was glorified:

"Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty."

But while Italy was on fire with the new sunrise, it was still for England merely a streak of light upon the horizon.

The Mediæval Church, in place of welcoming the cleansing changes of a Wyclif, opposed all remedies for curing her of her sick condition. Nor were our Kings any more farseeing. Henry IV helped to stiffen the autocratic power of the Church by passing the Act that heretics should be burned to death. Henry V persecuted the Lollards with relentless vigour. But in vain did they try to prop up the tottering edifice of mediæval thought. They could hold back for a while the oncoming tide; to give fresh life to what was moribund was beyond their power; so England stood:

"Between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born."

Our intellectual centres dwindled into insignificance, and the continuous social disturbances helped but to emphasize the mental and moral degradation of the country. But if the Wars of the Roses reacted unfavourably on our literary life, they contributed to bring matters swiftly to a crisis, by destroying the power of the great Feudal nobles, and bringing about the inevitable reaction.

Meanwhile, Learning suffered badly. The tragedy of John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, is a case in point. He was a scholar and a traveller, one imbued with the new culture of Italy. Oxford was indebted to him for the gift of valuable manuscripts brought from the Continent. As a translator of the classics he had done a splendid work. But the opportunist politics of the age had engulfed him, and he was executed in 1470. Fuller's tribute to him as "noble and virtuous" was probably ill-deserved; but there was force in the hyperbole, that "the axe did at one blow cut off more learning than was in the heads of all the surviving nobility."

Meanwhile an agency was at work, more potent even than the zeal of reformers, to turn the scale in favour of the New Learning.

A Kentish man, William Caxton (c. 1422–91) after serving his apprenticeship to a City mercer, crossed to Flanders, and in the intervals between business duties, dimmed his eyesight by much writing. Later, he became copyist in the service of Margaret of Burgundy, the sister of Edward IV, and while groaning over the mechanical labour, he came across a new art introduced into Bruges by Colard Mansion a clever calligrapher (about 1473).[1]

Possibly, Caxton had learned the new art at Cologne a year or so previously, but whether this was the case or not, he gave Mansion financial assistance. When he returned to his native country he carried with him his precious Printing Press (1478), and established himself in the Almonry at Westminster, where he advertised his work thus: "If it please any man, spiritual or temporal, to buy any pyes of two or three commemorations of Salisbury all emprynted after the form of the present letter, let him come to Westminster, and he shall have them chepe." Caxton was a man of business as well as a man of letters. Probably the things which brought him most money at first were the service books and sermons which he sold to the preachers. There we see the shrewd man of affairs. In his publication of Lydgate and Gower, of Malory, and of that "worshypful man, Geoffrey Chaucer," we recognise the man of letters. He had a pretty taste for literature, and as early as 1468–69 translated into English a favourite mediæval romance, *Le Recueil des Histoires des Troye*. Long before becoming a printer he had been a translator, and translation occupies him still. According to his own account, he translated twenty-one books, and printed in fourteen years nearly eighty separate volumes, some of which passed through several editions.

Edward IV and Richard III both favoured him: to Richard, Caxton dedicated his *Order of Chivalry*.

The Earl of Arundel allowed him "a yearly fee of a buck in summer and a doe in winter," for translating *The Golden Legend*.

The Golden Legend, printed about 1493, is Caxton's most important translation.

The Renascence had come with Caxton, and the great nobles of the day no less than the monarchs were stung with the desire of knowledge.

Thus the Renascence movement in London

[1] It is possible that both Caxton and Mansion were fellow-students in the art of printing at Cologne. Evidence points to Cologne as the place of Caxton's earliest printing operations.

begins with the publication of English masterpieces, awakening in the minds of the people a sense of their national life. Then, with the arrival of the Tudors, the dawn broadened into the sunrise.

The invention of the Printing Press, coupled with the discovery some time before, of a way of transforming linen rags into paper, made the multiplication and circulation of books a very different matter from what it had been in the Middle Ages.

Thus the Renascence, in place of becoming a scholar's monopoly, was rendered a far-reaching popular movement.

(i) Art and Letters

Caxton deemed the Middle Ages more interesting than Classical antiquity. Indeed, all that was vital and inspiring in mediævalism he found summed up in Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*. This is his greatest undertaking. It is a book of noble proportion, written in fine flowing English, with that simple austerity characteristic of the Saxon genius.

Who is this unknown writer suddenly made famous by Caxton?

Of Sir Thomas Malory very little is definitely known. He may have belonged to a Worcestershire family of that name who fought with both Lancaster and York in the Wars of the Roses, one member of which was named Thomas, and a member of parliament in 1444–5; several families in Yorkshire and also in the Midlands aspire to have him for an ancestor, but no trace of a Thomas can be found who lived about that time. Professor Kitteridge in "*Who was Sir Thomas Malory?*" traces him to a certain Sir Thomas Malory of Newbold Revell in Warwickshire, who succeeded to the family estates about 1434. John Bale (1495–1563) the historian, in his *Account of the Lives of Eminent Writers of Great Britain*, says he was a Welshman. The one thing certain is, that he wrote the *Morte d'Arthur*, which comprises twenty-one books compiled from a variety of sources. According to Bale, the first four books are founded on Robert de Borron's *Romance of Merlin*; Book V from *Morte d'Arthur* manuscript in Lincoln Cathedral Library; Book VI from the French Romance of *Lancelot*; Book VII is not identified; Books VIII–X from the Romance of *Tristan* by Luce de Gast; Books XI–XXI are mainly from *Lancelot*, with interpolations.

Of the first folio edition printed by Caxton in 1485 only one perfect copy is in existence; of two subsequent editions, 1498 and 1529, printed by Wynkyn de Worde, one copy of the latter is in the British Museum.

Malory sings the praise of love, not with the gay abandon of the French troubadour, but with that seriousness of passion typical of the North.

While she loved, he says of Guenevere, she was a true lover, and therefore she had a good end. It is a pity if love be spent upon one who happens to be inaccessible. Still, love, whether of maid or wife, is good, inasmuch as all love is good. All Malory pleads for is that Love first be given to God, and then that the lover keep faithful to his love.

The Death of Launcelot

"Oh ye mighty and pompous lords, winning in the glory transitory of this unstable life, as in reigning over great realms and mighty great countries, fortified with strong castles and towers, edified with many a rich city: Ye also, ye fierce and mighty knights, so valiant in adventurous deeds of arms, behold, behold, see how this mighty conqueror King Arthur, whom in his human life all the world doubted, yea also the noble Queen Guenever, which sometime sat in her chair adorned with gold, pearls, and precious stones, now lie full low in obscure loss or pit covered with clods of earth and clay. Behold also this mighty champion, Sir Launcelot, peerless of all knighthood, see now how he lieth grovelling upon the cold mould, now being so feeble and faint, that sometime was so terrible, how and in what manner ought ye to be so desirous of worldly honour so dangerous. Therefore me thinketh this present book is right necessary often to be read, for in all ye find the most gracious, knightly, and virtuous war of the most noble knights of the world, whereby they got praising continually. Also me seemeth by the oft reading thereof, ye shall greatly desire to accustom yourself in the following of those gracious knightly deeds, that is to say, to dread God and to love righteousness, faithfully and courageously to serve your sovereign Prince. And the more that God hath given you the triumphal honour, the meeker ye ought to be, ever fearing the unstableness of this deceitful world, and so I pass over and turn again unto my matter.

So within six weeks after Sir Launcelot fell sick, and lay in his bed; and then he sent for the bishop that there was hermit, and all his true fellows. Then Sir Launcelot said with dreary steven: "Sir Bishop, I pray you that ye will give me all my rights that belongeth unto a Christian man." "It shall not need you," said the hermit and all his fellows, "it is but a heaviness of the blood, ye shall be well amended by the grace of God to-morrow."

"My fair lords," said Sir Launcelot, "wit ye well, my careful body will into the earth, I have warning more than I will now say, therefore I pray you give me my rights." So when he was houseled and eneled and had all that a Christian man ought to have, he prayed the bishop that his fellows might bear his body unto Joyous Gard. Some men say Anwick and some men say Bamborow.

"Howbeit," said Sir Launcelot, "me repenteth sore but I made mine avow sometime, that in Joyous Gard I would be buried, and because of breaking of my vow I pray you all lead me thither." Then there was weeping and wringing of hands among all his fellows. So at the season of the night, they went all to their beds, for they all lay in one chamber; so after midnight against day, the bishop that was hermit, as he lay in his bed asleep he fell on a great laughter; and therewith the fellowship awoke, and came unto the bishop and asked him what he ailed. "Ah Jesus, mercy," said the bishop, "why did ye awake me, I was never in all my life so merry and so well at ease." "Why, wherefore?" said Sir Bors.

"Truly," said the bishop, "here was Sir Launcelot with me, with more angels than ever I saw men upon one day; and I saw the angels heave Sir Launcelot towards heaven, and the gates of heaven opened against him." "It is but dretching of swevens," said Sir Bors, "for I doubt not Sir Launcelot aileth nothing but good." "It may well be," said the bishop, "go ye to his bed, and then shall ye prove the sooth."

So when Sir Bors and his fellows came to his bed they found him stark dead, and he lay as he had smiled, and the sweetest savour about him that ever they smelled. Then was there weeping and wringing of hands, and the greatest dole they made that ever made men. And on the morrow the bishop sung his mass of *Requiem*, and after the bishop and all those nine

knights put Sir Launcelot in the same horse bier that Queen Guenever was laid in before that she was buried.

And so the bishop and they altogether went with the corpse of Sir Launcelot daily, till they came into Joyous Gard, and ever they had an hundred torches burning about him.

And so within fifteen days they came to Joyous Gard. And there they laid his corpse in the body of the choir, and sung and read many psalters and prayers over him and about him; and ever his visage was laid open and naked, that all folk might behold him; for such was the custom in those days that all men of worship should so lie with open visage till that they were buried."

Caxton's personality is an interesting one: it may be seen in his various prefaces. These reflect a kindly and simple nature, with a pleasant admixture of keen humour to take off the flatness.

His style is uncertain, for he is not clear how far to draw upon foreign tongues. But he has a ready instinct for good Saxon prose, and his prose is far more readable and attractive than some of the prose written about this time. One of his pleasantest qualities is the confidential note which he strikes—a note, that was later on to be the distinctive note of the English Essay. At present English prose is still in the experimental state; like, to a lesser extent, the verse. But poetry was to have a glorious career, before English prose made itself a force with which to be reckoned.

The Successors of Caxton

For nearly fifty years after the death of Caxton, the book trade in England was directed for the most part by two men, Jan Wynkyn de Worde (d. 1534), and Richard Pynson (d. 1530); but the admirable start made by Caxton was scarcely maintained by his successors. Classical learning took a very low place, and until 1543 no Greek book was printed in England. Religious literature of a mediocre kind could be had in abundance, there was a steady market for these, and contemporary poets like Skelton and Hawes had the gratification of finding some of their work printed. For any advance in the development of English literature we must look, however, not to the printer but to a wealthy nobleman, Lord Berners, who did admirable work as a translator.

John Bourchier, 2nd Lord Berners (1467–1533) was educated at Oxford, and married Catherine, daughter of the Duke of Norfolk. As a youth he was intimately acquainted with Henry VIII, with whom he travelled to Calais. After filling many important positions in the State, he was made Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1516, and Deputy to Calais in 1520 with a yearly salary of £100 and £104 "spyall money." In straitened circumstances through numerous lawsuits in connection with his estates, he was continually borrowing money of the King who, during Berner's last illness, ordered his goods to be sequestered in the interest of his creditors.

His literary work consisted of important translations from the French and Spanish. In 1523, at Henry's request, he translated Froissart's *Chronicles*, a second volume in 1525 being printed by Richard Pynson; *Huon of Bordeaux* from the French (1532), printed by Wynkyn de Worde; *The Castell of Love* from the Spanish; the *History of the moost noble and valyaunt Knight, Arthour of Lytell Brytayne*; and in 1534 *The Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius*, translated from Guevara's *El Relox de Principes o Marco Aurelio*, which also inspired Lyly in his *Euphues*.

Among lesser literary forces may be mentioned Robert Fabyan (d. 1513), who did useful work as a chronicler of London history, despite his tendency to accept all the fabulous tales of our national origin first made by Geoffrey of Monmouth. Edward Hall (d. 1547), is a man of more scholarly attainment. His chronicles the story of the Houses of Lancaster and York, and carries the story down to 1532. He had an eye for characterisation; and some of his work attracted Shakespeare, who makes fairly generous use of it in his plays dealing with Plantagenet England.

Henry VII had done much to encourage the New Learning. Mention of him usually recalls the memory of a shrewd, sagacious, and thrifty statesman, a man with a genius for practicability and cautious common sense. For the rest he does not impress himself upon us as a figure of the Renascence. But there were two Henrys; and one of them especially marked in earlier years was a kindly, art-loving student, somewhat reserved perhaps, but with flashes of humour, and an ardent, romantic temperament. We may recall the delight which Malory's Legends afforded him; the pleasure it gave him to surround himself with the best scholars of the day; the careful education he bestowed upon his children. He lacked the open, genial bearing of his successor; yet his tastes were as fully with the New Learning as were those of his son.

The hopes of cultured England were bright and confident when young Henry succeeded his father in 1509. Handsome, alert, artistic, with marked scholarly tastes, yet no bookworm, he seemed an ideal prince. He had the Englishman's love of outdoor exercise; a winning manner and an all-round versatility likely to endear himself to all sorts and conditions of men.

By his distinguished marriage with Catherine of Aragon he had made a powerful ally in Spain. In fact, there was no cloud on the horizon when he came to the throne. Men were willing to put up with the exuberance of vanity that showed itself even thus early, especially as there was some reason for it. What did it matter if, like Sir Willoughby Patterne, he knew that he had "a leg," and was pleased to share that knowledge with others? had he not single-handed met "that accursed" Luther, and confounded him in a learned book that had met with the approbation of the Pope himself?

Assuredly a man of the Renascence; he writes lyrics and composes music, is an expert on various instruments himself, and ranges over most subjects in science and philosophy, with an eager interest characteristic of the time. There is nothing of his father's parsimony about him. Erasmus is made heartily welcome and Holbein invited to stay, the clever foreigner is welcome at Court. England at length is coming into line with the Southern nations.

We are now in a position to examine more closely the spirit of the Renascence working in England and helping to stir its dull stagnation into fresh life. It was during the last few years of the fifteenth century that the connection of English thought with Italian scholarship began.

William Grocyn, for some time Greek Professor at Oxford, spent two years at Florence, where the famous Politian was lecturing, and about the same time Linacre, a man of great sensibility and refinement, was selected to help in the teaching of Lorenzo di Medici's children. These two men became saturated with the classicism of Florence, and on their return home communicated their eager enthusiasm to others in England, notably Colet, afterwards Dean of St. Paul's, and to Sir Thomas More. "To be in company of such men as Colet," said Erasmus, who entered Oxford in 1498, "he would not refuse to live even in Scythia," and he likened his talk to the talk of Plato. Grocyn's varied knowledge and Linacre's fine judgment, received also the warm commendation of the young scholar, while his tribute to More has become one of the commonplaces of literary history: "When did Nature ever mould a character more gentle, endearing, and happy than Thomas More's?"

The fire once lit spread apace. Schools and colleges sprang up, dedicated to the cause of the latest culture. Richard Fox, Bishop of Durham, founded grammar schools at Grantham and Taunton, and brought into being Corpus Christi College at Oxford; while Cambridge, not to be behind, responded with the creation of Christ's and St. John's Colleges through the influence of Bishop Fisher. In London, St. Paul's School sprang up at the instigation of Colet, where the young students were to be taught "the old Latin speech, the very Roman tongue used in the time of Tully and Sallust and Vergil and Terence; the Latin adulterate, which blind fools brought into the world, being absolutely banished." William Lilly, the godson of Grocyn, was to be the first headmaster. He was a friend of More, and well approved of by Erasmus as one versed in the art of educating youth.

Among the most remarkable personalities of the time is Sir Thomas More; he was the son of Sir John More, a justice of the King's Bench, who had his residence in the heart of the City, and it was here, in Milk Street, that Thomas was born in the year 1478. As a child he attended St. Anthony's School in Threadneedle Street, at that time considered to be a school of high repute. From here he followed the usual custom in those days of becoming attached to some great household.

Thomas More was particularly fortunate in his patron, Cardinal Morton, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who quickly discovered his young retainer's promise, remarking: "Whoever liveth to try it, shall see this child here waiting at table prove a marvellous man." The keen political insight showed by More was greatly due to the stimulating counsel of the Cardinal. This interest was continued after he left his patron, for we find it was through his influence that More was sent to Oxford and so came into contact with the New Learning then being advanced by Grocyn, Linacre, and Colet. It was here, also, he met and became the closest friend of Erasmus, and the three were soon looked upon as the most eager disciples of the forward movement of the day.

More's stay at Oxford did not last long. On his return to London he began to study law at New Inn and Lincoln's Inn, and we find him steadily working his way up to the Bar. At this time he was much in the society of Colet and Lilly.

At the age of twenty-one More is a Member of Parliament, and when a proposal is made four years later, by King Henry VII, for a subsidy for the marriage portion of his daughter Margaret, who was to be married to James IV of Scotland, More openly opposes the demand of the King. As his opposition influenced Parliament to the extent of their refusing the subsidy, he had at once to bear the wrath of the displeased monarch: "A beardless boy has disappointed the King's purpose!"

The result of this fearlessness brought More's father into the trouble, for the incensed king caused him to be fined upon a legal pretext, and Thomas More found it necessary to leave public life. This check to his career was terribly disappointing, and so unsettled More, that he at this time contemplated becoming a monk. His disposition had always been religious. While he was a law student he imposed upon himself various forms of self-mortification—fasting, praying, and next to his skin he wore a hair shirt.

The influence of his wise teacher, Colet, now Dean of St. Paul's, and of his friend Erasmus prevailed, and before he was twenty-five he had determined upon a secular career.

Erasmus has said of More, "When did Nature ever mould a character more gentle, endearing, and happy than Thomas More's;" and it is to this gentleness and kindly thought for others that we must ascribe his curious selection of a wife. He married in 1505, Jane, the eldest daughter of John Colt of New Hall, Essex, although he preferred her younger sister—but he did not wish to subject the elder sister to the discredit of being passed over, and so "of a certain pity he framed his fancy" towards the older daughter.

This first wife died, and in 1511 More married Alice Middleton, a widow. This marriage was one of great affection, and Erasmus, his friend, was impressed many years later by his devotion to her. "He loveth her as if she were a girl of fifteen."

More's prospects at the beginning of Henry VIII's reign (1509) were exceptional. Wolsey made him known to the King and honours came thick and fast. First appointed Under Sheriff of London, 1510; then became Master of Requests, 1514; Treasurer of the Exchequer, 1521; and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1525. His duties necessitated his making various visits abroad, and it was whilst staying in Antwerp that he wrote the first draft of his great work on Social Reform—*Utopia*.

We arrive at the year of Wolsey's fall, 1529. Not many days after the Cardinal was dispossessed of his office of Lord Chancellor, More, against his wish,

but yielding to the importunities of the King, stepped into Wolsey's vacant place.

More was the first layman to occupy this post. His resignation of the Chancellorship took place in 1532. His disapproval of Henry VIII's defiance of the Church and of his final break with Rome, left no alternative to More.

The King was unwilling to accept harsh measures with the statesman, and before the final steps were taken, opportunities were given to More to reconsider his position. But he was firm. In April 1534 he was sent to the Tower for declining the oath of adherence which he feared would impugn the Supremacy of the Pope, and so make it an easy matter for King Henry to divorce his queen. He was beheaded on Tower Hill, 6th July 1535. A brave man of most happy disposition, he met his fate with courage, and even on the scaffold his sense of humour did not desert him.

His Writings.—In 1510, *Life of Pico of Mirandola*, from the incomplete History of Richard III (written in Latin c. 1513), has been called the first book in classical English prose; it is sometimes said to have been based on a Latin work by Archbishop Morton, not extant.

Utopia, first printed in 1516 at Louvain; a second edition appeared in 1517. It was then revised by More and printed in 1518. Also reprinted in Paris and Vienna. It did not appear in English, till translated by Ralph Robinson, after More's death, 1551.

More's other Latin works include epigrams, a translation of some of Lucian's dialogues, and pamphlets against the Lutherans.

Amongst his English controversial works the most important is the *Dyalogue against Lutherannism and Tyndale*, in five books.

Whilst in the Tower he wrote *Dyalogs of Comfort against Tribulation*.

He also wrote much English as well as Latin verse.

Utopia; or, to give the full title, *The Discourse of Raphael Hythlodaye, of the best State of a Commonwealth*.

This tables on the social and political evils of the age was written in Latin in two parts, the second about 1515, the first a year later. Though printed at Louvain, Basle, Paris, and Vienna, no English edition appeared till Robinson's translation in 1551. Gilbert Burnet made a better translation in 1684, and Burnet's is the one now used.

Beginning with fact, Sir Thomas More relates how he and Cuthbert Tunstal, Master of the Rolls, were sent by Henry VIII "the unconquered King of England and a prince adorned with all the virtues!" —on a diplomatic mission to Prince Charles of Castile, with whom he had "some difference of no small consequence." A satisfactory termination to the mission not being imminent, More takes the opportunity of visiting Antwerp, and is entertained by Peter Giles, a man "whose conversation was so pleasant and so innocently cheerful, that his company in a great measure lessened any longings to go back to my country, and to my wife and children, which an absence of four months had quickened very much."

Through the kindness of Giles, More is supposed to make the acquaintance of Raphael Hythloday, a Portuguese who had travelled with the famous explorer Amerigo Vespucci. On their fourth journey Hythloday, impressed with the newly discovered country, requests to be left behind in order to make inquiries into its social and political government.

Finding that More and his friend are anxious to hear all he can tell them, Hythloday proceeds to relate how he and his companions ingratiated themselves into the affections of the people, and how "they came to towns and cities, and commonwealths that were both happily and well peopled . . . and reckoned up not a few things, from which patterns might be taken for correcting the errors of these nations among whom we live."

He tells them that while on a visit to England he had heard that the dreadful punishment enacted against thieves was *hanging*. "Would it not be better," he says, "that every man might be put in a method how to live, and so be preserved from the fatal necessity of stealing and of dying for it? . . . if you suffer your people to be ill-educated, and their manners to be corrupted from their infancy, and then punish them for those crimes to which their first education disposed them, what else is to be concluded from this but that you first make thieves and then punish them?"

The Utopians "do not wear themselves out with perpetual toil from morning to night" as is common in most countries. "Dividing the day and night into twenty-four hours, they appoint six of these for work, three of which are before dinner and these after . . . sleep eight hours; the rest of the time . . . left to every man's discretion; yet they are not to abuse that interval in luxury and idleness, but must employ it in some proper exercise."

All are engaged in some useful work, agriculture so "universally understood among them that no person, either man or woman, is ignorant of it; they are instructed in it from their childhood." No unnecessary labour is permitted, and the people are allowed "as much time as is necessary for the improvement of their minds, in which they think the happiness of life consists."

Their towns all possess a pure water supply and good sanitation, the streets are broad and "gardens behind all their houses," which they cultivate with great care; "there is nothing belonging to the whole that is both more useful and more pleasant."

In choosing their Prince from among their head magistrates, the people take an oath "before they proceed to an election, that they will choose him whom they think most fit for the office" and "give their voices secretly."

They "much more detest the folly of those who, when they see a rich man, though they neither owe him anything, nor are in any sort dependent on his bounty, yet, merely because he is rich, give him little less than divine honours."

Virtue is defined as "living according to Nature . . . they think we are made by God for that end; and believe that a man then follows the dictates of Nature when he pursues or avoids things according to the direction of reason." The first dictate is "a love and reverence for the Divine Majesty" . . .

the second "directs us to keep our minds as free from passion and as cheerful as we can . . . and use our utmost endeavours to help forward the happiness of all other persons . . ."

A life of pleasure is either a real evil or a good thing. "What sort of pleasure is it that men can find in throwing dice?" And what pleasure can one find in "seeing dogs run after a hare, more than of seeing one dog run after another? . . . But if the pleasure lies in seeing the hare killed and torn by the dogs, this ought rather to stir pity, that a weak, harmless, and fearful hare should be devoured by strong, fierce, and cruel dogs."

Of true pleasures some are mental, some physical. "The pleasures of the mind lie in knowledge, and in that delight which the contemplation of truth carries with it; . . . the joyful reflection on a well-spent life, and the assured hopes of a future happiness. . . ." Physical pleasures are of two kinds, "that which gives our senses some real delight . . . by recruiting Nature" and that which affects the senses such as "the pleasure that arises from music."

Perfect health is "the greatest of all bodily pleasures. . . . And if any should say that sickness is not really pain, but that it only carries pain along with it, they look upon that as a fetch of subtlety that does not much alter the matter."

"It is thought a sign of a sluggish and sordid mind not to preserve carefully one's natural beauty; but it is likewise infamous among them to use paint . . . no beauty recommends a wife so much to her husband as the probity of her life and her obedience; for as some few are caught and held only by beauty, so all are attracted by the other excellences which charm all the world."

The Utopians have few laws, "it is an unreasonable thing to oblige men to obey a body of laws that are both of such bulk, and so dark as not to be read and understood by everyone of the subjects." Neither have they any lawyers, for "they consider them as a sort of people whose profession it is to disguise matters and to wrest the laws; and, therefore, they think it is much better that every man should plead his own cause, and trust it to the judge . . . by this means they both cut off many delays and find out truth more certainly . . . without those artifices which lawyers are apt to suggest."

"Leagues are useless things, and believe that if the common ties of humanity do not knit men together, the faith of promises will have no great effect."

War is a brutal thing, and there is "nothing more inglorious than the glory gained by war; and therefore, though they accustom themselves daily to military exercises and the discipline of war, in which not only their men, but their women likewise, are trained up, that, in case of necessity, they may not be quite useless, yet they may not rashly engage in war, unless it be either to defend themselves or their friends from any unjust aggressors or, out of good nature or in compassion, assist an oppressed nation in shaking off the yoke of tyranny."

It is accounted a "just cause of war for a nation to hinder others from possessing a part of that soil of which they make no use . . . since every man has, by the law of nature, a right to such a waste portion of the earth as is necessary for his subsistence."

If war is forced upon them they "make use of the worst sort of men," which they hire "with the offer of vast rewards to expose themselves to all sorts of hazards, out of which the greater part never returns to claim their promises, yet they make them good most religiously to such as escape. This animates them to adventure again . . . for the Utopians . . . reckon it a service done to mankind if they could be a means to deliver the world from such a lewd and vicious sort of people, that seem to have run together, as to the drain of human nature. . . . When they draw out troops of their own people, they take such . . . as freely offer themselves, for none are forced to go against their will, since, if any man is pressed that wants courage, he will not only act faintly, but by his cowardice dishearten others."

They protect life and property in the enemy's country, neither do they harm any man "unless he is a spy."

"When a war is ended they do not oblige their friends to re-imburse their expenses; but they obtain them of the conquered." It is not said, however, how they meet their expenses if they suffer reverse.

"However, there are many things in the commonwealth of Utopia that I rather wish, than hope to see fulfilled in our government."

The Significance of the Utopia.—This work has been not inaptly called "the first monument of modern Socialism." In its general conception and trend it is in direct succession from Plato's *Republic*, though whereas Plato's is an aristocratic communism, More's is on a democratic basis. It is a People's State, with an elective government even though State controls. This insistence on State control; its advocacy of a *six hours' day*; its concern with over-population and what we term "the land question"; its denunciation of luxury and idleness; these things it is which give the *Utopia* a special interest to the Social reformer.

As a purely literary work it is of value as showing how the spirit of the New Learning expressed itself in the practical idealism of an English scholar; yet in the very language selected, it showed how far the author was from realising the possibilities of our native tongue. It was written to convert the student rather than to impress the populace. It was in part a scholar's dream of what might be; in part a reformer's dream of what should be.

More's friend Erasmus is a man of equal ability, but quite other in temperament and character. More's humour is genial, Erasmus is bitterly satirical. Erasmus' brilliance is clear-cut and cold, More's is softened with a kindliness of heart. His severities as Chancellor, whatever we may think of them, were certainly not the expression of his real nature. The best part of More is seen in his family life at Chelsea, and in the *Utopia*. His tenderness of heart extends to animals—a trait rare indeed in those times. "God," says he, "has given them life that they may live. . . . How can we find

more pleasure in seeing a dog run after a hare than in seeing a dog run after another dog?"

It is interesting to note that both More's *Utopia* and Erasmus' *Christian Primer* were written about the same time, and embody the ideals of the New Learning as applied to social and political life; ideals defined by a modern historian as "the art of living together in civil society and of securing the common weal of the people." Erasmus had little of More's fine humanity and delicacy of feeling, but intellectually he is at one with him. He urges the importance of the Golden Rule, and suggests that kings should refrain from entering into any avoidable war. It were best for them to seek the good of their people, not a mere section, but the good of the whole community. A king's claim to the throne should rest upon the goodwill of the nation, he should tax them as little as possible, and what taxation there is should fall upon the wealthy, not the poorer classes.

(ii) *Religion*

The first complete version of the Bible in English was made by Wyclif in 1382, though Wyclif himself was responsible probably only for the Gospels. The introduction of printing signalised the rapid multiplication of summaries of various portions of the Bible, and in 1525 Tyndale's translation of the New Testament was first issued. To Miles Coverdale, however, belongs the privilege of rendering the first complete English Bible in 1535, a Bible based on the Swiss-German version. Tyndale's translation, however, being freely used so far as it went.

William Tyndale (born c. 1484), a small, thin, earnest man of extreme pertinacity, was educated at Oxford and Cambridge, and later acted as tutor in a Gloucestershire family. He was an ardent supporter of Luther, and although he did not lack friends in London, found it necessary to go abroad to work at his translation of the New Testament from Greek into English. This he completed at Hamburg, and the translation was finally printed at Worms, three years after Luther's translation of the New Testament into German. He was helped in his work by one William Roy, a Minorite friar educated at Cambridge. Tyndale had no special affection for his collaborator, about whom he remarked drily: "As long as he had gotten no money, somewhat I could rule him; but as soon as he had gotten his money he became like himself again. Nevertheless, I suffered all things till that was ended which I could not do alone . . . when that was ended I took my leave and bade him farewell for our two lives, and as men say, a day longer." The translation, coming as it did from one associated so closely with "the arch heretic" Luther, was denounced by Cuthbert Tunstal at St. Paul's Cross, and publicly burnt.

More was selected to do battle against Tyndale. He criticised his text, for its avoidance of certain Catholic terms, such as grace, confession, and penance. Tyndale defended his exclusion of these words, on the ground that a false meaning had become attached to them. More frankly admitted, however, that the English ought to have the Bible in their own tongue, and disposed of the argument that some might come to harm that way by saying that "to keep the whole commodity from any people because of harm that by their own folly and fault may come to some part, were as though an unlicensed surgeon should . . . cut off a man's head by the shoulders to keep him from toothache."

More's disposition was naturally gentle and humane, and his sensibility and insight made him quite alive to the defects of his Church. His own policy would have been quietly and gradually to have reformed from within; and the crude, violent methods of Luther and the uncompromising vigour of his friends, jarred not merely on his refined and tranquil habit of mind but thoroughly alarmed him. It was fear for the safety of his Church that forced him into association with the sorry exponents of persecution. It is only fair to him to remember that toleration was quite alien to the spirit of the time. Neither the Reformers nor their opponents looked upon it as a desirable quality. Each side was in fierce earnest; each thought the other heading for damnation. To More therefore it probably seemed like the adoption for a brief while of a policy he hated in order to save England from destruction.

Whatever may be thought of Tyndale's substitution of such words as congregation, elder, knowledge, penance, for church, priest, confession, penance, the rhythmic grace and verbal charm of his version has not been questioned. To it the translation of the Authorised Version owed a great debt, scarcely realised by many people.

Miles Coverdale (b. 1488), a Yorkshireman educated at Cambridge, had become a priest in 1514, and had assisted Tyndale in the translation of the Pentateuch. Less brilliant as a scholar than Tyndale, he had no small measure of his literary power, and about the time of Tyndale's martyrdom, his friend and colleague completed his translation of the entire Bible.

Finally, in 1540, a translation more carefully revised, containing a prologue by Cranmer, was appointed to the use of the churches. Of the five men more or less associated with the translation in England—Tyndale, Coverdale, Rogers, Cromwell, and Cranmer—Coverdale alone survived a violent death; dying quietly as an old man in 1568, after a life of extraordinary mental activity.

Good translations from the Classics now make their appearance, with the smiling approval of such men as the erudite and whimsical tutor Roger Ascham and Wolsey himself. According to an interesting document, "The Daybook of John Dow," bookseller at Oxford, we learn in what great demand are the authors of antiquity. Aristotle is greatly sought after; Horace, Ovid, and Virgil are all names to conjure with commercially. Virgil especially took the fancy of the early sixteenth century.

The custom for the scholar to write prose in Latin still persists, but there are vigorous efforts on the part of some—Ascham is one of the first—to give vitality to our own tongue. "To pretend,"

said More, "that our language is barbarous is not a fantasy . . . and if they would call it barren of words there is no doubt that it is plenteous enough to express our myndes in anye thing whereof one man hath use to speke with another." Yet, good Sir Thomas, for all that, wrote his famous *Utopia* in Latin.

Ascham, on the other hand, insisted in his *Treatise on Shooting*, "I have written this English matter in the English tongue for English men."

EARLIER RENASCENCE AND POETRY

(1400–c. 1490)

Wyatt and Surrey to Sidney

THE EARLIER RENASCENCE AND POETRY

The Poetry of the Renascence has all the freshness and vigour of a youthful race:

> "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very Heaven."

At first the poets—scholars and courtiers—could do little but stammer with fitful grace. The instrument is there, but they cannot as yet pipe on it. They are embarrassed and self-conscious. Yet this awkwardness melts away. When we reach Spenser and Sidney, the tentative flutings are over. The music is sweet, spontaneous, full-throated.

During the earlier years of the Renascence in England we are still in the experimental period. The bleakness of the post-Chaucerian period is over, but from the time of Wyatt and Surrey until we reach Sir Philip Sidney, English poetry is interesting more for its promise than for its performance.

The poetry of the age opens with the publication of a volume known as *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557).[1] This book contained the verse of those ill-fated courtiers Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey, and marks the first English poetry of the Renascence.

Thomas Wyatt was born in 1503, entered St. John's College, Cambridge, at the age of twelve, and took his degree at fifteen.

He was at one time, like Chaucer, esquire to the King. He travelled to Italy on several occasions, and was the first to introduce the sonnet into England. His friend Surrey praised his handsome appearance where "force and beauty met." He was an accomplished swordsman, and could handy words as well as the rapier; a fine linguist, an agreeable musician, a brilliant talker, it is small wonder that he became a favourite with Henry VIII. His letters to his son have the weighty wisdom of Chesterfield's utterances. They were modelled on Seneca's epistles:

> "Have your friends in a reverence; and think unkindness to be the greatest offence, and least pardoned, among men; but so much the more to be dread, for God is justest upon that alone. . . . If you will seem honest, be honest; or else seem as you are."

Wyatt died of a fever in 1542, in his thirty-ninth year.

[1] Richard Tottel, a printer who, along with Grimald, a University scholar and chaplain to Ridley, made a collection of verse written by courtiers of Henry VII.

THE LOVER'S APPEAL

And wilt thou leave me thus?
Say nay! say nay! for shame,
To save thee from the blame
Of all my grief and grame.
And wilt thou leave me thus?
Say nay! say nay!

And wilt thou leave me thus,
That hath loved thee so long
In wealth and woe among:
And is thy heart so strong
As for to leave me thus?
Say nay! say nay!

And wilt thou leave me thus,
That hath given thee my heart
Never for to depart
Neither for pain nor smart:
And wilt thou leave me thus?
Say nay! say nay!

And wilt thou leave me thus,
And have no more pity
Of him that loveth thee?
Alas! thy cruelty!
And wilt thou leave me thus?
Say nay! say nay!

His friend and disciple, Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, was born about 1517. More hot-blooded than his friend, he was continually getting into trouble as a young man, and made several visits to the Fleet Prison. His whole career was a chequered one; in fighting, soneteering, and roystering he spent his days, and fell at last a victim to Henry's arbitrary power, being beheaded, on a pretext of treason, in 1547. He was more dashing and indiscreet than his friend, but equally with him, had an open, ingenuous disposition, charm of manner, and a cultured mind.

Of these two names Wyatt's is the most important. Modelling his work upon Italian models, he attempted a great variety of metrical experiments—songs, madrigals, sonnets, elegies; occasionally imitative, but with touches of grace and fantasy.

Surrey is seen rather as the disciple of Wyatt than an independent force; yet his sonnets are more effective than those of Wyatt. Wyatt adhered strictly to the Petrarcan model, used with such fine effect at a later date by Milton, and still more recently by Rossetti. Surrey modified the form, and it was this modification that Shakespeare seized upon in his splendid Sonnet sequence. The Petrarcan form is perhaps the more impressive; the modified English form the more expressive.

Surrey also translated the second Æneid into blank verse. *This is the first example of blank verse*

in English. Rhymed verse hitherto had held undisputed sway; but one effect of the study of the classics was to lessen the prestige of rhyme. Surrey's blank verse was very unlike the sonorous measure it became in the hands of Marlowe. But it was a step at any rate in the direction of a form of literature in which the greatest Elizabethans won their highest triumphs. Surrey and Wyatt stand in relation to the glory of English poetry under Spenser and Shakespeare as Thomson and Collins do to Wordsworth and Shelley.

Surrey excels his friend as a metrist, and shows little of hart awkwardness that mars much of Wyatt's verse. But it must be remembered that if the disciple excelled his master in ease and assurance, the master had the advantage of having opened up the way. In the work of these men, we mark for the first time a more personal note in English poetry, for the great characteristic of mediæval verse is its impersonal character. Conventional it still is, and often stiff in expression; but a more individual tone is now imparted to it.

DESCRIPTION OF SPRING

The soote season, that bud and bloom forth brings,
With green hath clad the hill, and eke the vale,
The nightingale with feathers new she sings;
The turtle to her mate hath told her tale.
Summer is come, for every spray now springs,
The hart hath hung his old head on the pale;
The buck in brake his winter coat he slings;
The fishes flete with new repaired scale;
The adder all her slough away she slings;
The swift swallow pursueth the flies smale;
The busy bee her honey now she mings;[1]
Winter is worn that was the flowers' bale.
And thus I see among these pleasant things
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs!

GEORGE GASCOIGNE (c. 1525–1577) is an interesting figure of the time and has been held responsible for the first English prose comedy, *The Supposes* (from Ariosto); the first regular verse satire, *The Steel Glass*; the first prose tale (from Bandello); the first translation from Greek tragedy, *Jocasta*; and the first critical essay, *Notes of Instruction*. Whether this be correct or not, he was undoubtedly a man of considerable culture, was a well-known figure at Court and in political circles, and was, as befitted a man of breeding and education, a fairly extensive traveller. He is a tolerable metrist and has a nice turn for fantasy, as may be seen by his collection of verse, *Flowers, Herbs, and Weeds*. His *Lullaby of a Lover* is a pleasant specimen of his original power.

LULLABY OF A LOVER

Sing lullaby, as women do,
Wherewith they bring their babes to rest,
And lullaby can I sing too,
As womanly as can the best.
With lullaby they still the child;
And if I be not much beguiled,
Full many wanton babes have I
Which must be stilled with lullaby.

First lullaby, my youthful years,
It is now time to go to bed,
For crooked age and hoary hairs
Have won the haven within my head;
With lullaby then, youth, be still,
With lullaby content thy will,
Since courage quails and comes behind,
Go sleep and so beguile thy mind.

Next lullaby, my gazing eyes,
Which wanton were to glance apace,
For every glass may now suffice
To show the furrows in my face.
With lullaby then wink awhile,
With lullaby your looks beguile;
Let no fair face, nor beauty bright,
Entice you oft with vain delight.

And lullaby, my wanton will,
Let reason(s) rule now rein thy thought,
Since all too late I find by skill
How dear I have thy fancies bought;
With lullaby now take thine ease,
With lullaby thy doubts appease,
For trust to this, if thou be still
My body shall obey thy will.

With Gascoigne may be mentioned TURBERVILLE, GOOGE, and TUSSER. These men were all agreeable verse-writers rather than genuine poets; happy occasionally in their phrasings and fancies, but uninspired and mediocre on the whole. It is best to regard them as indirectly helping the development of English poetry by their translation work. This indirectly served to strengthen and enrich the language, and therefore gave the original men of the age better material on which to exercise their craft.

"The green that you did wish me wear
Aye for your love,
And on my helm a branch to bear
Not to remove,
Was ever you to have in mind
Whom Cupid hath my feire assigned.
* * * * *
As winter's force cannot deface
This branch his hue,
So let no change of love disgrace
Your friendship true;
You were mine own, and so be still,
So shall we live and love our fill.

Then I may think myself to be
Well recompensed,
For wearing of the tree that is
So well defensed
Against all weather that doth fall
When wayward winter spits his gall."[1]

The most original of this early group is THOMAS SACKVILLE. He is not a cheerful writer, but he had real imagination, with nothing of that mannered prettiness which makes much of his contemporaries' work so wearisome. His *Mirror for Magistrates* gives a powerful picture of the underworld where the poet describes his meeting with famous Englishmen who had suffered misfortune. This work is not all from Sackville's pen, but the Prologue and design are his, and the Prologue has a Dantesque intensity about it, and a power of allegorising, unequalled save in the pages of Spenser. Sackville's technical skill is far superior to his predecessors'—superior to any but the great names of the age. Undoubtedly he is the most original poetic force between Chaucer and Sidney.

[1] Mingles.

[1] Turberville.

COMPLAINT OF THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM

So long as fortune would permit the same,
I liv'd in rule and riches with the best:
And pass'd my time in honour and in fame,
That of mishap no fear was in my breast:
But false fortune, when I suspected least,
Did turn the wheel, and with a doleful fall
Hath me bereft of honour, life, and all.

Lo, what avails in riches floods that flow?
Though she so smil'd, as all the world were his:
Even kings and kesars bitten fortune's throws,
And simple sort must bear it as it is.
Take heed by me that blithe'd in baleful bliss:
My rule, my riches, royal blood and all,
When fortune frown'd, the feller made my fall.

For hard mishaps, that happen unto such
Whom wretched state once never felt to change,
Agrieve them not in any part so much
As their distress, to whom it is so strange
That all their lives, nay, passed pleasures range,
Their sudden woe, that aye wield wealth at will,
Algates their hearts more piteously must thrill.

For of my birth, my blood was of the best,
First born an earl, then duke by due descent:
To swing the sway in court among the rest,
Dame Fortune me her rule most largely lent,
And kind with courage so my corpse had blent,
That lo, on whom but me did she most smile?
And whom but me, lo, did she most beguile?

Now hast thou heard the whole of my mishap,
My shame, my change, the cause of all my care;
In wealth and woe, how fortune did me wrap,
With world at will, to win me to her snare;
Bid kings, bid kesars, bid all states beware,
And mell them this from me that tried it true:
Who reckless rules, right soon may hap to rue.

"Thence come we to the horror and the hell,
The large great kingdoms, and the dreadful reign
Of Pluto in his throne where he did dwell,
The wide waste places, and the huge plain,
The wailings, shrieks, and sundry sorts of pain.
The sighs, the sobs, the deep and deadly groan;
Earth, air, and all, resounding plaint and moan.

. . . . . .

Lo here, quoth Sorrow, princes of renown,
That whilom sat on top of fortune's wheel,
Now laid full low; like wretches whirled down,
Ev'n with one frown, that stayed but with a smile:
And now behold the thing that thou, erewhile,
Saw only in thought: and what thou now shalt hear,
Recount the same to kesar, king, and peer."

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

"If he goes on in the course he hath begun, he will be as famous and worthy a gentleman as ever England bred." These were the words spoken by the Earl of Essex, a few minutes before he died, soon after his arrival in Ireland, where he had gone to take high official office with Sidney in his train. He was anxious to make Sidney his son-in-law: "I wish that he might match with my daughter . . . He is so wise, virtuous, and godly."

Philip Sidney was born on the 30th November 1554, in the beautiful historic mansion of Penshurst, in Kent—Sir Henry Sidney, his father, being engaged at this time in the thankless task of governing Ireland. His mother, Lady Mary Dudley, was a daughter of the Duke of Northumberland, the nobleman whose schemes as queen-maker lost him his head, and it was at this tragic period of their family history that Sidney's life began.

The accession of Queen Mary occurred fifteen months before Sidney's birth, and her husband, Philip of Spain, with the widowed Duchess of Northumberland, Sidney's grandmother, were the dismal sponsors at his baptism. His attendants had come under the prevailing gloom of that period, and it is perhaps due to these surroundings that Sidney's thoughts inclined to a serious cast.

After his early childhood, spent at Penshurst, he was taken to Ludlow Castle, and from there was sent to the famous Shrewsbury School. When quite a child, he could write letters in French and Latin, and was ever an eager pupil. At the age of fourteen he left Shrewsbury, and went to Christ Church, Oxford. At school he had met Fulke Greville, afterwards Lord Brooke, a friendship sprang up which lasted through life, and afterwards Greville became his biographer.

Greville's deep affection and admiration for his friend never ceased. He desired to have inscribed on his tomb: "Friend to Sir Philip Sidney." It is also recorded that Sidney's fascination extended amongst many others. His tutor at Christ Church also left directions for the following inscription to be recorded on his tombstone: "Sidney has been my pupil."

After Oxford, Sidney found it an easy matter to enter Queen Elizabeth's Court, his uncle, the Earl of Leicester, being at that time the Queen's favourite; and it was he who introduced him to the all-powerful man of the day, Sir William Cecil, afterwards Lord Burghley.

It was while spending a vacation at Hampton Court with the statesman's family, that Sidney's magnetism was again noticeable. His host, a man of the world, discovers Sidney so attractive that he was at first anxious to secure him for a husband for his daughter, a girl of thirteen, but Sidney was discarded for a wealthier suitor. Subsequently a marriage was arranged with the Earl of Oxford, and we can quite understand why these two young rivals, who were fated to see so much of each other at Court, could never become friends.

We now come to the time when Sidney leaves England for a tour on the Continent, lasting three years. A great deal of this period was spent in Venice, where his studies extended over many subjects, among them being astronomy and music. The great Italian painters made a deep and lasting impression on him. History and Italian literature, added to the study of the poetry of Tasso, were amongst the many interests that laid hold of Sidney; at the end of his three years' foreign experience Sidney returned to England an accomplished writer.

In 1576 he was staying with his uncle Leicester at Kenilworth, where the Queen was regaled with one of the most elaborate entertainments on record. It is very probable that Shakespeare, who lived only a short distance away, may have been brought to Kenilworth to see the wonderful scenes. After the Kenilworth festivities Sidney went with the Queen and Court to visit the Earl of Essex at Chartley Castle. It is here he fell in love with Penelope, the Earl's twelve-year-old daughter. As we have seen, the Earl was most anxious for the match, his dying words being in praise of his young

friend. But though no marriage was to take place, the attachment inspired Sidney to address a series of sonnets to the lady, whom he called "Stella," and Sidney, for the purpose of these literary effusions, named himself "Astrophel." This beautiful friendship continued, with the approval of Sidney's wife, after "Stella's" marriage, almost to the end of his life.

At the age of twenty-three, 1577, Sidney was entrusted by Elizabeth to carry congratulatory messages to the Elector Palatine at Heidelberg, and the new Emperor Rudolph the Second, at Prague. The Queen's government also ordered him to visit Antwerp to congratulate the Prince of Orange on the birth of a son. William the Silent, who was never known to waste words, came under the spell of Sidney's charm, and declared "that in Sidney the Queen of England had one of the greatest and ripest counsellors that could be found in Europe." Although his diplomatic missions were so great a success, he quickly lost the ground he had gained with the Queen through his defence of his father's exertions as Lord Deputy in Ireland, and his opposition to Elizabeth's projected marriage with the Duke of Anjou.

At this time the Queen heard of the secret marriage of her favourite Leicester, and all Leicester's family, including Sidney, suffered from her anger. Sidney was not sorry to leave the Court, and we find him becoming an occupant in the house of his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, with a sense of relief. It was here, in this house in Wiltshire, that Sidney wrote his famous romance, *Arcadia*.

He now sought a reconciliation with the Queen, not unsuccessfully, and received official promotion —that of Steward to the Bishop of Winchester, while he also became a Member of Parliament for Kent. In 1583 a knighthood was bestowed, and more promotion followed; he was appointed joint-Master of the Ordnance, and in the autumn of the same year he married, at the age of twenty-nine, the daughter, who was only fourteen, of Sir Francis Walsingham.

Part of the ensuing three years of Sir Philip Sidney's short life were passed amid new scenes. Soon after his marriage, Sidney accepted with gratitude the Queen's orders to accompany his uncle Leicester to the Netherlands, to help in checking the career of Spain. In his one encounter, that at Zutphen, he received a wound which (October 2, 1586) proved fatal. It was at Zutphen that there occurred the famous incident of the soldier and the cup of water. Sidney saw the man suffering, and put the cup from his own lips, saying: "Thy need is greater than mine."

His Writings.—His literary work occurred between the years 1578 and 1582, though nothing was published till after his death. The *Arcadia* appeared in 1590, in an unfinished state, and appeared again in 1598, complete. About 1580 *Apologie for Poetrie* was written. In 1591 this work was named *Defense of Poesie*. The *Astrophel and Stella* Sonnets appeared in 1593, numbering one hundred and eight, and eleven songs.

Less brilliant than Marlowe, less witty than Lyly, inferior to Spenser in glamour, and excelled by many a contemporary song-writer in deftness of fancy, he has produced a body of work which for its versatile excellence places him in the foremost rank of his time.

Of his *Arcadia* and its remarkable influence, mention is made elsewhere. Here may be noted the discerning critique—*The Defense of Poesie*—where he uttered those poignant simple words that go to the root of all poetry: "I never heard the old story of Percy and Douglas, that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet."[1]

His quick and sensitive imagination enables him to pluck out the very soul of song. "It is not riming and versing that maketh a poet, no more than a long gowne maketh an advocate, who tho' he pleaded in armour should be an advocate and no soldier."

But his most remarkable literary work is to be found in the series of sonnets, *Astrophel and Stella*, first published after his death. There was undoubtedly a personal element in these love verses. Sidney (Astrophel) having been in love with Penelope Devereux (Stella), who afterwards made an unhappy marriage, but allowance must be made for a poet's fancy, and there is no need to treat them as entirely autobiographical.

More than most poets, Sidney has suffered at the hands of the uncritical enthusiast and the sour detractor. By some he has been lauded as co-equal with Spenser, by others as cold and artificial. The open-minded student cannot fail to realise the injustice of both these verdicts. As a many-gifted personality, he is probably second to none; as a poet, he is certainly inferior to Spenser in power of expression and in range.

A man of exquisite culture with a delicate palate for all that is fine in literature, he knew precisely what to say, but lacked at times the executive power to say it in the right way. This is largely due to want of experience in writing; and his later verses are greatly superior to his earlier efforts.

But, if some of his work seems more literary in inspiration than original and first hand; if, as compared with Spenser, the lines on occasion drag somewhat nervelessly, there are rare flashes of beauty, fine notes of passion, unforgettable phrases.

We recall such lines as:

"Fool! said my Muse, look in thy heart and write";

such verses as:

"Doubt you, to whom my Muse, these notes intendeth
Which now my breast o'ercharged to music lendeth?
To you, to you! all song of praise is due:
Only in you my song of praise is due";

such melodious things as:

"Ring out your bells, let mourning shewes be spread,
For Love is dead";

and the even more familiar:

"My true love hath my heart, and I have his."

THE LOVER'S LITANY

Ring out your bells! let mourning shewes be spread,
For Love is dead.
All love is dead, infected
With the plague of deep disdain;

[1] See also *post*.

Worth as nought worth rejected,
And faith, fair scorn doth gain.
From so ungracefull fancy,
From such a female frenzy,
From them that use men thus,
Good Lord, deliver us!

Weep, neighbours, weep! Do you not hear it said
That Love is dead?
His deathbed, peacock's Folly;
His winding-sheet is Shame;
His will, False Seeming wholly;
His sole executor, Blame.
From so ungrateful fancy,
From such a female frenzy,
From them that use men thus,
Good Lord, deliver us!

Let dirge be sung, and trentals rightly read,
For Love is dead.
Sir Wrong his tomb ordaineth
My mistress' marble heart;
Which epitaph containeth
"Her eyes were once his dart."
From so ungrateful fancy,
From such a female frenzy,
From them that use men thus,
Good Lord, deliver us!

Alas, I lie. Rage hath this error bred,
Love is not dead.
Love is not dead, but sleepeth
In her unmatched mind:
Where she his counsel keepeth
Till due deserts she find.
Therefore from so vile fancy,
To call such wit a frenzy,
Who Love can temper thus,
Good Lord, deliver us!

A Ditty

My true-love hath my heart, and I have his,
By just exchange one to the other given:
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss,
There never was a better bargain driven:
My true-love hath my heart, and I have his.

His heart in me keeps him and me in one,
My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides:
He loves my heart, for once it was his own,
I cherish his because in me it bides:
My true-love hath my heart, and I have his."

Taking leave of these lesser men, we may regard Sir Philip Sidney as closing the earlier period, and ushering in the great creative period of Renascence verse.

EARLIER RENASCENCE AND THE DRAMA

Introduction. The Drama: Its General Influence—Its Origin and Influence—Stages in its Development. Miracle Plays: Chester, Towneley, York, Coventry Cycles—Production of the Plays—Moralities—Interludes—Pre-Shakespearean Dramatists. Marlowe: His Life—His Writings—Characteristics.

THE DRAMA

Introduction

(a) *Its General Influence*

Two points of special interest detach themselves in connection with the drama. What was the effect upon our literature as a whole; how did it affect our national life and character?

Upon our literature the drama is incomparably the greatest force of the time: it inspired our greatest poetry as well as our sweetest lyrics; it gave variety, flexibility, and clarity to our prose. It inspired our poetry, because the exigences of the stage demanded word pictures that should conjure up clearly and vividly the scene suggested; because the exigences of acting demanded the eloquent exhibition of elemental emotions and swift transition of mood; because the exigences of individualising demanded nice distinctions of diction. Philosophic reflection, poignant introspection, joyousness of heart, agony of spirit; all these things clamoured for utterance in the drama. Elizabethan poetry voiced them all. The drama made for intensity of expression; it made also for extensity.

As against the 6000 words of the Old Testament it is computed there are about 15,000 in Shakespeare. The racy marrow that lay in the popular vernacular was used by the drama; the quaint technique with which the performances abounded, served again as grist. Small wonder, then, that we look with such pride upon the Elizabethan Age.

Last benison of all to literature, it created blank verse and thus handed on to Milton the torch with which he glorified our poetry.

How did it affect our National Life? It focussed the patriotic feeling of the nation and enabled Englishmen to feel more clearly and intensely that spirit of nationality which had been growing up ever since the battle of Bosworth. The average man learned his history at the theatre; he understood as he had never done before, something of the country's story, of its struggle in the past, of its fight for freedom, of its weakness in times of civil strife. He saw the evils of Court favouritism, of kingly oppression, and of ecclesiastical tyranny.

Such plays as *Henry V* stirred the playgoer much as Chevy Chase stirred Sir Philip Sidney. Not only in Shakespeare but in Jonson, Heywood, Chapman, Beaumont and Fletcher, the epic of Britain and the tale of British glory was chanted.

The Puritan may have looked askance at the Playhouse; and had reason for his drastic measures in the time of Charles. But he owed a rich debt to the drama for having stirred the conscience of the nation in the past, and given her so clear a vision of her corporate life.

(b) *Its Nature*

Drama may be defined as an *articulate story presented in action.*

It must be articulate—that is, spoken; for a pantomime is a story in action; and the orator who

declaims may give us an articulate story, though not necessarily in action. This articulate story presented in action is intended to appeal through the medium of another art—the art of mimicry, which is the actor's art. It must lend itself therefore to this secondary art, and in so far as it suggests matter that lies beyond the range of mimicry it fails in its intent.

The story must be articulate, it must also be in action. This constitutes Drama—but it does not differentiate effective from ineffective drama. That depends on the story, and for effective drama conflict of some kind is essential. There must be some clash between man and his surroundings. If the conflict be a trivial one, presented with a dash of caricature, we get a farce. If a serious one, ending happily for hero and heroine, we have a comedy. If a serious one with an unhappy ending, we term it a tragedy.

Turning now from this brief consideration of the nature of drama to its historical evolution, we are met by the fact that drama is the earliest of all the imitative arts.

(c) *Its Origin and History*

The origins of the drama have always been deeply rooted in the religious instincts of mankind. This is true of the Greek, Indian, Chinese, Egyptian, and also of the modern Christian drama. The ancient Greek drama never lost its kinship with the religious ceremonies of the people. Dionysus, God of Life and Death, the God of Wine, and of the fertile Earth, was the father of Greek Comedy and Tragedy. The production of a play was a sacred function that every citizen had a right to attend. The Roman drama was an offshoot of the Greek, but in the days of the late Empire it fell into a degraded and corrupt state. So, when Christianity became the state religion, the theatre was heartily frowned upon. But it was as futile to hope to suppress the drama as to suppress laughter and tears, and before long the Church was found utilising the very tendencies she had endeavoured to crush, so that it is true to say, the "cradle of the drama" in Europe, and more particularly in England, "rested on the altar." The clergy were obliged to find some method of teaching and explaining to the ignorant masses the doctrinal truths of religion. The services of the Church were in Latin, and even if the Bible had been accessible to the laity, few could read it. Hence, in very early times, the Gospel stories were illustrated by a series of living pictures in which the performers acted the story in dumb show.

In the next stage the actors spoke as well as acted their parts. Special plays were written by the clerics, at first in Latin and later in the vernacular French. These early plays were known as *Mysteries* or *Miracles*. The very word "mystery" bespeaks its ecclesiastical origin, since the word comes from the French *Mystère* derived from *ministère*, because the clergy, the *ministerium* or *ministri ecclesiæ*, themselves took part in these plays.

In England the term *Miracle* is used indiscriminately for any kind of religious play, but strictly speaking the term *Mystery* is applied to the stories taken from the Scripture narrative, while *Miracles* are plays dealing with incidents in the lives of Saints and Martyrs.

The history of the English drama is rooted in lay as well as in religious history. It may be well at this point to sketch the main lines of development, before dealing in greater detail with the early plays that merged gradually into Elizabethan drama.

Passing then to consider the lines of development shown by the drama from Plantagenet times down to the era of Elizabeth, we find certain distinctive stages, whilst underlying the entire movement is a twofold appeal.

The drama appeals to two instincts deeply rooted: (1) The craving for amusement. (2) The desire for improvement. This twofold appeal accounts for the complex origin of the drama, and enables us to differentiate the lay from the sacred element.

Regarding the first—the lay element and the craving for amusement—we note how that in the Middle Ages the juggler, the tumbler, and the jester ministered to the needs of the time. They are found in the twelfth century, and Langland tells us how gaily and unblushingly they flourished in the fourteenth century, though the serious-minded wished to restrain them "to a modest hilarity." Much of it was very primitive fooling, but there were dialogues and sequences of which fragments only have survived. The Middle Ages sorely needed a Pepys. Of these entertainers, the jester was the best. He lived by his wits in a very literal manner, disgrace and death following upon an unsuccessful sally, and he survived into Shakespeare's day, though fallen then from his high estate to play the fool between the acts of a play. What he had been at his zenith we may judge from the picture of Touchstone, of Feste, and the Fool in *Lear*. Such debates as *The Owl and the Nightingale* influenced the development of the drama, for before Chaucer's time some of these were turned into story form (the story being borrowed from the budget of some wandering minstrel).

The most important entertainments of the Middle Ages, however, were supplied by the Pageants and the May Games, and by the Mysteries and Miracles of the Church. Roughly speaking, we may say that the Juggling and Clowning heralded the coming of Farce and Comedy, the Pageants anticipated the Historical Drama, whilst in the May Games we have a foretaste of the Masques and Pastoral Plays so popular in Elizabethan times.

Passing from the lay to the sacred element, it is remarkable what use the Church made of the rough humours already noted in the clownings and debates. The Church made skilful use of these, moulding them to her purpose and, in the parlance of a familiar tag, "combining instruction with amusement."

Drama is obviously inherent in the very ritual of the Church, and the Mass itself was a factor in dramatic development. The Seasons of the Year suggested the subject matter of Plays: Christmas, Easter, stories derived from the Bible, called

Mysteries, stories from the lives of the Saints, called *Miracle Plays*. Early in the Middle Ages the clergy celebrated Holy Days—Christmas, Easter, &c.—by playing scenes from the Life of Christ.

The *first* positive stage in the development of the drama is marked by the performance of these stories in the church.

The *second* stage is reached when the play emerges from the church into the market-place. This was effected when the guilds were entrusted with the performances in the fourteenth century. It was customary for each craft to represent a play according to its particular trade. For instance, the Fishermen presented the Flood; the Vintners, the Marriage at Cana. The work was very seriously taken by the guilds, lack of competence and unpunctuality being met by heavy fines.

Performances were given on cars or scaffolds in the open spaces of the town. There was no attempt at scenery, but attention was given to stage properties. There was a monstrous head with movable jaws to represent Hell; and, in addition to a rich costume, the actor had some symbol to denote his part—*e.g.* St. Stephen had a stone; God was symbolised by the Papal dress.

The play of *Noah* gives us some insight into the nature of these plays, and shows the blending of rough English humour with didactic purpose. For though the drama had its *source* in sacred story, in the *method* of telling we can trace the influence of the old English amusements—the pageants and May games, the horse-play of the juggler, and the quips of the jester.

Noah having finished the Ark, informs his wife of the fact, and begs her to enter. Dame Noah, however, having determined to go on a jaunt with a crony, declines the invitation with some finality of manner. After an altercation, in which the services of the son Japhet are enlisted, she is compelled to enter. But no sooner in than in a true shrewish spirit she boxes her husband's ears! And he finds, poor man, that although sheltered from one storm he has exposed himself to another.

On the whole, Miracle Plays proved more popular than Mysteries, probably on account of their fresher subject-matter. Each big town had its own cycle of plays—*e.g.* York, Chester, Coventry.

The *third* stage is reached when the Mystery and Miracle Play give place to the Morality and Interlude. In the Mystery and Miracle, serious and comic elements were interwoven. Now they part: the Morality presenting the serious and the Interlude the lighter side of things. The Morality was frankly didactic, dealing in abstractions and allegory. The characters typified certain qualities—*e.g.* Sin, Grace, Repentance. The Interlude aimed merely at amusement. Famous examples of both types of play are found in *Everyman* and the *Four P's* of Heywood.[1]

Moralities continued to flourish up to the end of the sixteenth century, and were popular in the heyday of Shakespeare's fame.

The *fourth* stage sees the beginning of English tragedy; for Tragedy preceded Comedy, in England as in Greece. We have reached now the influence of the Renascence, and see the effect of classical influences. Seneca's Tragedies, with their earnest and strenuous atmosphere, attracted the writers of the day; and *Gorboduc*, the first English drama, is the result. This was written by Sackville and Norton, and played before Elizabeth at Whitehall in 1562. When published it was called *Ferrex and Porrex*. Its intrinsic merits are slight, for it was frankly imitative, and its verse is stiff and lifeless. But the classical model served to give some form and coherence to the crude shapelessness of the drama at the time.

Of more importance at this period was the development of English Comedy, as exemplified by *Ralph Roister Doister* (c. 1566), and *Gammer Gurton's Needle* (1575), plays rich in English humour; the first (the better of the two) showing a keen sense of dramatic movement.

Let us resume now our consideration of the earlier forms of drama.

In the first place, the Miracle Plays.

One of the earliest examples of the miracle play has been preserved in an Orleans MS., and concerns St. Nicholas. It is written in Latin, with old French refrains.

The play of *St. Nicholas*[2] affords a good illustration of what in the first place was merely an acted sermon. On the Saint's day, the image of the Saint was removed from its shrine and a priest dressed as the image took its place. The service commences but a pause is made; another priest, dressed as a rich heathen, comes in at the church door, approaches the shrine where he deposits his treasure and asks the Saint to guard it for him, while he is on his journey. As soon as the heathen has departed, robbers enter the church, creep up to the shrine and steal the treasure. Soon the heathen returns, and finding his treasure stolen flies into a rage, beats and upbraids the Saint who has failed to protect his property. Then the image moves, steps down from the pedestal, goes out and reasons with the robbers and compels them to restore their ill-gotten goods. Terrified, the thieves return to the church, and again place the treasure at the feet of the Saint. The image returns to its place. The heathen rejoices, and adores the image. Another priest now appears representing the Saint himself, and bids the heathen to worship God alone. The play ends with the conversion of the heathen to the true faith. The service then proceeds to a conclusion.

The great festivals of the Church's year afforded opportunities for these performances which gradually became more elaborate, singing and music being introduced; and eventually they became no longer mere ritualistic ceremonies but real dramas—as in the *Easter Office* and the *Office of the Shepherds*.

At an interval in the Easter Service three priests, representing the three Maries, slowly and sadly advance up the church to where a grave has been prepared. On the way they sing a lamentation; arriving at the grave, they see an angel arrayed in an alb, with a mitre on his head, a palm in his left hand, and a branch of candlesticks in his right. He

[1] A *Pardoner*, a *Pedlar*, a *Palmer*, a *Potecary*.

[2] By Hilarius.

asks them whom they seek, and the women reply, Jesus of Nazareth. The gospel narrative is followed and finally a priest, personating the Saviour, appears, announcing his Resurrection. The choir then burst in joyous Alleluias and the play ends with the singing of the *Te Deum*.

The *Office of the Shepherds* was performed on Christmas Eve. A cradle was placed on the altar and beside it an image of the Virgin Mary. A number of the clergy represented the shepherds and entered the church carrying crooks and having with them real sheep and dogs. Some of the shepherds pretend to go to sleep, while others watch their flocks. Suddenly a choir-boy, dressed as an angel, mounts the pulpit and, preceded by blasts from the trumpeters, announces the birth of Christ. Immediately a choir of singers in the clerestory sing "Glory to God in the Highest." The shepherds proceed up the church to the altar where other priests show them the child and bid them announce his birth to the people. The shepherds adore the Child and his Mother and march through the church singing a hymn of praise.

Another early Christmas play concerns the Slaughter of the Innocents. The part of the *Innocents* is taken by the choir-boys! The other characters by monks.

In one part of the church was erected a manger, in another a throne for Herod, still another represented Egypt. The story is then set forth in very few words, the choir singing anthems at intervals. At the end of the play, the choir-boys (having risen from the dead) enter the choir, the throne of Herod is occupied by Archelaus, and an angel bids the Holy Family return from Egypt. The performance concludes with the *Te Deum*.

The actors in these performances were the priests, monks, and members of the choir, but it is very probable that in distant towns and villages it would not always be possible to confine the actors to the clerical staff, hence laymen were allowed to take part in these representations.

An old Dutch novel called *A Merye Jest of a man that was called Howleglas* (*Ulenspiegle*) affords an instance of an amusing hoax by Howleglas on the priest at the customary Easter play, in which "iij of the simplest persons that were in the town played the iij Maries."

The home of the drama was in the church, arising out of the services of the church, from the gradual union of dumb show, action, and speech; the dialogues at first in Latin, then in French or Anglo-Norman, and finally in English—the language of the common people—and at once the religious drama became exceedingly popular. The wandering minstrels, story-tellers, &c., quickly added them to their *repertoire*, and acted scenes from the Bible story or the legends of the Saints, to crowds of people outside the churches. The clergy at once proceeded to excommunicate these unauthorised players and began to give performances in their churches on a more extensive scale. At once the churches became so crowded that it became necessary to enact them in the churchyards, and probably on account of the desecration, they were very soon removed to the open spaces and streets.

The members of the city companies, the trade guilds and the wandering minstrels soon assisted in rendering them, and very soon the Christmas and Easter plays were brought together, and a cycle of short plays dealing with events from the Creation to the Last Judgment were formed.

When laymen began to act in them, comic interludes were introduced—although the clergy still took part.

Nor did acting altogether cease in the churches.

The first miracle play known to have been acted in England was the miracle play of St. Katherine, mentioned by Matthew Paris as having been acted at Dunstable about 1100. It was given under the direction of one Geoffrey, a schoolmaster from France, who borrowed from St. Albans the copes, books, &c., for the performance. During the night, Geoffrey's house was burnt down, and the costly vestments and properties were destroyed. The disaster led to Geoffrey forsaking the world and entering the monastery of St. Albans as a monk, and of which he became the Abbot in 1119.

William FitzStephen, a monk of Canterbury, wrote an account of the City of London, in which he mentions the miracle plays and their popularity; "London, instead of common interludes belonging to the theatres, has plays of a more holy subject—representation of those miracles, which the holy confessors wrought, or of the sufferings wherein the glorious constancy of the martyrs did appear." He also describes a play on the life of Thomas Becket.

At the end of the thirteenth century, these plays had passed into the hands of the laity, and were rendered by the trade guilds. The observance of the Festival of Corpus Christi came to be associated with the performance of these plays in which each guild or craft undertook to produce a scene. The simple miracle play had evolved into a series of plays that began with the Creation, covered the chief events in Bible history, and ended with the Day of Judgment.

Four great cycles of plays have come down to us—viz. York, Chester, Towneley (Wakefield), Coventry—besides a few fragments of plays that were acted in other places.

The York cycle forms one of the most interesting that have survived. It consists of forty-eight plays that were performed by the trade guilds from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century. Although only forty-eight have been preserved, the records of the city of York show that in 1415 fifty-one plays were acted. The number of plays varied according to the guilds taking part. Each trade guild was supposed to act a distinct play, and as the guilds grew or declined in numbers and importance, a new play was added, or one omitted when the guild was too poor to produce the play or had perhaps ceased to exist.

The York plays are written in the Northumbrian dialect, and an endeavour is made, by varying the metre and diction, to give suitable expression to the characters in the plays. They have dramatic life, and are on the whole reverent in tone. Even the bad characters receive sympathetic treatment.

Herod stands up for one oppressed, and Pilate rigidly observes justice.

The first play in the series deals with the Creation of the World, and the Fall of Lucifer. Three plays set forth the Fall of Man, and their expulsion from Paradise. Next follows the story of Cain and Abel. Cain refuses to obey the angel's command and give a tenth of his goods to God—arguing "if he be mooste in mighte and mayne, what need has he?" The eighth and ninth plays deal with the building of the Ark, and the Flood, and were acted by the Shipwrights, Fishmongers, and Mariners, who introduced touches which amuse a modern reader but were doubtless received with becoming gravity by the medieval audience. Indeed, such anachronisms are constantly occurring throughout the plays—*e.g.* Noah, when he wishes to find out if the Flood has abated, casts out the lead; the duty of paying tithes is insisted on in *Cain*. The *Nativity* was played by the Thatchers' Guild and the Stable of Bethlehem was represented by a tumble-down building much in need of repair. The Shepherds bring as offerings a brooch with a little tin bell attached, a horn spoon, and some nuts threaded on a ribbon.

A number of plays deal with different incidents in the Life of Christ, the Passion and Crucifixion. The thirty-seventh play is the Harrowing of Hell—a play that always delighted the people, from its realistic presentation. A square, embattled tower—the entrance to which was through a huge and hideous dragon's gaping mouth, glaring eyes, enormous nose—represented the mouth of Hell.

> "An ydeous hole, all vaste, withouten shape,
> Of endless depth, o'erwhelmed with rugged stone,
> With ungly mouth, and grisely jaws doth gape,
> And to our sight confounds itself in one."

When the mouth was open, fire and smoke issued forth—produced by a brazier and bellows hidden behind. Drums were beaten and horns blown, tin cans were banged, and amidst all this din the devil and his imps leaps in and out the flames, dragging the wicked characters below and stirring up the unfortunate people consigned to Limbo. Christ comes to deliver his Saints from torment, but the evil-doers are left.

Other plays follow, dealing with the Resurrection, Ascension, &c., and finally the Day of Judgment. A full list of the plays performed in 1415, and the parts taken by each guild, was drawn up by Roger Burton, the Town Clerk of York, and still exists. Other plays outside the cycle were also acted in York. A play of St. George on Midsummer Day; a play on the Lord's Prayer,[1] and a Creed play.

Whilst each play was in the hands of the trade guild, the city authorities exercised careful supervision and control. A proclamation was issued by the Mayor in which men were forbidden to go armed, with the exception of knights and squires, and to hinder the procession. The pageants might not be played but in the places assigned to them, and the actors were bidden to be ready to play "at the mid-hour between four and five in the morning." Disregard of these regulations involved heavy penalties. After a time the restriction of the pageants to certain places was removed, and it was ordered that "those persons should be allowed to have the play before their houses who could pay the highest price for it." In 1426 an attempt was made to have the plays performed on the Vigil of Corpus Christi, by the advice of William Melton of the Friars Minors, who commended the plays but disapproved of the "revellings, drunkenness, shouts, songs and other insolencies" which had disgraced the solemn procession in which the Sacrament was carried through the streets. The citizens, however, refused to accede to this, and the plays were performed on Corpus Christi Day and the procession was postponed until the next day.

[1] Referred to by Wyclif (d. 1384): "*Yn prescriptes in Englisch bonge as we seyn in ys play of York.*"

The Towneley Plays

These were acted at Woodkirk, near Wakefield, and are sometimes known as the Wakefield Plays, deriving their first title from the fact that the MS. volume containing the text was discovered in the library of Towneley Hall in Lancashire. Some of the plays may have been acted at the two fairs which were held annually at Woodkirk. Five of the plays are almost identical with plays in the York cycle, and some of them were acted by the trade guilds of Wakefield.

The second Shepherd's Play is prefaced by a comic interlude that has been described as the first farce in the English language.

The shepherds are out in the fields on Christmas Eve, they begin to grumble at the weather, their heavy taxes:

> "We are so lamed
> We are made hand-tamed
> With these gentlery men";

of the trials of matrimony:

> "We silly wed-men dree mickle woe";

of their hard work and low wages. Presently they lie down to sleep, a notorious thief "Mac" with them. As soon as the shepherds are soundly snoring, Mac slips off with a fat sheep on his back. He hurries home and awakens his wife, Gill. She is afraid he will be hung. Mac believes he can get more by stealing than those who toil and labour, and mentions his many escapades. His wife reminds him:

> "But so long goes the pot to the water
> At last it comes home broken."

They decide in the end to put the sheep into the cradle, dressed as a babe, and pretend the child was born that night. They succeed after a good deal of effort in placing the sheep in the cradle, and cover it with a blanket. Mac then returns to the shepherds, lies down again and pretends to be asleep. One by one the shepherds waken, and begin to tell their dreams—how they had seen Mac clothed in a wolf's skin, carry off a sheep. They arouse the sham sleeper, who says he has dreamt that his wife has born him a son, he must hasten home and see if it is well. After his departure the shepherds miss one of the sheep, and suspecting Mac, they follow him home and demand admission to his house. They charge Mac with the theft.

The character of Herod in the Coventry plays offers an example of early melodrama. Herod is a braggart:

"I stamp, I stare, I loke all about,
Might I take them I would turn them on hot coals.
I run, I rave, and now I am mad."

Herod was dressed as a Saracen in a gown of gaudy colours. He wore red gloves, and bore a sceptre and painted wooden sword. His face was concealed by a mask, and he wore an iron helmet on his head. He rageth on the platform, he descends into the street and rageth again.

As these plays were acted as late as 1591, it has been thought probable that Shakespeare may have witnessed them. In addition to these cycles of plays, single plays were acted in various parts of the country; at Newcastle-on-Tyne and in Cornwall, where they were enacted in round enclosures of earth and stone.

The Production of the Plays

The records of the cities which produced these plays contain many entries with respect to their production. The guild having had a play assigned to it was bound under heavy penalties to enact the play every year, and contributions towards the expenses were levied upon each member. The next step was to procure the pageant book. If a new play was required, a learned monk or scholar was commissioned to write it. The selection of the players, the rehearsals, the furnishing, the properties, dresses, and simple scenery were matters considered with care and attention. The plays, as we have already noted, were acted upon a movable stage or "*pagant*" scaffold upon four or six wheels, divided into two parts or rooms, an upper and a lower. The upper was either open at the top or covered in with a canopy; the lower room, enclosed with painted cloths, served as a dressing-room for the performers. The lower part frequently represented Hell—the stage itself the Earth—the upper part Heaven. On the great day of the pageant, the narrow streets were thronged with crowds of people, many of whom had travelled long distances to witness the performances. Lords and ladies, knights and squires mingle with monks and pedlars—yeomen and their wives, palmers, pilgrims, merchants, tradesmen, and apprentices jostle each other.

The Heralds ride through the streets, and preceded by trumpeters read the Bans or proclamations; the plays were then acted, each in their order, at the proper stations.

The miracle plays ceased to be acted about 1600, but by that time the regular drama was established. The miracle plays had performed their work, they had spread through the land a love of acting, and stimulated men's minds to the comprehension of the essentials of the drama. The common people had already a national tradition so strong that when attempts to conform the English drama to the classical models were made, the native genius asserts itself even in these, until in Shakespeare it reaches the supreme height of the Romantic School.

Morality Plays

Moralities began to be acted in the reign of Henry VI, and like the miracle plays continued to flourish until the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. The morality is a drama in which the characters are allegorical, symbolical, or abstract—the main purpose of the play being didactic. The allegorical characters to be found in some of the earlier miracle plays owe their introduction to religious sources. They are not essential to the story. One of the earliest morality plays was *The Castle of Perseverance* (*c.* 1400, Henry V), a drama of the old faith. The spiritual progress of Mankind from the day of his birth to the Day of Judgment is set forth. The world, the flesh and the Devil enter boasting their might. The Good and Bad Angels strive to possess the Soul of Mankind. He forsakes the Good Angels and consorts with the Seven Deadly Sins. From their power he is released by Confession and Penance and safely lodged in the Castle of Perseverance. The Seven Deadly Sins attack the Castle and are repulsed by the roses discharged by the Virtues—the symbols of the Passion. He is lured from the Castle by Avarice, and in spite of warnings he gives himself to her. Finally Death claims him, and in terror he prays to Misericordia. Dying, he appears before the throne in heaven and his soul awaits judgment. "Let him drink as he brewed" is the claim of Justice; but Mercy pleads the Passion of Christ and the Soul of Mankind is saved.

The Interludes dealing with the Old Faith gave place to others that set forth the teaching of the Reformation, e.g. *Hyche Scorner*, *Lusty Juventus* (1550 ?). *New Custom* (1573 ?). Others concerned the New Learning, *Nature of the Four Elements* (1517–19), *The Trial of Treasure* (1567 ?).

By far the most popular of all the Moralities is that of *Everyman*, which has been reproduced in recent years—"by figure a moral play, showing how the Father of heaven sendeth death to summon every creature to come and give account of their lives in this world."

The Moralities with their allegorical characters led to greater attention being paid to the plot, whilst gradually the abstract personification began to emerge into real people with individual idiosyncrasies. The Moralities, like the Miracles, were adapted to the audience. Comic scenes were introduced to relieve the seriousness of these mediæval "problem" plays. The Vice, a character peculiar to the Morality, was allowed to enter between the scenes and amuse the people with a humorous interlude. The Devil was also a comic character. A number of plays exist in which the transition stages of the Morality can be plainly discerned. Comedy and Morality in *Tom Tiler and his Wife* (1560), Tragedy and Morality in *King Cambyses* (1561) and *Apius and Virginia* (1563), History and Morality in Bales' *King Johan* (*c.* 1548).

The Morality approaches nearer to the actual drama when abstract virtues and vices are replaced by real people.

MUNDUS ET INFANS

Conscience. Why, good sir knight, what is your name?
Manhood. Manhood, mighty in mirth and game:
All power of pride have I ta'en:
I am as gentle as a jay on tree.
Conscience. Sir, though the world have you to manhood brought,
To maintain manner ye were never taught.
No, conscience clear ye know right nought,
And this longeth to a knight.
Manhood. Conscience! What the devil man, is he?
Conscience. Sir, a teacher of the spirituality.
Manhood. Spirituality! What the devil may that be?
Conscience. Sir! all that be leaden in to light.

YOUTH

Aback, fellows, and give me room;
Or I shall make you to avoid soon!
I am goodly of person;
I am peerless wherever I come.
My name is Youth, I tell thee,
I flourish as the vine tree:
Who may be likened unto me,
In my youth and jollity?
My hair is royal and bushed thick;
My body plump as a hazelstick;
Mine arms be both big and strong,
My fingers be both fair and long;
My chest big as a tun;
My legs be full light for to run,
To hop and dance and make merry.
By the mass, I reck not a cherry
Whatsoever I do!
I am the heir of all my father's land,
And it is come into my hand:
I care for no mo.

THE INTERLUDES

The Interludes of John Heywood stand midway between the Moralities and the regular drama, since in the Interlude the allegorical characters have disappeared. The Morality was a sermon in disguise; the Interlude aimed at amusement and entertainment. It is possible that Interludes of music, jesting, story-telling, had always to a greater or lesser extent accompanied feasts and banquets, but it was left to John Heywood, in the reign of Henry VIII, to give the Interlude a definite place not only in literature but in the evolution of the drama. Heywood was born in North Mimms in Hertfordshire, he was a Roman Catholic and a friend of Sir Thomas More, who obtained for him his position at Court, as a producer of entertainments for the King's pleasure. This he kept through the reign of Edward VI and Queen Mary. On the death of Queen Mary he is said to have fled from the country. He died in exile sometime between 1577 and 1587.

The Mery Play betwene Johan Johan, the husband, Tyb his Wife, and Sir Johan the Priest, printed in 1553, has been attributed to Heywood. This story of the intrigues of a cleric with a faithless and shrewish wife is of value as a specimen of early comedy and also as testimony to the licence allowed by Roman Catholic writers in treating of the established priesthood. The Interlude of the *Four P's* (1540), *i.e.* the Palmer, the Pardoner, the Poticary, and the Pedlar, is the best known of all the Interludes. Four servants attired according to their respective characters enter at the proper interval during the banquet. The Palmer describes the shrines he has visited, and the wonders he has seen; the Pardoner replies that doubtless he has returned no wiser than when he went, he extols the gratifying benefits of his office:

"Give me but a penny or two pence,
And as soon as the soul departeth hence,
In half an hour, or three quarters at the most,
The soul is in heaven with the Holy Ghost."

The Poticary now enters, and joins in the contention, declaring that no one enters heaven without the aid of the Poticary. Finally, the Pedlar enters and being asked what he has in his pack, opens it and discloses his wares, inviting the others to buy.

The Palmer answers:

"Nay, by my troth, we be like friars;
We are but beggars, we be no buyers."

A lively conversation ensues, followed by some part singing. The Pardoner renews the argument respecting the relative value of their callings, requesting the Pedlar to be the judge. He declares himself unfitted to judge of the greater matters, but he has observed they have one gift in common, in which he considers himself skilled enough to be their judge, and that is in lying! Let them each make a trial of their skill in that direction, and see which of them can tell the greatest lie.

The Poticary tells the story of a marvellous cure, the Pardoner follows with a story of his visit to Purgatory and to Hell to recover a lost soul. He is allowed to enter the latter place through the friendly offices of the devil:

"For as good hap would have it chance
The devil and I were of olde acquaintance,
For oft in the play of Corpus Christi,
He hath played the devil at Coventrie."

Being the soul of a woman, permission is readily accorded by Satan, since:

"All the devils within this den
Have more to do with two women
Than with all the charge we have beside
. . . Apply thy pardons to women so,
Trust unto us there come no mo!"

The Palmer expresses great surprise and astonishment "that women in hell such shrews can be." He has travelled through many towns and cities throughout Christendom. He has seen five hundred thousand women, yet in all the places he has been, he had never seen or heard of "any woman out of Patience!"

Poticary. By the Mass, there is a great lie.
Pardoner. I never heard greater, by our ladye.
Pedlar. A greater! Nay, know ye any so great?

The Palmer is therefore awarded the prize.

The Palmer. I am a Palmer, as ye see,
Which of my life much part have spent
In many a fair and far country:
As Pilgrims do, of good intent.
At Jerusalem have I been
Before Christ's blessed sepulchre:
The Mount of Calvary have I seen,
A holy place, you may be sure.
To Jehosaphat and Olivet
On foot, God wot, I went right bare:
Many a salt tear did I sweat,
Before my carriage could come there.

Yet have I been at Rome also,
And gone the stations all a-row;
S. Peter's shrine and many mo,
Than, if I told all, ye do know.[1]

The Pardoner. I say yet again my pardons are such,
That if there were a thousand souls on heap,
I would bring them to heaven as good cheap
As ye have brought yourself on pilgrimage
In the least quarter of your voyage,
Which is far aside heaven, by God!
There your labour and pardon is odd.
With small cost and without any pain,
These pardons bring them to heaven plain:
Give me but a penny or two pence,
And as soon as the soul departeth hence,
In half an hour, or three-quarters at the most,
The soul is in heaven with the Holy Ghost.[2]

Another Interlude by Heywood is *The Mery Play between the Pardoner and the Frere*, printed in 1533, but which was written before 1521.

The demand for entertainments of this kind led to the formation of small companies of actors being maintained in the houses of great noblemen. Successful Interludes were given in public when leave was granted to the players. The freedom with which questions of religion and politics were handled in these entertainments led to restrictions and penalties. Thus it came about that with the inauguration of the regular drama—companies of players were ready to perform in them.

Gorboduc

The first English tragedy was written by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, and was acted by the Gentlemen of the Inner Temple before Elizabeth, on the Banqueting Day of the Grand Christmas festival of the Inner Templars, January 18, 1561.

Sackville, who afterwards became Lord Buckhurst, had already attained a reputation as a poet, by his sonnets and the *Induction to the Mirror for Magistrates*.

The argument of the play is as follows:

"Gorbodus, King of Britain, divided his realms in his lifetime to his sons Ferrex and Porrex. The sons fell to dissension. The younger killed the elder. The mother, that more dearly loved the elder, for revenge killed the younger. The people moved with the cruelty of the fact, rose in rebellion, and slew both father and mother. The nobility assembled, and most terribly destroyed the rebels; and afterwards for want of issue of the Prince, whereby the succession of the crown became uncertain, they fell to civil war, in which both they and many of their issues were slain, and the land for a long time almost desolate and miserably wasted."

The story is divided into five acts. Norton wrote the first, second, and third, and Sackville the fourth and fifth. The action takes place behind the scenes, and each act ends with a chorus, in imitation of the tragedies of Seneca. It departs from the classical model in the use of dumb show and is written in blank verse—first used by Surrey in translating a part of Virgil's *Æneid*, and now for the first time applied to the drama.

Gorboduc treats of an episode in national history, the story being taken from Geoffrey Monmouth's *Chronicle*, chosen for the specific purpose of emphasizing the need for "concord and unity" at this particular time, and the evils that arise from civil dissensions. The play pleased the Queen so much that it was acted again a fortnight later. A pirated edition of the play was printed in 1565 by one William Griffith, who "getting a copy thereof at some young man's hand that lacked a little money and much discretion, in the last great Plague Anno 1565 about five years past, while the said lord was out of England and T. Norton far out of London, and neither of them both made privy put it forth exceedingly corrupted." The authorised version, which is thus prefaced, was issued in 1570.

The following may serve as an illustration of the metre of the play:

Videna (*the Queen*). (*Alone.*) Why should I live, and linger forth my time
In longer life to double my distress?
O me, most woeful wight, whom no mishap
Long ere this day could have bereaved hence,
Might not these hands, by fortune or by fate,
Have pierced this breast, and life with iron reft?
Or in this palace here, where I so long
Have spent my days, could not that happy hour
Once, once have happed, in which these hapy frames
With death by fall might have oppressed me?

Both the *Misfortunes of Arthur*, acted before the Queen at Greenwich in 1587, and *Tancred and Gismunda* (1568), follow *Gorboduc* in construction, but the classical type of play soon died out.

Ralph Roister Doister

The first regular English comedy, based on the model of the Latin comedy, was produced in 1541 or earlier. The play is usually attributed to Nicholas Udall, head master of Eton from 1534 to 1541. Udall was born in Hampshire in 1506. He was educated at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and came under the influence of the teachings of More, Colet, and Erasmus. Udall and a number of other young men were arrested in 1527 by order of Wolsey, for possessing Tyndale's translation of the New Testament and Luther's Tracts. The students saved their lives by making a public recantation. After leaving Oxford, Udall seems to have become a schoolmaster in the North. In 1533 Udall was in London, and shortly afterwards was appointed headmaster of Eton, where he remained until 1541.

It was the custom at large public schools to act Latin plays on special occasions. The idea seems to have occurred to Udall to substitute an English play for the usual comedy from Plautus or Terence. Hence the production of *Ralph Roister Doister*.

Ralph Doister, the hero of the play, is a braggart and a coward; he is wealthy but foolish. Matthew Merygreeke, a character modelled on the parasites of the classical plays by flattery and bullying, is able to fool Roister Doister to the top of his bent. He imagines that he is in love with Dame Custance who is already plighted to Gawin Goodluck, a merchant. While Goodluck is absent on a voyage, Ralph sends love tokens and messages to Dame Custance. The latter, although she has nothing but contempt for Ralph and his protestations, finding she cannot get rid of him, treats him with humorous raillery. A servant of Goodluck's reports to him the condition of affairs, and he returns filled with jealous suspicion. Dame Custance is

[1] *Four P.'s.* [2] *Ibid.*

now in a difficult position. She is finally extricated by the testimony of Tristram Trustie, and the admissions of Ralph himself. An amusing scene occurs when Dame Custance floute his advances. Ralph declares he will fire her out of the house and destroy all her goods. The Dame calls forth her servants to do battle with the enemy.

I will call forth my folks, that without any mocks
If he come again we may give him raps and knocks.
Madge Mumblecrust, come forth and Tibet Talkapace
Yea and come forth too Mistress Annot Alyface.
An. Alyface. I come.
Tibet. And I am here.
M. Mumble. And I am here too, at length.
C. Custance. Like warriors, if need be, ye must show your strength.
The man that this day hath beguiled you,
Is Ralph Roister Doister, whom ye know well inowe,
The most lout and dastard that ever on ground trod.
Tib. Talk. I see all folk mock him when he goeth abroad.
C. Custance. What, pretty maid? will ye talk when I speak?
Tib. Talk. No, forsooth, good mistress.
C. Custance. Will ye my tale break?
He threatened to come hither with all his force to fight,
I charge you if he come, on him with all your might.
M. Mumble. I with my distaff will reach him one rap.
Tib. Talk. And I with my new broom will sweep him one swap.
And then with our great club I will reach him one rap.
A. Alyface. And I with our skimmer will fling him one flap.
Tib. Talk. Then Trupenie's firefork will him shrewdly fray.
And you with the spit may drive him quite away.
C. Custance. Go, make all ready, that it may be even so.
Tib. Talk. For my part I shrew them that last about it go." [*Exeunt.*[1]

Ralph Roister Doister, while based on a careful study of Plautus, is not an adaptation of any particular play. Roister Doister may suggest the Pyrgopolinices or the Miles Gloriosus; and Merygreeke the parasite Gnatho, yet there is a distinctly native element which shows Udall to have been a shrewd observer; like John Heywood, he sketches his characters from life, and his work is an important link in the history of the drama. The classical form has absorbed elements belonging to both morality and interlude. Merygreeke has many qualities common to the Vice of the Moralities. The dual nature of the play is marked by the title, "Comedie or Interlude," and Udall is justly entitled to be called the "Father of English Comedy."

Gammer Gurton's Needle

"A Ryght Pithy, Pleasant and merrie Comedie: Intytled Gammer Gurton's Needle: Played on Stage not longe ago in Christes College in Cambridge—made by Mr. S. Mr. of Art." Thus runs the title-page of the earliest edition of this play, printed by Thomas Colwell in 1575. The authorship has been attributed to Bishop Still, John Bridges, and more recently to William Stevenson,[2] a Fellow of Christ's College from 1559–1561. Like *Ralph Roister Doister* in structure and form, it is modelled on Latin comedy, but the matter and characterisation are native.

[1] Act iv. sc. 4.
[2] Henry Bradley in *Representative English Comedies*, ed. C. Gayley.

Gammer Gurton's Needle is the second English comedy, and one of the few remaining examples of the college plays, that were probably very numerous in the sixteenth century. In this we see the Interlude of John Heywood expanded and developed under the influence of the foreign classical school. The play affords a picture of English village life in Tudor times.

Gammer Gurton loses her needle—at that time an article of value; Diccon the Bedlam accuses Dame Chat the Alewife of stealing it. This upsets the whole village; the parson, the bailey, the constable, Doctor Rat—are all called in to assist in the emergency. The tumult and confusion increases, eventually the needle is found sticking in the breeches of Hodge, the Gammer's farm servant. The humour is heavy-handed and coarse, but the characterisation is vivid and skilful. Hodge has become a generic title for the farm labourer. Diccon represents a type common enough both before and after Shakespeare, but which has disappeared with the altered social conditions of modern days. Like "Poor Tom" (*King Lear*), Diccon is a half-witted wanderer, incapable of useful work and responsible for a good deal of mischief.

Gammer Gurton and Dame Chat are prototypes of generations of village gossips, who have, however, become more refined in the course of the centuries. On the whole, general opinion considers *Gammer Gurton's Needle* in merit to fall below that of *Ralph Roister Doister*.

Both plays follow the classical school in the division of the play into five acts, in beginning each new scene with the introduction of a new actor, in limiting the action to a single day, and the scene to a single street—before a row of houses.

Roister Doister is stiffer and more formal in character than *Gammer Gurton*. The atmosphere of the latter is well illustrated by the famous drinking song, included in the play:

"Back and syde goo bare, goo bare,
Both hand and foot goo colde;
But Belly, God send thee good ale inoughe
Whether hyt be newe or olde.

I cannot eat but lytyll meate;
My stomache ys not goode,
But sure I thynke that I coude drinke
With hym that werythe an hoode.
Drynke ys my lyfe; although my wyfe
Sometyme do chyde and scolde,
Yet spare I not to plye the potte
Of jolly good ale and olde.
Back and syde goo bare, goo bare,
&c. &c.

I love no roste but a browne toste
Or a crabbe in the fyre
A lytell bread shall do me steade
Moocb bread I never desyer.
Nor froste, nor snowe, nor wynde I trow
Can hurt me yf hyt woulde;
I am so wrapped within and lapped
With jolly good ale and olde."

One thing is clear from these works, and that is the gradual approximation of the drama to the life of the day—especially the comedy side. There is real vitality, but so far little literary grace or power. This gift, however, was now to be bestowed.

The initial stages of this glorification are due to a new school that had arisen, called "The University Wits"—a professional set of literary men. Of this little constellation, Marlowe is the central sun, and round him revolved as minor stars, Lyly, Greene, Peele, Lodge, and Nash.

JOHN LYLY was born c. 1554, and at the age of fifteen was sent to Magdalen College, Oxford, where he matriculated in 1571. At the time of taking his degree two years later, he was in some trouble with the college authorities, and known as a noted wit "averse to crabbed studies of logic and philosophy . . . and bent to the pleasant paths of poetry." His endeavour to procure a Fellowship through Lord Burghley being a failure, he then finished his arts course at Oxford in 1575, meanwhile studying at Cambridge, and was incorporated M.A. in 1579, during which time he was writing his noted *Euphues*, said by Charles Kingsley to be "as brave, righteous, and pious a book as man need look into."

Euphues was printed by Gabriel Cawood and published early in 1579. It at once made its author famous; a second edition was issued in August the same year, and eight subsequent editions appeared within seven years as well as a Dutch translation. The fame of *Euphues* brought Lyly into touch with Lord Burghley, who offered him employment, and always ambitious to get into Court circles, he at once accepted the post of Vice Master of St. Paul's and Savoy companies of child actors, for whom he composed several light dramatic pieces. He hoped that this post might lead to the important post of Master of Revels at the Court of Elizabeth, but in this he was disappointed, and on the St. Paul's company being disbanded in 1591, Lyly was out of employment.

Turning his attention to politics, he became several times Member of Parliament, and as a champion of the cause of the bishops in the Marprelate controversy wrote his celebrated tract, *Pappe with an Hatchet, that is a sound blow on the eare for the idiot Martin to hold his peace.*" This was privately printed in September 1589 under the pseudonym "Double V."

Little is known of Lyly after 1597, when he wrote some Latin verses in praise of the Queen. He died on November 30, 1606, and lies buried in the Church of St. Bartholomew-the-Less in the City of London.

His best known dramas include *Alexander and Campaspe*, probably played for the first time on New Year's Eve 1581; *Sapho and Phao*, 1584; *Endymion* (written round the friendship existing between the Queen and the Earl of Leicester), 1591; and *Midas*, 1592.

The plays of Lyly were written after the publication of *Euphues* (see *post*, p. 105), and were acted by "the children of Paul's before her Majesty." In character they were mythological or pastoral, and approximated to the Masque rather than to the narrative drama of Marlowe. They were written in prose intermingled with verse, and whereas the verse is almost wholly charming, the prose is often marred by the fantastic conceits that weary the reader of *Euphues*. Nor had Lyly that sense of the theatre displayed by many of his contemporaries, who lacked his sense of literary form and polished wit. Among his plays are *The Woman in the Moon*, *Campaspe*, *Midas*, and *Love's Metamorphosis*.

But if his plays are less rich in concrete humanity, and in stage effectiveness, than those of Greene, Peele, and Lodge, his superior culture and finer sense of style provided compensations not to be despised. Perhaps the plays approximate more to the masques than the drama, and undoubtedly they gain by the interpolation of those delightful songs for which he was such an adept; yet his dialogue is really admirable at times, happy in clear-cut phrases and allusiveness. Finally, if not a born dramatist, he was a brilliant man, who did good service for the drama, on its more purely literary side.

GEORGE PEELE, of Devonshire origin, the son of James Peele, citizen and salter of London, was born about 1558, and as a free scholar was educated at Christ's Hospital from 1565–70. In March of the following year he went to Broadgate Hall (now Pembroke College), Oxford, and completed his degree in arts in 1579.

On leaving Oxford he came to London, where, in company with Marlowe, Greene, and Nash, he formed one of that band of dissolute young men endeavouring to earn a livelihood by literary work.

Peele was an actor as well as a writer of plays, for in 1589 we find him a member of the Lord Admiral's company, and two years later, when Queen Elizabeth visited Lord Burghley at "Theobalds," Peele was also present in his professional capacity.

Notwithstanding his profligate and irregular life, Peele was a hard worker; he not only wrote plays and poems but three pageants for ceremonial occasions in London.

The Arraignment of Paris, 1584; *Edward I*, 1593; *The Battle of Alcazar*, 1594; *The Old Wives' Tale*, 1595—the only known copies of this are one in the British Museum, and one in the library at Bridgewater House; *David and Fair Bathsheba*, 1599; and an earlier play now lost, entitled *The Hunting of Cupid*, supposed to have been written about 1591. Among other works may be mentioned *Polyhymnia*, 1590, a poem in blank verse; *The Honours of the Garter*, 1593; *The Fall of Troy*, published with *A Farewell to Norris and Drake*, 1589; and a thumb book 1¼" × 1", with two lines on a page.

George Peele left behind him some half dozen plays, richer in poetic beauty than any of his group save Marlowe. His earliest work is *The Arraignment of Paris*; his most notable, perhaps, *David and Bathsheba*.

The Arraignment, which contains an elaborate tribute to the Queen, is really a Court Play of the Masque order; something akin to Lyly's work, but of a much higher dramatic power. It is essentially a Pastoral or Masque, shows great skill in the variation of metre, and if less musical on the whole than *David and Bathsheba*, has some striking passages of melodious beauty.

David and Bathsheba contains many lines of great beauty—not the rare sweeping beauty of Marlowe, but a gentler and more insinuating charm. Certainly, he shares with Marlowe the honour of informing blank verse with that musical

quality that, in the later hand of Shakespeare, was to be one of its most remarkable characteristics.

Here is a passage :

Bathsheba. Come, gentle Zephyr, trick'd with those perfumes
That erst in Eden sweeten'd Adam's love,
And stroke my bosom with thy silken fan :
This shade, sun-proof, is yet no proof for thee ;
Thy body, smoother than this wavelas spring,
And purer than the substance of the same,
Can creep through that his lances cannot pierce :
Thou, and thy sister, soft and sacred Air,
Goddess of life, and governess of health,
Keep every fountain fresh and arbour sweet ;
No brazen gate her passage can repulse,
Nor bushy thicket bar thy subtle breath :
Then deck thee with thy loose delightsome robes,
And on thy wings bring delicate perfumes,
To play the wanton with us through the leaves.

THOMAS KYD (1558–95) was the son of a London notary, and received his education at Merchant Taylor's School. A dramatist and translator, he achieved great popularity with his first work *The Spanish Tragedy*, which was translated into German and Dutch, and in which Jonson is supposed by some to have been his collaborator. The record of his life and works is uncertain. He appears to have lived in straitened circumstances and suffered imprisonment "for treasonable and atheistical views." *Cornelia*, *Jeronimo*, *The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune*, *Solyman and Perseda*, and the Ur *Hamlet* are supposed to have emanated from his pen.

"Sporting Kyd," as Jonson called him, must be mentioned for his adherence to the Senecan School ; and for popularising the "blood and thunder" element that proved one of the attractive features of the Pre-Shakespearean drama. Violent and extravagant he is always, but at any rate he helped to break away from the nerveless monotony of *Gorboduc*.

Putting aside his translation of *Cornelia*, *The Spanish Tragedy* is his only known play ; and although its ranting style roused the contempt of Shakespeare, yet there are touches of genuine force behind the extravagances ; and even extravagance is better than lifelessness.

Ghost. When this eternal substance of my soul
Did live imprison'd in my wanton flesh,
Each in their function serving other's need,
I was a courtier in the Spanish court :
My name was Don Andrea ; my descent,
Though not ignoble, yet inferior far
To gracious fortunes of my tender youth.
For there in prime and pride of all my years,
By duteous service and deserving love,
In secret I possess'd a worthy dame,
Which hight sweet Bellimperia by name.
But, in the harvest of my summer joys,
Death's winter nipp'd the blossoms of my bliss,
Forcing divorce betwixt my love and me.
For in the late conflict with Portingal
My valour drew me into danger's mouth,
Till life to death made passage through my wounds.
When I was slain, my soul descended straight
To pass the flowing stream of Acheron ;
But churlish Charon, only boatman there,
Said that, my rites of burial not perform'd,
I might not sit amongst his passengers.
Ere Sol had slept three nights in Thetis' lap,
And slak'd his smoking chariot in her flood,
By Don Horatio, our knight marshal's son,
My funerals and obsequies were done.
Then was the ferryman of hell content
To pass me over to the slimy strand,
That leads to fell Avernus' ugly waves.
There, pleasing Cerberus with honey'd speech,
I pass'd the perils of the foremost porch.
Not far from hence, amidst ten thousand souls,
Sat Minos, Aeacus, and Rhadamanth ;
To whom no sooner 'gan I make approach,
To crave a passport for my wand'ring ghost,
But Minos, in graven leaves of lottery,
Drew forth the manner of my life and death.
"This knight," quoth he, "both liv'd and died in love ;
And for his love tried fortune of the wars ;
And by war's fortune lost both love and life." [1]

ROBERT GREENE, born about 1560, came from Norwich, and was educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, which he entered at fifteen, and also at Oxford. He made an unfortunate choice of companionship, "amongst wags as lewde as my selfe," which followed him throughout his life.

Following the fashion of the day, he travelled abroad to the advantage of his literary power if not to his morals. On his return he lived hard and furiously ; however, a fit of industry overtaking him he returns to Cambridge, this time to Clare Hall, and on taking his M.A. in 1583, left for London.

In 1580, while at Cambridge, he wrote his first work, *Mamillia*. On its publication in 1583 the heartiness with which it was received gave him fresh energy, and with a large number of adventurous tales and romantic stories, written usually at great pressure, sprang into fame.

"Easy come, easy go," soon found his purse "the bottome" of which "returned him a writt of *non est inventus*," and circumstance turns his hand to the drama, his patrons including Essex, Leicester, and Arundel.

In nature quarrelsome, he was seldom for any length of time on good terms with his friends, and his jealousy, especially of the young Shakespeare, took the form of a violent attack on him in his Epilogue to the *Great's Worth of Wit*.

During one of his many fits of repentance, which were unfortunately neither deep nor lasting, he fell in love with "a gentleman's daughter of good account," whom he married in 1586, spent her fortune, and deserted her and his child a year later ; she returned to her home and they never met again.

A few more years of work, riotous living, and repentances, his health gives way. After a surfeit of pickled herrings and Rhenish wine from which he never recovered, he died on November 2, 1592, in abject poverty, owing £10 to a poor shoemaker in whose house he lived.

The day before his death he wrote a pathetic letter begging his "sweet wife, as ever there was any good will or friendship between thee and mee" to "see my host satisfied of his debt" and to "Forget and forgive my wrongs done unto thee. . . . Farewell."

His plays comprise *Orlando Furioso*, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, *Alphonsus King of Aragon*, *Looking Glass for London and England* (with Lodge), and *George-a-Greene, the Pinner of Wakefield*. Among his other works the most important are *Pandosto*, from which Shakespeare

[1] *The Spanish Tragedy*.

took the plot for *The Winter's Tale*; *Penelope's Web*, and his partly autobiographical *Groat's Worth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance*.

Greene was a story-teller and pamphleteer who turned his attention to drama, chiefly because drama was a paying thing. Yet in so far as he is a story-teller, he manages to hold the reader's attention despite irrelevances and prolixities. But although he relies on some of the old devices of the Miracle and Morality, and does not disdain the mechanical funniments of the Interlude, he contributes to the development of the drama by his sincerity and real insight into character.

Let us take as an example his most effective play, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. This deals partly with the tricks of the Friar (based on a legend of the famous Franciscan) and partly with a straightforward romantic love-story—though not too straightforward to admit of those complications between two men in love with one maid, that give variety and interest to the tale. There is comic relief of a kind, that doubtless pleased the more unsophisticated. But the chief merit of the play lies in the lively method of presenting the story. It is not uninstructive to compare Greene's necromancer—Bacon—with a similar character treated by Marlowe in *Faustus*. Greene's magician is merely an ingenious conjuror; Marlowe's a man of mystery. The one character shows merely a lively fancy, the other a vivid imagination.

Where Lyly excels in literary polish, and Peele in melodic charm, Greene achieves distinction in the vigorous humanity of his characterisation; and if Peele could write more charming love lyrics, Greene could handle better a love story.

Greene's dying exhortation to his brethren in the craft, has a curious interest for the historian as well as the student of character.

"To those gentlemen his quondam acquaintance, that spend their wits in making plays, R. G. wisheth a better exercise and wisdom to prevent his extremities." Marlowe, "famous gracer of tragedians," is requested "to abandon his blasphemies and atheistical opinions." Nash is required to moderate his satire. Peele is singled out for encomium, "no less deserving than the other two, in some things rarer, in nothing inferior."

The theatre is execrated. "Base-minded men all three of you, if by my misery ye be not warned; for unto none of you, like me, sought those burrs to cleave—those puppets, I mean, that speak from our mouths, those antics garnished in our colours."

Finally, he points derisively to the "upstart crow beautified with our feathers, that, with his 'Tiger Heart wrapt in a Player's Hide,' supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you; and being an absolute Johannes-factotum, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in the country." What vexes him is that one of the actors for whom he wrote should be the means of taking the bread out of the mouths of scholars.

The fact is that Greene, a vain and irritable man, is incessantly seeing the youthful genius Shakespeare sweeping all before him. The cry is comprehensible enough, for one of Greene's temperament, and some excuse may be made for him. But no utterance of that time more clearly shows the imperious power of the master dramatist of the age.

The dramatic work of Lodge and Nash is almost negligible; certainly they are inferior to their contemporaries, remarkable though they be in the domain of fiction.

We pass to the greatest of the band, to the great protagonist of Elizabethan drama—CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE.

In February 1564, in the parish church of St. George the Martyr, at Canterbury, the register bears witness that a certain small child, "the some of John Marlowe, a shoemaker," was christened Christopher.

Kit Marlowe's early years were spent in that quiet cathedral city; once the busy Mecca of devout pilgrims, now a resting-place for courtiers and ambassadors on their way to and from the Continent. Educated at the King's School, Canterbury, through the help of a patron he went up to Cambridge in 1581, and obtained his degree in 1583. Of his life after 1583, little is known. In 1587 his first play, *Tamburlaine*, was produced, and took the public ear at once, by reason of its impetuous force, its splendid command of blank verse, and its sensitiveness to beauty.

Tamburlaine is a Scythian shepherd obsessed with the idea that his mission in life is to be "the scourge of God" and a terror to the world till "Immortal Jove says, Cease, Tamburlaine!" He pursues and overcomes the mightiest monarchs of the Eastern world with the bloodthirstiness of a savage beast; captive kings drag his chariot to the field of battle for further conquest, and with their queens imprisoned in cages; at length dashing out their brains rather than exist for further indignity. Yet Tamburlaine is possessed of a personal magnetism that cannot be withstood:

> "Sooner shall the sun fall from his sphere
> Than Tamburlaine be slain or overcome."

says the Persian warrior sent to quell him.

Cowardice is an abomination for which he slays one of his sons; and to teach them endurance he does not hesitate to lacerate his own flesh. Smitten with pain and sickness, "the ugly monster Death," though he follow, cannot instil terror into him—"Let us march," he says, "and weary Death with bearing souls to hell"—but even Tamburlaine the mighty conqueror must yield place to a mightier.

Tamburlaine was succeeded by *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, in which the dramatist gives an old mediæval legend a glowing Renascence setting. The story of the alchemist who sells his soul to the Devil never lost its fascination, and in late years Faustus became more of the heartless sensualist than the headstrong magician. It was in this form that Goethe found the story and turned it to his own use. In the ancient legend the Faustus barters his soul in return for some years of gaiety and pleasure. Marlowe's Faustus desires pleasure also, but incidentally only, it is every form of joy that he would drink of freely. He is a genuine incarnation of the Renascence spirit, and has nothing of that calculating, introspective nature peculiar to Goethe's gentleman. Following *Faustus*

came *The Jew of Malta*, a play rich in fine episodes, and with a glorious opening, but lacking the grip and imaginative appeal of the earlier plays. *Edward II*, his last play, is from the technical point of view also his best. Lacking the intensity and rhythmic beauty of the earlier plays, it shows rare skill of construction, while the characterisation is wholly admirable. To some extent no doubt it inspired Shakespeare's *Richard II*, and the abdication scene is obviously modelled on Marlowe's.

Marlowe's other work for the stage is almost negligible. *The Massacre of Paris* survives, it is true, in a fragmentary and corrupt condition, but this dramatisation of contemporary French History is strangely lacking in power and interest. *The Tragedy of Dido*, written in conjunction with Nash and published after Marlowe's death, has a certain lyric sweetness, but bears little impress of Marlowe's greatness, and is supposed to be an early work, greatly altered and added to by his collaborator. A great portion of *Henry VI* is from Marlowe's pen, and more happily reminiscent. But the outstanding work, putting aside the four plays above discussed, is the fragmentary *Hero and Leander*, a poem of singular freshness and beauty.

In 1593 Marlowe, probably retreating from the plague then raging at London, stayed in the little village of Deptford, and was here slain in a drunken brawl by a "bawdy serving man, and a rival of his lewd love." He was then twenty-nine years of age, and his brief, strong life, albeit its tragic close, had done much to renovate and glorify the English drama. A rebel in thought as well as in imagination, Marlowe reminds us of his own *Faustus*. His genius had serious limitations. Deficient as it was in humour, sympathetic insight, and subtlety, along its own lines it was supremely great.

Marlowe had dreamed his early dreams in the great cathedral city. And a dreamer he always remained. For despite his roving life and dissipation, despite his full-blooded vitality and love of the world, his real compelling life was the life of the imagination.

His Writings

What did he do? (1) He raised the subject matter of the drama to a higher level. He provided big heroic subjects that appealed to the imagination. Tamburlaine—a world conqueror; Faust in pursuit of universal knowledge; Barabas with fabulous dreams of wealth; Edward II with his mingling nobility and worthlessness, sounding the heights and depths of human nature.

The insatiable spirit of adventure; the master passions of love and hate; ideals of beauty; the greatness and littleness of human life: these were his subjects. That he had the knowledge and power to deal with them adequately, could not be said; but it is sufficient that he interested his fellow-men in them, and recalling his brief, meteoric, and unhappy life, it is marvellous, not that he made so many mistakes, but that his achievements were so high.

(2) He gave life and reality to his characters. They were no longer puppets pulled by a string; but living and breathing realities. You can feel the fierce exaltation of the conqueror, Tamburlaine; the vibrant passion and rapturous longing of his Faust; the fierce selfishness of his Barabas.

(3) He took the blank verse of the Classical School, hard and unflinching as a rock, and struck it with his rod till the waters of human emotion gushed forth. The old rhyming lines of Romantic drama he put aside; blank verse had little grip, when he took it in hand, but he fathomed its immense possibilities, and saw how it could be made the expression of the finest wit or the most delicate fancy.

Its "infinite variety" was beyond his power to express; that remained for his successors to show; but its colour and energy he revealed. He "taught successors to play upon its hundred stops" if he could not play upon them himself.

How did he do it? He found blank verse consisting of lines, each ending with an accented monosyllable; each line standing by itself; a thing of nerveless monotone. He varied the rhythmic pauses, altered the accents, made the metre to suit the subject, instead of fitting the subject to the metre; and bade farewell to the "jigging veins of rhyming mother wits; and such conceits as clownage keeps in pay."

(4) He gave a unity to the drama, hitherto lacking.

Plays before had been formless: a succession of isolated scenes often with no proper connecting link. And although, compared with Shakespeare, the work of Marlowe seems often turgid and unwieldy, yet it shows quite sufficient promise to show us the extent of Shakespeare's indebtedness.

Indeed it was many years before Shakespeare could rise to Marlowe's height; and fine and interesting as is *Richard II*—it was not merely modelled on *Edward II*, but falls short of that play in its characterisation and imaginative power.

Of Marlowe's influence on Shakespeare, more will be said later. It is sufficient to note it and emphasize here the direction in which the influence lay.

Reviewing the trend of Marlowe's work, these points then have to be borne in mind:

(1) He glorified the matter of the drama—by his sweep of imagination (*vide* Stories).
(2) He vitalised the manner and matter of the drama—by his energising power (*vide* Characterisation).
(3) He clarified and gave coherence to the drama (*vide* Verse).

Marlowe saw clearly enough that the Romantic drama was suited to the needs of the nation, and that therefore no other form of drama could express so well its abundant, concrete life. But he saw also that for the Romantic drama to be a thing of beauty as well as a force, the medium of blank verse must be chosen. No finer tribute was paid him than that given by Michael Drayton, in *Epistles of Poets and Poesy* (1627):

"Next[1] Marlowe, bathèd in the Thespian springs
Had in him those brave translunary things
That the first poets had: his raptures were
All air and fire which made his verses clear;
For that fair madness still he did retain
Which rightly should possess a poet's brain."

[1] Ingenuous.

"Fair madness" is a satisfying phrase fit to rank beside the noble suggestion of Keats, that "Poetry should please by a fine excess."

Marlowe's work has three marked characteristics:

(1) Its pictorial quality;
(2) Its ecstatic quality;
(3) Its vitalising energy.

(1) *Its pictorial quality.*—Marlowe has been called the Father of English Dramatic Poetry; just as Defoe is termed the Father of English Fiction, and Chaucer the Father of English Narrative Poetry.

There were, of course, pictorial possibilities in the disjointed efforts preceding, but the effect on the imagination may be compared with that of a cheap magic lantern to a fine dissolving one. We are given occasional flashes of life with much that was blurred and chaotic. The old chronicle plays meandered on with no sharp visualising power; the imitations of Seneca, the comedy ventures *à la* Plautus, lack not only life, but charm of presentation.

Sackville's lines drag; Lyly's affectations worry; but Marlowe with his instinct for selecting those scenes that best impress the imagination and those similes that strike home most effectively, made of the drama a thing of beauty.

With Keats and Morris, Marlowe shares an intense appreciation of colour effects: there is the glitter of gold and scarlet about his verse:

"The pavement underneath thy chariot wheels
With Turkey carpet shall be covered,
And cloth of arras hung about the walls;
Fit objects for thy princely eye to pierce;
A hundred lacquies clothed in crimson silk,
Shall ride before thee on Barbarian steeds,
And when thou goest, a golden canopy
Enchas'd with precious stones. . . ."

In reading these lines we think of the rich ornament in *The Eve of St. Agnes*.

The magic of old-world names holds him. He treats them like jewels to give warmth and colour to his verse.

"Is it not passing brave to be a king
And ride in triumph thro' Persepolis?"

Here indeed is the poet's joy in words.

And there is reason for it. It has been well said that *Tamburlaine* was the work of the first great poet who used our modern English speech. And superb was the use he made of it.

Compare the dragging and toneless lines of *Gorboduc* with *Tamburlaine*, and note how the verse glitters and sparkles.

"O hard and cruel hap, that thus assigned
Unto so worthy a wight so wretched end;
But most hard, cruel heart, that could consent
To lend the baleful destinies that hand
By which, alas, so heinous crime was wrought."[1]

Tamburlaine's eager and feverish search across the world for some vision to satisfy his dreams reminds us of

"The desire of the moth for the star;
Of the night for the morrow:
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow."

[1] *Gorboduc.*

But the pictorial quality is no mere visualising of a dreamer's fancy; it shows the inspiration of that spirit of adventure which was in the air.

Tamburlaine is a kind of monstrous Drake. His thirst for conquest, his passion for discovery, is the passion of Drake, of Hawkins, and of Frobisher. In Tamburlaine's last speech he speaks of what may yet be discovered, and it is a speech which would flush the cheeks of the swarthy sailors in the audience. We have always to remember that Columbus is the pioneer of the age no less than More; and that many poets of the time, like Raleigh, were also voyagers.

(2) *Its ecstatic quality.*—This is well exemplified in the speech of Faustus:

"Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.
[*Kisses her.*
Her lips suck forth my soul! See, where it flies!
Come Helen, come give me my soul again—
Here will I dwell, for Heaven is in these lips:
And all is dross that is not Helen!"

It is indeed a fire that burns through his verse, and gives it glow and radiance, mellowing the harsh crudities and coarse outlines:

". . . Ah, my good Lord, be patient, she is dead
And all this raging cannot make her live:
If words might serve, our voice hath rent the air;
If tears, our eyes have wearied all the Earth;
If grief, our murthered hearts hath streamed forth blood.

Nothing prevails, for she is dead, my Lord.

Had I as many souls as there be stars—
I'd give them all for Mephistophelis."

Here is the thirst for beauty expressed:

"What is beauty, saveth my sufferings, then?
If all the pens that ever poets held
Had fed the feeling of their masters' thoughts,
And every sweetness that inspired their hearts,
Their minds and muses on admired themes;
If all the heavenly quintessence they still
From their immortal flowers of poesy,
Wherein, as in a mirror, we perceive
The highest reaches of a human wit;
If these had made one poem's period,
And all combined in beauty's worthiness,
Yet should there hover in their restless heads
One thought, one grace, one wonder, at the least,
Which into words no virtue can digest."

What matter for drama the Northern Sagas would have yielded him: Lohengrin, Tannhäuser, the story of Sigurd?

The ecstatic note in his verse is seen also in *Barabas*:

Barabas is waiting for his daughter, who has tricked his foes of their treasure; simulating love and religion to further her father's base projects.

Thus, Barabas:

". . . Like the sad-presaging raven, that tolls
The sick man's passport in her hollow beak,
And in the shadow of the silent night
Doth shake contagion from her sable wings,
Vex'd and tormented runs poor Barabas
With fatal curses towards these Christians.
The incertain pleasures of swift-footed time
Have ta'en their flight, and left me in despair;
And of my former riches rests no more
But bare remembrance; like a soldier's scar,
That has no further comfort for his maim.
O Thou, that with a fiery pillar led'st
The sons of Israel through the dismal shades,

Like Abraham's offspring; and direct the hand
Of Abigail this night! or let the day
Turn to eternal darkness after this!
No sleep can fasten on my watchful eyes,
Nor quiet enter my distemper'd thoughts
Till I have answer of my Abigail."

Then the treasure is found and thrown down to him:

"O my girl,
My gold, my fortune, my felicity,
Strength to my soul, death to mine enemy;
Welcome the first beginner of my bliss!
O Abigail, Abigail, that I had thee here too!
Then my desires were fully satisfied:
But I will practise thy enlargement thence:
O girl! O gold! O beauty! O my bliss!"
[Hugs the bags.

In his joy he forgets danger, until reminded of it by his daughter. He, softened and excited, kisses her, and rises into sentimental raptures:

"Farewell my joy, and by my fingers take
A kiss from him that sends it from his soul."

A cursory examination of Marlowe's work might incline the reader to think that his nature was highly passionate. Of passion, however, in the primal, full-blooded sense of the word, there is really little in Marlowe's writings. He is rather excitable and ecstatic, moved to exuberant expression by certain appeals to the imagination, such as the appeal of beauty; but not profoundly emotional as were Shakespeare, or Beaumont and Fletcher, or Webster. He never suggests the man of the world, the student of human nature; always the wistful visionary; living in a world of his own, a world of beauty and wonder.

(3) *Its vitalising energy.*—Culminating proof of his originality and artistic instinct—he discarded the classic convention for the romantic. He saw clearly enough that the Romantic drama was better suited to the exigences of insular genius.

This vitalising energy redeemed the *Tamburlaine* from absurdity, and gave a beauty and lifting power to the *Faust* legends which won the praise of Goethe.

He is not content with vague description, but actualises his subject—as in the pageant of the *Seven Deadly Sins* in *Faustus*. Many a mediæval poet had sung of them. Marlowe gives them life and reality.

To the modern reader, the gruesome physical touches strike as distasteful and jarring, where they do not merely amuse. But childish as some of the theatrical effects seem, these are but the overflowings of a strong and vital imagination. One moment we think of Pyramus—this is "Ercles vein, the tyrant's vein," and are reminded of the

"Raging shocks and shivering shocks."

At the next moment we pass from the ridiculous to the sublime, and the vibrant music of his eloquence takes us by the throat and compels our admiration.

Marlowe's genius did not incline him much to the lyric, though his famous *Passionate Shepherd* shows what he could do in this direction. But his fragmentary narrative poem, *Hero and Leander*, has a fresh, sensitive beauty transcending the coarser magnificence of young Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*. The haunting line:

"Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?"

lingered long in Shakespeare's memory.

He had, of course, the defects of the temperament of his age: a frequent, over-luxuriance of imagination, a lack of restraint, an extravagance bordering on the ridiculous. But no criticism can obscure the greatness of his genius. He found the drama crude and chaotic; he left it a great force in English literature.

EARLIER RENASCENCE AND PROSE

The Novel: Lyly—Greene—Lodge Sidney—Nash, &c.

THE ENGLISH NOVEL

THE eager, inquisitive spirit that flamed up at the Renascence could not exhaust itself entirely in the expansion of our poetry, or even in the creation of the romantic drama; for in achieving this it realised also the compelling interest of everyday actualities.

The favourite story-teller of Chaucer's time had been the minstrel. He it was, as we have seen, who first familiarised the common folk with the legends of Arthur and his Knights, of Charlemagne, with such verse tales as *Gawain and the Green Knight*, and the popular *Guy of Warwick*. Needless to say, the art of story-telling in the minstrels' hands was of a rough and crude kind. They broadened and coarsened the Arthurian Romances to suit the taste of their primitive-minded hearers; but in so doing they introduced a contemporary note, interlarding their tales with ridicule of the decadent mediæval church, and thus giving that flavour of actuality, which paved the way for the Novel of Elizabeth's time.

While they were doing this, our first great realistic poet, Chaucer, was helping with finer artistry to create a distaste for the high-falutin mediæval romance. He effected this directly in *Troilus and Cressida*, an ancient romance treated as a genuine character study; indirectly in his epic of contemporary life, *The Canterbury Tales*.

Here, then, in Chaucer's time is the first stage in the development of the Novel from the old Romance that had its inspiration in the songs of the minstrel.

The next stage is marked by the publication of Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*. With the matter of this remarkable book I have dealt elsewhere; it is sufficient to emphasise the fact that while ostensibly a great prose romance garnered from the romantic treasures of the Middle Ages, yet, by virtue of the simple directness of its language, it proved an admirable model to the prose story-teller of Renascence England. The confusing intricacies, the long-windedness of the legendary tales on which it is based, are swept aside. Giving us the cream of mediæval romance, it yet awoke a

desire for stories more in touch with the life of the day.

It is quite true that for many years to come, throughout the first half of the sixteenth century, Romance held a foremost place in the popular imagination, largely owing to the energy and enterprise of Caxton, who printed romantic stories from Spain, Germany, and Italy, to the infinite disgust of sober-minded Ascham. They ceased, however, to dominate the educated classes as they had done formerly. Even Malory's work was admired less for its matter than for its style. Romanticism survived, not the old romance. The Tales are still there, but the attitude towards them is different. The old romantic themes are yet familiar enough, but they are either regarded as picturesque relics of a bygone age, or else serve the Elizabethan dramatist as material to be woven into the concrete actualities of the drama.

Had it not been for Italy, the Novel might have tarried for another hundred years. Rhetoric and song were indigenous to the race: Spenser, Marlowe, Shakespeare would have found articulate speech, Italy or no Italy. But it may reasonably be doubted whether we should have had the Elizabethan novelist.

Why was the influence of Italy so suddenly and imperatively felt?

Largely because of the newly awakened zest of the day for foreign travel, which helped to spread Italian fashions both of dress and literature.

Moreover, Italy was the home of the Novel. It was here that Boccaccio, in 1350, first attempted those prose tales of amorous adventure, *The Decameron*—"Novella Stories." The term originally meant a *fresh* story, but soon Novel was applied to *any* story in *prose* as distinct from a story in verse, which retained its old appellation of Romance.

Travel stimulated also the translation of Italian literature. So that those who could not afford to travel could at least learn something of this literary El Dorado through translations.

The mediæval Romance dealt with a legendary past. The Novel dealt with the realities of everyday life. In this lay its compelling attraction.

There was no more popular book than William Painter's collection of Italian Stories. He was the Clerk of the Ordnance in the Tower, and his translation not merely inspired the Romantic drama but interested English readers in Italian fiction specifically, and the art form of the Novel generally. Thus he paved the way for the English novel as well as providing a background for the English drama.

In his preface he says:

"Pleasant they be for that they recreate and refresh wearied minds defatigated either with painful travail or with continual care, occasioning them to slug and to avoid heaviness of mind, vain fantasies and idle cogitations. Pleasant so well abroad as at home, to avoid the grief of winter's night and length of summer's day, which the traveller on foot may use for a staye to ease the wearied body, and the journeyer on horseback, for a chariot or less painful means of travail in steade of a merry companion to shorten the tedius toil of weary ways."

Stephen Gosson declared rightly enough, that Painter's volume had been ransacked to furnish the playhouses of London. Shakespeare borrowed from him generously in *Romeo and Juliet*, and *The Merchant of Venice*; and Beaumont and Fletcher, Peele, Marlowe, Webster, and others availed themselves only less liberally of his stories.

The Elizabethan prose writers who distinguished themselves in prose fiction were John Lyly, Robert Greene, Thomas Lodge, Sir Philip Sidney, and Thomas Nash.

JOHN LYLY (see *ante*, p. 98) is the pioneer of the English novel, the first stylist in prose, and the most popular writer of his age. A young Kentish man, with slender financial resources and very few friends, he had the good fortune to attract the attention of Lord Burghley, who became his patron.

In 1579 Lyly published the first part of his famous fiction, *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*, which was received with general delight and approbation. It was written designedly for ladies, and in his quaint preface he modestly prefers his claim: "It resteth, ladies," he declared, "that you take the pains to read it but at such times, as you spend in playing with your dogges, and yet I will not pinch you of that pastime for I am content that your dogges lie in your laps, so Euphues may be in your hands, that when you shall be weary in reading the one, you may be ready to sport with the other." Finally he adds slyly that "if they desire to slumber after dinner, it will bring them to sleep far better than beginning to sew and pricking their fingers when they begin to nod."

Such insidious courtesy and modesty were not without result. The ladies were duly flattered; the *Euphues* was to be seen everywhere in the boudoirs of ladies, and the author became as much sought after and petted as is a popular actor to-day. Perhaps the great dames were touched by his diffidence in not seeking to take a first place in their hearts, but content to share attention with the lapdog.

The language of the *Euphues* did not, however, with its involved artifices of speech, emanate from Lyly. Derived from Ovid, Plutarch, and Pliny, originally it was imported from Spain, and one of its exponents, Guevara, became extremely popular. *The Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius* was written by this gentleman and translated by Lord Berners (1532) and by Sir Thomas North (1572). Here we find the same monstrous profusion of similes that we see in *Euphues*, the same combination of sententious reflection and fanciful conceits, that proved so much to the taste of many readers.

In the structure of his work, Lyly is Spanish, but there is much more moralising in Lyly than in Guevara, and more sentiment. That no doubt is another reason for his popularity. From Lyly to the present day, the most popular writers of fiction have always been sentimental and didactic.

Euphues was a good-looking, nimble-minded Athenian youth who goes first to Naples, then to England to study men and governments. His volubility is remarkable, and he uses his friend Philautus as a kind of conversational Aunt Sally against whom to hurl his sententious wisdom. Once indeed, during the voyage to England, Phil-

cutus does rebel: "In faith, Euphues, thou hast told a long tale, the beginning I have forgotten, the middle I understand not, and the end hangeth not together. . . . In the meantime it were best for me to take a nap, for I cannot brook these seas, which provoke my stomach sore."

The name itself is explained by Ascham thus (*Schoolmaster*, 1570); "Εὐφυής is he that is apt by goodness of witte and applicable by readiness of will, to learning, having all other qualities of the mind and parts of the bodie that must another day serve learning, not troubled, mangled or halfed, but sound, whole, full, and able to do their office."

There is plenty of abuse, quite in the vein of modern denouncers of the "Smart Set" and "The Sins of Society," of the superfluities of Elizabethan dress, and of feminine charms. "When they be robbed of their robes, then will they appear so odious, so ugly, so monstrous, that thou wilt rather think them serpents than saints, and so like hags, that thou wilt fear rather to be enchanted than enamoured."

Obviously, the ladies of the time were flattered than otherwise at the appellation of serpent; and the word "hag" of course here is synonymous with witch. No woman objects to be called a witch. But through all the seeming bitterness about women, there runs a delicate compliment to their fascination and power, and though setting out to cure love and to distract the lover's attention from matters of the heart, he really seeks only to show how to retain the lady's affection, and how to dissemble anger and grief with her inconsistencies.

There was a sequel to this romance which appeared in 1580, in which England and English ways are held up in terms of the highest praise. And if before, Lyly has said hard things about women, he makes rich amends in his glowing panegyric of English gentlewomen. Indeed, he excuses his tirades unnecessarily—since women never objected to being abused for their fascination and wiles—on the ground that he had referred to Italian women. As he knew nothing whatever of Italian women, this explanation carries small conviction; but as very few of his readers knew anything about them also, save through the highly-coloured medium of Boccaccio, it mattered little.

English women are so beautiful, he says, that the traveller cannot help exclaiming, "There is no beauty but in England." In other countries, he remarks witheringly, "they all have lovers and spend their time painting their faces; but in this Island they are in prayer devout, in bravery humble, in beauty chaste, in feasting temperate, in affection wise, in mirth modest, in all their actions though courtly, became women, yet Angels became virtuous." After this magnificent tribute Philautus is naturally advised to take an English wife; whilst Euphues, picturesquely unsociable to the last, retires to his native Greece, carrying with him recollections of a country not inferior to a Paradise.

But with all this idealising, it is clear that we have parted from the novel of picturesque abstractions and vague mythology, and are dealing with present-day manners. Lyly does his best, moreover, to give a realistic atmosphere to his conversation, and in his reflections he dexterously deals with matters that concern everyday life. The mixture of frivolity and fantasy—with solid moralising—was quite agreeable to the taste of his readers. On the surface there was a great deal of light-heartedness and trifling in English Society, but deep down the seriousness of the Briton, not perceived at first sight, existed and kept England from the vices and excesses that weakened at that time such nations as Spain.

There are witty turns of speech in Lyly worth remembering:

"It is a blind Goose that cometh to the Fox's sermon."

"Thou must halt cunningly to beguile a cripple."

"The best charm for an aching tooth is to pull it out, and the best remedy for love is to wear it out."

Sayings like these recall the modern apothegms of George Eliot.

The style is marked by the constant use of antithesis and alliteration, which at times becomes mannered to a wearisome extent, but often gives agreeable force and pungency to the matter:

". . . Where salt doth grow nothing else can breed.
Where friendship is built no offence can harbour."

A defect in Lyly's prose style is his excessive fondness for classical authorities—a fondness that overburdens his prose with a torrent of allusions, comical rather than impressive. Fickleness and constancy, when mentioned, bring with them interminable lists of mythological ladies and gentlemen remarkable for these characteristics. He is not content with an illustration: an allusion with him is synonymous with cataloguing.

In the hands of a great literary artist such as Burton, this characteristic is used with a deliberate quaintness that amuses us, just as Lamb could turn the involutions of Elizabethan prose to deliciously humorous account. Less interesting even than this mythological weakness, is the habit of Lyly to employ references to fictitious natural history, largely derived from the legends of animal and plant lore in the old Bestiaries that preceded genuine biological studies.

How far Lyly regards these things as scientific truths, we do not know, nor does it much matter; but using them as literary decorations suggests how grievously he mistook the art of adornment.

Take for instance this passage:

"I have read that the bull being tied to the fig-tree loseth his strength, that the whole herd of deer stand at the gaze if they smell a sweet apple, that the dolphin by the sound of music is brought to the shore. And then no marvel it is that if the fierce bull be tamed with the fig-tree, that women, being as weak as sheep, be overcome with a fig; if the wild deer be caught with an apple, that the tame damosel is won with a blossom; if the fleet dolphin be allured with harmony, that women be entangled with the melody of men's speech, fair promises, and solemn protestations."

Small wonder that Shakespeare poured ridicule on it in his early plays.

While there is much that is interesting in Lyly's work, his prose style suffers from the serious defect of ignoring the distinction between prose and verse. It is the prose of an age that found its most effective medium in verse.

Robert Greene, who succeeded Lyly, if less brilliant, attains a greater simplicity in his later writings. He was a happy-go-lucky Bohemian, who had no patron, and lived on his wits. His first novel is poor and imitative, but in *Pandosto* (1588), from which Shakespeare took his *Winter's Tale*, he showed real originality. The most considerable factor made by Greene to the development of the novel is to be found in his pamphlets rather than in his conventional fiction, for here he writes from personal knowledge of the "underworld" of his day. Especially vivid is his *Life and Death of Ned Browne*, a notorious cut-purse, wherein he anticipates the "low life" scenes of Defoe and Smollett.

He has a happy touch of individualising his characters, as may be seen from the following from *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier*:

"I espied afar off a certain kind of an overworn gentleman attired in velvet and satin, but it was somewhat dropped and greasy, and boots on his legs, whose soles waxed thin and seemed to complain of their master, which treading thrift under his feet had brought them unto that consumption. He walked not as other men in the common beaten way, but came compassing circumcirca, as if we had been devils, and he would draw a circle about us, and at every third step he looked back as if he were afeard of a bailey or a sergeant. . . .

"A poet is a waste-good and an unthrift, that he is born to make the taverns rich and himself a beggar. If he have forty pounds in his purse together, he puts it not to usury, neither buys land nor merchandise with it, but a month's commodity of wenches and capons. Ten pounds a supper, why 'tis nothing, if his plough goes and his ink-horn be clear. Take one of them with twenty thousand pounds and hang him. He is a king of his pleasure, and counts all other boors and peasants that, though they have money at command, yet know not like him how to dominere with it to any purpose as they should. But to speak plainly, I think him an honest man, if he would but live within his compass, and generally no man's foe but his own."

Another writer of fiction to be noted is Thomas Lodge, the studious friend of Greene. He travelled much in the earlier years of his life, and while journeying he wrote several romances; one entitled *Rosalynde* (1590), which inspired Shakespeare's *As You Like It*.

Thomas Lodge, the son of a rich London merchant who had also been Lord Mayor, was born in 1557, and educated at Merchant Taylor's School and Oxford, where he was the friend of Lyly.

Choosing law as a profession, he studied for a time at Lincoln's Inn, but the craze for travel seized him; he abandons the law and sets out first to the Canary Islands and then to South America. During this time he wrote his famous *Rosalynde*—"Euphues' golden legacie . . . fetcht from the Canaries"—published in 1590; *Robert the Devil*, 1591; *Euphues' Shadow*, "the battaile of the senses wherein youthful folly is set down"—published under the editorship of Greene in 1592, while Lodge was travelling; and *The Margarite of America*, 1596. His principal dramatic works are *The Wounds of Civil War* and *A Looking Glass for London and England*, neither of which were very popular. He also wrote many poems and was a voluminous translator.

Having, as we suppose, tired of travel as a recreation, and literature as a profession, he settled down to make a livelihood in another direction. Studying medicine at Oxford, he took his degree of M.D. in 1603, and built up a large practice, followed his profession for twenty-two years, and died in affluence in 1620.

Lodge also derived from Lyly, but not in the same way as did Greene. Lodge had travelled, as did many young men of that time, over distant seas, looking for opportunities abroad rather than at home to advance him. These did not come, but during the long journeys by sea he wrote several romances; one entitled *Rosalynde* being of special interest to us, for from it Shakespeare, with a quick eye for a good story, evolved the plot of *As You Like It*.

Far removed are his prefaces from the simpering, deprecating prefaces of Lyly. He has his own little way with the Critics. If they do not like his books, let them hold their peace, otherwise he will throw them overboard to feed cods. This is swashbuckling with a vengeance.

Rosalynde is itself a remodelled version of an old mediæval tale. In the Middle Ages it was called *The Tale of Gamelyn*, and Chaucer had intended weaving it into his *Canterbury Tales*, but died before effecting this. Originally it was merely a story of valour with no love interest whatever. Lodge remodied the deficiency, and invented *Rosalynde*; he also gave us the fair she-page, and her friend Phœbe, the hard-hearted shepherdess.

Rosalynde, daughter of the deposed king, who leads a forester's life in the woods of Arden, is exiled from Court, and departs with Alinda her friend, daughter of the Usurper—Rosalynde being dressed as a page.

"I thou coast," says Rosalynde, quite in the spirit of Shakespeare's heroine, "am of a tall stature, and would very well become the person and apparel of a page; thou shalt be my mistress, and I will play the man so properly, that trust me in what company so ever I come, I will not be discovered. I will bring me a suit and have my rapier very handsomely at my side, and if any knave offer wrong, your page will show him the point of his weapon."

The Forest of Arden in Lodge's story would have amazed the Royal Geographical Society. It is placed near the vineyards of Gascony, and is full of those bewildering shrubs usually confined to cheap provincial theatres. Pine trees, fig trees, and lemon trees grew amicably together, with convenient strips of pasture for sheep, and animals from all parts of the globe. Shepherds and shepherdesses abounded, who embodied not only the domestic virtues but scholarly attainments. Sonnet writing was as child's play to them; and French and Latin tags abounded. Hero, too, is the shepherdess Phœbe, "as fair as the wanton that brought Troy to ruin." Rosalynde's page-name is Ganimede, and in the novel she shows qualities fully as attractive as she does in the play, though not possessed of so pretty a wit. Phœbe, deceived as in Shakespeare by Rosalynde's doublet and hose, falls in love with her, and in the novel Rosalynde treats her more kindly than does her more brilliant counterpart in *As You Like It*.

Everything turns out happily, and although there is much brave fighting, none gets killed for

whom one cares a jot; and there is a triple marriage to conclude the tale.

Here is a passage from Rosalynde's advice to Phœbe;

"Such my fair shepherdess as disdain in youth, desire in age, and then are they hated in the winter, that might have been loved in the prime. A wrinkled maid is like a parched rose, that is cast up in coffers to please the smell, not worn in the hand to content the eye. Love while thou art young, less thou be disdained when thou art old, and if thou love, love like that of Montanus, for if his desires are many, so his desires are great."

Lodge never did anything better than *Rosalynde*. He was not a prolific writer like Greene, nor, despite his boastful valour, a dare-devil.

The fourth important name in the fiction of the time is Thomas Nash. "Ingenuous, ingenious, fluent, facetious Thomas Nash," as his friend Lodge called him. The emphatic quality was the facetiousness. There was a strain of humour in Lyly, and fitful outbursts of gaiety in Greene, but both Lodge and Sidney showed rather a contemplative wit than humour or mirthfulness. It is otherwise with Nash; he has a rich fund of humour that partakes somewhat of Rabelais' uproarious quality.

Nash, like Greene, took the rogue in hand and painted with skill and fidelity the needy adventurer of the time: *The Unfortunate Traveller, or The Life of Jack Wilton* (1594), but unlike his contemporary, he did so with a smile on his lips. He found the English novel suffering from too much sentiment, and promptly freshened it with his light-hearted humour.

He died at the age of thirty-three, having shortened his days, says his friend Dekker, "by keeping company with pickled herrings."

The chief point, then, that distinguishes Nash from his contemporaries is his "comedy" attitude towards life. There is another point worth notice. His style is neither Euphuistic nor Arcadian. Eschewing the literary affectations and manners of his day, he did his best to cultivate an individual style, vigorous, easy, and vital, which was well suited to his subject-matter.

The Unfortunate Traveller, or The Life of Jack Wilton (1594)

The hero is a lively young page with less money than wit, who has a smattering of Latin with which he embellishes bombastic conversation and succeeds in persuading casual acquaintances that he is of more importance than his position would imply.

Travelling in France on one occasion, attached to the Court of Henry VIII, he is present at the siege of Tournay, to which "a number of my creditors that I coosned can testifie."

Jack, on the look-out for fresh adventure, fixes as one of his victims at this time mine host of the canteen, who was "an olde servitor, a cavalier of an ancient house as it might appeare by the armes of his ancestrie, drawen very amiably in chalk on the inside of his tent doore," but who is always boasting of his ancient pedigree.

One day, finding the old man "counting his barrels, and setting the price in chalke on the head of everie one of them" Jack approaches with politeness and requests to be allowed a private talk with him, as he has important matter to communicate.

"'With me, young Wilton?' quoth he, 'marie and shall. Bring us a pint of syder of a fresh tap into the "Three Cups" here; wash the pot!'

"So into a backe roome he had mee, where . . . he buckle me declare my minde, and there upon he dranke to me on the same."

Beating about the bush in order to gain time, our hero starts by flattering his man; he tells him he has always admired him, "partly for the high descent and lineage from whence he springs, and partly for the tender care and provident respect he had of poore soldiers," and amazement that he should condescend "in his own person to be a victualler to the campe; a rare example of magnificence and courtesie; and diligently provided, that without farre travel, every man might have for his money syder and cheese his bellyfull. Nor did he sell his cheese by the way onely, or his syder by the great, but abast himselfe with his own hands to take a shoomakers knife; a homely instrument for such a high personage to touch, and cut it out equally like a true justiciarie in little pennyworthes that it would doo a man good for to looke upon. So likewise of his syder, the pore man might have his moderate draught of it (as there is moderation in all things) as well for his doit or his dandiprat as the rich man for his halfe souse or his denier." The old man swallows the bait, and Jack proceeds: "'Why, you are everie childe fellow; any man that comes under the name of a soldier and a good fellowe, you will sitte and bear companie to the last pot, yea, and you take in as good part the homely phrase of, "Mine host heeres to you," as if one saluted you by all the titles of your baronie. These considerations, I saie, which the world suffers to slip by in the channell of carelessness, have moved me in ardent zeale for your welfare, to forewarne you of some dangers that have beset you and your barrels.'

"At the name of dangers hee start up, and bounst with his fist on the board so hard, that his tapster overhearing him, cried: 'Anon, anon, Sir!' and entering with a bow asks him what he wanted."

Irate at the interruption, but "for feare of displeasing me he moderated his furie, and onely sending him for the other flesh pint" and bids him look to the bar and "come when he is call with a devillish name."

By this time Jack and his host are beginning to show signs of the "syder" they have consumed and both "fall to weeping." This is, Jack thinks, the "psychological moment," and forthwith tells his tale; how he heard that the innkeeper, by letters secreted in empty barrels, is giving valuable information to the enemy. The man protests, Jack will not listen, and hints at high treason. Still further details on the part of the man which Jack ignores, and declares there is only one way of setting aside the dangerous rumours. He must make himself very popular with the soldiers. How can it be done? Jack suggests, after due consideration, that the best way would be by supplying free drinks to the army.

The host in great fright eventually agrees to follow Jack's advice, which is carried on for a time, but the trick is discovered soon after, and Jack is well whipped, but not hard enough to make him sufficiently repentant to forsake his evil ways, or damp his spirits: "Here let me triumph awhile," says he, "and ruminate a line or two on the excellence of my wit!"

Many more like adventures take place before Jack leaves France. He gives an amusing description of his fine clothes on his return to London.

"I had my feather in my cap as big as a flag in the fore-top . . . my cape cloake of bludes cloth over-spreading my back like . . . an elephantes eares . . . and my hands without gloves, all a mode French."

Jack Wilton, written as was customary in the form of memoirs, is dedicated to the Earl of Southampton, the patron, it will be remembered, of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*.

Like others of its class, right down to Pickwick, it has but slight coherence, and consists of a series of episodes lightly strung together, and is bewilderingly incoherent at times. But there is some capital characterisation, and one or two strong scenes of real dramatic value.

Wilton, like Gil Blas, has little money, but plenty of wit and resource and a smattering of scholarship. He careers over the Continent, deceiving everyone he can, getting into all manner of difficulties. He has some excellent gibes at contemporary acting, in a manner that reminds one of Hamlet's caustic advice. Says he:

"One as if he had been playing on clay floors, stampingly treade the stage so harde with his feete, that I thought verily he had resolved to doe the carpenter that sette it upp some utter shame. Another flung his armes like cudgelles at a peare tree, insomuch as it was mightily dreaded that hee would strike the candles that hung above their heades, out of their sockets and leave them all darke."

In a third characteristic of Nash, his Italian temperament, he resembles Benvenuto Cellini. A lover of poetry, gaiety, and passion, he hated the Puritan, and those who chronicle things.

Here is a sample from his varied wares, in the picture of a merchant's wife, from *Pierce Penilesse*:

"Mistress Minx, a merchant's wife, that will eat no cherries, forsooth, but when they are at twenty shillings a pound, that looks as simperingly as if she were besmeared, and jets it as gingerly as if she were dancing the canaries: she is so finical in her speech, as though she spake nothing but what she had first sewed over before in her samplers, and the puling accent of her voice is like a feigned treble, or one's voice that interprets to the puppets. What should I tell how squeamish she is in her diet, what toil she puts her poor servants unto, to make her looking-glasses in the pavement? how she will not go into the fields, to sower on the green grass, but she must have a coach for her convoy: and spends half a day in pranking herself if she be invited to any strange place? Is not this the excess of pride, signior Satan? Go to, you are unwise, if you make her not a chief saint in your calendar."

Sidney's "*Arcadia*"

Of Sidney's work as a poet mention has been made. His *Arcadia* remains to be noticed, for it marks a well-defined stage in the history of the novel.

Preceding writers had been more or less disciples of Lyly and imitators of Euphuism. Sidney invented a new style. And for a while Arcadianism displaced Euphuism. This book, written in 1580, appeared after Sidney's death. It was written primarily to please his sister, the Countess of Pembroke. In essence it is a romance with a pastoral flavouring. There is more characterisation and more movement, though less humour, than we find in Lyly; more passion than in Greene, if less actuality; and a finer vein of poetry than in Lodge, though more inequality in interest. The style, despite of artificialities, rises at times to a level of high beauty. With Lyly's *Euphues* it may take its place as one of the dominant influences of the time.

Professor Raleigh has well said that the "*Arcadia* is in some sort a halfway house between the older romances of chivalry and the long-winded 'heroic' romances of the seventeenth century. Action and adventure are already giving way to the description of sentiment, or are remaining merely as a frame on which the diverse-coloured flowers of sentiment may be broidered."

French influences more considerably affect Sidney than his predecessors. Perhaps he is of all of them the least touched by the magic of Italy, though he was a great admirer of Spanish literature.

Pamela's Prayer, from "Arcadia"

"Kneeling down, even where she stood, she thus said: O All-seeing Light, and eternal Life of all things, to whom nothing is either so great, that it may resist, or so small that it is contemned; looke upon my misery with thine eye of mercy, and let thine infinite power vouchsafe to limit out some proportion of deliverance unto mee, as to thee shall seeme most convenient. Let not injurie, O Lord, triumph over mee, and let my faults by thy hand bee corrected and make not mine unjust enemy the minister of thy Justice. But yet, my God, if, in thy wisedome, this be the aptest chastisement for my inexcusable follie: if this low bondage be fittest for my over-high desires; if the pride of my not enough humble heart, be thus to be broken, O Lord, I yeeld unto thy will, and joyfully embrace what sorrow thou with love mee suffer. Onely thus much let me crave of thee . . . let calamity be the exercise, but not the overthrow of my vertue: let their power prevaile, but not prevaile to destruction: let my greatnesse be their prey: let my paine be the sweetnesse of their revenge: let them, if so it seem good unto thee, vexe me with more and more punishments. But, O Lord, let never their wickednesse have such a hand, but that I may carry a pure minde in a pure body. And pausing a while: And, O most gracious Lord, said shee, what ever become of me, preserve the vertuous Musidorus."[1]

Dekker, whose dramatic work has already been noticed, also essayed fiction. But although he has shown some measure of Nash's gaiety and shrewdness of observation in the "Picaresque" stories which he essayed, it is as a dramatist and writer of prose, other than fiction, that he is most entitled to remembrance. With the close of the Elizabethan period, the first period of the English novel came to an end. During the next century French romance, of the extravagant and artificial order, came into fashion for the class who cared about fiction. But, as we shall see, if the seventeenth century produced no great novelist, it produced many writers who contributed indirectly to the amazing development of the Novel which took place in the eighteenth century.

[1] Pamela's Prayer, from *Arcadia*, Book iii. Also in the "*Eikon Basilike*, the portraiture of his sacred majesty in his solitude and sufferings," among the "prayers used by his majestie in the time of his sufferings, delivered to Dr. Juxon, Bishop of London, immediately before his death . . ."

THE EARLIER RENASCENCE AND PROSE

Introduction—Prose other than Fiction: (i) The Development of Style; (ii) The Art of Criticism.

INTRODUCTION

During the fifteenth century Latin was the vehicle of prose, and works of importance were almost entirely written in that tongue. Three names alone stand out before the time of Caxton, as makers of English—Reginald Pecock, Sir John Fortescue, and the Paston Family.

Pecock's personality was a remarkable one. He was a Welshman by birth, and an Oxonian by training. Having taken Orders, he soon distinguished himself as an opponent of Lollardy. His zeal brought in his wake numerous foes, and as the most effective attack against an enemy was the charge of heresy, this heresy hunter was charged himself by his political foes of heretical tendencies. He escaped death by recantation, of errors he had never held, and died finally in imprisonment. One of his offences was that he wrote in English, another that he urged the use of reason in confuting arguments. This is the line he adopted in the *Repressor*, but his learning excited both jealousy and suspicion; and the one argument in strong favour was to suppress by merely citing adverse authorities. That Pecock abjured at this time was sufficient to damn him, in an age when the faintest show of tolerance towards a heretic, even if it took the innocent form of quietly pointing out his errors and trying to dissuade him by the method of what Arnold called "sweet reasonableness."

The language in which he wrote is fairly clear, but the English is often stiff and formal. Yet there is something of the vigour and colloquial ease that began to show themselves later in Ascham.

In Sir John Fortescue, we see the politician, as in Pecock we see the theologian. He was a constitutional lawyer, a traveller, and conversant with other modes of government. His treatise, *The Difference between an Absolute and a Limited Monarchy*, is a critical approval of English rule. The book was completed about 1470, and it is supposed that the book was intended for Henry VI. It is an interesting piece of controversial writing.

The Paston Letters

The interest of the Paston Letters is historical rather than literary.

This collection of the papers and correspondence of a well-to-do Norfolk family, give us considerable insight into the domestic life of the time. We realise the anarchy that prevailed and the friction between the nobles and the business class, the necessity for seeking royal favour, the practice of the manorial courts, and the various domestic embroilments that occur in large families. The problem of the daughter is especially emphasized. Sons were more easily managed; but daughters, unless speedily married, were apt to be looked on as mere encumbrances. They were denied any volition of their own, and indeed the *patria protestas* is strongly in evidence as regards both boys and girls, even when they had grown up.

Altogether, this collection of letters is a document rich in human interest; and as a picture of the social life of the age is unequalled for its plenitude of curious and informing detail.

Sir John alleges literature, but it is the literature of the Middle Ages.

A Paston Letter

Margaret Paston to John Paston

A.D. 1462, 7 Jan.

To my ryth worchepfull husbond, John Paston, be thys delyveryed in hast.

Ryth worshepfull husbond, I recommand me to yow. Pleyse yow to wet that I sent yow a lettyr by my cosyn Barneys man of Wychyngham wyche was wretyn on Seynt Thomas Day in Crysmas, and I had no tydyngys nor lettyr of yow sens the wek befor Crysmas; wher of I mervayle sore. I fere me it is not well with yow be cawse ye came not home or sent or thys tyme. I hopyd verily ye schold have ben at home by Twelthe at the farthest. I pray yow hertly that ye wole wyshesave to send me word ye do as hastly as ye may, for my hert schall nevyr be in ese tyll I have tydyngys fro yow. Pepyll of this contre begynnyth to wax wyld, and it is seyd her that my Lord of Clarans and the Dwek of Suthfolk and sertayn jugys with hem schold come downe and ryt on syche pepyll as be noysyd ryotous in thys contre. And also it is seyd here, that there is retornyd a newe resewe up on that that was do at the acher. I suppose swyche falkynge comyth of false schrewys that wold mak a rerour in this contre. The pepyll seyth here that they had levyr go up hole to the Kynge and complayne of siche false schrewys as they have be wrongyd by a fore, than they schold be compleynyd of with owt cause and be hongyd at ther owne dorys. In good feyth men fere sore here of a comone rysyng, but if (*i.e.* unless) a bettyr remedy may be had to a pese the pepyll in hast, and that ther be sent swyche downe to tak a rewyll as the pepyll hathe a fantey in, that wole be indeferent. They love not in no wyse the Dwke of Sowthfolk nor his modyr. They say that all the tretourys and extorsyonerys of thys contre be meyntenyd by them and by syche as they get to them with lic goodys, to that intent to meynten suche extorsyon style as hathe be do by suche as hathe had the rewyll undyr them be forn tyme. Men wene, and the Dwke of Sowthfolk some ther schull be a schrewd reuellbut if (unless) ther come odyr that be bettyr belovyd than he is here. The pepyll feryth hem myche the more to be hurt, because that ye and my cosyn Barney come not home; they say they wot welle it is not well with yow, and if it be not well with yow, they say they wot well, they that wole do yow wrong wole sone do them wronge, and that makyth them all most mad. God for Hys mercy geve grace that ther may be set a good rewyll and a sad in this contre in hast, for I herd nevyr say of so myche robry and manslawter in thys contre as is now within a lytyll tyme. And as for gadyryng of money, I sey nevyr a worse sesen, for Hychard Calle seyth he can get but lytyll in substans of that is owyng, nowthyr of yowyr kyvelod nor of Pastollys tl'eyr. And John Paston seyth, they that may pay best they pay werst; they fare as thow they hopyd to have a newe word (world). And the blyssyd Trinite have yow in Hys kepyng and send us good tydyngys of yow.

Yelverton is a good thrulhare fraud for yow one for adyr in thys contre, as it is told me.

Wretyn in hast on the Thoresday nex aftyr Twelthe,—
By yowyr, MARGARET PASTON.

PROSE OTHER THAN FICTION

From Ascham to Hooker

(i) The Development of Style

The shopkeeper of the day, whether he be fishmonger or bookseller, was not content to await in the shadow of his shop for the welcome customer. He stood on the threshold and hailed him cheerfully: "What lack ye, gentles?" . . . then followed a description of the commodity the lack of which he was prepared to supply.

Ever since the Middle Ages, shops had been arranged in groups like at a fair, and hard by St. Paul's or Westminster Hall, the booksellers flocked together.

"I pray ye: see any fresh new bookes? Look I beseech you for your love, and buy for your money!"

A sign of the times is the prevalence of books dealing with England and English customs. The novelists of the day laud their country and decry the foreigner, and even that worthy Elizabethan divine, William Harrison, who took the English to task for their extravagance, is none the less possessed of the new national spirit that animates everyone.

"If we have weaknesses, these be nought to the vices of our neighbours." Stubbes in his *Anatomie of Abuses*, Lyly in his *Euphues*, each congratulate themselves that they are English.

Shakespeare of course, in his chronicle plays, was to do much to foster this feeling: but he did not kindle it. It was there ready to break out at the least encouragement.

Stow, Holinshed, and Camden embark on the history of their country. Holinshed dives into the past; Stow deals methodically with the present; Camden discusses religious affairs; Hakluyt gives expression to the maritime adventures of the age.

Elizabethan prose falls into two main periods: the first culminating in Hooker; the second in Bacon.

The translation of the New Testament by Tyndale had given a potent impulse to the study of English, and although the influence of the classical writers unduly prolonged the habit of writing in Latin—note More's *Utopia*—yet the use of our own vernacular found many advocates, and towards the end of the century proved a fairly established custom.

ROGER ASCHAM (1515–1568) may be taken as a starting point.

Roger Ascham is known as a distinguished writer, a fine classical scholar, and an entertaining correspondent. He was born at Kirby Wiske, near Thirsk in Yorkshire, in the year 1515, and died in 1568. He became a student of St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1530 and soon obtained his fellowship, notwithstanding his well-known sympathy with the Reformed doctrines. Later, he was appointed University Reader in Greek, and in 1546 University orator. Amongst "past-times" for gentlemen he gives cock fighting an important place, but Ascham's chief interests were music, writing, and archery.

His first work to attract attention, *Toxophilus*—devoted to archery, one of his favourite recreations—he published in 1545, and dedicated it to Henry VIII. In 1548 his reputation gained for him the position of tutor to the Lady Elizabeth at Cheshunt.

The years 1550–53 were lived on the Continent, chiefly at Augsburg: he was then secretary to Sir Richard Morysin or Morison, who held the post of ambassador to Charles V. When he returned to England he obtained the Latin secretaryship to Queen Mary. This prominent post being given to a Protestant, has occasioned great surprise. His extreme care and tact helped him to escape suffering in any way for his opinions.

On the accession of Elizabeth, who was once his pupil, he remained at Court and became the Queen's tutor as well as secretary. These posts were held by Ascham until the end of his life.

PUBLICATIONS

Toxophilus, published 1545.
Schoolmaster, published 1570, after his death.
Report of Germany.
Two hundred and ninety-five letters, Latin and English, partly official and partly personal.

Ascham, a sturdy old scholar of the more formal type, was a Puritan in his tastes, and opposed to the new taste for Romance, but an undoubted pioneer of good, direct English prose.

His treatise on *Cock Fighting*—for which he had a weakness—is unhappily lost. But his *Toxophilus*, and *Schoolmaster* published after his death, furnish us with good examples of his strenuous efforts as a formative force in English prose. Even his letters are not negligible. Begun in Latin, he passes gradually to his mother tongue, and the ultimate rejection of Latin as a literary form of expression is due to his deliberate intention to write in "the English speech for English men."

Of his two considerable works, *Toxophilus*, the pean on archery is the more pleasing discussion; the *Schoolmaster*, the more important in its bearing on English prose. Both illustrate agreeably not merely the worth and excellence of the old scholar, with his ingrained suspicion of Italian romances, but also the characteristics of the typical Saxon teacher who never fails to combine praise of bodily culture with that of the mind, and who, for all his love of books, is a keen sportsman at heart.

The use of alliteration and antithesis he retains, seeing no more clearly than did his successor Lyly, how these mediæval tricks, never very effective in verse, are still more out of place in prose. On the other hand, following good classical models, he wrought out a clear, concise, and yet not over concise, style.

In an age so saturated with rhetoric and ornate conceits, it is a great tribute to Ascham that he should have achieved a prose at once simple and straightforward, yet never bald nor unmusical.

"I can teach you to shoot fair, even as Socrates taught a man once to know God. For when he asked him what was God? 'Nay,' saith he, 'I can tell you better what God is not, as God is not ill, God is unspeakable, unsearchable, and so forth.' Even likewise can I say of fair shooting, it hath not this discommodity with it nor that discommodity, and at last a man may so shift all the discommodities from shooting that there shall be left nothing behind but fair shooting. And to do this the better you must remember how that I told you when I described generally the whole nature of shooting, that fair shooting came of these things, of standing, nocking, drawing, holding and loosing: the which I will go over as shortly as I can, describing the discommodities that men commonly use in all parts of their bodies, that you, if your fault in any such, may know it, and go about to amend it. Faults in archers do exceed the number of archers, which come with use of shooting without teaching. Use and custom separated from knowledge and learning, doth not only hurt shooting, but the most weighty things in the world beside. And, therefore, I marvel much at those people which be the maintainers of uses without knowledge, having no other word in their mouth but this use, use, custom, custom. Such men, more wilful than wise, beside other discommodities, take all place and occasion from all amendment. And this I speak generally of use and custom."

Professor Saintsbury calls his prose "a go-cart to habituate the infant limbs of English prose to orderly movement." It is no unfair description.

The prose of Lyly has already been discussed in relation to the novel. A few general remarks may still be made, however, with reference to its place in the development of English Letters.

Ascham's prose, clear, forcible, and serviceable as it was, did not lend itself readily to the literary graces demanded of the story-teller; and "Euphuism," with all its grave defects, did impart a colour and individuality to prose of distinct value; it carried the revolt against simplicity too far. Lyly erred in confounding often mere glitter with splendour, and artificiality for distinction; but it is easier to depreciate him than to appreciate him rightly; and he did much to establish the point that "Manner is as worthy of study as Matter.' He is the first English stylist.

Sir Philip Sidney brought forward our prose another stage. Considering him here as a stylist, he put aside the elaborate affectations of Lyly, and while not free from mannerism, struck a happy comparison between the straightforward simplicity of Ascham and the highly-coloured complexity of Euphuism. His prose at its best is both simple and melodious, strong and sweet, and he achieves for prose much what Spenser did for verse.

"The Poet doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way as will entice any man to enter into it. Nay, he doth, as if your journey should lie thro' a fair vineyard, at the very first give you a cluster of grapes, that full of that taste you may long to pass further." [1]

The Defence of Poesy

"Our tragedies and comedies, not without cause, are cried out against, observing rules neither of honest civility nor skilful poetry. Excepting 'Gorboduc' (again I say of those that I have seen), which notwithstanding, as it is full of stately speeches, and well-sounding phrases, climbing to the height of Seneca his style, and as full of notable morality, which it doth most delightfully teach, and to obtain the very end of poesy; yet, in truth, it is very defectuous in the circumstances, which grieves me, because it might not remain as an exact model of all tragedies. For it is faulty both in place and time, the two necessary companions of all corporal actions. For where the stage should always represent but one place; and the utmost time presupposed in it, should be, both by Aristotle's precept, and common reason, but one day; there is both many days and many places inartificially imagined.

"But if it be so in 'Gorboduc,' how much more in all the rest? where you shall have Asia of the one side, and Afric of the other, and so many other under kingdoms, that the player, when he comes in, must ever begin with telling where he is, or else the tale will not be conceived. Now shall you have three ladies walk to gather flowers, and then we must believe the stage to be a garden. By and by, we hear news of shipwreck in the same place, then we are to blame if we accept it not for a rock. Upon the back of that comes out a hideous monster with fire and smoke, and then the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave; while, in the meantime, two armies fly in, represented with four swords and bucklers, and then, what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field?

"Now of time they are much more liberal; for ordinary it is, that two young princes fall in love; after many traverses she is got with child; delivered of a fair boy; he is lost, groweth a man, falleth in love, and is ready to get another child; and all this in two hours' space; which, how absurd it is in sense, even sense may imagine; and art hath taught and all ancient examples justified, and at this day the ordinary players in Italy will not err in. Yet will some bring in an example of the Eunuch in Terence, that containeth matter of two days, yet far short of twenty years. True it is, and so was it to be played in two days, and so fitted to the time it set forth. And though Plautus have in one place done amiss, let us hit it with him, and not miss with him. But they will say, How then shall we set forth a story which contains both many places and many times? And do they not know, that a tragedy is tied to the laws of poesy, and not of history; not bound to follow the story, but having liberty either to feign a quite new matter, or to frame the history to the most tragical convenience? Again, many things may be told, which cannot be shewed; if they know the difference betwixt reporting and representing. As for example, I may speak, though I am here, of Peru, and in speech digress from that to the description of Calicut; but in action I cannot represent it without Pacolet's horse. And so was the manner the ancients took by some 'Nuntius,' to recount things done in former time, or other place.

"Lastly, if they will represent an history, they must not, as Horace saith, begin 'ab ovo,' but they must come to the principal point of that one action which they will represent. By example this will be best expressed; I have a story of young Polydorus, delivered, for safety's sake, with great riches, by his father Priamus to Polymnestor, King of Thrace, in the Trojan War time. He, after some years, hearing of the overthrow of Priamus, for to make the treasure his own, murdereth the child; the body of the child is taken up; Hecuba, she, the same day, findeth a sleight to be revenged most cruelly of the tyrant. Where, now, would one of our tragedy-writers begin, but with the delivery of the child? Then should he sail over into Thrace, and so spend I know not how many years, and travel numbers of places. But where doth Euripides? Even with the finding of the body; leaving the rest to be told by the spirit of Polydorus. This needs no farther to be enlarged; the dullest wit may conceive it.

"But, besides these gross absurdities, how all their plays be neither right tragedies nor right comedies, mingling kings and clowns, not because the matter so carrieth it, but thrust in the clown by head and shoulders to play a part in majestical matters, with neither decency nor discretion; so as neither the admiration and commiseration, nor the right sportfulness, is by their

[1] *Apologie for Poetrie.*

mongrel tragi-comedy obtained. I know Amphitryo did somewhat so, but that is a thing recounted with grace of time, not represented in due moment: and I know the ancients have one or two examples of tragi-comedies as Plautus hath Amphytrio. But, if we mark them well, we shall find, that they never, or very daintily, match hornpipes and funerals. So falleth it out, that having indeed no right comedy in that comical part of our tragedy, we have nothing but scurrility unworthy of our ernste ears: or some extreme show of deformedness, indeed fit to fill up a loud laughter, and nothing else: where the whole tract of a comedy should be full of delight; as the tragedy should be still maintained in a well-raised admiration."

Even more successful was RICHARD HOOKER, "Judicious Hooker," as his epitaph styles him.

A Devonshire man, born in 1553, of good, industrious, middle-class stock, as a boy he was unusually earnest and grave. A desire for information—"Why this was, and that was not to be remembered?—Why this was granted and that denied?"—combined with his general demeanour, attracted the attention of his schoolmaster, who persuaded a well-to-do relative to assist in furthering the boy's studies. Later, he was brought to the notice of Bishop Jewel, who was so impressed by the lad's earnestness and learning, though but fifteen, that he procured his admission to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and supplemented the income allowed Hooker by his uncle.

Completing his arts course in 1576, he was elected a Fellow of his College; three years later, lecturer in Hebrew.

While at Oxford a particular friendship was formed with Edwin Sandys, author of *Speculum Europæ*, and George Cranmer, a descendant of the celebrated Archbishop. For some reason not quite clear, Hooker and others, among them his old tutor Dr. Reynolds, were expelled, but were reinstated almost immediately.

Ordained in 1582, he was shortly afterwards appointed to preach a Sermon at St. Paul's Cross—an unfortunate incident as it transpired, for on this occasion he met his future wife, Joan Churchman, a woman most unfitted both by temperament and education to be the helpmeet for this grave, studious man, and he left the quietude of Oxford to become rector of Drayton-Beauchamp and a life of domestic unrest.

On the death of Alvey, in 1585, Hooker was appointed Master of the Temple, but differences of religious opinion arose with his Puritan colleague, Walter Travers, who was suspended by the Archbishop. Hooker, grieved at this, asked to be allowed to retire from the Mastership. He was then presented to the living of Boscombe, and made sub-Dean of Salisbury. Here he finished the first four books of his famous *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, entered in Stationers' Register, March 9, 1592, and published in 1594, the fifth in 1597, the sixth and eighth in 1648, the seventh not appearing till 1662.

In July 1595 he was presented to the living of Bishop's Bourne in Kent, where he remained till his death in 1600.

Hooker is described by his biographer, Izaak Walton, as "an obscure, harmless man, in poor clothes, of a mean stature . . . his body worn out, not with age, but with study and holy mortification."

The aim of Hooker was to give us a prose that should be at once simple and impressive. Sidney had combined simplicity with cadence. Hooker gave to the cadence a finer and more sustained rhythm. In point of time he is the forerunner of Lyly, but he certainly carried prose style to a higher stage of development, and if less powerful an influence in his day than either Lyly or Sidney, exerted in the long run a more potent one.

Theological literature very rarely lends itself to literary excellences. Of how few modern theologians can it be said that they had the art of saying well what they had to say. But Hooker will be remembered not merely as the first vernacular defender of the English Church, but as a writer of fine, eloquent prose.

Its distinguishing quality is its sustained dignity and sobriety. Judicious in his argument, he is equally self-restrained and moderate in style. Lacking the poetic genius of Sidney and the richer eloquence of Jeremy Taylor, he is a safer model.

And with him must be mentioned JOHN FLORIO, the first translator of Montaigne; and RICHARD KNOLLES, who materially helped to build up an orderly and systematic school of historical writings.

Contemporary with Hooker is Sir Walter Raleigh, a striking personality of the Elizabethan type, and a remarkable though unequal proseman of the ornate school.

Sir WALTER RALEIGH, one of the most versatile, brilliant, and daring spirits of his time, whose achievements give a colour to the period in which he lived, was born near Budleigh Salterton in 1552. His father had married the widow of Otho Gilbert, thus Walter Raleigh was the half-brother of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, the explorer, who took possession of Newfoundland, our oldest colony, in 1583.

A youth of exceptional intelligence, from the first fond of out-door life, and addicted to books, Raleigh was for a time a student at Oriel College, Oxford, afterwards reading law in London. Of ardent, impetuous disposition, the study of law was soon abandoned. He was not eighteen when he became a soldier, fighting for the Huguenots' cause in France. His first encounter with the Spaniards was in 1578, when he went with Humphrey Gilbert to the West Indies. There was some little fighting, but the expedition was not a success. Two years afterwards he was in Ireland fighting against the rebels. He gave material help in suppressing the rebellion, acting with boldness, determination, and severity. He was rewarded with a grant of forty thousand acres of land in the counties of Waterford and Cork. By this time he had become known to Queen Elizabeth. Being a man of good appearance, and witty and sparkling conversation, it was not long before he was a favourite at Court. Knighted in 1584, and in 1585 appointed Lord Warden of the Stannaries and Vice-Admiral of Devon and Cornwall, he entered the House of Commons as Member for his native county.

The death of Humphrey Gilbert was an opportunity upon which he built the highest hopes. Gilbert had been given the right to take possession of

an enormous area in North America, but his death prevented him from exercising this right. The Queen transferred the privilege to Raleigh. Aided by friends, he fitted out two ships. He had intended accompanying the expedition, but the Queen interposed. She was so pleased with his flatteries and protestations of devotion that she ordered him to remain in England, and he had to take up his residence at the Court. The expedition was so far successful that the following year Sir Walter and his friends sent out another. This time there were seven vessels—Sir Richard Grenville, Raleigh's cousin, being in command. It is said that to this second expedition we owe the introduction of tobacco and the potato to this country. These expeditions were part of Raleigh's scheme to colonise America. They cost him £40,000, or in our currency a quarter of a million, but were unsuccessful.

The potato was first cultivated in these regions on Raleigh's Irish estate. On one of his visits to Ireland he came to know Edmund Spenser, whom he introduced to Elizabeth. A plan to seize Spanish treasure-ships was formed in 1592—but again he was thwarted by the Queen in his desire to accompany it. One of Elizabeth's maids of honour was Bessie Throgmorton; Raleigh fell in love with her (he afterwards married her). The jealous Queen discovered what was going on, and was so angry that she sent Raleigh and his sweetheart to the Tower. They were detained there for some time.

Very characteristic of the time is the next expedition with which the name of Raleigh was associated. With a thirst for knowledge, a hatred of Spain, there was combined a desire for gain which infected all classes. Marvellous stories were abroad of fabulous wealth awaiting the bold and courageous in South America. To secure this gold would be at once to enrich one's self and to strike a blow at the Spaniard. This cupidity and patriotism inspired the wild spirits of Elizabeth's day. The project took hold of Raleigh's imagination. He sent agents to investigate, they returned able to tell him little or nothing. He decided to go himself. With an authority from the Queen and the aid of her chief ministers, he set out in search of El Dorado in 1595. There was fighting at Trinidad and the Spanish Governor was taken prisoner. Raleigh was cheered by hearing from him of an explorer who had told a wonderful story of the gold to be found near the banks of the river Orinoco. Ten boats containing one hundred men bore the expedition up the river. From the first immense difficulties were met, and terrible hardships were suffered. The boats were not fitted for their purpose. The heat was almost intolerable. The food supply was bad, and every night they had to sleep in the open air. Raleigh describes the journey in his *Discovery of Guiana*. They went up the river for four hundred and forty miles, and had to turn back, bringing with them only some tons of white spa (obtained from the river bank) in which appeared to be traces of gold. El Dorado was not discovered. It is of the irony of events that long after, gold in abundance was found at a spot not far from the point to which Raleigh travelled.

Raleigh was indomitable. Back in England, he was soon again fighting the Spaniards. He joined the fleet which made an attack on Cadiz, and took part in the expedition to capture Spanish treasure-ships in 1597. In both enterprises he showed great bravery and skill. James I came to the throne in 1603, and his succession marked the beginning of misfortunes which led Raleigh at last to the scaffold. Stripped of his official appointments, dismissed from the Court, an accusation was brought against him that he was attempting to place James' cousin, Arabella Stewart, on the throne and was plotting to seize the King. Raleigh's independence and freedom of utterance had made him many enemies. Cecil, the all-powerful minister, was not his friend. Elizabeth, though capricious in her treatment of him, had stood between Raleigh and his foes. She removed, he was now without a protector. There was no evidence that could be called evidence against him, but he was arrested; unmanned for the moment, he attempted to commit suicide. He was tried at Winchester, and on November 17, 1603, he was condemned to death as a traitor. All his property was confiscated. A month later he was reprieved. James would not pardon him or fix any period of imprisonment, but kept him a prisoner in the Tower. There he remained for twelve and a half years. During six of these years his wife bore him company. In the Tower he wrote his famous *History of the World*, and interested himself in chemical experiments. The high courage of Raleigh did not fail in the dreary confinement of the Tower. Ever hoping that he would be released, his mind was full of new schemes and plans for the realisation of his old ambitions. Among his friends were James' queen, and his heir Prince Henry. They regarded him as imprisoned unjustly. He unfolded to them his idea of a second expedition to Guiana, and petitioned the King many times to allow him to go. There was a chance of profit to the King in the scheme, and at length Raleigh was liberated. In 1617 he sailed in command of twelve vessels! One of the conditions on which he had been set free was that he should not take offensive operations against the Spaniards, but Guiana was claimed by Spain, and conflict was inevitable. Misfortune and defeat overtook the expedition almost at once. In an attack on a Spanish settlement at the mouth of the Orinoco his son Walter was killed, and the hostility of the settlers prevented him from going up the river. Broken-hearted he returned to England, attempted to escape to France, was caught and again became an inmate of the Tower. James was at this time negotiating a marriage between his son Charles and the Infanta of Spain, and it was necessary to show friendship to Spain. Raleigh had broken his promise not to molest Spanish dominions, and the King seized upon this. It was decided to carry out the sentence of death passed in 1603. Raleigh was beheaded at White Hall on October 29, 1618. On the scaffold he thanked God that he was allowed "to die in the light." "I have a long journey to take and must bid the company farewell." Feeling the axe's edge, he remarked with a smile, "This

gives me no fear, this is a sharp medicine, but is a certain cure for all diseases!" He himself gave the signal to the executioner, bidding him, "Strike, man!"

Works

Fight about the Isles of the Azores, appeared in 1591.
A Discovery of the Empire of Guiana, 1596.
History of the World, written during his imprisonment, 1612.
Verses found in his Bible in the Gatehouse in Westminster, 1618.
Cynthia, lost until part of it was published by Dr. Hannah in 1885.
The Pilgrimage, supposed to be written in 1603.
Poems on Sir Philip Sidney, 1591, without his signature.
The Lie first appeared in print in 1608.
Nymph's Reply, The Prerogatives of Parliaments, The Cabinet Council, published by Milton in 1658.
The Discoveries—"Perfect piece of writing."
Advice to his Son.

Remarkable as was Raleigh's physical activity, no less restless was his mind. When imprisonment gave enforced leisure to the one, the other part of him went a-roving.

He was a verse-writer of distinction—does not Gabriel Harvey speak of his "fine and sweet invention"?—and wrote a fine sonnet that was appended to the first edition of the *Faerie Queene* and many poems signed "Ignoto," published in *England's Helicon*.

As to his prose, perhaps his most notable achievement was the *History of the World*, a serious, discursive review of the past and present—very popular for its treatment of Biblical history and early times, but disliked by James, "for being too saucy in censuring Princes." It is rich in fine passages of eloquent prose, and is also an interesting piece of self-revelation. Its chief defect, an entire lack of humour, is felt at times, but is largely counterbalanced by the picture it presents of a restless, adventurous, and ambitious spirit, with a rich sense of the fullness of life and a tragic appreciation of its ironies.

> "Even such is time that takes on trust
> Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
> And pays us but with rust and dust."

(ii) The Art of Criticism

So far, English prose has been considered either for its imaginative qualities, as in dealing with the fiction, or with its technique, as in the foregoing remarks on prose style. Necessarily, the manner of saying the thing rather than the matter has engaged our attention. There is, however, another aspect of our literature than the artistic, and to this side we shall now turn. Here the matter is the thing of paramount importance. Not how the thing is said, but what kind of thing is said.

Once again, however, a start may conveniently be made with Roger Ascham, and his general attitude will best be gathered from *The Schoolmaster*.

The first thing to strike us is his depreciation of the faculty of imagination. He had little care for poetry, still less for prose romance. Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* is singled out for special blame, seeing in it only "open man's laughter and bold bawdy." As a critical force, therefore, while valuable in simplifying and encouraging an English prose style, he was in active opposition to the general trend of the age as regards purely imaginative work. In itself, this was a sign of intellectual limitations; but it was no misfortune in an age when the imagination was encouraged to an unbridled extent, to have the matter-of-fact, conservative tendencies of Ascham.

In Gascoigne's *Notes of Instruction*, we have really valuable criticism on the important subject of prosody. He warns against the misuse of accents and the warning was a needful one, as not only the minor poets of the time but even so great a master as Spenser, proved careless in this respect. For instance he points out, we must say *understánd*, not *únderstand*; makes a highly seasonable caution against excessive alliteration, and uses a phrase that Lyly and his school might well have taken to heart. We must be careful not to "hunt a letter to death."

Passing to Stephen Gosson (1554-1624), we come into touch again with the Puritan onslaught on by Ascham.

Gosson himself was no mean scholar and versifier. At one time with a taste for dramatic writing, he suddenly forswore the delights of literature and denounced the art he had followed as a poisonous one. The poetry of the classical poet he finds tainted with loose paganism; and this moral laxity he detects in the theatre of the day as well as in the verse-making. The taint is not inherent in poetry, but as poetry exists is almost inseparable from it.

His argumentative methods may be gathered from the following quotation:

> "The best play you can pick out, is but a mixture of good and evil, how can it be then the schoolmistress of life? The beholding of troubles and miserable slaughters that are in tragedies drive us to immoderate sorrow, heaviness, womanish weeping and mourning, whereby we become lovers of dumps and lamentations, both enemies to fortitude. Comedies so tickle our senses with a pleasaunt vein, that they make us lovers of laughter and pleasure, without any mean, both foes to temperance. What schooling is this? Sometime you shall see nothing but the adventures of an amorous knight, passing from country to country for the love of his lady, encountering many a terrible monster made of brown paper, and at his return is so wonderfully changed, that he cannot be known but by some posy in his tablet, or by a broken ring, or a handkerchief, or a piece of cockle shell. What learn ye by that? When the soul of your plays is either mere trifles, or Italian bawdry, or wooing of gentlewomen, what are ye taught? Peradventure you will say, that by these kind of plays the authors instruct us how to live with constancy, to sue with modesty, and to loath whatsoever is contrary unto us. In my opinion, the discipline we get by plays is like to the justice that a certain schoolmaster taught in Persia, which taught his scholars to lie and not to lie, to deceive and not to deceive, with a distinction how they might do it to their friends, and how to their enemies: to their friends, for exercise; to their foes, in earnest. Wherein many of his scholars became so skilful by practice, by custom so bold, that their dearest friends paid more for their learning than their enemies. I would wish the players to beware of this kind of schooling, lest that whilst they teach youthful gentlemen how to love and not to love, how to woo and not to woo, their scholars grow as cunning as the Persians."[1]

To this vigorous attack Lodge essayed a reply,

[1] *Plays confuted in five actions*, 1582.

but though he certainly had the better case, he scarcely made the best of it. As Professor Saintsbury acutely says: "The assailants, in England at least, had for the time an unfair advantage, because the defence could point to no great poet but Chaucer. The real answer was being provided by one of themselves in the shape of the *Faerie Queene*."

Of far greater importance is Sir Philip Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie*, by which he includes all forms of Romance, whether in verse or prose. He reminds his readers that all the greatest authors were really poets. Homer, Hesiod, Ennius, Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Chaucer; that the Roman called the poet *vates* (a prophet), and that we by using the Greek *poet* signify he is a maker; in fact a creator.

Then comes the famous reminder that "it is not rhyming and versing that maketh a poet," and the more famous confession, "I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet." The abuses of poetry do not nullify its use; they may be corrected. The significance of Spenser's tribute is that it represents the dominant feeling of the Elizabethan for verse; it reveals its hold upon the age, and encourages its high note of laudation.

The *Rules to be observed in Scottish Poetry* (1585), by James the First, is a book of not much importance, but William Webbe's *Discourse of English Poesie* (1586) is of greater value.

Webbe was an enthusiastic admirer of Spenser—"the mightiest English poet that ever lived." With the poetry of Chaucer's age, however, he is not closely acquainted, and in his excursion into the poetry of the past, he displays no particular acumen.

Webbe's value lies less in his argumentative disquisition than in his power of appreciation. He has a natural taste for fine verse, and it is on the appreciative side of criticism, not the judicial, that he claims recognition.

A Discourse of English Poesie

"This place have I purposely reserved for one, who if not only, yet in my judgment principally deserveth the title of the rightest English Poet, that ever I read; that is, the author of the *Shepherd's Kalendar*, intituled to the worthy gentleman Master Philip Sidney, whether it was Master *Sp.* or what rare scholar in Pembroke Hall soever, because himself and his friends, for what respect I know not, would not reveal it, I force not greatly to set down: sorry I am that I cannot find none other with whom I might couple him in this Catalogue in his rare gift of Poetry: although one there is, though now long since, seriously occupied in graver studies (Master Gabriel Harvey) yet, as he was once his most special friend and fellow poet, so because he hath taken such pains, not only in his Latin Poetry (for which he enjoyed great commendations of the best both in judgment and dignity in this Realm) but also to reform our English verse, and to beautify the same with brave devices, of which I think the chief lie in hateful obscurity: therefore will I adventure to set them together, as two of the rarest wits and learnedst masters of Poetry in England. Whose worthy and notable skill in this faculty, I would wish if their high dignities and serious businesses would permit, they would still grant to be a furtherance to that reformed kind of Poetry, which Master Harvey did once begin to ratify: and surely in mine opinion, if he had chosen some graver matter, and handled but with half that skill, which I know he could have done, and not poured it forth at a venture, as a thing between jest and earnest, it had taken greater effect than it did."

Another volume about this time, *The Art of English Poesie* (1589), is usually attributed to George Puttenham (1530 ?–1590).

Puttenham, unlike Webbe, does not excel in appreciation, but shows a wide knowledge of European literature, and a wise feeling for the relative merits of writers.

On Style

"Style is a constant and continual phrase of speaking and writing, extending to the whole tale or process of the poem or history, and not properly to any piece or member of a tale; but is of words, speeches, and sentences together; a certain contrived form and quality, many times natural to the writer, many times his peculiar bye-election and art, and such as either he keepeth by skill or holdeth on by ignorance, and will not or peradventure cannot easily alter into any other. So we say that Cicero's style and Sallust's were not one, nor Cæsar's and Livy's, nor Homer's and Hesiodus', nor Herodotus' and Thucydides', nor Euripides' and Aristophanes', nor Erasmus' and Budeus' styles. And because this continual course and manner of writing or speech sheweth the matter and disposition of the writer's mind more than one or two instances can show, therefore there be that have called style the image of man (*mentis character*). For man is but his mind, and as his mind is tempered and qualified, so are his speeches and language at large; and his inward conceits to the metal of his mind, and his manner of utterance the very warp and woof of his conceits, more plain or busy and intricate or otherwise affected after the rate."

Of Poesis and Poesy

"Wherefore, the nobility and dignity of the Art considered, as well by universality as antiquity and the natural excellence of itself, Poesy ought not to be abased and employed upon any unworthy matter and subject, nor used to vain purposes, which nevertheless is daily seen, and that is to utter conceits infamous and vicious or ridiculous and foolish, or of no good example and doctrine. Albeit in merry matters (not unhonest) being used for man's solace and recreation it may be well allowed, for as I said before, Poesy is a pleasant manner of utterance, varying from the ordinary of purpose to refresh the mind by the ears' delight.

Poesy also is not only laudable because I said it was a metrical speech used by the first men, but because it is a metrical speech corrected and reformed by discreet judgment and with no less cunning and curiosity than the Greek and Latin Poesy, and by Art beautified and adorned and brought far from the primitive rudeness of the first inventors; otherwise it may be said to me that Adam and Eve's aprons were the gayest garments because they were the first, and the shepherd's tent or pavilion the best housing because it was the most ancient and most universal. Which I would not have so taken, for it is not my meaning; but that Art and cunning, concurring with nature, antiquity and universality, in things indifferent, and not evil, do make them more laudable. And right so our vulgar rhyming Poesy, being by good wits brought to that perfection, we see is worthily to be preferred before any other manner of utterance in prose, for such use and to such purpose as it is ordained and shall hereafter be set down more particularly."[1]

The next contribution of note to critical literature, is the volume *Observations in the Art of English Poesy* (1602), by Thomas Campion. A poet of much beauty and musical rhyming, he tilts laboriously—having in this matter the spirit of the Renas-

[1] *The Art of English Poesie.*

cenne with him—against rhyme. Perhaps the best argument against Campion is one of his own poems, most of these being written after his critical exercise.

Daniel's *Defence* came about five years later. It is pleasantly and graciously written, with due acknowledgment of Campion's abilities, and he takes up the strong position that arbitrary laws superimposed upon the verse of a people are absurd, and that the verse of a language is such as best harmonises with the matter of that language. Rhyme "gives to the ear an echo of a delightful right," and to the memory "a deeper impression of what is delivered."

EARLIER RENASCENCE

The Call of the Sea in Renascence Literature: Mandeville—Hakluyt—Purchas, &c.

THE CALL OF THE SEA IN RENASCENCE LITERATURE

Michelet summed up the Renascence in "the discovery of the world and the discovery of man." With the latter aspect, the culture and art of the movement are necessarily concerned. The richly veined humanity of the Italian Renascence sufficiently emphasized this side; on the other, the revolution wrought in astronomy and the art of navigation introduced a new world as dazzling and surprising in its vast possibilities as the imaginative world opened by Michael Angelo and Shakespeare.

The sense of curiosity and the craving for adventure, indigenous to man and so long restricted to the tortuous word-spinning and Crusading zeal of the Middle Ages, received a tremendous stimulus that soon found expression in maritime discovery and commercial enterprise. The adventurous seaman was to open up not merely new countries but a new literature. Yet, the Call of the Sea was no new note in our literature; the white surf thunders grimly through *Beowulf*, and carries its salt sting and desolating grandeur throughout the whole of Saxon poetry.

After the Norman Conquest, when the English were becoming more civilised, and the seaman adventurer was merged into the bartering merchant, the Call of the Sea is lost in other cries, and even Chaucer's Shipman fails to carry conviction. But with the Renascence, once again we can hear the roar of the ocean and can taste the salt brine.

The adventurous spirit in our literature, hitherto, had been practically confined to that extraordinary mixture of outrageous fable and genuine travel entitled the *Travels of Sir John Mandeville*; that had sufficed during the late Middle Ages to satisfy the craving for wonders beyond our narrow seas. It really mattered very little that there was "no such person"—indeed it took several ventures to find that out, so distinct is its impress of a genial, curious, broad-minded personality revealed in this mosaic of many men's wanderings, for its enormous popularity testified not merely to the love of the marvellous but to the passion for knowledge about the other countries, which is characteristically English.

The serious recording of voyagers, however, was a thing not begotten in England. It came, as might be expected, from Spain and Italy. Peter Martyr of Anghira catechised the navigators of the time, being commanded to write a history of Spanish explorations. This he did with a thoroughness and enthusiasm that soon communicated itself to others. His great work *De Orbe Novo*, written between 1511 and 1532, was translated into several languages. An Italian, Pigafetta, told the story of Magellan's voyage; other works followed in quick succession, inspiring Englishmen once again, after many years, to challenge the mysteries of the ocean. It is true that the Age of Discovery nominally opened with the voyages of Cabot, but there is no literary impulse to set these down, and when later on Hakluyt essayed to tell the story, he found the slenderest of material.

One of the earliest names in the new literature of the sea is that of Richard Eden, an industrious compiler of Spanish achievements with the laudable object of inspiring his country to go on and do likewise. He further published a book on the *Art of Navigation*, 1681. In his style he is clear and unpretentious, and as an interpreter of maritime discovery, he is worthy of a place of honour.

Meanwhile, in 1553, Sir Hugh Willoughby had perished in his voyage to the North-East, an account of which was written in Latin by Clement Adams and translated later by Hakluyt.

After this came the remarkable voyages of Sir John Hawkins in 1562, 1564, 1567. On the third occasion he wrote an account of his experiences in a brisk and forcible style, made none the less attractive by the occasional vein of philosophic meditation.

In 1576 George Gascoigne wrote a preface to a *Discourse of a Discoverie, for a new passage to Cathay*, attributed to Sir Humphrey Gilbert. The tract was written primarily to convince Gilbert's brother, who looked upon the project as a wild and foolish thing. Gilbert was prepared to admit its hazardous character, not, however, that it was impossible to "common capacities," as his brother alleged. For himself, he declared, "He is not worthy to live at all who, for fear of danger or death shunneth his country's service . . . since death is inevitable and the fame of virtue immortal."

Martin Frobisher found a literary sponsor in his friend Captain George Best, who described in vigorous and direct speech Frobisher's struggles in the North-West (1577). Meanwhile Eden's industry in dealing with the general literature of discovery, both at home and abroad, is supplemented by Richard Willey. While during the last few years of the century Sir Richard Hawkins adds the exist

ing information on the lives and theories of the early explorers. The great literary exponent of this spirit of adventure, however, is Richard Hakluyt; who summarised and co-ordinated much previous work on the subject, and is the greatest contemporary authority on all pertaining to the sea exploits of the age.

Richard Hakluyt was born about 1553, in Herefordshire, of good British stock notwithstanding his name, and educated at Westminster School and Oxford, where he graduated B.A. in 1574, and M.A. in 1577, leaving Oxford with a special enthusiasm for the study of geography and travels, first implanted by his cousin Richard Hakluyt of the Middle Temple.

With all his love for voyaging, he does not appear to have travelled further than Paris, where he became Chaplain to the British Embassy shortly after his ordination in 1583, although he had published *Divers Voyages touching the Discovery of America and the Lands adjacent . . .*, his first volume, in 1582.

During a short visit to England in 1584, Hakluyt submitted to Queen Elizabeth, a treatise recommending the plantation of certain uncultivated parts of America, written at the request of Sir Walter Raleigh, who was very keen on the colonisation of America by the English. (This paper being lost for some considerable time, was not printed till 1877, when it was published at Cambridge, Massachusetts, among the Collections of the Maine Historical Society.) However, the authorities were so impressed with it at the time that the author was promised the next vacant prebend at Bristol, to which in 1586 he was admitted.

Remaining in Paris for five years longer, Hakluyt translated and published an account by Laudonnière of voyages in Florida. In 1588 he returned to England, and a year later published in one folio volume *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, and Discoveries of the English Nation*. In April 1590 he became rector of Wetheringsett-cum-Brockford in Suffolk, prebendary in 1602, and archdeacon of Westminster in 1603.

Hakluyt was twice married. He died on November 26, 1616, and is buried in Westminster Abbey.

To Hakluyt we are indebted for a translation of Adam's account of Willoughby's adventures; for a record of Gilbert's last voyage, with its memorable pen picture of the last scene in which the doughty old seaman figured.

Frobisher's voyages were given by him for the first time connectedly, and the thoroughness and zeal with which he threw himself into the work of a chronicler, is sufficiently illustrated by the profound influence which his many volumes exercised upon the poets and dramatists of the age.

This influence was due to two things; due in the first place to the imaginative stimulus of the subject matter, to the compelling magic encompassing those that go down to the sea in ships; due in the second place to the simple, unaffected directness of the writers—men unversed in literary artifice, and in the affectations of the day, conscious only that they had something to tell that was worth the telling.

Hakluyt's Voyages

"Whose maketh navigation to these countries hath not only extreme winds and furious seas to encounter withal, but also many monstrous and great islands of ice: a thing both rare, wonderful, and greatly to be regarded.

"We were forced sundry times, while the ship did ride here at anchor, to have continual watch, with boats and men ready with hawsers, to knit fast unto such ice which with the ebb and flood were moved to and fro in the harbour, and with force of oars to hail them away, for endangering the ships.

"Our general on certain days searched this supposed continent with America, and not finding the commodity to answer his expectations, after he had made trial thereof, he departed thence, with two little barques, and men sufficient, to the east shore, being the supposed continent of Asia, and left the ship, with most of the gentlemen, soldiers and sailors, until such time as he either thought good to send or come for them.

"The stones on this supposed continent with America be altogether sparkled and glister in the sun like gold; so likewise doth the sand in the bright water, yet they verify the old proverb, 'All is not gold that glistereth.'

"On this west shore we found a dead fish floating, which had in his nose a horn, straight and torquet, of length two yards lacking two inches, being broken in the top, where we might perceive it hollow, into which some of our sailors putting spiders they presently died. I saw not the trial hereof, but it was reported unto me of a truth, by the victuallers whereof we supposed it to be the sea unicorn.

"After our general had found out good harbour for the ship and barques to anchor in, and also such store of gold ore as he thought himself satisfied withal, he returned to the *Michael*, wherein Master Yorke aforesaid was captain, accompanied with our master and his mate, who coasting along the west shore, not far from whence the ship rode, they perceived a fair harbour, and willing to sound the same, at the entrance thereof they espied two tents of seal skins, unto which the captain, our said master, and other company resorted. At the sight of our men the people fled into the mountains; nevertheless, they went to their tents, where, leaving certain trifles of ours as glasses, bells, knives, and such like things, they departed, not taking anything of theirs except one dog. They did in like manner leave behind them a letter, pen, ink, and paper, whereby our men whom the captain lost the year before, and in that people's custody, might (if any of them were alive) be advertised of our presence and being there.

"On the same day, after consultation, all the gentlemen, and others likewise that could be spared from the ship, under the conduct and leading of Master Philpot (under whom, in our general's absence, and his lieutenant, Master Best, all the rest were obedient), went ashore, determining to see if by fair means we could either allure them to familiarity, or otherwise take some of them, and so attain to some knowledge of those men whom our general lost the year before.

"At our coming back again to the place where their tents were before, they had removed their tents farther into the said bay or sound, where they might, if they were driven from the land, doe with their boats into the sea. We, parting ourselves into two companies, and compassing a mountain, came suddenly upon them by land, who, espying us, without any tarrying fled to their boats, leaving the most part of their furs behind them for haste, and rowed down the bay, where our two pinnaces met them and drove them to shore. But if they had had all their furs on, as well as they in rowing, it had been lost time to have chased them."

The successor of Hakluyt was Samuel Purchas (*c.* 1575–1626), whose literary executor he became. Born at Thaxton, and educated at Cambridge, he was also a cleric and held various benefices, including that of the important rectorship of St. Martin's, Ludgate

Hill, in the City of London. He is known by his three compilations: *Purchas his Pilgrimage, or Relations of the World and the Religions observed in all Ages and Places . . .*; *Purchas his Pilgrim, or the History of Man*; *Hakluyt Posthumus, a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Land Travels, &c.*

Inferior to Hakluyt as a writer, and less interesting as a man, he is none the less notable for the addition he made to sea records of the time; especially true in the earlier years of the seventeenth century. He reflects the same keen spirit of nationality, and his abridgments of the writings of Spanish and Portuguese discovery, enlivened by his own notable imagination, make good reading. He is less simple and direct than Hakluyt, and succeeds more by the interest of his matter, than by his manner, which is touched too often by the literary mannerism of the age. From the time of Purchas the literature of discovery began to merge into the more prosaic literature of travel and colonial history.

But the Call of the Sea, if less insistent, never fails to find some expression in our literature, whenever romanticism wells to the surface, as it does from time to time, and despite changing fortunes; the glamour of the salt ocean re-asserts again its ancient power.

The freshening influence of Hakluyt and his comrades upon contemporary English prose was a matter, therefore, of real moment. His imaginative influence was even more remarkable, and Professor Walter Raleigh in a fine essay dealing with Hakluyt's *Voyages*, has shown how many-sided and pervading was the inspiration of this quest for adventure.

In Marlowe, we find it perhaps at its height. Marlowe's restless imagination and insatiable curiosity seized hungrily on the stuff o' travel for his plays, and did not Slow declare that Drake was "as famous in Europe and America as Tamburlaine was in Asia and Africa"?

Assuredly, then, there is the spirit of Hawkins and of Drake in Tamburlaine and Faust, it is hard to imagine *The Tempest* and *Pericles* of Shakespeare, with their vivid descriptions, without the sea chronicler of the time; or the stirring speeches of Othello, with no Hakluyt to give colour and substance to the romantic visions of the poet.

Throughout this great era of the drama and of poetry, the Call of the Sea persists, and from Spenser's *Faerie Queene* to the *New Atlantis* of Bacon, and the *Paradise Lost* of Milton, we may trace its spell. With the decline of the Renascence, it dies down as a stimulus to our literature; and the matter-of-fact, common-sense attitude of the eighteenth century found its plenary inspiration elsewhere. None the less the spirit of adventure had its own triumph even in that age, and the stirring exploits that had stirred into flame the genius of Marlowe, descended on that brilliant, home-loving journalist, Defoe. So a literature that started with *Tamburlaine* ended with *Robinson Crusoe*.

THE HEIGHT OF THE RENASCENCE

Spenser and his Contemporaries—Earlier Song Writers and Sonneteers.

SPENSER AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

"An over-fine quiteness," wrote Sir Philip Sidney in 1581, "should seem to skew the house for poets." Hitherto the scholar and courtier had ruled the domain of fantasy with pleasing and graceful though not very vital results. But the words were no sooner uttered than a force came into poetry that speedily dispersed the "over-faint quietness," Spenser came at a crucial moment in English Poetry. The spell of Italy had taken hold of our senses, without gripping the heart and consciences. Ascham's suspicion of the novel, and his hostile attitude towards Italian influence, did at any rate represent one side of national feeling. The revival of letters had merged into the Protestant Revolution: but the influence of Germany and Italy were hitherto antagonistic forces in our literature. It is impossible not to feel that the verse of Surrey, and of Gascoigne, reflect only in part national character and temperament. Now in Spenser, the Puritan side and the artistic side are merged and reconciled. Spenser is at once the child of the Renascence and the Reformation. On one side we may regard him with Milton as "the sage and serious Spenser," on the other he is the Humanist, alive to the finger-tips with the sensuous beauty of Southern Romance.

Edmund Spenser

In "Merry London, my most kindly nurse," in his own words, Edmund Spenser was born about 1552. His father (of a Lancashire family related to the noble house of Spencer) was a journeyman cloth-maker, and was living in London before 1550. Of his mother, Elisabeth, nothing is known. His education began as a "poor scholar" under the "spending of the money of Robert Nowell," and at Merchant Taylor's School opened in 1561. In 1569 he matriculated at Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, and in 1576 took his degree of M.A. There is little doubt, judging from work he did at this time, that he showed remarkable ability. His Miscellany published by Dr. Jan van der Noodt, called "A Theatre for Worldlings," showed considerable promise, but was only later acknowledged by Spenser. At Pembroke College he matriculated as a sizar, which indicates his poverty. A sizar's duties consisted of menial work for which bread and lodgings were returned as payment. It was here he met Harvey and Edward Kirke, the latter a fellow-sizar. They both became stimulating and sympathetic friends to Spenser. Harvey, who was a Fellow of the College, deeply interested himself in Spenser, and being himself a student of literature, there is no doubt his good influence was considerable. It was

at a later period that this power was to be feared, Harvey's pedantic suggestions being deleterious to the free growth of Spenser's powers.

After obtaining his degree, Spenser left Cambridge, and despite the poor social position occupied there, his affection lasted until the end of his life for "my mother Cambridge." From there he went on a visit to his kinsfolk in Lancashire. At this time Spenser was in poor health, possessing very little money, and with no plans for the future. During this visit, it is supposed he met a woman of higher social pretensions than his own, with whom he fell in love, and who figures as Rosalind in much of his future work. She disdained the poor poet, but instead of this disappointment driving him to despair, it aroused him to make fresh efforts. Harvey writes to him to "forsake his shire" and come to London where he will present him to the Earl of Leicester. Spenser followed Harvey's advice, and on his arrival an introduction takes place. Leicester is impressed and offers him secretarial employment and his abode in Leicester House. Sir Philip Sidney, the Earl's relative, became acquainted with Spenser here, and a friendship which was deep and life-lasting began between the two poets. Spenser soon felt the influence of the culture he was surrounded by. Leicester House gave him the opportunity of mooting the great in every walk of life. His ambitions were stirred and he seriously began his literary career. *The Shepheard's Calendar* was published in 1579, and although it placed Spenser immediately in the highest rank of living writers, Drayton declared "Master Edmund Spenser had done enough for the immortality of his name had he only given us his *The Shepheard's Calendar*, a masterpiece if any."

The poet was suffering from pecuniary embarrassment. His great hope when he entered Leicester House was that it was the gateway to a substantial official position. Just as he was feeling that Leicester was disappointing in this respect, a position was offered which for a time quietened Spenser's uneasiness.

In 1580 Spenser secured the post of secretary to Lord Grey de Wilton, who had just been made Lord Deputy of Ireland. Had he been able to exercise his own wishes he would never have left "Merry London." He loved his native town, and only accepted the office in Ireland thinking it would lead him home again to a permanent official post. He went to Dublin with the Queen's Deputy and no doubt was present at the Desmond Rebellion. His *View of Ireland* tells of the terrible scenes in the Munster province, and no doubt shocked his gentle poetic nature and made him long more than ever for England. As there seemed no prospect of his being able to return, he applied himself to his duties and preferments quickly came to him. He obtained many good positions which he held with his secretaryship. Much land was given him, he had many congenial companions who thoroughly appreciated his genius and stirred him to give the world more proofs of his poetic genius. At Kilcolman, an old castle of the Desmonds, in the beautiful country of the Galtee Hills, County Cork, Spenser began to reside in 1588. Among other visitors came Sir Walter Raleigh, and listened with wonder and admiration to Spenser's reading of the beginning of the great poem the *Faerie Queene*. Raleigh, himself a poet, read to Spenser his poem *Cynthia*. Through the sympathetic understanding and appreciation of Spenser's work the two writers soon became close friends. For an interesting account of their connection, see *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*, Spenser's autobiographical poem. Raleigh was anxious that the *Faerie Queene*, even in the incomplete poem, should at once be published. It was owing to his persuasion that Spenser accompanied him to Court in order that Queen Elizabeth might see their writings. Spenser was quite willing to rush away to his beloved London, ever hoping that he might have the good fortune to meet with the official appointment which would keep him there. The three completed books were published and dedicated to the Queen. Their reception was all that could be desired, and their success immediate. The Queen granted him a pension of fifty pounds a year. We must remember how much greater a sum that represented then compared to the present day. It would have been larger but for Lord Burghley's interference. Poets seeking lucrative positions were not looked upon with much favour by the great statesman. Spenser never forgave Lord Burghley. The smallness of the pension would not allow him to give up his post in Ireland, so once more he had to return. Late in the year 1591, he is again attending his duties as Clerk of the Council and working at the *Faerie Queene*. We may presume the following two years were passed in this way, until we come to the great change which took place in his private life. This was his marriage on June 11, 1594, to Elizabeth Boyle, daughter of James Boyle, and a relation of Richard Boyle, who was later Earl of Cork. Little is known of the bride except what can be gathered from his *Amoretti* and *Epithalamion*. There were four if not five children born. 1596 sees him once again in London, but in 1597 he returned with his wife and children to Kilcolman. Having previously resigned his Clerkship to Sir Richard Boyle, a relation of his wife's, he was appointed in 1598 Sheriff of Cork. In this year Tyrone's rebellion arose. The Castle Kilcolman was set on fire and Spenser had only just time to escape with his household. It was thought for some time that his youngest child had perished in the flames.

In 1598, on January 16, Spenser died in a tavern in King Street, Westminster. There is a tradition that he was in extreme poverty at the end, even wanting bread. To Jonson we owe the statement that "he refused twenty pieces sent him by my Lord Essex, saying he was sure he had no time to spend them."

The poet died at the early age of forty-seven and lies in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey, the funeral expenses being borne by the Earl of Essex. It was the Queen's wish that the responsibility of a monument above his grave should be due to her, but her purpose was frustrated by a dishonest royal servant, who stole the money given him for the work. The grave was left unhonoured for

twenty-one years, when Ann Clifford, Countess of Dorset, raised a monument on which was inscribed: "Here lyes expecting the second comminge of our Saviour Christ Jesus, the body of Edmund Spenser, the Prince of Poets in his Tyme, whose divine spirit needs noe other witnesse than the workes which he left behind."

PUBLICATIONS

The Shepherd's Calendar, entered at Stationers' Hall, December 5, 1579.
Colin Clout's Come Home Again, published 1595.
Faerie Queene, first three books published, 1590.
Faerie Queene, second three books published, 1596.
Two Cantos of some following books of the *Faerie Queene*, 1609.
Complaints, nine miscellaneous poems appeared early in 1591. One of these, *Mlnopotmos*, or the *Fate of the Butterfly*, had already been issued in 1590.
Prosopopoia, or more often called *Mother Hubberd's Tale*, a satire. This is amongst the collection.
Daphnaida, an elegy, 1592.
Amoretti, and *Epithalamion*, 1595.
Prothalamion, a "Spousal" Ode, privately printed in 1596.
Four Hymns, now lost, in 1596.
Astrophel, an Arcadian elegy on Sir Philip Sidney's death, 1586. This same year he wrote his prose treatise, *View of Ireland*.

The Shepherd's Calendar is modelled on the artificial pastoral popularised by the Renascence, and inspired by Virgil and Theocritus. Technically it is a poem of considerable merit, and shows great adroitness in dealing with various old-time metres in a fresh and masterly way. While his love of allegory leads him to pretty pieces of word painting such as the delightful *Oak and the Briar*. Comparing the poem with the verse preceding it, one realises the richness, the warm pictorial beauty, and sense of amplitude hitherto alien to our poetry.

But *The Shepherd's Calendar* pales in significance beside the *Faerie Queene*.

This poem was neither written in England nor inspired by England. Ireland is the inspiration; Ireland is the scenic background; Ireland supplies the stuff of adventure; Ireland—the troublous, storm-tossed Ireland of Elizabeth's reign.

The enemies of Gloriana were flesh and blood enemies; the knights came from Elizabeth's Court—were not Raleigh, Ormonde, and Grey of their number? And for this reason, perhaps, this poem has been called the Epic of the English Wars in Ireland under Elizabeth.

The poem reveals a sober, chaste, and sensitive spirit; one keenly alive to sensuous beauty, but kept from the grossness and coarseness of some of his brilliant contemporaries by a mind of singular refinement; and beauty is for him of the supremest value in life. Small wonder that Keats was fired by his verse, for certainly his famous phrase, "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever," is entirely Spenserian in sentiment.

The poem set out to be a story with twelve knights of Elizabeth who undertake various enterprises in her honour. But the poet had, unlike Chaucer, little gift of lucidity, and soon wanders off the main road into the flowery meads of fancy. Starting in the middle of one of the adventure, he never completes his initial design, and the poem is merely a lovely mosaic into which are woven deeds of chivalry and pictorial fantasies, and grave moralising. From the pleasaunces and excitements of chivalry Spenser takes his ideas; yet he is not content merely to tell an entertaining story as Tasso and Ariosto had done, but to present his visions in a framework of high and noble purpose. Indeed, in a letter to Raleigh he avows his purpose is "to fashion a gentleman . . . in virtuous and gentle discipline."

What differentiates Spenser from, say, Shakespeare the poet is the equable calm that pervades even his fervour. Sensitive to every phase of imagination and beauty, there is always a dreamy atmosphere about his verse. The sharp, vivid intensity of Shakespeare is not his; but he has his own particular charm.

His genius is epic, not lyric; he is a story-teller, not a singer. He has something of Homer's ancient simplicity, though not the poignancy. But the similes are primal and direct.

A wounded hero falls

". . . as an aged tree,
High growing on the top of rocky cliff,"

His is a rich ornate imagination; yet it rarely becomes turbid and oppressive. If it lacks Marlowe's thrill, it certainly also lacks his violence. It is a thing of prismatic colouring, refracting the white light of common day in delicate rainbow hues. The symbolism behind his faerie music need not trouble us; and we may enjoy the adventures of his Knight of the Cross defending his beloved Una, almost without realising that it is a battle between truth and falsehood with which he is concerned.

The Amoretti—love sonnets, fall far below the level of Shakespeare's splendid series; and that curious undertone of melancholy that sounds through most Renascence poetry is blended here delicately with frank and sensitive delight in the beauty and splendour of things. Intenser in its passion, and therefore more arresting in its hold upon the reader is the *Epithalamion*. There is no relatively short poem that exhibits more happily the sensuous sweetness, and the rapture of Spenser's best work, than this poem.

The manuscript of *Colin Clout* was sent to his friend Sir Walter Raleigh on his arrival back in England in 1591, but was not published till 1595. It is livelier than most of Spenser's work; the dreamy languor that hangs like a silver mist over his pictures is here thrown aside for a space. It is a brilliant piece of vigorous retrospect, and a happy and affectionate tribute to Raleigh's protection.

His prose work on Ireland is an able and thoughtful contribution to the Irish problem from the English point of view. Granting the point of view—that could scarcely have been otherwise with one in Spenser's position—it shows an insight into the causes of disaffection, and a frank criticism of English rule, in advance of the time. The book displays a side of Spenser's powers not illustrated in his poetry; a shrewdness of insight, and on the whole a fair and judicious spirit.

Spenser has been happily called the "poet's poet." In his own day he influenced a large number of verse writers, of more or less power. Cowley and

Dryden as a later period testified to his inspiring influence as a literary artist; Milton paid him warm tribute; and even Pope, whose poetic faculty is so different in kind from that of the Elizabethan, admitted to his compelling magic. The indebtedness of Keats and Tennyson is easily comprehensible; but the most significant testimony to the greatness of this romantic Puritan lies in the power he wields over versifiers so alien in imaginative vision as Dryden and Pope. The height of a mountain can never be fairly gauged till the looker-on is at a distance and can measure the relative importance of the hills before him. Lesser heights dwindle and melt into the horizon as we pass through the centuries. Spenser like Shakespeare still stands up sharply and distinctly against the skies; intervening hills of minor importance may have shut him off from those of us in the plain, but ascend any of our own heights—Browning, Tennyson, and William Morris—and we see him at once. And even those who have never read a line of the *Faerie Queene* have met him unknown and unrecognised in *The Earthly Paradise*. Limitations he had, of course; the splendour of Shakespeare is beyond his grasp, and the fine austerity of Milton. But no poet in any age or clime had a richer and fuller sense of sensuous loveliness than he, or a more masterly command of the resources of rhythmic music and pictorial phrasing, such as would reveal this loveliness in words.

FAERIE QUEENE

The Patrone of true Holinesse
Foule Errour doth defeate:
Hypocrisie, him to entrappe,
Doth to his home entreate.

I

A gentle Knight was pricking on the plaine,
Ycladd in mightie armes and silver shielde,
Wherein old dints of deepe woundes did remaine,
The cruell markes of many a bloody fielde;
Yet armes till that time did he never wield.
His angry steede did chide his foming bitt,
As much disdayning to the curbe to yield:
Full jolly knight he seemed, and faire did sitt,
As one for knightly giusts and fierce encounters fitt.

II

And on his brest a bloudie Crosse he bore,
The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,
For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he wore.
And dead, as living, ever him ador'd:
Upon his shield the like was also scor'd,
For soveraine hope which in his helpe he had.
Right faithfull true he was in deede and word,
But of his cheere did seeme too solemne sad;
Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad.

III

Upon a great adventure he was bond,
That greatest Gloriana to him gave,
(That greatest Glorious Queene of Faery lond)
To winne him worshippe, and her grace to have,
Which of all earthly thinges he most did crave:
And ever as he rode his hart did earne
To prove his puissance in battell brave
Upon his foe, and his new force to learne,
Upon his foe, a Dragon horrible and sterne.

IV

A lovely Ladie rode him faire beside,
Upon a lowly Asse more white than snow,
Yet she much whiter; but the same did hide
Under a vele, that wimpled was full low;
And over all a blacke stole she did throw.
As one that inly mourned, so was she sad,
And heavie sate upon her palfrey slow;
Seemed in heart some hidden care she had,
And by her, in a line, a milkewhite lambe she lad.

V

So pure and innocent, as that same lambe,
She was in life and every vertuous lore;
And by descent from Royall lynage came
Of ancient Kinges and Queenes, that had of yore
Their sceptres stretcht from East to Westerne shore,
And all the world in their subjection held;
Till that infernall feend with foule uprore
Forwasted all their land, and them expeld;
Whom to avenge she had this Knight from far compeld.

VI

Behind her farre away a Dwarfe did lag,
That lasie seemed, in being ever last,
Or wearied with bearing of her bag
Of needments at his backe. Thus as they past,
The day with cloudes was suddeine overcast,
And angry Jove an hideous storme of raine
Did powre into his Lemans lap so fast,
That everie wight to shrowd it did constrain;
And this faire couple eke to shroud themselves were fain.

VII

Enforst to seeke some covert nigh at hand,
A shadie grove not farr away they spide,
That promist ayde the tempest to withstand;
Whose lofie trees, yclad with sommers pride,
Did spread so broad, that heavens light did hide,
Not perceable with power of any starr:
And all within were pathes and alleies wide,
With footing worne, and leading inward farr.
Faire harbour that them seemes, so in they entered ar.

VIII

And foorth they passe, with pleasure forward led,
Joying to heare the birdes sweete harmony,
Which, therein shrouded from the tempest dred,
Seemd in their song to scorne the cruell sky.
Much can they praise the trees so straight and hy,
The sayling Pine; the Cedar proud and tall;
The vine-propp Elme; the Poplar never dry;
The builder Oake, sole king of forreste all;
The Aspin good for staves; the Cypresse funerall;

IX

The Laurell, meed of mightie Conquerours
And Poets sage; the Firre that weepeth still;
The Willow, worne of forlorne Paramours;
The Eugh, obedient to the benders will;
The Birch for shaftes; the Sallow for the mill;
The Mirrhe sweete-bleeding in the bitter wound;
The warlike Beech; the Ash for nothing ill;
The fruitfull Olive; and the Platane round;
The carver Holme; the Maple seldom inward sound.

X

Led with delight, they thus beguile the way,
Until the blustering storme is overblowne;
When, weening to returne whence they did stray,
They cannot finde that path, which first was showne,
But wander too and fro in waies unknowne,
Furthest from end then, when they nearest weene,
That makes them doubt their wits be not their owne:
So many pathes, so many turnings seene,
That which of them to take in diverse doubt they been.

. . . . .

Book II Canto I

XXXII

"Joy may you have, and everlasting fame,
Of late most hard atchiev'ment by you donne,
For which enrolled is your glorious name
In heavenly Registers above the Sunne,
Where you a Saint with Saints your seat have wonne:
But wretched we, where ye have left your marke,
Must now anew begin like race to ronne,

God guide thee, Guyon, well to end thy warke,
And to the wished haven bring thy weary barke!"

XXXIII

"Palmer," him answered the Redcrosse knight,
"His be the praise that this atchiev'ment wrought,
Who made my hand the organ of his might:
More then goodwill to me attribute nought;
For all I did, I did but as I ought.
But you, faire Sir, whose pageant next ensewes,
Well mote ye thee, as well can wish your thought
That home ye may report thrise happy newes;
For well ye worthy bene for worth and goodly thewes"

XXXIV

So courteous congé both did give and take,
With right hands plighted, pledges of good will.
Then Guyon forward gan his voyage make
With his blacke Palmer, that him guided still:
Still he him guided over dale and hill,
And with his steady staffe did point his way;
His race with reason, and with words his will,
From foule intemperaunce he oft did stay,
And suffred not in wrath his hasty steps to stray.

XXXV

In this faire wise they travelld long yiere,
Through many hard assayes which did betide;
Of which he honour still away did beare,
And spred his glory through all countryes wide.
At last, as chaunst them by a forest side
To passe, for succour from the scorching ray,
They heard a ruefull voice, that dearnly cride
With piercing shrieches and many a dolefull lay;
Which to attend awhile their forward steps they stay.

XXXVI

"But If that careless heavens," (quoth she) "despise
The doome of just revenge, and take delight
To see sad pageaunts of mans miseries,
As bownd by them to live in lives despight;
Yet can they not warne death from wretched wight.
Come, then; come soone; come, sweetest death, to me,
And take away this long lent loathed light:
Sharpe be thy wounds, but sweete the medicines be,
That long captived soules from weary thraldome free.

EPITHALAMION

Open the temple gates unto my love,
Open them wide that she may enter in,
And all the postes adorne as doth behove,
And all the pillours deck with garlands trim,
For to receive this Saynt with honour dew,
That cometh in to you.
With trembling steps, and humble reverence
She cometh in before th' Almighty's view;
Of her ye virgins learne obedience,
When so ye come into those holy places,
To humble your proud faces:
Bring her up to th' high altar, that she may
The sacred ceremonies there partake,
The which do endlesse matrimony make;
And let the roring Organs loudly play
The praises of the Lord in lively notes;
The whiles, with hollow throates,
The Quiristers the joyous Anthems sing,
That all the woods may answere, and their eccho ring.
Behold, whiles she before the altar stands,
Hearing the holy priest that to her speakes,
And blesseth her with his two happy hands,
How the red roses flush up in her cheekes,
And the pure snow, with goodly vermill stayne,
Like crimsin dyde in grayne,
That even th' Angels, which continually
About the sacred Altare doe remaine,
Forget their service and about her fly,
Oft peeping in her face, that seems more fayre
The more they on it stare.
But her sad eyes, still fastened on the ground,
Are governèd with goodly modesty,
That suffers not one looke to glaunce awry,
Which may let in a little thought unsownd.
Why blush ye, love, to give to me your hand,
The pledge of all our band?
Sing, ye sweet Angels, Alleluya sing,
That all the woods may answere, and your eccho ring

PROTHALAMION

Calm was the day, and through the trembling ayre
Sweete-breathing Zephyrus did softly play . . .
Along the shoare of silver streaming Themmes;
Whose rutty Bancke, the which his River hemmes
Was painted all with variable flowers,
And all the meades adorned with daintie gemmes.

There, in a Meadow, by the Rivers side,
A Flocke of Nymphes I chaunced to espy,
All lovely Daughters of the Flood thereby,
With goodly greenish locks, all loose untyde,
As each had bene a Bryde;
And each one had a little wicker basket,
Made of fine twigs, entrayled curiously,
In which they gathered flowers to fill their flasket,
And with fine Fingers cropt full feateously
The tender stalkes on hye.
Of every sort, which in that Meadow grew,
They gathered some; the Violet, pallid blew,
The little Dazie, that at evening closes,
The virgin Lillie, and the Primrose trew,
With store of vermeil Roses,
To decke their Bridegromes posies
Against the Brydale day, which was not long:
Sweete Themmes! runne softly, till I end my Song.

With that I saw two Swannes of goodly hewe
Come softly swimming downe along the Lee;
Two fairer Birds I yet did never see;
The snow, which doth the top of Pindus strew,
Did never whiter shew,
Nor Jove himselfe, when he a Swan would be,
For love of Leda, whiter did appear;
Yet Leda was (they say) as white as he,
Yet not so white as these, nor nothing neare;
So purely white they were,
That even the gentle streame, the which them bare,
Seem'd foule to them, and bad his billowes spare
To wet their silken feathers, lest they might
Soyle their fayre plumes with water not so fayre,
That shone as heavens light,
Against their Brydale day, which was not long:
Sweete Themmes! runne softly, till I end my Song.

. . . . . .

Then forth they all out of their baskets drew
Great store of Flowers, the honour of the field,
That to the sense did fragrant odours yield,
All which upon those goodly Birds they threw
And all the Waves did strew.
That like old Peneus Waters they did seeme,
When downe along by pleasant Tempe shore,
Scattered with Flowers, through Thessaly they streame,
That they appear, through Lillies plenteous store,
Like a Brydes Chamber flore.
Two of those Nymphes, meane while, two Garlands bound
Of freshest Flowers which in that Mead they found,
The which presenting all in trim Array,
Their snowy Foreheads therewithall they crowned,
Whilst one did sing this Lay,
Prepar'd against that Day,
Against their Brydale day, which was not long:
Sweete Themmes! runne softly, till I end my Song.

Ye gentle Birdes! the worlds fayre ornament,
And heavens glorie, whom this happie hower
Doth hade unto your lovers blissful bower,
Joy may you have, and gentle hearts content
Of your loves complacment:
And let fair Venus, that is Queene of love,
With her heart-quelling Sonne upon you smile,
Whose smile, they say, hath vertue to remove
All Love dislike, and friendships faultie guile
For ever to assoile.

Let endless Peace your steadfast hearts accord,
And blessed Plenty wayt upon your bord:
And let your bed with pleasures chast abound,
That fruitful issue may to you afford,
Which may your foes confound,
And make your joyes redound
Upon your Bridale day, which is not long:
Sweete Themmes! runne softly, till I end my Song.

. . . . . .

Above the rest were goodly to bee scene
Two gentle Knights of lovely face and feature,
Beseeming well the bower of any Queene,
With gifts of wit, and ornaments of nature,
Fit for so goodly stature,
That like the twins of Jove they seem'd in sight,
Which decke the Baudricke of the Heavens bright;
They two, forth pacing to the Rivers side,
Received those two fayre Brides, their Loves delight;
Which, at th' appointed tyde,
Each one did make his Bryde
Against their Bridale day, which is not long:
Sweete Themmes! runne softly, till I end my Song.

EARLIER SONG WRITERS AND SONNETEERS

Spenser's allegorical and descriptive vein of poesy inspired a number of his contemporaries and successors to work this vein much further. Some, however, there were who were caught more particularly by the passion for sonneteering, whilst others inaugurated that lilting school of song writers that flourished from Elizabethan times down to the close of the Restoration period.

First, concerning the *Sonneteers*. At an earlier period Surrey and Wyatt had shown some skill in this direction, but between 1593 and 1600 there was an amazing outburst of this form of poetry, and scarcely less remarkable than the fertility is the quality attained by a few names otherwise obscure in our literature.

Putting aside the work of the greater men, of Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare, there are the names of Barnes, Fletcher, Lodge, Daniel, Drayton, Constable, and Fulke Greville, and uncertain and varying as was the excellence of their craftsmanship, their work is at times equal to that of the great master himself.

The word "sonnet" is probably an abbreviation of the Italian *sonetto* (a little sound), and was a short poem recited originally to a musical accompaniment. Like the lyric, it was a single emotion or idea expressed in rhythmic melody; and it differed from the ordinary lyric less in conception than in form—as anyone may see for himself by comparing, say, one of Shakespeare's Sonnets on Love with one of his Songs on Love. The lilt and abandonment of the lyric are replaced by a more deliberate manner, a more austere treatment. There may be the same intensity of feeling, and an equal scope for fancy, but in one case it affects one like the scent of a wayside flower, in the other like the fragrance of a well-ordered garden.

The sonnet began to take shape as a special metrical form under Fra Guittone d'Arezzo, in the thirteenth century. He perfected the mechanism; Petrarch and Dante crowned it with beauty and power. The sweetness of its music at length attracted the early poets of the Renascence, but they lacked the cunning to make it yield up its magic. Then came Sidney with his caressing sweetness, who showed what might be done with it; and from his time the sonnet swiftly passes from a metrical experiment into poetry.

Without discussing here the various divergences from the Italian form of sonnet, made by English verse writers, we must not overlook the fact that the formal modifications characterising the Shakespearean form were first of all introduced by Daniel and Drayton. Drayton's sonnet, *A Parting*, is a magnificent piece of verse, sure in its handling, at once strong and restrained in its expression of passion.

A PARTING

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part,—
Nay I have done, you get no more of me;
And I am glad, yea glad with all my heart,
That thus so cleanly I myself can free;

Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,
And when we meet at any time again,
Be it not seen in either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain.

Now at the last gasp of love's latest breath,
When his pulse failing, passion speechless lies,
When faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
And innocence is closing up his eyes,

—Now if thou would'st, when all have given him over
From death to life thou might'st him yet recover!

Daniel's work, though less masterly, is skilful and pleasing always, occasionally touching great heights; but Daniel, no less than Drayton, did for Shakespeare's sonneteering, much what Marlowe did for his blank verse. They showed the way; his genius did the rest.

Around Spenser are a number of verse writers, who, while influenced largely by him and to a less extent by Sidney in their choice of subject, have yet sufficient creative power of their own to make us realise the richness of the poetic wealth now to our hand. There is GILES FLETCHER, graceful and fantastic; the many sided THOMAS LODGE, whose madrigals are unexcelled for dainty sweetness; WILLIAM PERCY, to whose scholarly gifts might be added the more dubious accomplishment of copious ale-drinking, and whose work is suggestive of contemporary French as well as the usual Italian influences; the mysterious "J. C." with his pretty aphoristic gift displayed in six-line stanzas.

There are also NICHOLAS BRETON, versatile in moods and methods, but at his happiest in sentimental conceits; and HENRY CONSTABLE, whose sonnets have no small measure of Spenser's sensuous charm.

"My Lady's presence makes the Roses red,
Because to see her lips they blush for shame.
The Lily's leaves, for envy, pale became;
And her white hands in them this envy bred.
The Marigold the leaves abroad doth spread;
Because the sun's and her power is the same.
The Violet of purple colour came,
Dyed in the blood she made my heart to shed.
In brief all flowers from her their virtue take;
From her sweet breath, their sweet smells do proceed
The living heat which her eyebeams doth make
Warmeth the ground, and quickeneth the seed.
The rain, wherewith she watereth the flowers,
Falls from mine eyes, which she dissolves in showers."

Some of these writers belong to the group of song-writers that constitute a special side of Renascence poetry. These will be more conveniently considered later, as they extend well into Jacobean times and merge almost imperceptibly into the lyricists of the Restoration period.

Descriptive poetry, whether purely narrative, or satirical in object, belongs more peculiarly to the Spenserian province. Some consideration of this may well round off this chapter.

Five noteworthy names here are DANIEL and DRAYTON, LODGE, HALL, and DONNE.

Of the first two, something already has been said; but these two men were more than sonneteers. Daniel was a prose-man as well as a poet, witness his spirited *Defence of Rhyme*. He was a west country man with an ardent imagination and an admirable technique. Art laid restraining hands upon him, and checked, as she often failed in doing, the tendency of the day to extravagance and audacity. Yet he is in no way chill; and has the gift—rare enough at any time, especially in Elizabethan—of moralising agreeably and pleasantly. His historical poem *Rosamund* is perhaps his best descriptive piece; quiet, restrained, yet full of pathos.

Michael Drayton is one of the most astonishing writers of his time. His versatility was amazing, and there is scarcely any side of poetic craftsmanship which he could not tackle with success. His literary life opens in 1591, with the *Harmony of the Church*; his sacred verse not pleasing, he reappears in 1593 with the *Shepherd's Garland*, an experiment in pastoral verse. Then came the *Barons' War*, and *England's Heroical Epistles*, while in later life the colossal *Polyolbion*, inspired by patriotic sentiment. As an historical poet he may be regarded as the Scott of his age, and his *Ballad of Agincourt* is a splendid specimen of its kind. Quite in another key is the quaint and fantastic *Nymphidia*; while his satirical gift is well illustrated in short poems like *The Owl* and *The Man in the Moon*.

From "Polyolbion"

Of Albion's glorious isle the wonders whilst I write,
The sundry varying soils, the pleasures infinite,
(Where heat kills not the cold, nor cold expels the heat,
The Calms too mildly small, nor winds too roughly great,
Nor night doth hinder day, nor day the night doth wrong,
The summer not too short, the winter not too long;)
What help shall I invoke to aid my Muse the while?
Thou genius of the place (this most renowned isle),
Which liv'st long before the all-earth-drowning flood,
Whilst yet the world did swarm with her gigantic brood,
Go thou before me still thy circling shores about,
And in this wand'ring maze help to conduct me out:
Direct my course so right, as with thy hand to show
Which way thy forests range, which way thy rivers flow;
Wise genius, by thy help that so I may descry
How thy fair mountains stand, and how thy valleys lie.

FAIRY-KING'S ARMOUR

From "Nymphidia"

And quickly arms him for the field,
A little cockle shell his shield,
Which he could very bravely wield;
Yet could it not be pierced,
His spear a bent both stiff and strong,
And well near of two inches long,
The pike was of a horse-fly's tongue,
Whose sharpness nought reversed.

And puts him on a coat of mail
Which was of a fish's scale,
That when his foe should him assail,
No point should be prevailing:
His rapier was a hornet's sting;
It was a very dangerous thing,
For if he chanc'd to hurt the King,
It would be long in healing.

His helmet was a beetle's head,
Most horrible and full of dread,
That able was to strike one dead,
Yet did it well become him.
And for a plume a horse's hair
Which, being tossed with the air,
Had force to strike his foe with fear,
And turn his weapon upon him.

Himself he on an earwig set,
Yet scarce he on his back could get,
So oft and high he did curvet,
Ere he himself could settle:
He made him turn, and stop, and bound,
To gallop and to trot around,
He scarce could stand on any ground,
He was so full of mettle.

TO HIS COY LOVE

I pray thee, leave! Love me no more!
Call home the heart you gave me!
I but in vain, that Saint adore;
That can, but will not, save me!
These poor half-kisses kill me quite!
Was ever man thus served!
Amidst an ocean of delight,
For pleasure to be starved!

Show me no more those snowy breasts,
With azure rivers branched!
Where whilst mine eye with plenty feasts;
Yet is my thirst not stanched!
O Tantalus, thy pains ne'er tell!
By me thou art prevented!
'Tis nothing! to be plagued in Hell;
But this, in Heaven tormented!

Clip me no more in those dear arms;
Nor thy "life's comfort!" call me!
Oh, these are but too powerful charms
And do but more enthral me!
But see, how patient I am grown!
In all this coil about thee!
Come, nice thing! let thy heart alone!
I cannot live without thee!

Satire in English verse had made its first orthodox appearance in Skelton. There is satirical fancy, of course, to be found in our poetry from Saxon times onwards; but the first definite satirist is Skelton. Gascoigne's *Steel Glass* is less clumsy; and he is followed by Joseph Hall with his *Virgidemiarum*; Lodge's satires are not equal to his romantic work, but Hall, though far inferior in general literary power, is a better artist in the domain of satire; and is interesting as a social historian. Donne is so much more than a satirist, and his writings have so many striking points of interest that he is best considered in dealing with the late Renascence period.

So far, the poetry passed under notice has been of the satiric, descriptive, or formally sentimental kind. To find a livelier mood we must turn to a school of poetry that sprung up about the time of

Spenser—the lyric school—and gave expression to the more sensitive and more capricious moods of the Elizabethan.

The lyric was already a literary force both in Italy and France; but until 1580 it did not impress itself upon English imagination. What brought about the sudden flowering of the lyric? To some extent the persistent study of foreign poetry, but chiefly the growing popularity of music.

Such brilliant musicians as BYRD, TALLIS, and DOWLAND needed articulate expression for their sweet lute melodies. The gift of song no doubt was dormant in many an Elizabethan verse-writer. It needed some outside stimulus to call it forth, and assuredly at no time in our history has there been so rich a company of singers; some already famous in other directions as dramatists or novelists, many quite unknown save for their "short swallow flights of song."

WILLIAM BYRD is the earliest of these singers, but his verse is characterised by its quaint moralising rather than by any flight of fancy. Lighter in texture are the Songs of John Dowland, famed for his "heavenly touch upon the lute." In the last years of the sixteenth century he published two volumes of "Songs and Airs." Take this charming snatch from the first volume (1597):

"Dear, if you change, I'll never choose again;
Sweet, if you shrink, I'll never think of love;
Fair, if you fail, I'll judge all beauty vain;
Wise, if too weak, more wits I'll never prove.
Dear, sweet, fair, wise! Change, shrink, nor be not weak;
And, on my faith, my faith shall never break."

CAMPION distinguished himself in three capacities, putting aside his fame as a musician. He wrote masques, among the best of their kind; displayed his nimble wit and scholarship in Latin verse, and discussed in prose form the values of music and poetry.

Campion's songs are light as thistledown, and float away in the air. Of his sonneteering we have already spoken.

Following these came JOHN DANIEL, ROBERT JONES, THOMAS MORLEY, and in the early years of the seventeenth century a crowd of names, about whom in many cases little is known save for the gay and tender lyrics ascribed to them.

SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLAND

Were we to fall asleep like the man in the *Dream of John Ball*, in this grey, noisy, bewildering London of ours, and then awake, not in the thirteenth century, but in the age of Shakespeare, what should we see? We should find ourselves in a quaint, picturesque city, about the size of Hyde Park, of narrow, tortuous streets, high-gabled, red-roofed wooden houses, and pleasant flower gardens, flanked about with green meadows, and windmills. No turbid, dingy river then, but what Spenser rightly called the "silver streaming Thames," busy with merchandise and gay with silk-covered tilt-boats, and merry-makers. For the river is the great highway of the time, and country cousins up to see the sights and young gallants bent on roystering, favour it alike, in preference to the crowded, cobbled streets.

Piccadilly is a country lane lush with flowers, King's Cross and Whitechapel are quiet, rural spots. At Holborn, we are skirting the meadows, and Regent Street is in Arcadia. Southwark is a pleasure-making village with its old Tabard Inn and rustic surroundings. From Temple Bar to Westminster, the way is gorgeous with spacious mansions, and formal gardens that run down to the water side.

Westminster, of course, was a city in itself, with its Palace, its Great Hall, its Almonry, its noble Abbey. But the traveller who struck up northwards would find himself among the buttercups where now curves Shaftesbury Avenue. From all parts of England, men turned towards London, dazzled by its pictorial splendour and material comforts.

Certainly she was attractive enough to the eye, both of the pleasure-seeker and the man of business. The latter saw in her black-fronted taverns, places where he could hire seamen for adventuring on the Spanish Main, while he gauged the trading possibilities of the new craze for literature under the shadow of Westminster. The pleasure-seeker, after enjoying the fashionable promenade down the great aisle of St. Paul's, or the bazaar-like excitement of the Royal Exchange, could elect between the Bear Gardens across the water or one of those strange novel entertainments without the City, at "The Curtain" in Shoreditch or "The Globe" in Southwark. The countryman would note with wonder the ancient walls that flung their grey protecting arms around the city, and would gaze, in mingled horror and fascination at the grim battlements of the Tower, dark with years, sinister with secrets; the symbol of despotic power and princely munificence. On the grassy plain of Spitalfields he could watch the artillery exercise; could appraise the city archers on the marshy ground of Finsbury, and duly admire the royal hunting ground, afterwards known as Hyde Park.

The streets are ill-lighted and roughly paved, with no footpaths for the cautious pedestrian; the houses are nameless and unnumbered, known by the flapping signs that projected from their doorways. The traffic is not considerable, happily enough; as it is, it requires no small skill to avoid the splashing from those on horseback and from the few cumbrous chariots that ground their way along.

Let us turn aside for a moment from the rough street and into an Elizabethan mansion with its formal old garden. Looking in at the front gate, we may see the wide terraces and broad straight walk, the geometrical flower beds, the trimmed yew hedges and intertwining willows, the inevitable fountain and florid Renascence sculpture.

More imposing is the interior with its spacious galleries and huge bedrooms, rich in embroideries and tapestries, but poor in what we to-day should call comforts. For there are rushes for carpets and benches for chairs.

Back again into the streets. What a medley of colour and costumes! The men and women seem

to be living in a perpetual fancy dress ball. There is little to differentiate the sexes in the matter of gorgeous ornament. William Harrison, household chaplain to Lord Cobham, sternly reproves the extravagance of the time. "Oh how much cost is bestowed nowadays upon our bodies and how little upon our souls; how many suits of apparel hath the one, and how little furniture the other."

Portia's remarks upon one of her lovers hit off happily the fashion of the day: "He is a proper man's picture, but alas, who can converse with a dumb show? How oddly he is suited; I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour everywhere."

False hair was greatly in request; and a curious and ghastly touch is given to a contemporary account of Mary Stuart's death by the description of how the beautiful, glossy tresses fell away, disclosing short grey hair, as "one of three score and ten years old."

I do not know that the Elizabethan lady was more artificial than many society women to-day. She has been taken to task severely—one cannot say unfairly—for her gorgeous apparel, her innumerable costumes, her dyes, her perfumes, her "magic" for preserving the complexion; but after all, are not these things to be found in Bond Street and Regent Street to day? Stiffly starched ruffs (starch was introduced about this time) and jewel-embroidered stomachers are no longer popular; but that is merely by a freak of fashion.

The difference in costume is best seen by comparing the modern nobleman or city man with the Elizabethan gentleman.

"Men," declared Harrison roundly, "are transformed into monsters. Some lusty courtiers and gentlemen of courage do wear either rings of gold, stones, or pearl in their ears, whereby they imagine the workmanship of God to be no little amended. But (he concludes) they rather disgrace than adorn their persons, as by their niceness in apparel, for which I say most nations not unjustly deride us, also for that we do seem to imitate all nations round about us, wherein we be like to the polypus or chameleon." Ribbons and roses adorned the locks of the exquisites; the waists were pinched in; the hands artificially whitened; mirrors peeped from their girdles; high-heeled boots improved the stature; whilst the hair was treated in the most fantastic ways.

What would be the daily ritual of a typical Londoner, not engaged in commerce? He would rise at daybreak and partake of a heavy breakfast of meat, fish, and ale—for tea was still a thing of the future. After breakfast, he might go to the apothecary's shop, where tobacco could be bought, and maybe look in at the bookseller's if of a studious turn of mind, and look at the latest novel by Lyly or Lodge, with a view to giving such to one of his women folk. Afterwards, at eleven, he would go to "Paul's Walke," inside the great city Cathedral, a place fitly summarised as "the meeting place of friends, the resort of poets, actors, gallants, traders and cheats; a club, a promenade, a sanctuary, a mart. There can you see your tailor, chat with your friends, hear the latest news about Drake, and dodge your creditors." This did a contemporary, John Earle, describe it: "A heape of stones and men, with a vast confusion of Languages, and, were the Steeple not sanctified, nothing liker Babel. The noyse in it is like that of Bees, a strange humming or buzzie,—mixt of walking, tongues and feet: it is a kind of still roare or loud whisper. It is the great Exchange of all discourse, and no businesse whatsoever but is here stirring and afoot."

From St. Paul's, back for the midday dinner, along the aristocratic Strand, and by the big shops of King Street, Westminster, with the cry of "What d'ye lack, gentles, what d'ye lack?" in your ears. Itinerant hawkers throng the roadway, ready to oblige with anything, from lace to apples. After another big meal with more ale and meat, the drama, at three o'clock, may well serve to while away the afternoon.

What was the theatre like?

These early theatres were primitive concerns, large wooden sheds, partly thatched with rushes, a flagstaff on the roof, and surrounded by a trench. They clustered round the swampy ground beside the Thames, and gave rise to a good deal of vexation to quiet citizens in the neighbourhood. For around these playhouses in the afternoons the narrow, tortuous streets were so crowded by a noisy, frivolous concourse that "business suffered in the shops, processions and funerals were obstructed, and perpetual causes of complaint arose."

Despite objections by the residents, and bitter criticism by the Puritans, now beginning to be a force in the social life, theatres multiplied rapidly, and we gather from the *Histrio-Mastix* of Prynne that in 1633 there were nineteen permanent theatres in London, which for a town of 300,000 inhabitants sufficiently indicates the intense interest taken in the drama.

The difference between the private and public theatres did not lie, as might be imagined, in the fact that admission was by invitation in the one, by payment in the other, but in the construction. The private theatres were designed on the model of the Guild Halls; the public theatres on those of the Inn Yard. The private theatres were the more luxurious, being fully roofed and seated. In the public theatres, on the other hand, the auditorium, as in Ancient Greece, was open to the sky, only the stage being roofed. Thus the pleasure of sight-seeing was of a doubtful kind in bad weather.

Close to the Globe Theatre was the famous Bear Garden, and the propinquity of the illustrious bear-seekers was sufficiently evident to the noses of the audience.

There were no tickets. A penny (about five-pence in our money) admitted to standing room in the yard. Rich spectators watched the performance from boxes on each side of the stage, paying about twelve shillings in modern reckoning for the privilege of a seat. In the upper proscenium box were the orchestra of "The Globe," the largest in London, composed of ten performers, with drum and trumpets for the martial scenes, oboes and flutes to suggest sentimental passages.

The fashionable part of the house was on the

stage itself. There sat the Royal patrons of the theatre, Essex and Southampton, with their friends. Failing seats, these gentlemen sprawled upon the rush-strewn boards, over which they spread their rich cloaks. Here also sat the dramatic poets of the time, to whom were accorded a free pass. Most important of all to us were the shorthand writers, commissioned by piratical booksellers, who took down the dialogue, under pretence of criticising it, and thus preserved for posterity many plays that otherwise would have been lost.

If we complain to-day of Society people who chatter in the stalls and boxes and annoy the players, what would have been thought of the ceaseless hum of conversation between the fashionables on the stage, interspersed with calls for drinks and lights for their pipes? For smoking went on, as in our music halls, throughout the performance.

No very strenuous objection, however, seems to have been raised either by the actors or the audience. They accepted the interruption just as they accepted the primitive scenery, as in no way disturbing the theatrical illusion.

Certainly a great deal was left to the imagination of the spectator, which was not so disastrous a thing as many may think in an age when scarcely anything is left to the imagination.

A trumpet blast started the performance. Then came the Prologue, spoken by an actor in a long black coat. The giving of a tragedy was signalised by draping the stage with black; for a comedy, blue hangings were substituted. A placard hung upon one of the stage doors bore the legend of Venice or Verona, as the case might be; no other indication was there of the *mise-en-scene*. In the the battle scenes an entire army scurried in and out through a single door. One can understand the apology of the Prologue in *Henry V.*:

> ". . . Pardon, gentles all,
> The flat unraised spirits that have dared
> On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
> So great an object: can this cockpit hold
> The vasty fields of France? or may we cram
> Within this wooden O the very casques
> That did affright the air at Agincourt?"

To keep up the spirits of the audience (occasionally damped by untoward storms of rain), there was a jester to dance between the acts.

No women ever appeared on the stage, and very few attended the theatre at all. It was far too rough a place. The Queen summoned the players to Court on special festivals—Twelfth Night, and so on; and Shakespeare's Company often gave a "Command" performance. Hence in some of the plays, notably *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Merchant of Venice*, flattering allusions are made for the benefit of the Queen.

After the performance, if you came on horseback, you looked out for your boy (there is a tradition that Shakespeare once took charge of the horses), then mounted your steed and clattered homeward, taking perhaps on the way one of the many taverns. The tavern played an important part in the life of the day. "It is," says a contemporary, "the busie man's recreation, the idle man's business, the melancholy man's sanctuary, the stranger's welcome, the Inns a Court man's entertainment, the scholar's kindliness and the citizen's curtesie. It is the studie of sparkling wits and a cup of Canary their booke where we leave them."

The concourse at "The Mermaid" had been largely brought together by Sir Walter Raleigh. The kindred souls who met there constituted a kind of Club in days when Clubland was not thought of. Truly a noble gallery, that included Shakespeare, Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, Selden, Carew, Donne, and many others of note. No more convivial spirit amongst them than Jonson, whose "particular vanity" was "a pure cup of rich canary wine," of which he says, "we will sup free but moderately." A pious aspiration which at times, perhaps, remained merely a pious aspiration.

Fuller's description of the two great poets is well known, but it bears repetition: "Many were the wit combats betwixt him (Shakespeare) and Ben Jonson, which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon, and an English man of war. Master Jonson (like the former) was built far higher in learning; solid but slow in her performances. Shakespeare, with the English man of war, lesser in bulk but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention."

Yes; this quickness, the quality which enabled him to paint so supremely the many-sided life of his age.

In this age, Society could be divided broadly into two main divisions—the Gentry and the Citizens. Country squires came up at certain seasons when suits were heard at Westminster, to get their disputes settled, and sometimes spent what was intended for legal business on the pleasures of the town. Jonson suggests rules for making a town gallant out of a country clown:

> "'Twere good you turned four or five acres of your best land into two or three trunks of apparel—you may do it without going to a conjuror . . . learn to play at primero and passage, and even (when you lose) have two or three peculiar oaths to swear by that no man else swears; . . . when you come to play be humorous, look with a good starched face, and ruffle your brow like a new boot, laugh at nothing but your own jests, or else as the noblemen laugh . . . and even when you are to dine or sup in any strange presence, hire a fellow with a great chain (though it be copper its no matter), to bring your letters feigned from such a nobleman, or such a knight, or such a lady."

Bob Sawyer would have rejoiced at the last suggestion; it is worthy to rank with his Church strategy.

After that it may be dark. If on horseback you may get home safely, but if on foot, the wise man takes a link-boy to light him home; and arms himself with one of those ash-tree cudgels, in which sturdy Dr. Johnson placed such confidence as a protection against injuries.

What about country life in these times?

The initial thing that strikes us is the unsanitary condition of the country towns. Brick and stone were gradually coming into use; but wooden houses abounded, with windows of horn (glass was

a luxury) and lattice-work. The streets were for the most part narrow, tortuous, and full of refuse. It was hard to go a dozen paces without falling over a pig; while there seemed to be mass meetings of poultry at every turn. It was considered quite "Progressive" when some of the corporations forbade live stock in the streets without attendants. Every pig must have a keeper.

Leaden pipes for water were not invented till 1535, the water supply coming from wells and running along the streets in open conduits or wooden pipes to the market cross or public fountain.

The villages were built higgledy-piggledy around a large green, with its Maypole and open pool, and contrasted significantly with the snug, trim estates of the country squires, with comfortable, well-arranged gardens, and picturesque, timbered houses.

The village churches, with their well-kept graveyards, made a good second so far as orderly appearance went, and they abounded in picturesque monuments to eminent crusaders and local worthies. The heavy handle of the church door—still a feature of old Norman churches—was for the benefit of fugitive criminals. The wrong-doer could cling to this door till it be opened, and obtain sanctuary for forty days, with leave to embark for some foreign country in case of murder.

The high roads, the pride and glory of Roman Britain, were in a grievous state. They were supposed to be maintained at the expense of the Crown. But the Crown, as a rule, found other more congenial means of spending money. This gave point to Gratiano's sarcastic joke, in *The Merchant of Venice*:

"Why this is like the mending of highways in Summer, When the roads are fair enough."

The age was emphatically an unscientific one, and its crudely superstitious character is reflected in the literature of the time. Nor was this primitive imagining peculiar to the common people, though with them of course it was most manifest. The great Lord Bacon could refer to Copernicus as a "man who thinks nothing of introducing fiction of any kind into nature, provided his calculations turn out well." And he so far shared in the prevalent belief in charms that he maintained that precious stones "may work by consent upon the spirits of men to comfort and exhilarate them."

The medicine man of the day was no whit more satisfactory than Chaucer's Doctor of Physic. Should you wish to be bled, there was the barber-surgeon, for bleeding and tooth drawing. Should you desire a medicine, the apothecary could be consulted. But this gentleman "in tattered weeds with overwhelming brows" had little to offer besides love philtres and charms. Should you wish to send an inconvenient acquaintance hastily to the "bourne from which no traveller returns," you might rely upon him with a measure of confidence; but if you were merely anxious to postpone your own visit there, the apothecary's treatment was less satisfactory.

A special magic of healing attached to the dead: a draught of spring water from the skull of a murdered man; pills compounded from the skull of a man that had been hanged; the touch of a dead man's hand: in all of these much virtue was supposed to lie.

There were two famous physicians of Shakespeare's time, Dr. Andrew Boorde and Dr. Dee. Dr. Boorde insisted on the therapeutic value of washing your face only once a week, and wiping it with a scarlet cloth. Dr. Dee, the Mortlake astrologer, consulted the stars as to the best date for Elizabeth's coronation. She retained him always as her special physician, and made him Chancellor of St. Paul's. Like many of his age, he was an alchemist, and declared that his intercourse with "good" spirits in visions had shown him how to transmute gold from baser metals.

Here, in matters that the science of to-day has made clear and orderly for us, we see the Elizabethan mind at its worst. We see the futilities of the riotous fancy, not the riches. In its imaginative literature we see the riches. The Renascence of classical learning, the stimulus of maritime discovery, the moral problems raised by the Reformation, above all the physical zest for life—and the oneness of beauty and truth; all these influences now bearing upon the social and intellectual life of the day.

Men realised for the first time, the richness and melody of their native tongue. The pageantry of words succeeds the pageantry of the streets. Men gloried in the beauty of language and became word-intoxicated.

Yes, it was an age pre-eminently when England realised

"The world—
The beauty and the wonder and the power,
The shapes of things, their colours, lights, and shades,
Changes, surprises, . . ."

The psychological legacy of the Renascence and Reformation movement was twofold: a splendid access of self-confidence, and an irrepressible faculty for self-expression whether in action or in literature. Man believed in himself, trusted in his powers, dared the Fates as he had never done before. In Shakespeare's time just as in Chaucer's, the gay and jocund crowds stand out against the dark, mysterious background of the Unknown. Chaucer's "privy thief" called Death remains yet a gaunt, sinister figure. But in Shakespeare's day there is one difference. The helplessness of man in the hands of the inscrutable Fates which was strongly and constantly present to the mediæval mind, carries no longer the same appeal. Chaucer faced the tragic issues of life with a kind of stoical reticence, as if to say, "The less said of these things the better. Accept them we must, we can't help ourselves, why dwell on them?" This was not the way of Shakespeare, he faced them boldly, and although he had too tenacious a grasp of the concrete facts of life to cry "Peace" where there was no peace, yet throughout his plays there breathes a sturdy self-reliance and sense of human responsibility.

"Men at some time are masters of their fates;
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings."[1]

[1] *Julius Cæsar.*

"Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,
Which we ascribe to heaven."[1]

Self-reliance, I have said, was a characteristic of the age. Self-expression was another.

Just as a man relied on himself; believed in his own powers, and buoyed with hope, thought no enterprise too perilous to attempt; so did the Elizabethan give amplest expression to passion and instinct.

After the self-repression and austerity of the Middle Ages, they exulted in their new-found freedom, like men let out of the Old Bastille.

In literature and life alike, they were impatient of rule and convention, caring only to give expression to their own special characteristics. To be different from your neighbour; to borrow whatever style in dress or in letters seemed best to suit your disposition. That was the aim. Naturally this led to some excess.

But the wheat and tares grew together, and happily the wheat has more vitality than the tares.

Alongside of the coarseness, the violence, the brutality, may be found splendid endurance, exalted passion, and a broad and tolerant humanity. The people who loved the crude delights of the cock-fight and the bear garden, delight none the less in the self-questioning of a Hamlet and the sentimental refinements of a Faerie Queene.

It was an age of intense curiosity, and exuberant joy of life.

The aggrandisement of wealth, the discovery of other worlds, the acquisition of knowledge; these matters which our more prosaic age seeks after with cooler calculation, and more scientific precision, were sought after by the Elizabethans in the eager, idealising, adventurous spirit of youth. Life was a glorious adventure; and knowledge itself a fantastic game. "Men are fools that wish to die"—that was the burden of Elizabethan song. To suck the marrow out of life; to find out all that was worth knowing; to realise all that was worth the feeling—such was the ideal of Shakespeare's age.

SHAKESPEARE: His Life—His Work—Nature of the Shakespearean Drama—In relation to modern life and thought—The Plays of doubtful authorship—Shakespeare in his Plays.

SHAKESPEARE

His Life

"These plays have had their trial and stood out all appeals." "The applause, delight, and wonder of our stage." These remarks were written in his lifetime by his brother playwrights. Their comments were not all so dulcet and flattering, yet even the, perhaps pardonable, envy of Greene testified to the power of this new dramatic force.

Queen Elizabeth had been reigning nearly six years when William Shakespeare was born, and of no literary genius whose work is universal in its appeal, is so little definitely known as a man and private citizen.

We move in an atmosphere of guesswork, illumined by a few occasional flashes of history. Out of these legends and rumours a fair-seeming and probable story has been constructed, and to avoid the irritating iteration of "perhaps," and "possibly," the account of Shakespeare's life has been given in simple straightforward fashion. But much of it is only conjecture.

John Shakespeare, his father, was the son of Richard Shakespeare, a small farmer living in Smithfield, a village close to Stratford. The son John was described as a glover in a lawsuit in the year 1556, but hides, corn, and general agricultural products were also included in his apparently multifarious business connections. He married Mary Arden in 1557, whose people were also farmers but in a better position than her husband's kinsfolk. Some small landed property was inherited through Mary Arden. There were born to John and Mary, four sons and two daughters: Joan in 1558 and Margret in 1562—both dying in infancy. The third child was William Shakespeare. His father's affairs for the first thirteen years of William's life were in a prosperous condition, for during that time John Shakespeare was elected an alderman (1565), and three years later he was mayor or bailiff. Diminishing business in 1577, when he was still an alderman, necessitated him paying only half his rate—three shillings and fourpence, instead of six shillings and eightpence, our police rate, in those days called "pike and bill rate," and in the next year, through business losses, he was obliged to mortgage some of his property. It was then that William Shakespeare was removed from school and an attempt was made to initiate him in the business of buying and selling the goods his father was concerned in. At the age of eighteen he was pressed, it is believed, into a hasty marriage with Anne Hathaway, by her friends. She was a daughter of Richard Hathaway, who farmed in the close-lying village of Shottery. Anne at the time of their marriage was eight years older than her boy-husband. The date of the marriage contract is November 28, 1582, and in the following May a daughter was born, whom they named Susanna. Twins followed, and were baptized (Hamnet and Judith) on the 2nd February 1585, taking their names probably from Hamnet and Judith Sadler, who were friends and neighbours of Shakespeare. It is recorded that thirty-six shillings and eightpence was left by Hamnet Sadler, at his death, to Shakespeare, to buy a ring. There is no evidence to show how Shakespeare was supporting his growing family. His father's position had been steadily going down, and his family had increased to five. In 1585, having no goods to distrain on, he was arrested. William Shakespeare could have had no assistance from his father. A tradition referring to this period assumes that a short time before 1586, Shakespeare lived the life of a schoolmaster in a village near Stratford. A more likely tale tells us of an escapade in Sir Thomas Lucy's Park, Charlecote. The story goes that a deer was stolen; Sir Thomas ordered Shakespeare to be whipped and

[1] *All's Well that Ends Well.*

imprisoned. If this be so, we may accept the statement that Shakespeare revenged himself by caricaturing Sir Thomas Lucy in presenting him as Justice Shallow in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and in the Second Part of *Henry IV*.

Shakespeare had been married four years when he made up his mind he would leave his native town and try his fortune in the great City. He had seen the players at Stratford, and instinct must have led him to seek them out when he arrived in London. Bidding good-bye to his wife and three children, he started his long walk to the capital, calling at Oxford on the way. London continued to be his home until the year 1609. Six years of hard work had to pass before he seemed to have made much headway, and in these six years, the most obscure in his whole career, there is a legend of him tending visitors' horses outside the playhouse. However that may be, his abilities soon brought him into notice, and he then became a member of one of the best acting companies. These performances doubtless took place in the first theatre known in England. This house was known as The Theatre, and was situated in Shoreditch. Later they moved to the Rose, a playhouse on the Banksido, Southwark, built in 1592. Before his connection with the Globe Theatre, Shakespeare had acted and written plays for a theatre in Newington Butts (1594), The Curtain and The Theatre in Southwark. The famous Globe Theatre—"The Wooden O"—was the scene of Shakespeare's greatest successes. With this theatre and the Blackfriars' Theatre, Shakespeare identified himself until the end of his professional life. It is conjectured he never left England. Occasional tours in the provinces formed the extent of his travelling. Other companies of English actors are known to have toured on the Continent, but there is no evidence that he did so. It is a pity that we have no reliable record of the characters Shakespeare portrayed; though report assigns the Ghost in *Hamlet*, and Adam in *As You Like It*, to their creator.

In 1594 we hear of him acting with William Kemp and Richard Burbage, the two leading actors of their time, before Queen Elizabeth at Greenwich Palace. The Lord Chamberlain paid them for their services £13, 6*s*. 8*d*. The Queen, wishing to express her delight with the performances, in an unusually expansive mood added a further sum of £6, 13*s*. 4*d*. The two amounts would equal in our currency the sum of £160. *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Comedy of Errors* were probably the plays thus favoured, these two plays being the most popular at the Court. During the remaining nine years of Elizabeth's life, many performances were given at her palaces.

When the Earl of Southampton was sentenced to imprisonment for life as a punishment for his association with the Earl of Essex in a rebellion (1601), Shakespeare, fortunately, had little need of his always generous patron. He was now at the height of his dramatic career, and in a position to help many of his younger struggling contemporaries, whom he was wont to meet in Broad Street, at the famous Mermaid Tavern. Playwriting and other literary work probably brought him in three hundred pounds a year. This, with his salary as an actor, would give him an income of over one thousand pounds a year, without adding his share in the profits of the Globe Theatre, and after, at the Blackfriars' Theatre. At the same time he did not forget his native town. He made efforts to raise the family name and fortune; discharging parental debts, at the same time also making himself responsible for their future. In 1599 the College of Heralds gave them their grant of arms. Earlier than this he had purchased the largest house in Stratford, called New Place. After Queen Elizabeth's death (1603), Shakespeare's successes continued, and under the reign of James the First, his popularity became even greater. No great Court festivities were complete without Shakespeare and his company, and there was a constant demand for the great writer's plays.

At, what we account, the early age of fifty-two, Shakespeare's health began to fail. His home was now in Stratford, and thither came Ben Jonson and Michael Drayton to cheer their friend. But perhaps these "merry meetings" proved too merry for an indifferent constitution. It is certain that Shakespeare contracted a fever which hastened his death. On Tuesday, April 23, 1616, he died. His burial, two days afterwards, took place inside Stratford church.

In a sonnet by William Basse, after commenting on the fact of Shakespeare not being buried in Westminster Abbey, he exclaims:

"Under this carved marble of thine own,
Sleep, brave tragedian, Shakespeare, sleep alone."

At Shakespeare's death, his wife and two daughters were living. Judith, the younger, married Thomas Quiney, a son of a neighbour, only two months before her father's death. John Hall, a physician, had married Susanna in 1608, and her tombstone inscription gives the opinion that she had inherited some of her father's wisdom and wit. This daughter became possessor of New Place and most of her father's property. To Judith a silver and gilt bowl, also a tenement in Chapel Lane (in remainder to the elder daughter) and £300. To his wife, "his second best bed and its furniture." Three of his friends, who were fellow-actors, received 26*s*. 8*d*. to buy memorial rings. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

His Work

The period of Shakespeare's literary activity extends over twenty-four years (1588–1612), and this may be broken up into four sub-periods.

The First Period (1588–94). Here historical plays predominate. He continues the work of Marlowe, and essays to mirror the broad national features of Plantagenet life. The one tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet* (1592), is essentially a young man's tragedy, strong in lyric beauty though lacking the grandeur and breadth of the later tragedies; while *The Merchant of Venice* (1594), though in form a comedy, is in a sombre framework of tragic irony, relieved by a golden thread of romance.

For the rest, he writes in buoyant spirits a social extravaganza, *Love's Labour's Lost* (1591); a rollicking farce, *The Comedy of Errors* (1592); a sentimental romance, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*

(1591); and a fantastic romance, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1594–5).

Marlowe probably had a share in the *Henry VI* plays; he frankly inspired *Richard III* and *Richard II*; *King John* being the first of the historical plays which shows an emergence from the domination of Marlowe.

To this period belongs also his earlier verse.

The Early Poetry

While Shakespeare was winning his first successes as a dramatist (1591–4), he appeared suddenly before the public in a fresh capacity. To his patron, the handsome, gallant Earl of Southampton (Henry Wriothesley), he dedicates the "first heire of my invention"—*Venus and Adonis*. It has all the precocity of youth, and is written in an exuberant, unrestrained vein, different from the disciplined power and passion that he so soon attained.

It may well be, that he imagined this literary "wild oat" would interest a man of Southampton's pleasure-loving taste, and was anxious to gratify so influential a man. Burdened as the poem is with the excessive heats of youth and an over-luxuriant fancy, there are the insignia of sweet and melodious poetry about it. When, moreover, in conjunction with this we take the nobler poem *Tarquin and Lucrece*, with its finer restraint and more exalted imagery, none could deny the incursion into literature of a fresh and original force.

"Lucrece," declared Michael Drayton, "was revived to live another age," and the reference to Colin Clout, to one "full of high thoughts and invention," was probably intended for Shakespeare.

The Second Period (1594–1600). Shakespeare has now found himself. There are three historical plays here, finer in quality than those preceding, the two plays of *Henry IV* (1597) and *Henry V* (1598). *Henry V* is the more showy, and has been well described as a "National Anthem in five acts"; but the *Henry IV* plays are far richer in humour and psychological power. Of the comedies, *The Taming of the Shrew* (1595) and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1598) are cast in the early farcical vein, though the handling is easier and stronger; *Much Ado about Nothing* (1599) is on a higher plane of wit; while in *As You Like It* (1600) and *Twelfth Night* (1600) humour and romance blend in perfect proportion.

Meanwhile, in 1594, a fresh essay in poetry is signalised.

The Sonnets

The majority of the sonnets were written probably in 1594, when Shakespeare had gained the patronage of the Earl of Southampton. The popularity of the sonnet was then at its height, and already we have seen what men like Daniel and Drayton, Spenser and Sidney made of it. The form he chose was not the Italian form, and consisted of three decasyllabic quatrains, each rhyming alternately, and rhyming couplet to conclude. Although unequal in power and beauty, they show a far maturer touch than that displayed in the splendid though undisciplined *Venus and Adonis*, and *Tarquin and Lucrece*. How far they express personal experience and voice the emotions of the man rather than the fancy of the artist, it is impossible for us to determine.

Among the commentators will always be two rival schools; the one claiming that here "Shakespeare unlocked his heart"; the other denying that the Sonnets were more than literary exercises. At a first reading the unprejudiced, and one may add unsophisticated reader would imagine certainly that he was listening to some intimate personal confession, and that no flash of real emotion, no gleam of memory lights up these verses, is highly improbable. At the same time we have to remember that love-sickness with all its reproaches, its plaints and its entreaties, was one of the literary conventions of the age. The poet of the time might take some incident in his own career or in that of some contemporary, and concentrate his literary fancies upon that. Sidney did this in his Sonnet cycle, and Shakespeare often illustrates, from contemporary life, some aspect of his dramas. But these are merely spring-boards for the poet's imagination to leap from into the Unknown. There is no need to regard them as autobiographical confessions.

In fact Sidney himself frankly referred to those who

> ". . . do dictionarys method bring
> Into their rhymes running in rattling rowe—
> . . . that poor Petrarch's long deceased woes
> With new-born sighs and denisèd wit do sing."

On the other hand, just as Shakespeare borrowed with royal and genial unconcern, a plot or a character that might strike his fancy (though rarely without glorifying it), so here the student may find palpable parallels between many Shakespearean conceits and those that deck the verse of Daniel and Drayton. As many of Drayton's sonnets were written and available before the date assigned to Shakespeare's, it is not unreasonable to regard the greater man as the borrower here. He is saturated, moreover, with the stock illustrations of Renaissance poetry in the description of the seasons or of a lover's emotion, and though he gave to these ingenious turns and charming touches of his own, he is obviously indebted to the many English disciples of such masters as Petrarch and Ronsard. But if not affording necessarily a clue to his heart, these sonnets afford, as all genuine literary work does, a clue to his personality and temperament, while there are occasional touches of autobiography that no reasonable critic could confute.

Roughly speaking, the impression we have of Shakespeare the Man from the plays is confirmed by the Sonnets. Making all allowance for the dramatic mask that enables the writer to identify himself sympathetically with a particular emotion, we find it quite possible to detach certain vital characteristics that showed us a man of an eager, sensitive nature—one intensely alive to the pleasure of the senses, and to the beauty of the physical world.

The most vivid impression of the man derived from his wealth of dramatic imagination, is the insistent sanity of outlook. This is less apparent in the Sonnets, not merely because they cover only his

earlier years, but because probably some love affair had troubled him, because also he was beginning to find out something of the tricks of friendship and comradeship, in the Court circle to which he was a new comer. There is a lack of emotional balance at times in the Sonnets, whatever allowances may be made for literary convention. And into all the conventional sighs and tears of love, that are the common stock of every contemporary sonneteer, there is suddenly projected a story of intrigue very different in colour and complexion.

Sonnet cxliv starts the tale: "Two loves I have of comfort and despair," and we hear of a man and a woman both of whom the poet had loved dearly. The man had been his dear friend, but the woman suddenly becoming enamoured of him, had drawn him from his allegiance to the poet. Shakespeare makes every allowance for the man; his youth and attraction and inexperience. He feels more bitterly towards the woman. She, he feels, had turned from him towards his friend in sheer wantonness of spirit. But he yields up his mistress rather than lose the comradeship of his friend.

It is possible that the young and brilliant friend is Southampton, his patron; and without assigning any paltry prudential motive to Shakespeare for surrendering his love so readily, we can understand the feeling of the young dramatist, who feels he is no match in bearing and accomplishment for the Earl.

The young poet is responsive to the æsthetic influences at Court, his dawning genius has attracted the attention of the cultured and witty circle that revolves round the Queen. Shakespeare, with all his fastidious sensibilities aroused—for had he not always been an alien to the coarse minds of his own class no less than to the ignorance and crudeness of the mob?—finds himself for the first time amid surroundings that appeal irresistibly to his sense of beauty and refinement, no less than to his literary ambitions. The brilliant young nobleman has taken note of him, and Shakespeare is transported into a heaven of delight. To find a patron is the ambition of every contemporary man of letters, and we need not construe the rapturous compliments of Shakespeare to Southampton, as the fulsome flattery of a snobbish spirit.

In any case—for the reproach of snobbishness hurled against the dramatist may be disregarded for the moment—there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of his attachment, and it is easy to understand how that a temporary lack of balance may have arisen in the poet's mind. The surroundings are all so new; every cultured courtier who greets him with a friendly word, is a Solon; every pretty, soft-eyed woman who coquettes in the fashion of the day with the new comer, is an angel of light. One of them—it may be that the "black-eyed wanton" beauty, Mary Fitton, is the woman in question—takes a fancy to him which he in his inexperience construes as love. Upon her he emptics all the passionate devotion of his nature, to find out later something of the capriciousness of the sex. He realises he has been fooled; sees also that it is madness for him to compete with such men as Southampton. The patron is not to blame; the poet is anxious to find every excuse for him. The woman has deliberately entangled him. What could he do? He realises her fascination and cannot blame his friend. The woman he has lost; but he will not forego the friendship of his brilliant rival.

Other than love matters rouse his jealousy; and these also he meets in the same spirit. His friend is interested in other writers. Instinctively he resents the interest, fearing perhaps he may be passed on one side. Yet he strives hard, and not unsuccessfully, to argue down this natural resentment, and does full justice to their work; comparing one as a worthier pen, and comparing him to a vessel of "tall building and goodly pride."

Who these rival poets are and who the woman, there is insufficient data to determine. Various have been the conjectures; but where evidence is so slender, it seems superfluous here to enter into battle with the myriads of Shakespeare's commentators on the point. What does seem established, and what after all matters most, is the fact that these intrigues are genuine personal experiences woven into a fabric, that abounds in the fictitious agonies and loves of every aspiring poet.

One other point of psychological interest remains.

Throughout Shakespeare's plays there is a curious emphasis upon a special physical type, black-eyed and pale-faced. Such is always the type of inconstancy and depravity. Romeo is stabbed by "a white wench's black eye"; Biron is infatuated by "a whitely wanton with a velvet brow." Recalling these allusions by the light of the fickle "dark ladie" of the Sonnets, it is not unreasonable to imagine that here we have memories of this capricious love that serve the dramatist in his studies. Dramatic imagination may do much, but the astounding creation of Cleopatra, with her "infinite variety" of moods, her stormy sensuality, yet compelling power, becomes only explicable if we see in it a bitter experience of the man transformed by poetic genius and dramatic splendour into an imperishable picture—"Wretched men" are "cradled into poetry" by wrong and "learn in suffering what they teach in song."

The Third Period (1600–1608). In the third period Tragedy predominates, and we reach here the culminating point of Shakespeare's power as a dramatist. The romances of the period, *All's Well that Ends Well* (1595), *Measure for Measure* (1604), and *Troilus and Cressida* (1603), are essentially tragedies set in a key of forced comedy; they are rich in poetry, but leave a confused and unpleasant impression upon the mind.

Incomparably greater are the tragedies. Starting in grave measured style with *Julius Cæsar* (1601), he rises to greater heights of drama and reflective poetry in *Hamlet* (1602); while in *Othello* (1604), *King Lear* (1606), and *Macbeth* (1606)—that superb trilogy of plays—imaginative subtlety and passionate intensity make of these dramas the most superb and compelling in our literature.

The Fourth Period (1608–12). The last period opens with Tragedy; *Antony and Cleopatra* (1608), with weaker dramatic grip than its immediate

predecessors, but fully as ripe in the strength of its characterisation. *Coriolanus* (1609), *Timon of Athens* (1608), *Henry VIII* (1612), and *Pericles* (1608) are only fitfully great, the three latter, perhaps only Shakespearean in part; but when in the eventide of his career he turned again to his first love, Romance, we get *Cymbeline* (1610), *The Tempest* (1611), and *The Winter's Tale* (1611).

The tragic period has left behind it a legacy of spiritual power and imaginative subtlety that make the last works of the dramatist a fitting paean of farewell.

Nature of the Shakespearean Drama

In Shakespearean drama almost every phase of the life of the age is mirrored, from the particular craze and fashion of the moment to the broad, general characteristics of the national life.

Shakespeare was fully alive to the necessity of dealing with familiar themes. Much of the topicality we miss to-day, for its interest was a transient one, and Shakespeare's fame does not depend on it; but for an intimate understanding of the dramatist, we must take this element into consideration.

Travelling was the rage of the day, and Italy the goal of those finishing their education. Rosalind makes fun of Jaques: "Wear strange suits, disable all the benefits of your own country; be out of love with your nativity; or I will scarce think you have swam in a gondola!"

Thus *Love's Labour's Lost* (1591) was in its inception a social satire dealing with the fashions and fads of the day. Euphuism[1] and extravagance in dress are derided with as much topicality of allusion as a play of Mr. Bernard Shaw's would show to-day. The Elizabethan pedant figures amusingly in Holofernes, who has been "at a great feast of languages and stolen the scraps." Hotspur's speeches abound in reference to current fashions—*e.g.* he speaks of velvet guards on the dress of fashionable city ladies, and there are many references in the plays to favourite games and sports—*e.g.* the mention of tennis in *Henry V.*

The historical plays are admirably true to life, but to Elizabethan rather than to Plantagenet life. Eastcheap, the haunts of Prince Hal and Falstaff, abounds in taverns in Shakespeare's day. There was no "Boar's Head" in the time of Henry IV.

The Merry Wives depicts accurately middle-class provincial life, and the fashions in dress for men and women are commented on and described in *The Merchant of Venice*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Richard II.*

And just as he deals with ephemeral fads and crazes and some passing event, so does he deal on a much larger scale with the broad phases of Elizabethan national life. The dull-witted country constable is held up for ridicule in *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Much Ado about Nothing*. The elaborate ritual of Court life is depicted in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Antony and Cleopatra*; its trickeries and pretentiousness in *Hamlet*, *Timon of Athens*, and *Cymbeline*.

The mass of the people believed whole-heartedly in the existence of good and bad spirits. And the literature of the time exhales this belief to a remarkable extent. Preaching to Elizabeth in 1588, Bishop Jewel appealed to her to take extreme measures against witches and wizards.

It was in vain that Reginald Scott, in 1584, tried to stem the tide of current opinion in his *Discoverie of Witchcrafte*: men and women, particularly women, had only to evince some eccentricity of manner to be accounted guilty of witchcraft and forthwith to be burned. How far Shakespeare himself believed in these influences we do not know: what we do know is the impressive dramatic use he made of the spirit world in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*: the apparition at Elsinore, the witches on the desolate heath, the ghostly visitor at the banquet. The last instance, where the vision (unlike the two others) is plainly subjective, not being perceived by Lady Macbeth or the other guests, tends to show that Shakespeare well appreciated the "tricks" played by "strong imagination." But in other cases he frankly voices the popular belief in sorcery and witchcraft. Joan of Arc is depicted as a witch in *Henry VI.* Hamlet asks the Ghost:

> "Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,
> Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell?"

We hear of portents before the death of Julius Cæsar:

> "Ghosts did shriek and squeal about the street!"

The disgusting potions supposed to be brewed by witches, and possessing magical qualities, are particularised by Shakespeare in the scenes with the witches.

We look upon *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest* merely as charming fantasies; but the fairy world in the Wood near Athens, the Spirits that obey the behest of Prospero, were as real to many of Shakespeare's audience as Helena and Lysander, Miranda and Ferdinand. And I feel sure that it was not Prospero the philosophic recluse, but Prospero the magician, who appealed primarily to the Elizabethans.

In short, superstition was everywhere, and the London hostel no less than the wayside inn, the merchant's palace as well as the shepherd's hut, resound with tales of wonders, omens, and portents of "presages and tongues of heaven."

In all of these matters Shakespeare was of his age. That is, the Elizabethan side of him. An astute borrower, with a ready eye for a good plot wherever he might chance to find it; a skilful reader of the pulse of the public; a gentle, sensitive, sensuous and somewhat melancholy man; often called upon against the grain, we may conjecture, to satisfy the rough taste of the "groundlings."

But there is the universal side of the man. He was of his age; but he was also of the ages. And this by virtue not so much of his dramatic power, which often suffers through the loose texture of his work, but of his incomparable poetry and insight into human nature. He is the supreme poet in an age of great poetry, because his poetry is wider in range and deeper in feeling than that of his contemporaries. He touches every mood: of graceful sentiment, as in the romantic comedies; of delicate fantasy, as in the fairy plays; of philosophic medi-

[1] See *post*, p. 98.

tation, as in the tragedies of the mid-period; and of poignant passion, as in the later tragedies. In the verse that bodies forth such primal things as love, hate, hope, despair, courage, endurance, Shakespeare towers above his fellows. When we think of Lear in his desolation, of Othello in his last anguish, of Macbeth in his soul agony, and the despair of Cleopatra—we think of English literature at its greatest.

Yet it is precisely here, on Shakespeare's dramatic genius, that the criticism of to-day is the least favourable.

Among modern critics are to be found several stalwart heretics who attack, point-blank, Shakespeare's power of characterisation, sneer at what they call the "emptiness" of his philosophy and "ready-made morality," and accuse him of arrant snobbery.

No serious attempt has been made—the task indeed were futile—to question his genius as a poet; but a number of modern writers (Tolstoy being the most famous) have done their best to detach him from his niche among the great creative artists of the world and to place him "in the second order . . . with Dickens, Scott, and Dumas."

The three points especially singled for criticism, his outlook on life, his power to portray character, and his outlook on society—so far as we can construe it from his writings, these things may well be considered more fully. Not that Shakespeare's reputation is in any grave danger from the attack of the heretic; since one who has compelled the homage of men so divergent in critical taste as Ben Jonson, Samuel Johnson, Hazlitt, Lamb, Coleridge, Shelley, Arnold, Rossetti, Swinburne, Victor Hugo, Lessing, Schlegel, Goethe, Heine, has little to fear from a few reactionary spirits, however able.

Some may question even, whether it is worth while to raise the point; and if it were merely a matter of dealing with a few wilful paradoxes, then it would certainly be idle. But there are, I think, a number of earnest and thoughtful students to-day, who are in fundamental accord with the heretic's position, and to whom the sociological test is the one great test of a writer's power. Moreover, one cannot deny to the heretic's negations a certain substratum of truth, that has been obscured by indiscriminate Shakespearean idolatry.

The heretic's position is by no means wholly to be deprecated. He has certainly done a good work in dispelling the "good strong stupefying incense smoke" that is apt to collect about every idol; and in obliging the enthusiast to account intelligently for the faith that is in him.

Let us examine first of all, the charge of "empty philosophy" urged against Shakespeare. The taunt is flung out in opposition to the claim of philosopher maintained by some on his behalf. The taunt is an idle one, but not more idle than the philosophic credentials. The truth is that in any clear and definite sense of the term there is no philosophy in Shakespeare's writings, nor any pretence at a philosophy. To a generation nurtured on essayists like Carlyle and Ruskin, novelists like George Eliot and George Meredith, poets like Wordsworth, Shelley, and Browning, it seems the proper thing to expect from the man of letters a more or less explicit theory of life—religion, ethics, social politics—and we fail to realise that this notion of a "message" upon life and its meaning, is essentially modern and utterly alien to the Elizabethan spirit.

"Snakes in Iceland. There are no snakes in Iceland!" We may apply that old story to Shakespeare's philosophy. There is no philosophy. Shakespeare was an artist and concerned primarily not with postulating theories of life, but with the stuff of life itself. You have a dozen different points of view, but no definite conclusion.

> "Others abide our question—Thou art free!
> We ask and ask—Thou smilest and art still."

This may irritate the modern reader who is accustomed to the artist preacher, but it is absurd to urge it as an intellectual disqualification.

The vital point at issue is how far has the artist succeeded in dealing with the raw material of humanity? He cannot be blamed for not doing what he never undertook to do. The attempts made by some of his admirers to squeeze a philosophy of life out of the utterances of his characters, seem as unfair as it is foolish. Let us take them as we find them: the fatalism of Kent, the meliorism of Edmund, the despairing cry of Macbeth where life is "a tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury signifying nothing"; the serene melancholy of Prospero to whom "we are such stuff as dreams are made on"; cynical Jaques, and idealistic Brutus; each has his value as a human document, each perhaps falls in with some mood of its creator, but none are to be taken as other than the expression of one content to live life to the full, in place of weaving theories about life.

The artist has his place in the scheme of things, quite as much as the philosopher. But I shall be reminded that the greatness of the artist has been called into question especially in his power to portray live men and women.

This to me is the strangest and most unaccountable charge of all, for surely no writer ever maintains his hold upon the imagination of successive ages, without a profound and searching knowledge of human nature. Mere popularity is no test of greatness. The idol of one age is often relegated to the lumber-room of the next. But a man who appeals to the many not merely in his own time, but in other times—that man must appeal to the universal instincts of human nature. In other words, he must have the root of the matter in him. If Shakespeare be superficial as a reader of men, then indeed it were vain to call him great. Knowledge of human nature is the touchstone alike of great poetry and great prose. All that is needed here is the fiat of the creative imagination. "Let there be Light . . . and there was Light!"

To illustrate this aspect of Shakespeare's art there is no need to dwell on even the great characterisations such as Hamlet, Macbeth, Iago, Othello, Desdemona, Rosalind, Juliet. One may take studies less complex in delineation and note the same subtlety and searching insight.

What could be finer than the closing scene of

Antony's life, when after his frailties have illumined scene after scene, there breaks out a certain greatness in him that has never been subdued?

Antony. She hath betrayed me, and shall die the death.
Maridian. Death of one person can be paid but once,
And that she has discharged. . . .
Antony. Dead then?
Maridian. Dead.
Antony. Unarm Eros; the long day's task is done,
And we must sleep.

Probing the criticism of Shakespeare's psychology, it seems to me that it is due, at bottom, to a dislike of the form of the Elizabethan drama, and the belief that it blurs the presentment of character. This point is certainly worth consideration, for it may be urged, with some show of reason, that blank verse serves to encourage unnatural dialogue, and to make for stilted phraseology. Is, then, this convention of blank verse inimical to the presentation of the finer shades of characterisation? It may be admitted that verse drama is a convention; but all art presupposes some convention. No stage dialogue is wholly natural. Our most realistic plays to-day are, in their way, quite as conventional as the Elizabethan drama. It is not the business of art to imitate life; but to produce the illusion of life. Words must be, just as incidents must be, selected. Admitting this, the objector may still urge that the illusion of life is far less possible under the conditions of the Elizabethan drama. Humour expresses itself in quite another way from the emotion of anger, love, or jealousy. Certain emotions may well find expression in sonorous lines; with others, such a convention is ludicrous. Most certainly; and surely no one realised this more clearly than Shakespeare. Romeo talks in verse, Falstaff in prose; indeed the same character speaks alternately in verse and prose, according to the mood. When Rosalind is in holiday humour she drops into prose; when Othello's greatness is obscured by sheer animal passion, he speaks prose; and the simple, comic character talks in prose all the time.

The question further reduces itself to this. When Shakespeare confines himself to verse, can he in this medium *only*, achieve intricate psychological effects? For a reply, we have but to consider such speeches as Shylock's scenes with Antonio, tingling with fine irony; Hamlet's soliloquy, charged with subtle alternations of mood; the amazingly clever presentment of nervous irritability in the later scenes of *Richard III*, when the man's nervous system is breaking down under the strain of misfortune; the famous duologue between Macbeth and his wife after the murder, where the passages of verse reveal most wonderfully the workings of the soul; and one of Lear's long speeches, where the reader can feel the speaker struggling hard against the insidious oncoming of madness. Many more instances could be adduced. Surely these suffice.

Limitation of space precludes my quoting these, so I will rely upon the very play that Tolstoy singled out for scorn—*King Lear*. Mark how well the oncoming madness of the distraught king is suggested in this tirade:

"Darkness and Devils!
Saddle my horses; call my train together—
Degenerate bastard! I'll not trouble thee."

. . . . . .

O let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven—
Keep me in temper: I would not be mad.

. . . . . .

I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad:
I will not trouble thee, my child, farewell;
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter,
Or rather a disease that's in my flesh,
Which I must needs call mine; thou art a boil—
. . . But I'll not chide thee.

. . . . . .

You think I'll weep;
No, I'll not weep:
I have full cause for weeping; but this heart
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,
Or ere I'll weep. O fool, I shall go mad!"

Further, of his insight into character, it may be said that a ready test of the actuality of his characters is the impression they make on the modern reader. Portia, Rosalind, Beatrice, Cleopatra, Juliet, are startlingly modern. Placed beside the women of Sheridan or Goldsmith, and you realise how the latter are dated and how alive and fresh are the former. Beside them even the women of Dickens and Thackeray seem old-fashioned. And the reason is that Shakespeare's women have the primal qualities of womankind common to every age, and therefore can never be dated.

And there is subtlety no less than actuality.

With what masterly touches the figure of rash, hot-tempered Harry Percy is drawn! How impatient he is about the medical advice on the field of battle:

". . . He made me mad
To see him shine so brisk and smell so sweet,
And talk so like a waiting gentlewoman:
Of guns and drums and wounds—God save the mark!—
And telling me, the sovereign'st thing on earth
Was parmaceti for an inward bruise!"

Prince Henry characterises him in pleasantly humorous fashion:

"I am not yet of Percy's mind, the Hotspur of the North; he that kills me some six or seven dozen of Scots at a breakfast, washes his hands and says to his wife, 'Fie upon this quiet life! I want work!' 'O my sweet Harry,' says she, 'how many hast thou killed to-day?' 'Give my roan horse a drench,' says he, and answers, 'Some fourteen,' an hour after; 'a trifle—a trifle.'"

He is a born fighter; intrepid, independent, honourable; he has humour and geniality. But he is not the great warrior. Superficially only is he a romantic figure. Place him beside Othello and mark the difference. There is no deep imagination, no fine artistic feeling, no largeness of heart about Percy. He hates music, is jealous of others' merits, and although his famous utterance "Tell truth and shame the devil" is a fine one, yet it is inspired no little by his want of feeling with the mysterious side of things. But there is an honest rationalism about the man which commands respect.

Glendower. I can call spirits from the vasty deep.
Hotspur. Why, so can I, or so can any man;
But will they come when you do call for them?
Glendower. Why, I can teach you, cousin, to command the devil.

Hotspur. And I can teach thee, coz, to shame the devil.
By telling truth: tell truth and shame the devil.

While with unerring insight Shakespeare differentiates such vital rogues as Falstaff, the tavern haunter, and Autolycus, the vagabond of the fields.

Two points remain for consideration; they are both implied in the sociological criticism at present so rife. According to this, Shakespeare is to be condemned for his poor, ready-made morality, and for his egregious snobbery.

The ethical criticism is largely inspired by the modern tendency to look at the literary artist as a potential teacher. Many artists are teachers. Browning was one, so was Meredith, so was Ibsen, so was Tolstoy. But no Elizabethan dramatist ever dreamed of assuming the teacher's rôle. "Our true intent is all for your delight"—to amuse and entertain, that was the sole ambition of the writer of plays. When he happened to be a man of genius he could not help doing more than this, but it was incidental and accidental. There is no definite moral teaching in Shakespeare's plays; but being a great artist of wide range, he necessarily presented ethical problems as a part of human life, not with a view to discussing their rightness or wrongness.

What we have to ask ourselves therefore is what kind of man do the plays reflect? Do they picture one above or below the average moral standard of his day?

Let us present a test.

A characteristic of the Elizabethan was intolerance. Toleration indeed, in Tudor times, was quite an unknown quantity. Not only was it rare to find, but it was regarded not as a virtue but as a lamentable weakness.

In some of the fine souls, Sir Thomas More for instance, we find it advocated; but More's own sentiments could not withstand the pressure of public sentiment; and his own career as Chancellor is certainly not remarkable for tolerance, or even bare justice.

The current feeling about the Jew is expressed in Marlowe's *Barabas*. To put it briefly, he was a monster outside the pale of consideration. What did Shakespeare do for him? Without any sentimentality, he pictured him as a man:

"Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villany you teach me I will execute; and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction."

Another test of a writer's moral attitude, using the word in a large sense, is his treatment of the courtesan. You may glorify her with the immoralists, or condemn her with the pietists; either attitude is common enough in literature. What is uncommon is the broad, generous outlook that without in any way construing black as white, seeks to show the "soul of goodness" in things evil. Now, surely no man of superficial "ready-made" morality could have painted that splendid sinner, Cleopatra, not splendid as some French writers would have made her *because* of her sinning, but *despite* it—great in spite of her viciousness and folly. Is it possible not to keep a place in one's sympathies and liking for that arch rogue, braggart, and coward Falstaff, or that careless, irresponsible vagabond, Autolycus? Is ready-made morality accountable for this? Not that Shakespeare's moral attitude is impeccable.

During those gloomy years, when it seemed for a time as if his faith in human nature had been shaken, during the writing of *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Troilus and Cressida*, there is much that is no better—if no worse—than the conventional morality of the day. The issue of *All's Well* is certainly anything but well. But the writer is so obviously sick at heart and cynical in mood during this time, that it is unfair to take it as a worthy sample of his art. Compare these plays with the cycle of great tragedies which follow, and how different the atmosphere. I take at random a snatch of dialogue between Hamlet and Polonius—Polonius the man of maxims, whose morality is certainly of the ready-made order:

Polonius. My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

Hamlet. God's bodykins, man, much better: use every man after his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity; the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty.

A suggestive passage surely, not merely for his own, but for our own age, a hint that the statesman who has to deal with subject races might well take as a hint.

One point remains for consideration. A number of modern writers on Shakespeare have insisted strongly on his snobbery, hinting that he was essentially undemocratic, hating the mob. According to one critic, *Coriolanus* is a "mine of insults" against the people. Even Dr. Furnivall admits, "Shakespeare used the poor rather as material for fun to amuse his richer patrons with, than as folk with whom he felt. He doesn't show much sympathy with them—not so much as Chaucer, I think—but his representations of them are all in good part, and like those of Chaucer and Dickens, make his hearers think kindly of the men they laugh at."

Now, Shakespeare certainly had no liking for the rough, uneducated mob; he was a man of sensitive feeling, acutely responsive to breeding and culture, and had nothing of that demagogue spirit that leads men to play down to the "groundlings" for personal aggrandisement and popularity. Brutality and ignorance he hates heartily with Elizabethan frankness, and states it without equivocation in forcible language. *Coriolanus* is a plain unvarnished picture of mob fickleness and brutality. To call it a "mine of insults to the people" is ridiculous. No reader of *Henry IV* can say that Shakespeare was blind to the virtues and merits of the people at large. His pictures of moral worth are far less partisan than Dickens'. Want of sympathy

with the poor in their sufferings I find nowhere. On the contrary, there is a passage in *King Lear* remarkable for its poignant sympathy.

> "Take physic, pomp;
> Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
> That thou may'st shake the superflux to them
> And show the heavens more just."

Or take a comedy—*As You Like It*—and note how admirably the rustic spirits hold their own with the aristocrat.

Shakespeare no more spurned the poorer classes than he spurned the middle classes. It were quite as easy to make out a case from *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, showing how meanly he thought of the burgher class, or from *Macbeth*, and *Othello*, to show how meanly he thought of soldiers, as to see in *Coriolanus* "a mine of insults to the people."

It is quite probable that in those days when the man of letters was dependent on a patron, and when it was the custom to heap meaningless adulation on the Sovereign, Shakespeare was no better than his fellows. The fulsome compliments poured upon Elizabeth not merely by her courtiers but by the foreign ambassadors who wished to retain her regard, make dismal reading. Unhappily, snobbery and sycophancy are not peculiar to Shakespeare's time, and if Shakespeare was neither better nor worse than many of his contemporaries in this respect, there is reason to suppose that he accepted it carelessly, as a convention to be observed, and that it was not due to real littleness of mind and dwarfed sympathies. He was not a paragon of the virtues; he had his weaknesses both as a man and artist. But the marvel is that, typifying as he does the greatness and the defects of his age and generation, he should so far transcend his time as to speak to us to-day—at any rate to those of us who have ears to hear, despite our changes of thought and shifting of ideals—with an even greater compelling power than in his day and generation.

Plays of Doubtful Authorship attributed to Shakespeare

(1) Certain plays were published during Shakespeare's lifetime with his name or initials attached to them. *Locrine* (1595), *Sir John Oldcastle* (1600), *Thomas Lord Cromwell* (1602), *The London Prodigal* (1605), *The Puritan* (1607), *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (1608), *Pericles* (1609).

(2) Certain plays were published after Shakespeare's death in association with his name. *The Troublesome Reign of John* (1622), and circulated anonymously in 1591; *Two Noble Kinsmen* (1634), by Fletcher and Shakespeare; and *The Birth of Merlin*, Shakespeare and Knowles (1662).

(3) Certain plays have been assigned to him on internal evidence in more modern times, for example, *Edward III*, *Arden of Feversham*, and *Sir Thomas More*.

This classification does not exhaust the number of plays imputed to him at some time or another, but it covers the most important, from the point of view of evidence.

On what grounds then do we exclude or include them? The answer is, almost entirely on internal grounds. External evidence helps us very little. So contemptuously careless was Shakespeare of his plays that he allowed piratical booksellers to foist plays of inferior merit on the public with his name attached. Of his poetry he was jealous and took care; the dramas were written for the stage, what happened to them after, or what else was attributed to him he ignored.

Dealing with (1); the only plays sufficiently remarkable to demand consideration are *Locrine*, *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, and *Pericles*. There is the slenderest evidence in the case of the others, evidence of no moment; nor indeed have the plays themselves any intrinsic value.

Locrine is in no better plight as regards evidence, but it is an interesting piece of work. Modelled on the lines of Senecan tragedy, its blood and thunder style approximates more to the work of Kyd than that of any other known contemporary; though there is more tenderness and grace in certain passages than we find in plays by the author of *The Spanish Tragedy*, and a livelier sense of comedy.

On account of the two latter characteristics, perhaps, the play has been attributed in turn to Peele and Greene, while the rhetorical splendour of passages has suggested to some minds Marlowe. Neither in its treatment of character nor in its phraseology does it suggest Shakespeare's method at any point in his career. That is the most certain thing that we can advance about the play. The rest is an open question.

A Yorkshire Tragedy is a play of domestic life and deals with an actual occurrence, recorded by Stow and others. It is the tale of a profligate and his unhappy wife. The profligate is drawn with power and subtlety; and the temperament of the man is admirably suggested in the lines:

> "O would virtue had been forbidden; we should then have proved all virtuous, for 'tis our blood to love what we are forbidden."

The whole play is remarkable in its sordid and unflinching tragedy; but written as it was in the first decade of the seventeenth century, its treatment of blank verse is markedly different from Shakespeare's at that time.

Pericles, though not mentioned in the first folio edition, is generally credited to Shakespeare; but whereas it was once thought to be one of his early writings, it is now found to be in accordance with his latest style, and is presumed to have been written about the time of *Antony and Cleopatra*.

The subject was a popular one. First treated in a Greek romance, it was often translated in the Middle Ages, and Gower deals with it in his *Confessio Amantis*. The story is a repulsive one, in many ways, dealing with an incestuous love, and when not repulsive is meandering and undramatic, but it certainly has been embroidered with some beautiful scenes and with some striking pieces of characterisation; that of Pericles himself for instance—one of those sensitive, introspective souls that Shakespeare excelled especially in depicting. That it may not be wholly Shakespeare's is not improbable, but outside of Shakespeare it would be hard to match some of the scenes for beauty of diction and masterly handling; for instance, the shipwreck passages.

Coming to the second category, the only play that need detain us is the *Two Noble Kinsmen*. It is modelled largely upon the old romance treated by Chaucer in *The Knight's Tale*; to which is added that element of Elizabethan realism for which the novel had already given men a taste. So we have two plots, set in a discursive background of masque-like splendour.

The play is extremely uneven in merit, but there can be no question of imaginative grasp attained at times. It is agreed that Fletcher had a hand in the work, but who the other collaborator is, has not been settled. Some have argued in favour of Massinger, and as Massinger's diction has a certain Shakespearean quality at times, it is possible that Massinger is the part author. The probabilities, however, are in favour of Shakespeare; for putting aside Acts II, III, and IV, assigned by most critics to Fletcher, the character of the diction and the method of treatment is far less like Massinger than Shakespeare. This has been ably pointed out by a writer in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*:

"In the mechanical elements of poetic rhythm, Massinger comes very near to Shakespeare; but, when we look deeper, and come to the consideration of those features of style which do not admit of tabular analysis, we find the widest difference. The diction of Massinger is, above all things, orderly and lucid. He shows, at times, passion and imagination; but he never allows these to check the stately decorum and even flow of his verse. Now, the diction of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* is of a peculiar nature, and Spalding, in his famous *Letter*, with others after him, naturally directed his attention to this, above all other things, in attributing these non-Fletcherian scenes to Shakespeare. In the profusion of striking metaphors, the copious outpouring of profound thoughts, and the extreme concision, often involving harshness and obscurity, of the utterance, these scenes bear a marked resemblance to the plays of Shakespeare's final period, and to nothing else in literature. Moreover, the very defects of these scenes are the same defects which we meet with in Shakespeare's so-called romances."

In the third category are a number of plays that, independently of the problem of their Shakespearean inspiration, merit our attention.

The play of *Edward III*, based on a story of Bandello's, is a remarkable piece of work. There is no external evidence in favour of Shakespearean authorship, though the play is often remarkably Shakespearean in style. The most plausible conjecture is that it is an old play touched up by the Master's hand. Frankly, I do not think too much must be made of what we may call the Shakespearean touch. Many had caught the trick of phrase—many of no mean power either as poets or playwrights—and because of this, plays have been assigned to Shakespeare. Just as surely as Mr. Stephen Phillips' poems might be ascribed—were their authorship doubtful—to Tennyson.

In default of external evidence, nothing short of very strong and precise internal evidence should convince us as to Shakespeare's authorship in the case of these plays.

The play of *Sir Thomas More* is another illustration in point of this. There are touches of the Shakespearean manner, but nothing of the Shakespearean spirit. It is cleverly devised from materials supplied by Hall's *Chronicle* and Roper's biography; the characterisation of More, a delightful and congenial subject, is treated well, but many a contemporary dramatist might have written the play.

Arden of Feversham remains to be noted. Swinburne ascribes it unhesitatingly to Shakespeare. "It seems to me not pardonable merely, nor permissible, but simply logical and reasonable—to set down this poem as the possible work of no man's youthful hand but Shakespeare's."

Of the play's power there can be no question. Like *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, it is a grim, realistic study of domestic life, and like it also, the play is founded on fact. A dissolute wife kills her forbearing husband.

The subject is treated with psychological insight; but *pace* Mr. Swinburne, it is hard to find in its pedestrian verse more than a fleeting suggestion, here and there, of Shakespeare's magic. Perhaps pedestrian is too reproachful a term; the verse is bare and austere, seldom touched by beauty of thought or grace of diction, yet with a simple dignity and distinction of its own in its grim situations. But the universal simplicity of style, the unromantic treatment of the theme is not in harmony with Shakespeare's ardent and often over-rich imagination.

The play was first claimed for Shakespeare in 1770; it was published as early as 1592, a year in which Shakespeare was at work upon the earlier draft of *Romeo and Juliet*.

What a difference in the two plays, in order of imagination!

Whoever be the author, *Arden* is a splendid piece of work, and if Shakespeare be not the writer, as is a matter of considerable doubt, it is not unworthy of his genius, alien though it may be to the manifestations that we know.

Shakespeare in his Plays

I believe that all Shakespeare's great tragedies are the outcome of some profound personal experience, though not necessarily the actual experience related in the play. The invention of the dramatist has given them an habitat; the poet's insight has impressed the crude facts with a poignancy and passion that the man himself need not have necessarily experienced. But the underlying inspiration has been founded upon experience of life. Shakespeare has known what it was to feel the intellectual paralysis that comes from sensitive, probing introspection; he has been torn by the cruel devastation of jealousy; has tasted the bitterness of ingratitude among those he had reckoned his friends; has been brought face to face with those obstinate questionings of the Why and Whither that meet us in *Hamlet*. The form and texture of the plays reflect the creative imagination of the dramatic artist; but the spirit that animates the great utterances is surely something born of experience.

His life was a full, rich, and varied one; it is idle to suppose, then, that it contributed no fuel to kindle his powers into intense expression.

The great man of letters is always the stronger for being a great man of the world. The men of any age who have touched our hearts are the men that have faced the facts of life, looked the world straight in the face, and wrung from its harshest moments, inspirations for future travellers.

For some of them, weaker in purpose, less stable in endurance, the world proved too strong. Marlowe's brilliant career was cut short in a drunken brawl; while Greene and Nash wore away their powers of body and soul in reckless living.

Shakespeare as a man, though not immune from the weaknesses of his time and the infirmities of full and sensuous natures, soon realised, to use Shelley's words, that "Man who man would be must rule the Empire of himself." Had he not fashioned his life so well, this record he has left behind would have been impossible. Moreover, his compelling greatness lies in that he sounded sorrow and despair yet preserved to the end a brave front, a courageous confidence.

His work shows a gradual development of his genius. Beginning with high-spirited farce, he passes to fantastic romance, thence after a spell of English chronicle plays that help to strengthen his power of characterisation, gave him a firm grip on concrete realities, he turns to the higher comedy note of *The Merchant of Venice*, and the mellower romanticism of *As You Like it*. In his earlier work there is only one tragedy—*Romeo and Juliet*—and that is essentially a young man's tragedy; beautiful in its lyric poignancy, yet far inferior in imaginative intensity to the group of great tragedies. Before he came to these, his plays show a passing mood of bitterness and misanthropy, and abounding in fine poetry as are such plays as *Troilus and Cressida*, and *All's Well that Ends Well*, they lack the intensity and sanity of outlook that mark his best work. They are succeeded, however, by the tragedies, and while the earlier ones are more deliberate and analytical in treatment, the later ones are marked by swiftness and vehemence of thought and expression.

Yet, deeply as they stir the springs of pity and terror within us, they do not depress our vitality, as do many modern tragedies. Why is this? Largely, I think, because at bottom Shakespeare never loses faith in human nature; physical and moral horrors you may get, never the paralysing horrors of fatalism.

Finally, after the storm comes the calm of the first period. Once again, romance and comedy join hands, but there is no harking back. Delightful as the earlier romances are, the later ones are finer. There is a deeper and fuller interpretation of the possibilities of human life. Who would exchange Ariel for Puck, Prospero for Hippolyta, Caliban for Bottom?

There is no need for us to take all that Shakespeare gives us, with the indiscriminating idolatry that marked an elder generation of Shakespearean critics; that would do him as great disservice as to accept the cramped and petty criticisms of the eighteenth-century commentators. Scholars like Dowden, Bradley, Brandes, and Swinburne have done much to give us a truer insight into the fundamental greatness of the writer; while the unwholesome pall of adulation has been effectively dispelled by the useful, if exaggerated strictures of such men as Shaw and Ernest Crosby. The reader may safely be left with these various mentors at his elbow, to discriminate the dross from the gold, so long as he allows no critic, however great, to stand ultimately between himself and his subject. He cannot then fail to realise that the work of Shakespeare at his best, belongs to the great race utterances of literature, and like them we have come to look on it as a portion of our intellectual and spiritual heritage.

The Poetry of Sentiment

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

* * * * *

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since cancell'd woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight:
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restored and sorrows end.

* * * * *

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come:
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.[1]

"Take, O, take thy lips away,
That so sweetly were forsworn;
And those eyes, the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn:
But my kisses bring again, bring again;
Seals of love, but seal'd in vain, seal'd in vain:"[2]

"O mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O, stay and hear; your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low:
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
Journeys end in lovers meeting:
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:

[1] Sonnets xviii., xxx., cxvi. [2] *Measure for Measure.*

In delay there lies no plenty,
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,
Youth's a stuff will not endure."[1]

The Poetry of Fantasy

Where the bee sucks, there suck I:
In a cowslip's bell I lie:
There I couch when owls do cry.
On the bat's back I do fly
After summer merrily.
Merrily, merrily shall I live now
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

. . . . . .

Come unto these yellow sands,
And then take hands:
Courtsied when you have and kiss'd
The wild waves whist:
Foot it featly here and there;
And, sweet sprites, the burthen bear.

Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange,
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell.
Ding-dong.[2]

The Poetry of Passion

Othello. Soft you; a word or two before you go.
I have done the state some service, and they know't.
No more of that. I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice: then must you speak
Of one that loved not wisely but too well;
Of one not easily jealous, but, being wrought,
Perplex'd in the extreme; of one whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinal gum. Set you down this;
And say besides, that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
And smote him, thus.[3] (*Stabs himself.*)

The Poetry of Meditation

Claudio. Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;
To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendent world; or to be worse than worst
Of those, that lawless and incertain thoughts
Imagine howling—'tis too horrible!
The weariest and most loathed worldly life,
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
Can lay on nature, is a paradise
To what we fear of death.[4]

The Psychologist

Servant. O master! if you did but hear the pedlar at the door, you would never dance again after a tabor and pipe; no, the bagpipe could not move you. He sings several tunes faster than you'll tell money; he utters them as he had eaten ballads and all men's ears grew to his tunes. . . .

Why, he sings 'em over as they were gods and goddesses. You would think a smock were a she-angel, he so chants to the sleeve-hand and the work about the square on't.

. . . . . .

Auto. I'll be with you at your sheep-shearing too. If I make not this cheat bring out another, and the shearers prove sheep, let me be unrolled, and my name put in the book of virtue.

. . . . . .

"Jog on, jog on, the foot-path way,
And merrily hent the stile-a;
A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile-a."

. . . . . .

Beating and hanging are terrors to me: for the life to come, I sleep out the thought of it.[1]

The Dramatist

Enter Lady Macbeth

Lady M. That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold;
What hath quench'd them hath given me fire. Hark! Peace!
It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is about it:
The doors are open, and the surfeited grooms
Do mock their charge with snores: I have drugg'd their possets,
That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live or die.
Macb. (*Within.*) Who's there? what, ho!
Lady M. Alack, I am afraid they have awaked
And 'tis not done: the attempt and not the deed
Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;
He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done't. (*Enter* Macbeth.)
My husband!
Macb. I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?
Lady M. I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.
Did not you speak?
Macb. When?
Lady M. Now.
Macb. As I descended?
Lady M. Ay.
Macb. Hark!
Who lies i' the second chamber?
Lady M. Donalbain.
Macb. This is a sorry sight. (*Looking on his hands.*)
Lady M. A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.
Macb. There's one did laugh in 's sleep, and one cried "Murder!"
That they did wake each other: I stood and heard them:
But they did say their prayers, and addressed them
Again to sleep.
Lady M. There are two lodged together.
Macb. One cried "God bless us!" and "Amen" the other,
As they had seen me with these hangman's hands:
Listening their fear, I could not say "Amen,"
When they did say "God bless us!"
Lady M. Consider it not so deeply.
Macb. But wherefore could not I pronounce "Amen"?
I had most need of blessing, and "Amen"
Stuck in my throat.
Lady M. These deeds must not be thought
After these ways: so, it will make us mad.
Macb. Methought I heard a voice cry: "Sleep no more,
Macbeth does murder sleep—the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleave of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast,—"
Lady M. What do you mean?
Macb. Still it cried "Sleep no more!" to all the house:
"Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more. Macbeth shall sleep no more."

[1] *Twelfth Night.*
[2] *The Tempest.*
[3] *Othello*, Act v. sc. 2.
[4] *Measure for Measure.*
[1] *The Winter's Tale.*

Lady M. Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,
You do unbend your noble strength, to think
So brainsickly of things. Go get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there: go carry them, and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.
Mach. I'll go no more:
I am afraid to think what I have done:
Look on't again I dare not.
Lady M. Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the dead
Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt. (*Exit. Knocking within.*)
Mach. Whence is that knocking?
How is't with me, when every noise appals me?
What hands are here? ha! they pluck out mine eyes!
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

Re-enter LADY MACBETH

Lady M. My hands are of your colour, but I shame
To wear a heart so white. (*Knocking within.*) I hear a knocking
At the south entry: retire we to our chamber:
A little water clears us of this deed:
How easy is it then! Your constancy
Hath left you unattended. (*Knocking within.*) Hark! more knocking:
Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us
And show us to be watchers: be not lost
So poorly in your thoughts.
Mach. To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself. (*Knocking within.*)
Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst![1]

THE HUMOURIST

Falstaff. Hal, if thou see me down in the battle, and bestride me, so; 'tis a point of friendship.
Prince. Nothing but a colossus can do thee that friendship. Say thy prayers, and farewell.
Falstaff. I would 'twere bed-time, Hal, and all well.
Prince. Why, thou owest God a death.
Falstaff. 'Tis not due yet; I would be loath to pay him before his day. What need I be so forward with him that calls not on me? Well, 'tis no matter; honour pricks me on. Yea, but how if honour pricks me off when I come on? how then? Can honour set to a leg? no: or an arm? no: or take away the grief of a wound? no. Honour hath no skill in surgery, then? no. What is honour? a word. What is in that word honour? What is that honour? air. A trim reckoning! Who hath it? he that died o' Wednesday. Doth he feel it? no. Does he hear it? no. 'Tis insensible, then? yea, to the dead. But will it not live with the living? no. Why? detraction will not suffer it. Therefore I'll none of it. Honour is a mere escutcheon: and so ends my catechism.[2]

[1] *Macbeth*, Act ii. sc. 2. [2] *1 Henry IV*, Act v. sc. 1.

FRANCIS BACON: His Life. His Work: *Essays—New Atlantis—Henry VII.*

FRANCIS BACON

THERE are few names that shine with greater brilliance than Francis Bacon's (or to give him his full title, Lord Verulam or Viscount St. Albans) in the literary and scientific world at this day, nearly three hundred years after his death. His will contained the following: "For my name and memory, I leave it to men's charitable speeches, and to foreign nations and the next ages."

London was the birthplace of this writer, philosopher, and statesman, the capital which claims to be the native place of so many of the great men of the sixteenth century. At York House in the Strand, on the 22nd January 1561, in the official residence of his father, Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, Francis Bacon was born. He was the younger son of his father's second marriage. His mother, Anne Cooke, was a daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke, a sister-in-law to Lord Burghley. She was a woman of strong character, highly educated, deeply religious, and interested herself in the Church's reformation. Her strong will and narrow Calvinistic beliefs, combined with her great classical knowledge, without doubt coloured and influenced her son's life from a very early age. When a very young boy, his serious mind and self-confidence attracted Queen Elizabeth's attention. Her "young Lord Keeper" was a title she merrily gave him. There were six children born of the first marriage of Sir Nicholas Bacon, and of the second, two, Francis and his brother Anthony, who was two years older.

At the early age of twelve years, Francis with his brother were entered as fellow-commoners at Trinity College, Cambridge, and at the end of two years Francis returned to London and began to study law. In 1576 he went to the English Embassy in Paris, as a Junior Secretary to Sir Amyas Paulet, who had just taken up the position of English Ambassador. Bacon, who was then sixteen, remained in France with Sir Amyas Paulet a little over two years. He was not nineteen when his father suddenly died, without providing for this son of his second marriage. This necessitated Bacon leaving France and at once deciding on his future profession. He went into the law, much against his inclination, and began his studies at once at Gray's Inn, whilst his whole nature was craving for the attraction of literature and philosophy. Being possessed of a very small income and the knowledge that he must make his own fortune before he had the necessary leisure to devote himself to his favourite studies, helped him to give his mind to his work. In 1582 Bacon was "called," and in four years afterwards was elected a bencher of his inn. He had looked in vain to his uncle, Lord Burghley, to assist him to obtain one of the many lucrative posts which the profession he had adopted held. When Bacon was twenty-three he turned his thoughts to Parliament. In political affairs, of course, Burghley's influence was paramount, and he exerted it to secure for Bacon a seat in the House of Commons as member for Melcombe Regis. Subsequently he sat for Taunton, and in 1593 he represented Middlesex. He soon became a prominent member of the House. On one occasion he managed to give offence to the Queen by opposing a grant demanded by the Government. Disappointed in his hopes of promotion, he detached himself from Burghley and strongly supported the policy of Lord Essex, who presented him with

property at Twickenham, which Bacon was able to sell for eighteen hundred pounds, equal to about £12,000 at the value of money to-day. This gift was largely in the nature of a consolation for Essex's failure to obtain for him high legal office. It was due to Bacon's advice that Essex undertook the difficult problem of Ireland's government. Bacon never tired of pointing out to Essex that he, and he alone was fitted to successfully undertake the suppression of Tyrone's rebellion (1598) and then return to Court covered with glory. Bacon stood to gain whether his friend was triumphant or a failure. He could be of infinite service to him on his return if his mission proved successful, and if Essex returned disgraced, Bacon decided he could put him on one side, and the field would once more be clear. Essex, as a means to Bacon's greater advancement in the pursuit of position was certainly doubtful, so the sooner he was out of the way the better. The following year proved Essex's downfall. At his trial it was Bacon who pressed the evidence into a course which meant certain conviction of the prisoner, quite in opposition to the favourable conducting of the evidence by Sir Edward Coke. This trickery and meanness of Bacon's is hard to understand and harder to forgive. His whole mind was given up to self-advancement, and anyone standing in the way of this realisation must go.

Whilst Bacon had been giving much attention to his profession and politics, his literary activities had been considerable. In 1597 he published a volume of essays which at once showed the author to be a man of diverse talents. Bacon had discovered by the time James the First ascended the throne, that flattery and lies appeared to "bring" success.

He was knighted in 1603, became Solicitor-General in 1607, and in 1613 Attorney-General. The following instance proves that nothing would deter him from the carrying out of any purpose that might assist him in his duties: it is known he helped in the torturing of an old clergyman named Peachman, in order to force a confession of treason from this victim. The year before he became Solicitor-General, at the age of forty-five, Bacon married Alice Barnham, whose father had been a rich London merchant, and at his death had left his daughter two hundred pounds a year. This former represented a much larger sum than two hundred pounds represents to-day. It is to be remembered that it was eight times higher than the value of our currency. From his office as Clerk of the Star Chamber, Bacon drew an income of about two thousand pounds a year; this, with his other posts, must have brought in yearly a large amount of money.

His love of show and lawlessness with regard to expenditure caused him to be always in debt. After his marriage he spent enormous sums on Verulam House, near St. Albans. The completion of this vast mansion, the magnificent furniture and decorations, together with an army of servants, far exceeded the amount of his income, and he was ever spending more than he received.

Bacon had no children. We may believe that he and his wife lived happily together for a considerable time. In his will he left her generously provided for, but at the close of his life he cancelled this provision "for just and grave cause, utterly revoked and made void, leaving her to her right only." As he died owing twenty-two thousand pounds, perhaps his wife had no great cause for annoyance. His flatteries to the King and his favourite, Buckingham, and his assiduous scrambling for prosperity, still continued. Buckingham used his great influence in endeavouring to secure the highest appointments for Bacon, with the full determination of using him afterwards for his own purposes. As soon as the office of Lord Keeper became vacant in 1617, Buckingham saw to it that Bacon should fill it. In January of the next year he became Lord Chancellor. Honour quickly followed. In six months he was made Baron Verulam and Viscount St. Albans in 1621. The year that placed him on the pinnacle of his ambitions, was the year in which his rapid downfall began. His great position as Lord Chancellor was terribly misused. Buckingham constantly required him to favour his friends. Bacon accepted bribes and presents and was obviously dealing unjustly. No longer could a parliamentary inquiry be put off. He was accused and admitted he was guilty of corruption, and threw himself on the mercy of his judges. "My lords, I beseech you to be merciful to a broken reed." As a punishment he was ordered to give up all offices of State, a life imprisonment in the Tower, and to pay a fine of forty thousand pounds. The King gave him his freedom the next day, and allowed the fine to go unpaid. He retired in disgrace to his country residence near St. Albans. His small private fortune, together with a pension of one thousand two hundred a year, which James had only a short time before given him, still remained to him. From this time until the end of his days, literature and science held him. Despite his busy life, his studies had never been neglected. Five years afterwards, on April 9, 1626, Bacon died at the age of sixty-five. In pursuit of his scientific researches when out driving, he alighted from his carriage one snowy day, and bought a fowl from a cottager, and had it killed, then stuffed the body with snow, intending to discover if the stuffing would preserve the flesh. The experiment cost him his life. Seized with a sudden illness, he was carried into the house of his friend, Lord Arundel, and put into a damp bed prepared by a servant in his master's absence. He became rapidly ill with bronchitis. His age, and weakness from his strenuous life, made recovery impossible. At St. Michael's Church, St. Albans, over his grave a monument may still be seen, which was erected by an admirer.

His Work

Although Bacon had no great respect for the English language, holding that "these modern languages will at one time play the bankrupt with books," yet no man individually did more to give strength and simplicity to our tongue than he. So far, the great defect in English prose had been its prolixity and diffuseness. Bacon put an end to this. His scientific training helped him here, it suggested clarity. With his philosophical and scientific treatises, such as the *Novum Organum*, we need not

language of the poem is clear and vivid. Hampole is animated by a desire to instruct and edify. He is careless of the claims of style and he does not always trouble himself as to the number of syllables in a line. In the seven divisions of *The Pricke of Conscience*, Hampole considers the wretchedness of human nature, the transitoriness of the world, of life, death, purgatory, the last judgment, hell and heaven. "He vividly depicts the weakness, ugliness and loathsomeness of human nature, the terrors of death and the last judgment, and the torments awaiting the sinner beyond the grave; while all the splendour, all the charm of the poet's art, are lavished upon the picture of heaven."

The treatise *De incendio amoris*; The Fire of Love, *translated into English by Richard Misyn* in 1435. He dwells on the necessity of contrition, and two stories well exemplify the emphasis which Hampole laid upon the religion of the heart, as opposed to mere conventional religion. He tells of a wicked canon of Paris who, before he died, confessed his misdeeds, and did penance, yet was damned because he had not in his heart truly repented. Of another sinner who was forgiven before he received absolution! A scholar of Paris was so grieved at his sins that he was rendered speechless. He was told to write them down, and at once was sensible of God's forgiveness. Hampole insists on the paramount importance of the active life in the case of persons with position and influence. Altogether by the strength of his character, the wealth of his subjective religious experiences, Rolle exercised a wide influence and deserves a high place among the poets of religious thought. A cycle of mystic and practical poems centred round Rolle, and his writings had a wide circulation, and doubtless many of his followers imitated his work, *e.g.* Wm. Massington, *Wending of Life*.

The Ancren Riwle

One of the most notable works in prose produced early in the thirteenth century, is the *Ancren Riwle*, or Nun's Rule—a treatise containing instruction and guidance to women leading the solitary life of "anoresse" or "recluses."

The author of this work is now generally accepted as being Bishop Poore, who held the See of Salisbury from 1217–28, when he was translated by Bishop Honorius to Durham. It is also extremely probable that the nuns for whom this rule was written dwelt at Tarrant in Dorsetshire. A religious house was established at Tarrent by Ralph de Kahaines in the reign of Richard I. About a hundred years after its foundation Bishop Poore, who was born at Tarrent, became known as its second founder, and in 1237, during his last illness, he came to Tarrent and died there.

Three sisters of noble birth renounced the world, and lived in solitude in a house close to the church, attended by two women (out-sisters) and some lay brothers. Bishop Poore would seem to have been their spiritual adviser, and at their urgent request—"and ye my dear sisters have oftentimes importuned me for a Rule"—he wrote this book which deals with the outward and inward rule to be observed by Anoresses. He divides the book into eight parts. The first part treats of religious service; the next, of the five senses of fleshly and spiritual temptations, of confession, penitence; finally, he considers the external rule, in which he enters into details concerning the food, clothing, possessions, treatment of the maids, &c., in an eminently practical fashion. The work displays the author's learning and fervent piety, his generous and benevolent attitude towards human frailty.

He exhibits within certain limits a refreshing freedom and broadness of view. "If any ignorant person ask of what order you are . . . say that ye are of the order of St. James, who has described order and religion—'Pure religion and without stain is to visit and assist the widows and fatherless children and to keep himself pure and unstained from the world.'"

Thus the writer, while not unmindful of the usefulness of externals, insists on the primary importance of the religion of the heart—purity of heart and love of Christ are the central themes dwelt upon.

The life of the anchoress was to be one of poverty—"Ye shall eat no flesh nor lard except in great sickness." They should not take meals outside the convent with friends. An anchoress is not to gather alms in order to dispense them—"Housewifery is Martha's part, and Mary's part is quietness and rest from all the world's din, that nothing may hinder her from hearing the voice of God." An anchoress should have nothing that draweth her heart outward—"Carry ye on no traffic. An anchoress that is a buyer and seller, selleth her soul to the chapman of hell. Do not take charge of other men's property in your house, nor of their cattle, nor their clothes, neither receive under your care the church vestments, nor the chelice, unless force compel you or great fear, for oftentimes much harm has come from such careltaking." For this reason they are not to possess any beast "except only a cat"—an anchoress that hath cattle must think of the herdsman's hire, of the cow's fodder—"defend herself when her cattle is shut up in the penfold, and moreover pay the damage. Christ knoweth it is an odious thing when people in the town complain of anchoresses' cattle."

Their clothing might be black or white, their garments are to be plain, warm, and well-made. They are to wear no iron, nor hair-cloth, nor hedgehog skins; their shoes are to be thick and warm. "Have neither ring, nor brooch, nor ornamented girdle, nor gloves, nor any such thing that is not proper for you to have." Their time is to be occupied with their devotions and in shaping, sewing, and mending church vestments, and poor people's clothes. An anchoress is enjoined never to be idle. "Iron that lieth still soon gathereth rust; and water that is not stirred soon stinketh."

She is not to send nor receive, nor write letters without leave, neither may she become a schoolmistress, nor turn her house into a school for children. Her maiden may teach any little girl "concerning whom it might be doubtful whether she should learn amongst the boys."

The dwelling of the anchorite was as a rule

concern ourselves here. From our point of view the chief writings to notice are the *Essays*, the *Advancement of Learning*, the *History of Henry VII*, and the *New Atlantis*.

The *Essays*, ten in number, were issued first in 1597, again augmented in 1612, and finally just before his death.

The genesis of these is interesting. He jotted down in talking, any brilliant or suggestive thing he heard, or any illuminating thought that struck him. These he put together into a book—constantly augmenting the stock.

Emerson is the one modern writer with whom Bacon may be fairly compared, for their method is much the same. In each case you have a series of trenchant and apparently disconnected sayings, where the writer endeavours to reach the reader's mind by a series of aphoristic attacks.

Comparing Bacon with his predecessors, Hooker, Sidney, Lyly, Ascham, it will be seen how widely he departs from the prolix methods of the day. In rhetorical power, musical cadence, quaint turns of speech, he is equalled by many of his contemporaries, excelled by a few, but for a clear, terse, easy writing, he has no peer save Ben Jonson, and even to-day his *Essays* are models of succinct, lucid prose.

No man of the age had greater foresight than he; for clear-headed, prudential considerations he was unequalled. Material success and services to humanity were his objects in life. These aims were sometimes in conflict; though he did his best to blend them, and when the tussle came, personal considerations won the day. He had a great brain; not a great soul. He was too fine a man to play for self-aggrandisement only, too sagacious a thinker to truckle to the shallow heads of the day; but he was not great enough to resist temptation. He was both too great and too little to succeed in life.

Yet his faults are obvious enough to the cursory student of history. It is more profitable to deal with his finer qualities.

His Aims

It has been well said that "nothing throws so clear a light on the career of any great man as a knowledge of his character and aims when he made the first step into the world." Bacon has stated his aims clearly. It was primarily to be of use to the human race; secondly, to serve his country.

The aims were big sounding but were conceived in all sincerity, and were no mere grandiloquent notions. He was conscious of his power and felt justly that his type of mind was of a serviceable character.

Clear foresight, as I have said, was the predominating characteristic. Combined with this was a cautious, judicial spirit, an untiring industry, and an even, amiable disposition.

The whole aim of science in Bacon's view was to endow the condition and life of man with new powers and works. Truth and utility were ultimately one and the same. Vain abstractions Bacon abhorred. His was to be the method of induction—the new method—arguing from ascertained facts to principles. The first step, obviously, was to collect the facts.

The collection of facts!—that is his insistent point. To keep the eye fixed on Nature, and so receive her images as they are.

The main significance of Bacon's philosophic position lies in this, that he emphasizes the necessity for a critical analysis of experience.

"Man, the servant and interpreter of Nature, can do and understand so much and so much only as he has observed in fact or in thought, of the course of Nature. Beyond them he neither knows anything nor can do anything."

Experience and observation! How valuable a lesson for an age in which the crudest superstition and the most childish fancies did service for scientific investigation. One has only to recall the medical theories and practices of the day, to see how badly Bacon's method was needed.

This may be added. Bacon has been called the parent of Modern Science. The phrase is only true of him if we look at Bacon's ideas, not his methods. His methods contributed nothing; his ideas everything. What he himself said of himself is truer than he perhaps imagined: "I only sound the clarion; but I enter not into the battle." He lacked the genius of investigator and inventor; he was a prophet rather than a general. He knew what ought to be done; but his ways of setting about it were faulty.

Said Voltaire: "The Chancellor Bacon did not yet know nature, but he knew all the roads that led to her."

But his ideas were true and right enough; and time has only confirmed their essential rightness; and they all lay in the systematic and wide examination of facts; as the primary step in Science; and the postponement of generalisation until data had been collected.

As an illustration of Bacon's prose style, we may take the following passage:

Of Studies

"Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments and the meaner sort of books; else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man. And therefore if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit; and if he read little, he had need have much cunning to seem to know that he doth not.

"Histories make men wise, poets witty, the mathematics subtile, natural philosophy deep, moral, grave, logic and rhetoric able to contend."

"Henry VII"

"As for the disposition of his subjects in general towards him, it stood thus with him; that of the three affections which naturally tie the hearts of the subjects to their sovereign, love, fear, and reverence; he had the last in height, the second in good measure, and so little of the first, as he was beholden to the other two.

"He was a Prince, sad, serious, and full of thought;

and secret observations, and full of notes and memorials of his own hand, especially touching persons. As, whom to employ, whom to reward, whom to enquire of, whom to beware of, what were the dependencies, what were the factions, and the like; keeping, as it were, a journal of his thoughts. There is to this day a merry tale; that his monkey, set on as it was thought by one of his chamber, tore his principal note-book all to pieces, when by chance it lay forth; whereat the court, which liked not these pensive accounts, was almost tickled with sport."

If the *Essays* reflect Bacon's lucidity of method, and the *History of Henry VII* his eloquence, to the *New Atlantis* we may turn for some taste of his imaginative ideals.

The "New Atlantis"

The key-note of the *New Atlantis* is the pursuit of knowledge, which in Bacon's view is a religious duty. Many of the scientific hints thrown out by Bacon as Utopian possibilities have now become everyday realities. Certainly we may claim to have "some Degrees of Flying in the Ayre . . . Ships and Boates for going under water." Modern medical science is familiar with "Chambers of Health where we qualify the Aire . . . for the cure of divers diseases." These are but a few illustrations of the way in which Bacon foreshadowed the trend of scientific research.

The style of the book is clear and direct. Comparing it as a Utopian picture with that of More, a few points of interest detach themselves.

(1) More emphasizes the social; Bacon the intellectual well-being of the community.

(2) The chief note in More's *Utopia* is simplicity of life, whereas the chief feature of the citizens of *Atlantis* is orderliness of life.

(3) More is Puritan in his ideas of dress; Bacon favours a certain external splendour.

(4) The tone of More's mind is democratic; of Bacon's aristocratic.

Bacon's fragment, equally with More's more considerable work, has inspired future generations no less by its fertile suggestions than by its simple charm of narrative.

"Wee sayled from Peru, (whear wee had continued by the space of one whole yeare), for China and Japan, by the South Sea; taking with us Victuals for twelve Moneths; And had good Windes from the East, though soft and weake, for five Moneths space, and more. But then the Winde came about, and setled in the West for many dayes, so as we could make little or no way, and were sometimes in purpose to turne back. But then againe there arose Strong and Great Windes from the South, with a Point East; which carried us up, (for all that we could doe) towards the North; By which time our Victualls failed us, though we had made good spare of them. So that finding our selves, in the Midst of the greatest Wildernesse of Waters in the World, without Victuall, we gave our Selves for lost Men, and prepared for Death. Yet we did lift up our Harts and Voices to God above, who *sheweth his Wonders in the Deepe*; Beseeching him of his Mercy, that as in the Beginning He discovered the Face of the Deepe, and brought forth Dry-Land; So he would now discover Land to us, that we mought not perish."

. . . . . .

"We have also certaine Chambers, which wee call Chambers of Health, wher wee qualifie the Aire as we thinke good and proper for the Cure of diverse Diseases, and Preservation of Health.

"Wee have also faire and large Baths, of severall Mixtures, for the Cure of Diseases, and the Restoring of Mans Body from Arefaction: And others for the Confirming of it in Strength of Sinnewes, Vitall Parts, and the very Iuyce and Substance of the Body.

"We have also large and various Orchards, and Gardens; Wherin we do not so much respect Beauty, as Variety of Ground and Soyle, proper for diverse Trees, and Herbs: And some very spatious, wher Trees, and Berries are set, wherof we make diverse Kinds of Drinks, besides the Vineyards. In these wee practise likewise all Conclusions of Grafting, and Inoculating, as well as of Wilde-Trees, as Fruit-Trees, which produceth many Effects. And we make (by Art) in the same Orchards, and Gardens, Trees and Flowers, to come earlier, or later, then their Seasons; And to come up and bear more speedily then by their Naturall Course they doe. We make them also by Art greater much then their Nature; and their Fruit greater and sweeter and of differing Tast, Smell, Colour, and Figure, from their Nature. And many of them we so Order as they become of Medicinall Use.

"Wee have also Meanes to make diverse Plants rise by Mixtures of Earths without Seedes; And likewise to make diverse New Plants, differing from the Vulgar; and to make one Tree or Plant turne into another.

"We have also Parks, and Enclosures of all Sorts, of Beasts, and Birds; which we use not onely for View or Rarenesse, but likewise for Dissections, and Trialls; That thereby we may take light, what may be wrought upon the Body of Man. Wherin we finde many strange Effects; As Continuing Life in them, though diverse Parts, which you account Vitall, be perished, and taken forth; Resuscitating of some that seeme Dead in Appearance: And the like. We try also all Poysons, and other Medicines upon them, as well of Chyrurgery, as Physicke. By Art likewise, we make them Greater, or Taller than their Kinde is; And contrary-wise Dwarfe them and stay their Growth: Wee make them more Fruitfull, and Beering then their Kind is; and contrary-wise Barren and not Generative. Also we make them differ in Colour, Shape, Activity, many wayes. We finde Meanes to make Commixtures and Copulations of diverse Kindes; which have produced many New Kindes, and them not Barren, as the generall Opinion is. We make a Number of Kindes, of Serpents, Wormes, Flies, Fishes, of Putrefaction; Wherof some are advanced (in effect) to be Perfect Creatures, like Beastes or Birds; And have Sexes, and doe Propagate. Neither doe we this by Chance, but wee know before hand, of what Matter and Commixture, what Kinde of those Creatures will arise."

Significance of His Work

Of Bacon's contribution to critical thought mention is made elsewhere. Regarding here his work as a whole, we may say that the best summing up is expressed in his own words: "A bell ringer who is up first to call others to church." In his *Advancement to Learning*, he is one of the earliest to seek to consolidate and unify his knowledge; in his *Essays* he is the pioneer of clear sententious English, that suggests rather than expounds, and blends dignity with familiarity, in that pleased and attractive manner which is the secret of the power of all our great essayists. Again, in his *Henry VII* he shows the possibilities of a flowing, orderly, and picturesque narrative that shall compel attention without recourse to strained conceits. Finally, in his *New Atlantis*, with its plea for a College of Scientific Research, he started a movement that led to the foundation of our Royal Society, and inspired in a later era that stupendous undertaking the French *Encyclopédie*. Despite the marks of philosophy, with which it is customary to adorn Bacon, it may be questioned whether he will be seriously

regarded as a great thinker. Here again he is the "bell ringer" to thought, rather than the profound reasoner. His literary methods are then of the orator, not the dialectician; he is not good in argument; not reliable even in exposition. He saw the value of scientific precision, and the careful accumulation of facts, but his own cast of mind is not adapted to the carrying out of his own admirable precepts.

In fact he is a valuable, intellectual irritant rather than a constructive force; an intellectual irritant with fine rich literary resources at his command; fertile in illustration, luminous in suggestion, and with considerable power to challenge and arrest the attention. Cowley well compared him with Moses on Pisgah, surveying the Promised Land, but not entering into possession. That dictum goes to the root of the matter.

THE DECLINE OF THE RENASCENCE

Introduction: The England of Milton and Bunyan: Puritanism and its Significance.

INTRODUCTION

The England of Milton and Bunyan

Milton was born on December 9, 1608, at Black Spread Eagle Court, in Bread Street. Thus was Puritanism nourished in the very bosom of the Renascence, for was not the famous Mermaid Tavern hard by, where the great Elizabethan poets and wits foregathered and caroused. Yet what a change of atmosphere in passing from the England of Shakespeare to the England of Milton.

Shakespeare stands first and foremost for the concrete realities of life; his words and phrases tingle with vitality and thrill with warmth. Milton is concerned rather with theorising about life; his lines roll over the mind with sonorous majesty, now and again thrilling us as Shakespeare did with the "fine excess" of creative genius, but more often impressing us with their stateliness and power, than moving us by their tenderness and passion.

There is a stern inflexibility here also that bespeaks the growing Puritanism of the age. A goodly leaven of Puritanism is a heritage of our Saxon nature. For a while the exhilaration of the Renascence swept the Englishman off his feet, but the excesses that every tidal movement brings along with it soon sobered him. The fanatic who had so long denounced the drama to deaf ears, at last found an uneasy listener, for the baser elements in the drama were triumphing now that Shakespeare's voice had been stilled. There were fine souls yet, but the glory of the drama was assuredly on the decline.

Jonson, with shrewd insight, saw the marks of moral deterioration about him, and though there was abundant talent in many of his brilliant contemporaries, realised that that would not save the drama. So he brings to the fore that theory of literature which makes of it a fitting instrument of moral education. Shakespeare interpreted life, Jonson, and after him Milton, satirised it and moralised it. Such a course was less popular than Shakespeare's, but the needs of the age were its justification.

Puritanism began with Ben Jonson, though it found its greatest poetical exponent in Milton, its greatest prose exponent in Bunyan.

Two influences contributed especially to the moulding of the England now under consideration. The first is the influence of the great dramatists and poets of Elizabeth's reign. They had helped to make the people realise their solidarity as a nation by their chronicle plays. They had given them high ideals, a hatred of tyranny, and a spirit of independence that was to fit them for conflict with the Stuarts. Such was the legacy of great Elizabethan drama.

The drama that awaits our notice has many claims upon our admiration, some on our affection; but it lacks that gripehold of the national conscience of which Marlowe and Shakespeare knew the secret.

The second influence is that of the Bible. The Scriptures, hitherto reserved for the select few, are now spread broadcast for men and women to consider and expound for themselves. The Bible is to be seen everywhere, heard of everywhere; it points an argument in the House of Commons; inspires the soldier on the field of battle; leavens the official despatches; the barber quotes it to his customer; the Puritan critic cites it against his enemies; and even those who foregathered at the tavern intersperse the news of the day with discussion of doctrines.

The term "Puritan" usually calls up the picture of an austere figure, garbed in black, with lank hair, a man with no feeling for art, no sympathy with the graces and amenities of life, a sour, crabbed, and gloomy personage.

That such Puritans existed is quite true; that such a picture is an absurd travesty of the best type of Puritan is equally true. Unfortunately, Puritanism has been associated in the popular mind with the extravagances of extremists. This, no doubt, is partly due to the fact that the stage, which the Puritan never regarded with favour, has revenged itself by perpetuating a caricature whenever it dealt with Puritanism. Even our own generation has witnessed Sir Henry Irving in a play where every artifice is used to idealise the portrait of Charles and to belittle the portrait of Cromwell.

In literature, not till Carlyle wrote his famous History did any adequate picture exist of the great political Puritan, and Macaulay was only expressing wittily the thought of his time when he wrote of the Puritan, that he disliked bear-baiting not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectator.

Anyone who wished to "purify" the usages of the church was called a Puritan, and it is a mistake to associate the term entirely with Nonconformity.

Many, of course, found it better to worship separately, as they could not get their forms sufficiently purified; but others were content to pursue the work of purification from within the Church. Puritanism had its Moses as well as its Luthers.

Intellectual as Monasticism had proved in its declining years, it had supplied an ideal which the serious and devout sorely missed now that it had been uprooted. To such, largely men of intense if narrow imaginations, moral fervour, and tenacity of purpose, Puritanism supplied the necessary inspiration. They seized upon its principles with eager enthusiasm, and found in it the wherewithal to combat the shallow and light-hearted.

The artist owes Puritanism a grudge for the ruthless destruction of so much that was beautiful in the art treasures of London. But the extremist is to be blamed largely for this. The finer type of Puritan was by no means insensible either to the beauty of art or to the innocent joys of life. Milton wrote Masques; Colonel Hutchison was an expert dancer; Cromwell delighted in music and encouraged musicians. In fact, the representative Puritan was by no means the dull dog he is painted, and Cromwell had less in common with some of the violent sectaries of his day than with some of the finer spirits among the Royalists.

If we turn from Milton, to regard for a moment Cromwell, the secret of Puritan dynamics is more fully disclosed. There was little about Cromwell of that hardness and austere reserve, common to many Puritans, and characteristic certainly of Milton. Milton triumphed because of his fiery sincerity and high imagination; Cromwell because of his genuine kindliness of heart and his rare sense of justice. From the days when he was an obscure member of the House to the time when he held the destinies of the country in his hand, no one of his contemporaries equalled him for the dogged consistency and unselfish bravery with which he championed the cause of the poor against the rich. There was none to plead for them, and he stepped forward despite the danger then attaching to any sympathisers with the people.

And just as his zeal on their behalf and his kindness of manner attached the poorer classes to him, so did his unpretentious directness and "familiar rustic carriage" endear him to the soldiers whom he led.

There was nothing here of that genuine "Kill-Joy" attitude which made the Presbyterian so unpopular. Cromwell could relax on occasion, as his friends well knew, and that the more gracious elements of his character were not oftener forthcoming we may attribute to the seriousness of the work he had to do.

Yet no man courted popularity less than he did, or felt more acutely lack of sympathy. But there was something Titanic about his resolution; never did he flinch from any course of which his conscience approved. We may criticise the wisdom and the humanity of certain aspects of his policy; its sincerity and patriotism or—considering his age and generation—its tolerance, we cannot. "See what a multitude of people come to attend your triumph"? was said to him on one occasion. "More would come to see me hanged," was the grim reply. No doubt it was perfectly true. To be well hated and misunderstood is both the privilege and tragedy of the strong man.

Admirable as a destructive force, Cromwell found the work of construction too hard; nor can we wonder at this, realising the stupendous difficulties that faced him. But he left a fruitful legacy of ideas behind him, none more fruitful than his insistence on liberty of thought in the teeth of the extremists of the day. This it was that attracted Milton towards him, and the saintly George Fox. It is quite true that the toleration he preached, moderate as it may seem to us to-day, was swept aside at the Restoration, yet it was not destroyed. It is also true that Puritanism had proved itself unfitted to be the sole inspiration of national statecraft. But I believe that it supplied the leaven of the far-reaching Benthamite reforms in the earlier half of the nineteenth century. "And if," as Mr. Gardiner has said, "his Puritanism descended from the proud position to which he had raised it," we may at any rate add, adopting the dictum on Charles, that it was greater in its fall than ever it had been in its days of power.

Yet with the glory of Puritanism as a dominant political force, it entered for yet a third time into our literature in the work of Bunyan. Of the Bedford tinker's work as literature, something will be said in its proper place. Here it may be affirmed that for sheer power over the hearts of men, Bunyan is unrivalled save by Shakespeare himself.

I. THE DRAMA

Ben Jonson

No one of the great vital personalities of the Elizabethan age is so well known to us as Ben Jonson. From his early precocious days when at Westminster School he attracted the attention of the historian Camden, down to the time when he was leading spirit of the Mermaid Tavern, numbering among his friends all the great men of the day, we seem to see the man as he was, sincere, brave, quarrelsome, and versatile; a good hater, an equally good lover, copious in speech, keenly critical in insight; a careful scholar, with a fine touch of poetry in his composition; the "huge galleon" of Fuller's famous account, notable for his wit combats with the "English man of war" Shakespeare. In physique big and unwieldy, with the uproarious egotism of his famous namesake; in intellect clear-headed, thoroughgoing, though often amazingly pedantic; in disposition, rough and satiric, yet essentially good at heart. Such was "Rare Ben Jonson"; literature has never had a more indefatigable servant; nor life a more omnivorous taster.

Born about the year 1573, a month after the death of his father, Ben Jonson was the son of a gentleman from the Border Counties, who for his zeal on behalf of the religion of the Reformers was imprisoned, and his estates sequestered, when Queen Mary came to the throne. Forced to leave his home, he came to London and became a minister in Westminster. Little, however, is definitely known of Jonson's antecedents.

When Jonson was two years old his mother married a tradesman who did the utmost for his little stepson; though "brought up poorly," his education was not neglected; he was sent first to the parish school of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, Charing Cross, afterwards to Westminster School through the kindness of Camden, the scholarly historian, then second master. Here it was the foundations were laid that afterwards enabled the poet to build up his monumental fame as a poet and dramatist.

Camden took an intense interest in the lad and his work, of which Jonson was not unmindful; it was to Camden he dedicated his finest comedy, *Every Man in His Humour*, in 1598, and also acknowledged the debt he owed his old master in a poem:

> "Camden! most reverend head, to whom I owe
> All that I am in arts, all that I know!"

On leaving Westminster School he was apprenticed by his stepfather to his own trade, that of a bricklayer, and it is not surprising to hear that Jonson "could not endure" the work. How could such work—whether it were in the office among estimates, specifications, and endless columns of figures, or in the more manual labour of piling up bricks and mortar—be congenial to a youth who had spent his school days among the classics of Greece and Rome! Can we wonder that he broke with the home ties and enlisted as a private soldier, and that many legendary stories are the outcome of this time spent with the army in the Low Countries.

On returning to London about the year 1592, though but twenty, he married; his wife he describes as "a shrew, yet honest"—perhaps with good reason for her shrewishness, if we take into account Jonson's own references to his early life;—and for some years they lived apart. Of several children not one outlived their father; an infant daughter who died in 1594, and a son, seven years of age, who died of the Plague in 1603, are both commemorated in his poems.

About the time of his marriage Jonson turned to the stage for employment, both as actor and playwright. He made his first appearance at a third-rate theatre in Clerkenwell, and afterwards joined Philip Henslowe's company; he was not a successful actor, and a duel with Gabriel Spencer, of the same company, in which Spencer lost his life, ended Jonson's career in that branch of the profession. On his trial for the deed Jonson barely escaped paying the extreme penalty, and was branded in the thumb with the letter T. (*i.e.* Tyburn). While in prison he changed his religion and, "on trust" he says, became a Romanist; twelve years later he abjured the Roman faith and returned to the Anglican.

After the trial a temporary breach took place between Henslowe and Jonson, and a play that was being written by Jonson for Henslowe's company was passed on to George Chapman to complete. At this the poet showed considerable annoyance, and considering himself slighted, he sought revenge by offering his new comedy, *Every Man in His Humour*, to the Lord Chamberlain's company of players, who were only too delighted to score against a rival manager; they produced it with much success in 1598, with Shakespeare in the cast. The feud between Henslowe and Jonson did not last; the poet was too valuable an adjunct to the company to ignore for long, and the following year he was asked to write for them again. Jonson bore no malice, and gave them *Every Man out of His Humour*.

Jonson's self-esteem, arrogance, and independent character led him into many squabbles with his fellow-playwrights, who took the usual means of retaliation by caricaturing and ridiculing each other in their plays. Dekker and Marston for some reason fell under the lash of Jonson in *The Poetaster* (1601), and Jonson is made their butt in *Satiromastix, or the Untrussing of the Humorous Poet*. As Marston dedicated *The Malcontent* to Jonson in 1604, and the three are found collaborating in *The Phœnix and the Turtle*, we may hope that the quarrel was just the outcome of a little passing professional jealousy. *Cynthia's Revels* (1600), another satirical play, roused society against him.

While living in the house of Lord D'Aubigny, Jonson was writing his first tragedy, *Sejanus*, which he dedicated to his noble patron. It was acted at the Globe Theatre in 1603, but not printed till the following year with a preface declaring that "It is not the same with that acted on the public stage; wherein a second hand had a good share."

Two years later the poet again suffers imprisonment. In company with Chapman and Marston, *Eastward Ho* was produced, and in it, as the Scots thought, some uncomplimentary remarks were made on them and their country. The authors were threatened with the loss of their ears and noses, but this indignity was spared them, and on their release, without trial, Jonson gave a supper party. So few allusions to Jonson's parents are made throughout his life that it may be interesting to quote a passage from the *Conversations*: "At the midst of the feast his old Mother drunke to him, and shew him a paper which she had (if the sentence had taken execution) to have mixed in the prison among his drinke, which was full of lustie strong poison, and that as she was no churle, she told, she minded first to have drunk of it herselfe."

With the accession of James I began a long series of Court entertainments, and the poet was in great request by the Royal Family and various noblemen and others in their pageants to welcome the new Sovereign. *The Satyr* was given at Althorp on June 3, 1603, before the Queen and Prince Henry; *The Pleasure*, at the Highgate residence of Sir William Cornwallis, and the first masque, *Blacknesse*, at Whitehall on Twelfth Night, 1605. The manuscript of which, dedicated to the Queen and signed by Jonson, is now in the British Museum.

A quarrel with Inigo Jones, the famous Court architect, who was also responsible for the stage properties and scenery for the Court masques, resulted in the temporary withdrawal of Royal patronage from Jonson. Both these men were masters and masterful, each wanted his own way, and the result seems to have been a fulfilment of the old adage that "a little dog at home can keep a big dog out."

Nevertheless Jonson's fame reached its height about the year 1611. With all his activity in Court circles he had been equally busy on behalf of the playgoing public, and his more lasting work was produced about this period: *Volpone, or the Fox* was staged at the Globe in 1606; *Epicene, or the Silent Woman* in 1609, by the Children of Her Majesty's Revels; *The Alchemist* (1610), *Catiline* (1611), and *The Devil is an Ass* (1616), by the King's Men; *Bartholomew Fair* in 1614. Then came a break; necessity compelled Jonson to return to the stage in 1625, with the *Staple of News*, and again in 1629 with *The New Inn*, the latter did not survive a first performance—"not acted," Jonson says, "but negligently played" and "most squeamishly beheld and censured"—so he relieved his feelings in the celebrated *Ode to Himself*.

"Come leave the loathèd stage,
And the more loathsome age;
Where pride and impudence, in faction knit,
Usurp the chair of wit!
Indicting and arraigning every day,
Something they call a play.
Let their fastidious, vain
Commission of the brain
Run on and rage, sweat, censure, and condemn;
They were not made for thee, less thou for them."

For a time Jonson had acted as secretary to Sir Walter Raleigh and tutor to his son, journeying with them to Paris in 1612, where, according to Drummond, there were occasions when tutor and pupil might have been more profitably employed.

In 1618 Jonson started upon his famous pedestrian feat from London to Scotland, and on reaching Edinburgh was given a hearty welcome by the Literary Society of that city; on he went to Hawthornden and remained as the guest of William Drummond for three weeks. Drummond kept some notes of their conversations with remarks not always flattering to his guest, which he published later. On January 25, 1619, he left Scotland for London, where he arrived about the end of April. While in Scotland the University of Oxford honoured him by offering him an M.A. degree—formally conferred upon him on July 19, 1620; while at Oxford Jonson was the guest of Richard Corbet of Christ Church, and one of his finest epitaphs is that *On Vincent Corbet*, the father of his host. The following year the King promised him the reversion of Master of the Revels after the deaths of Sir George Buc and Sir John Astley. This post had always been the poet's ambition to occupy, but it is "ill luck waiting for dead men's shoes," and Sir John outlived him. King James, however, appointed him Laureate, but Jonson refused a knighthood.

One of the disasters of his life occurred between the years 1621–23, in the burning of his library, even at this time said to be one of the richest in England—a large number of his own works were lost in the conflagration—and brought forth his *Execration against Vulcan*.

Jonson's health began to decline in 1626; attacks of palsy and dropsy became frequent, but on the death of Middleton in 1628 he was appointed Chronologer to the City with a salary of 100 marks, but it does not appear that he did any serious work in this direction. The salary was withdrawn in 1631, but restored in 1634 by wish of the King. A poem to King Charles in 1630, in which he suggests that his salary as Laureate should be raised from marks to pounds had the desired effect, with the addition of a tierce of canary wine, of which Jonson was very fond.

During the suspension of his salary as Chronologer, the poet was in very needy circumstances, and a piteous letter was sent to the Duke of Newcastle in which he asked his patron to "succour my present necessities"—"I have neither fortune to repay," wrote Jonson, "nor security to engage that will be taken." Many friends came to his assistance, among whom he numbered the Earl of Pembroke, who had been in the habit of sending him £20 annually "to buy books," the Sidneys of Penshurst, Lord D'Aubigny, with whom he had resided for some years, and Sir Walter Raleigh, who is said to have founded the famous club at the Mermaid Tavern.

How regularly could the portly figure of Jonson, laughingly referred to as the "Tun of Heidelberg," be seen wending his way along Fleet Street to Cheapside, then rounding the corner into Bread Street where the famous Mermaid was situated, there to join that Bohemian company of playwrights and statesmen, bishops and nobles, poets and prosemen, who were proud to be "sealed of the tribe of Ben," and the younger among them whom he called his "sons"—how he loved and commemorates them!

Shakespeare, "Soul of the age . . . thou art a monument without a tomb." Beaumont, "How I do love thee" and "am not worthy the least indulgent thought thy pen drops forth!" Donne, "the delight of Phœbus and each Muse, Who, to thy one, all other brains refuse." Then there is Herrick's commendation of the master where each verse of his "out-did the frolic wine;" and Beaumont's well-known lines:

"What things have we seen
Done at the Mermaid! heard words that have been
So nimble and so full of subtle flame
As if that every one from whom they came
Had meant to put his whole wit into a jest,
And had resolved to live a fool the rest
Of his dull life."

During the last few years of his life he was confined to the house with ever recurring attacks of palsy and dropsy that made it difficult for him to move about, and death must have come as a relief to the tired body as it did on August 6, 1637, and a final resting-place found for it in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey. By some misfortune, though money had been given to raise a monument to his memory, this was not done, and it was left for a stranger to inscribe "O Rare Ben Jonson" on the bas-relief placed upon the Abbey Wall.

His Writings

The first thing to realise about his work is that in his sharp and incisive criticism of famous contemporaries, he was actuated entirely by a well-considered theory of the drama, quite opposed to the methods of Shakespeare and other exponents of the romantic drama. There was never any petty

spite or jealousy in his criticisms; sharply as he chided the great Master on occasion, no other has left a more splendid or more memorable tribute to his genius than he, in declaring that his works were "not of an age, but for all time."

There is, despite all the natural contentiousness of the man, an invincible honesty, a fine generosity, that make his criticism especially valuable.

With his non-dramatic writings we are concerned elsewhere. It is sufficien there to emphasize the strength and clarity of his prose, the charm and grace of much of his verse. Unlike Marlowe, he leaned towards classic rather than romantic methods. Unlike Shakespeare, he deals with human life in sections rather than as a whole; being content to satirise manners rather than to paint men and women. In his drama, he is a moralist first and foremost, afterwards the artist. But his scope is very wide, comprising tragedies, comedies, masques, and farces.

His masques, replete in folk-lore learning, and classical imagery, are enlivened with gay interludes and pretty flights of fancy, for which he has less scope in the orthodox drama. If some of his contemporaries excelled him, as certainly they did in lyric sweetness and abandon, or displayed a more delicate invention on the purely imaginative side, no other writer of the time equalled, much less excelled him, in the all-round excellence of the masques, in the piquant blend of scholastic learning and fantastic frippery; indeed the famous Court masque of Jacobean times owes its form and comeliness largely to his indefatigable labours. Akin to the Masques, is the unfinished Pastoral, *The Sad Shepherd*, written with a lightness of touch, and delightful abandonment, that comes on the reader as a surprise.

We may regard the comedies and tragedies under three aspects, especially characteristic of Jonson.

(1) *His Technical Skill as a Playwright*

When first he threw in his lot with the playwrights, he frankly followed the current demand for romantic drama, showing no small skill in adopting the full-blooded romantic manner. Even here, in the early years of apprenticeship, he displayed vigorous power of imagination; but romantic drama was not characteristically expressive of the man's personality. After his dismissal by the theatrical manager, Henslowe, a rival manager—William Shakespeare—came forward and helped him to put on his comedy, *Every Man in His Humour*. Here Jonson for the first time struck the anti-romantic note, and sought to establish a satirical comedy of manners framed in a definite plan. He saw clearly enough that despite the splendid, exuberant power of the Shakespearean drama, there was no underlying theory or convention, and that its tendency to become formless and chaotic would be a serious matter without the genius of such men as Shakespeare to guide and control.

In the prologue to *Every Man in His Humour*, Jonson puts forward his plan of reform, electing to "sport with human follies, not with crimes." The word "humour," as used by Jonson, implied some oddity of disposition, especially with regard to the manners of the day.

The invention of Bobadil is one of his happiest; and the whole play, while clear and coherent in its framework, is alive with comic power, happy and not too heavily underlined.

Jonson made quite clear how he disapproved of the happy-go-lucky selection of plots. He would have none of those who "waylay all the old books they can hear of, in print or otherwise, to farce their scenes withal . . . as if their imagination lived wholly upon another man's trencher." He came to the making of comedies with a fine knowledge of Old English Literature, and of the classics, and with an intimate acquaintance of London life in all its guises.

In the comedies that follow *Every Man out of His Humour*, and *Cynthia's Revels*, the same care for clearness and definition are observed; but the moral aim of the satirist is somewhat too obvious; and the machinery creaks at times rather painfully.

His next ventures are in the direction of tragedy—of these *Sejanus* and *Catiline* are the most noteworthy. Here he tried to carry out the same plan previously attempted in comedy. He wished to revert to the severe conventions of the classic drama. But the scholar trips up the artist this time, just as the moralist did before. In his endeavour to be genuinely historical, and to avoid all irrelevance, he becomes dull and pedantic.

Not that *Sejanus* and *Catiline* are complete failures. If the endeavour to preserve, so far as practicable, the dramatic unities (in *Sejanus* he gives up unity of Time) leads to dullness, and if his avoidance of comic contrasts found no compensating advantage in eloquent diction, yet the characterisation is always thoughtful and well considered, and at times arresting. But whatever the merits of these plays may be, they pale beside the rich power of the comedies that followed: *Volpone*, *The Silent Woman*, and *The Alchemist*.

Volpone, or the Fox, is a study in avarice.

Volpone is no common miser, he glories less in the hoarding of his treasure than in its acquisition; and he revels in the hypocrisies of those who are over ready to fawn upon the rich man, fooling them to the top of their bent. The play is extraordinarily clever, and brilliantly constructed. Its defects lie in a certain hardness, and in lack of humanity. It deals relentlessly with the most contemptible qualities in human nature, and the bitterness of its cynical humour leaves an unpleasant taste in the mouth.

The Silent Woman is written in more genial vein. Here is comedy, with a dash of farce, and Coleridge considered it the most entertaining of the author's comedies. It is certainly highly amusing, and in point of construction fully as admirable as *Volpone*.

The story deals with a disagreeable old man, Morose, who has a special hatred of noise. Upon him is played a trick by his nephew, who introduces a boy dressed up as a woman, with a special gift for silence. This trait naturally commends itself to Morose, who marries Epicœne and finds, after the wedding, that his wife is a perfect tornado of noise.

That "she" is also a boy, is speedily disclosed by the nephew, and the farcical denouement is accomplished with many ingenious turns and boundless vivacity. The characters one and all are vigorously and amusingly drawn.

The Alchemist gives us another and less farcical study in trickery, though there is abundant merriment in it; while there are excellent sketches of humbugs and gulls of every variety; one of the most successful being Sir Epicure Mammon. This play, like *Volpone*, is written in blank verse—prose being used in *The Silent Woman*—and the style throughout is animated and flexible, well suited to the subject matter.

For sheer fun and high spirits, however, *Bartholomew Fair* must take the first place. Inferior to the other comedies in constructive skill, and overdrawn in parts, it is an amazingly vivid and many-sided presentment of contemporary manners. The stage is crowded with amusing figures, the mountebank, the fussy politician, the "Ebenezer Sluggins" of the day, and many others.

After an interval of nine years, came *The Staple of News*, modelled on Aristophanic lines, but lacking in the constructive power and comic invention of the earlier work, and those that followed show even a greater falling off; "mere dialogues" Dryden called them not unfairly. Indeed, Jonson was played out.

(2) *His Gift of Detailed Observation*

In treating of Jonson's craftsmanship, something has been said of his visualising power. Here is the most remarkable side of his power as a writer for the stage. Whether he is dealing with clear-cut characters or clear-cut repartee, he is equally happy. He has an eye for external peculiarities, unequalled by any of our men of letters save Smollett and Dickens. He points to the men of his day full of whims and cranks:

> "When some one peculiar quality
> Doth so possess a man that it doth draw
> All his affects, his spirits and his power
> In their confluxions all to run one way;
> This may be truly said to be a humour." [1]

Note the touches with which he builds up Volpone's character:

> "I gain
> No common way; I use no trade, no venture;
> Wound no Earth with ploughshares, fat no beasts
> To feed the shambles; have no mills for iron,
> Oil, corn, or men to grind them into powder."

There is something of Dickens' enjoyment in the comic invention with which he overlays his figures. One recalls Zeal of the Land Busy in *Bartholomew Fair*, who pretended to be so greatly shocked by the gaieties, yet is discovered "fast by the teeth in the cold turkey pie . . . with a great white loaf on his left hand and a glass of Malmsey on his right." Later on he moralises (*à la* Teckaniff at Todgers') about his food, "We may be religious in the minds of the profane, so it be eaten with a reformed mouth." He calls the fair "the shop of Satan," yet is surprisingly familiar with its devious ways. Ultimately he gets put in the stocks.

[1] *Every Man in his Humour* (Prologue.)

There is no more elaborate painter of London life than Jonson. Shakespeare paints with a bigger brush, but for detailed effects Jonson is supreme. He satirises vice with the vigour of Molière, but not with his adroitness. Had he lashed less furiously he might have kept a better edge on his rapier. Truly did a friend once say to him, "You write with a porcupine quill dipped into too much gall."

Yet this over emphasis was certainly not due to any blunted observation. His similes are neat and happy. For instance, this of an ill-bred man:

> "He minds
> A curtsey no more than London Bridge
> Which arch was mended last."

And when he keeps his didacticism in check, as in that amusing farce, *Bartholomew Fair*, his observant humour finds abundant scope.

(3) *His Graceful Fancy*

In imaginative intensity Jonson is inferior not only to Shakespeare, but to Marlowe, Webster, Beaumont and Fletcher, and other contemporaries. But he had a graceful fancy which showed to rich advantage in the Masques; and here and there it lightens up the Comedies with luminous flashes.

His last work, *The Sad Shepherd*, contains some of his pleasantest conceits. The Shepherd laments his charming Karine; spring had died with her, and since then earth has borne but thorns:

> "Here she was wont to go, and here, and here,
> Just where those daisies, pinks, and violets grow;
> The world may find the spring by following her. . . ."

His lyrics have sweetness and abundant grace. As instances, there are the songs, "O do not wanton with those eyes," the "Celia" cycle, and the familiar paraphrase from *Philostratus*, "Drink to me only. . . ."

Yet with all these qualities, with an exuberant and graceful fancy, with his ripe scholarship, his clear visualising power, his satiric faculty, the plays of Jonson leave in the reader's mind a certain coldness. We feel something is lacking. We admire, but are not carried away; our minds are stimulated but the emotions are rarely gripped. We realise the greatness of the man, but—What then is the matter? The matter seems to be that his mind and imagination never fused with the white heat of creative passion as was the case with Shakespeare. His intellect tyrannised over his art. He was too intent on proving some moral thesis, and admirable as his satire is, he was ever forgetting the artist in the moralist and riding a folly to death; spoiling a humorous character by a multiplying of comic minutiæ. None the less, many of the figures, despite the touch of caricature, are alive. His vitality and observant power endow them with life; and make us believe in them—anyhow for the time being—even if they do not enshrine themselves in our memories, as do the characters of Shakespeare.

But if there are very definite limitations to Jonson's attractiveness as a dramatist, it would be hard to exaggerate the remarkable influence he exercised on the drama. His jealousy for form and coherence, his scrupulous avoidance of the weaknesses of the Romantic drama, his shrewd

penetrating observation of manners, these things may be traced in the work of Beaumont and Fletcher, of Chapman, Marston, and Middleton, of Randolph and May, to mention some who profited by Jonson's methods. After the Restoration his popularity increased, and although his serious efforts failed to attract, yet his comedies held the stage for many years, and proved more to the taste of the Court than the pastoral comedies of Shakespeare.

As an influence on other forms of literature, the "humours" of Jonson are not without literary descendants in the novel of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. They can be met in the pages of Fielding; they crowd the stories of Smollett; and Dickens, who was certainly influenced by Smollett in his earlier work, was as certainly indebted to the comic inventiveness of Jonson.

There seems a fine appropriateness about his taking the part of Bobadil in Jonson's familiar comedy.

VOLPONE, OR THE FOX

MOSCA, *introducing* VOLTORE, *with a piece of plate*

Mosca. You still are what you were, sir. Only you
Of all the rest, are he commands his love,
And you do wisely to preserve it thus,
With early visitation, and kind notes
Of your good meaning to him, which, I know,
Cannot but come most grateful. Patron! sir!
Here's signior Voltore, is come . . .
Volpone. (*Faintly.*) What say you?
Mos. Sir, signior Voltore is come this morning
To visit you.
Volp. I thank him.
Mos. And hath brought
A piece of antique plate, bought of St. Mark,
With which he here presents you.
Volp. He is welcome.
Pray him to come more often.
Mos. Yes.
Volt. What says he?
Mos. He thanks you, and desires you see him often.
Volp. Mosca.
Mos. My patron!
Volp. Bring him near, where is he?
I long to feel his hand.
Mos. The plate is here, sir.
Volt. How fare you, sir?
Volp. I thank you, signior Voltore;
Where is the plate? mine eyes are bad.
Volt. (*Pushing it into his hands*). I'm sorry
To see you still thus weak.
Mos. That he's not weaker. (*Aside.*)
Volp. You're too munificent.
Volt. No, sir, would to heaven,
I could as well give health to you, as that plate!
Volp. You give, sir, what you can; I thank you.
Your love
Hath taste in this, and shall not be unanswer'd;
I pray you see me often.
Volt. Yes, I shall, sir.
Volp. Be not far from me.
Mos. Do you observe that, sir?
Volp. Hearken unto me still; it will concern you.
Mos. You are a happy man, sir; know your good.
Volp. I cannot now last long——
Mos. You are his heir, sir.
Volt. Am I?
Volp. I feel me going; Uh! uh! uh! uh!
I'm sailing to my port, Uh! uh! uh! uh!
And I am glad I am so near my haven.
Mos. Alas, kind gentleman! Well, we must all go——
Volt. But, Mosca——
Mos. Age will conquer.
Volt. Pray thee, hear me:
Am I inscribed his heir for certain?
Mos. Are you!
I do beseech you, sir, you will vouchsafe
To write me in your family. All my hopes
Depend upon your worship; I am lost,
Except the rising sun do shine on me.
Volt. It shall both shine, and warm thee, Mosca.
Mos. Sir,
I am a man, that hath not done your love
All the worst offices: here I wear your keys,
See all your coffers and your caskets lock'd,
Keep the poor inventory of your jewels,
Your plate and monies; am your steward, sir,
Husband your goods here.
Volt. But am I sole heir?
Mos. Without a partner, sir; confirm'd this morning:
The wax is warm yet, and the ink scarce dry
Upon the parchment.
Volt. Happy, happy, me!
By what good chance, sweet Mosca?
Mos. Your desert, sir;
I know no second cause.
Volt. Thy modesty
Is not to know it; well, we shall requite it.
Mos. He ever lived your course, sir; that first took him.
I oft have heard him say, how he admired
Men of your large profession, that could speak
To every cause, and things mere contraries,
Till they were hoarse again, yet all the law;
That, with most quick agility, could turn,
And (re-) return; (could) make knots, and undo them;
Give forked counsel; take provoking gold
On either hand, and put it up; these men,
He knew, would thrive with their humility.
And, for his part, he thought he should be blest
To have his heir of such a suffering spirit,
So wise, so grave, of so perplex'd a tongue,
And loud withal, that would not wag, nor scarce
Lie still, without a fee; when every word
Your worship but lets falls, is a chequin!
[*Knocking without.*
Who's that? one knocks; I would not have you seen, sir.
And yet—proceed you came, and went in haste:
I'll fashion an excuse—and, gentle sir,
When you do come to swim in golden land,
Up to the arms in honey, that your chin
Is borne up stiff, with fatness of the flood,
Think on your vassal; but remember me:
I have not been your worst of clients.
Volt. Mosca!
Mos. When will you have your inventory brought, sir?
Or see a copy of the will?—Anon!
I'll bring them to you, sir. Away, be gone.
Put business in your face.
[*Exit* VOLTORE.
Volp. (*Springing up*). Excellent Mosca!
Come hither, let me kiss thee.
Mos. Keep you still, sir.
Here is Corbaccio.
Volp. Set the plate away:
The vulture's gone, and the old raven's come!
Mos. Betake you to your silence, and your sleep.
Stand there and multiply.
[*Putting the plate to the rest.*
Now, shall we see
A wretch who is indeed more impotent
Than this can feign to be; yet hopes to hop
Over his grave——

Enter CORBACCIO.

Signior Corbaccio!
You're very welcome, sir.[1]

[1] *Volpone, or The Fox*, Act I.

BARTHOLOMEW FAIR

RABBI BUSY *rushes in*

Busy. Down with Dagon! down with Dagon! 'tis I, I will no longer endure your profanations.

Leath. What mean you, sir?

Busy. I will remove Dagon there, I say, that idol, that heathenish idol that remains, as I may say, a beam, a very beam—not a beam of the sun, nor a beam of the moon, nor the beam of a balance, neither a house-beam, nor a weaver's beam, but a beam in the eye, in the eye of the brethren; a very great beam, an exceeding great beam; such as are your stage players, rimers, and morrice-dancers who have walked hand in hand, in contempt of the brethren, and the cause; and been born out by instruments of no mean countenance.

Leath. Sir, I present nothing but what is licensed by authority.

Busy. Thou art all licence, even licentiousness itself, Shimei!

Leath. I have the master of the revels' hand for't, sir.

Busy. The master of the rebels' hand thou hast. Satan's! hold thy peace, thy scurrility, shut up thy mouth, thy profession is damnable, and in pleading for it thou dost plead for Baal. I have long opened my mouth wide, and gaped; I have gaped as the oyster for the tide, after thy destruction; but cannot compass it by suit or dispute; so that I look for a bickering ere long, and then a batch.

Ursula. Good Banbury vapours!

Cokes. Friend, you'd have an ill match on't, if you bicker with him here; though he be no man of the fist, he has friends that will to cuffs for him. Numps, will not you take our side?

Edg. Sir, it shall not need; in my mind he offers him a fairer course, to end it by disputation: beat thou nothing to say for thyself, in defence of thy quality?

Leath. Faith, sir, I am not well-studied in these controversies, between the hypocrites and us. But here's one of my motion, puppet Dionysius, shall undertake him, and I'll venture the cause on't.

Cokes. Who, my hobby-horse! will he dispute with him?

Leath. Yes, sir, and make a hobby-ass of him, I hope.

Cokes. Thank's excellent! indeed he looks like the best scholar of them all. Come, sir, you must be as good as your word now.

Busy. I will not fear to make my spirit and gifts known; assist me zeal, fill me, fill me, that is, make me full!

Wasp. What a deep-mouth, profane wretch is this! Is there any ignorance or impudence like his, to call his zeal to fill him against a puppet?

Quar. I know no fitter match than a puppet to commit with an hypocrite!

Busy. First, I say unto thee, idol, thou hast no calling.

Dion. *Now sir, I am called Dionysius.*

Leath. The motion says, you lie, he is call'd Dionysius in the matter, and to that calling he answers.

Busy. I mean no vocation, idol, no present lawful calling.

Dion. *Is yours a lawful calling?*

Leath. The motion saieth if yours be a lawful calling?

Busy. Yea, mine is of the spirit.

Dion. *Then idol is a lawful calling.*

Leath. He says, then idol is a lawful calling; for you call'd him idol, and your calling is of the spirit.

Cokes. Well disputed, hobby-horse.

Busy. Take not part with the wicked, young gallant: he neglecteth and blasphemeth; all is but blasting sophistry. I call him idol again; yea, I say, his calling, his profession is profane, it is profane, idol.

Dion. *It is not profane!*

Leath. It is not profane, he says.

Busy. It is profane.

Dion. *It is not profane.*

Busy. It is profane

Dion. *It is not profane.*

Leath. Well said, confute him with *Not*, still. You cannot bear him down with your base noise, sir.

Busy. Nay he me, with his treble croaking, though he croak like the chariot wheels of Satan; I am zealous for the cause——

Leath. As a dog for a bone.

Busy. And I say, it is profane, as being the page of Pride, and the waiting-woman of Vanity.

Dion. *Yea! what say you to your fire-women, then?*

Leath. Good.

Dion. *Or leather-makers for the Friers, that are of your fashion of faith? are not they with their perukes, and their pafs, their fans, and their bells, as much pages of Pride, and waiters upon Vanity? What say you, what say you, what say you?*

Busy. I will not answer for them.

Dion. *Because you cannot, because you cannot. Is a bugle-maker a lawful calling? Or the comfect-makers? much you love them; or your French fashioners? you would have all the sin without yourselves, would you not, would you not?*

Busy. No, Dagon.

Dion. *What then, Dagonet? is a puppet worse than them?*

Busy. Yea, and my main argument against you is, that you are an abomination; for the male, among you, putteth on the apparel of the female, and the female of the male.

Dion. *You lie, you lie, you lie abominably.*

Cokes. Good, by my troth, he has given him the lie thrice.

Dion. *It is your old stale argument against the players, but it will not hold against the puppets; for we have neither male nor female amongst us. And that thou may'st see, if thou wilt, like a malicious purblind zeal as thou art.*

Edg. By my faith, there he has answered you, friend, a plain demonstration.

Dion. *Nay, I'll prove, against e'er a Rabbin of them all, that my standing is as lawful as his; that I speak by inspiration, as well as he; that I have as little to do with learning as he; and do scorn her helps as much as he.*

Busy. I am confuted, the cause hath failed me.

Dion. *Then be converted, be converted.*

Leath. Be converted, I pray you, and let the play go on.

Busy. Let it go on; for I am changed, and will become a beholder with you.[1]

TO CELIA

Come, my Celia, let us prove,
While we may, the sports of love;
Time will not be ours for ever;
He at length our good will sever.
Spend not then his gifts in vain.
Suns that set, may rise again;
But if once we lose this light,
'Tis with us perpetual night.
Why should we defer our joys?
Fame and rumour are but toys.
Cannot we delude the eyes
Of a few poor household spies;
Or his easier ears beguile,
So removed by our wile?
'Tis no sin love's fruit to steal,
But the sweet theft to reveal;
To be taken, to be seen,
These have crimes accounted been.

Kiss me, sweet: the wary lover
Can your favours keep, and cover,
When the common courting jay
All your bounties will betray.
Kiss again: no creature comes.
Kiss, and score up wealthy sums
On my lips thus hardly sundred,
While you breathe. First give a hundred,
Then a thousand, then another
Hundred, then unto the other
Add a thousand, and so more;
Till you equal with the store,
All the grain that Rumney yields,
Or the sands in Chelsea fields.

[1] *Bartholomew Fair*, Act iv. sc. 3.

Or the drops in silver Thames,
Or the stars that gild his streams,
In the silent summer-nights,
When youths ply their stol'n delights;
That the curious may not know
How to tell 'em as they flow,
And the envious, when they find
What their number is, be pined.

Echo's Song

Slow, slow, fresh fount, keep time with my salt tears;
Yet, slower, yet; O faintly, gentle springs:
List to the heavy part the music bears,
Woe weeps out her division, when she sings.
Droop herbs and flowers,
Fall grief in showers,
Our beauties are not ours
O, I could still,
Like melting snow upon some craggy hill,
Drop, drop, drop, drop,
Since nature's pride is now a wither'd daffodil.

A Song

Oh do not wanton with those eyes,
Lest I be sick with seeing;
Nor cast them down, but let them rise,
Lest shame destroy their being.
Oh be not angry with those fires,
For then their threats will kill me;
Nor look too kind on my desires,
For then my hopes will spill me.
Oh do not steep them in thy tears,
For so will sorrow slay me;
Nor spread them as distract with fears;
Mine own enough betray me.

(*b*) POST-SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMATISTS (from Chapman to Shirley): Chapman—Marston—Dekker—Randolph—Rowley—Cockaine—Glapthorne—Davenant—Nabbes—Webster—Middleton—Heywood—Day—Tourneur—Massinger—Ford—Shirley.

POST-SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA

Contemporary with Jonson is George Chapman, a native of Hertfordshire, born near Hitchin in 1559, and educated at both Oxford and Cambridge; after which it is said he joined some theatrical company touring Germany. On his return he became the protégé of Prince Henry, eldest son of James I, his patrons also including Somerset, and the Earl of Essex, to whom he dedicated some of his plays.

His principal dramatic works are *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* (1596); two comedies, *All Fools'* (1599) and *The Gentleman Usher*; two French tragedies, *Bussy D'Ambois* (1613) and *The Admiral of France*; was a great collaborator with the well-known dramatists of his day, including Jonson, and the scholarly translator of the *Iliad* (1611), the *Odyssey* (1616), the *Hymns* (1624), and contributions from Hesiod, Juvenal, and Petrarch. He died in 1634.

Chapman is best known to the general reader by the striking tribute of Keats, while Swinburne's eloquent eulogy did much to call attention to his outstanding merit as a writer. Certainly, he is among the great men of the time, and whether as translator, as a writer of comedies, or as a verse maker, he claims our admiration. He is one of the collaborators in one of the very best comedies of the time, *Eastward Ho*, Jonson and Marston being also concerned in it. Judging from what we know of Marston's strongly coloured work, we should not rate his intervention as at all considerable; and despite Jonson's satirical strength, there is an alertness and gaiety about it which is certainly not characteristic of "Rare Ben." On the other hand it shows considerable affinity with his own comedy, *All Fools'*, and the inference that the capital merits of *Eastward Ho* are Chapman's, would not seem to be unfair.

His work, however, is distinctly uneven, and though his comedies are better than his tragedies, and remarkably able in many respects, it is as a translator that he will probably be best remembered.

His translation of Homer is recognised by scholars to be one of the very best in the language; this is especially so as regards the *Iliad*, where he uses the fourteener, a prosodic form far closer to the rhythmic sweep of the original than the somewhat uninspiring heroic couplet used in the *Odyssey*.

Like Jonson, Chapman is sometimes embarrassed as an artist by his learning, and he has none of that play of fancy which is one of Jonson's most agreeable attributes as a writer. For this reason he is unable often—to use Swinburne's expressive phrase—"To clear his mouth of pebbles and his brow of fog." Yet when he did get rid of the pebbles and the mist, there were few stronger and more original forces with which to reckon.

John Marston was born at Coventry about the year 1575, and took his degree at Brasenose College, Oxford, in 1594. His mother was the daughter of an Italian surgeon, his father a lawyer who wished his son to follow the same profession; Marston, however, not finding legal studies particularly to his liking, turned to literature and published a number of satires in 1598, among them *The Scourge of Villainy*, and *The Metamorphosis of Pygmalion's Image* being so distasteful to the church people that they were publicly burned by order of Archbishop Whitgift in 1599, and as there is in the same year an entry in Henslowe's *Diary* of a loan on September 28, "of forty shillings to the new poet Mr. Maxton" (probably Marston), we may infer that things were not very prosperous with him, at the beginning of his career at all events.

For about eight years Marston followed playwriting as a profession, and in 1607 decided that he would change it for a more serious occupation, took Orders and was preferred to the living of Christchurch, Hampshire, where he remained fifteen years. Previous to this Marston had married the daughter of the Rev. William Wilkes, chaplain to James I, and Jonson used to jestingly remark that "Marston wrote his father-in-law's preachings, and his father-in-law the comedies."

Three years after he resigned the living of Christchurch he died in London, and is buried in the Temple Church, beside his father.

Marston is essentially a tragic writer, though he

[1] *Cynthia's Revels.*

made a reputation in his day as a writer of vigorous satires. Some of his modern critics find insincerity in his work, and it is probable that his heart was not in much that he wrote; but he was a man of brilliant parts and real poetic power, marred by an unfortunate taste for "Erdas vein . . . the tyrant's vein," so nicely hit off in Shakespeare's lines. He is a writer who lends himself readily to effective extracts; for his work, though unequal, rises at times to heights of striking pathos, and illuminating irony.

Of his plays, *Antonio and Mellida* is perhaps the best, while *The Revenge of Antonio, Antonio and Mellida*, and *The Malcontent*, will furnish capital illustrations of his satirical and tragic powers.

We come now to THOMAS DEKKER, of whom we know less as a man than of any other remarkable man of the time, but whose genius, so highly praised by Lamb, few would be disposed to question.

Dekker was one of the hand-to-mouth writers of the age, one of the company of brilliant vagabonds who lived literally on their wits, and who wrought their comedies and tragedies out of the stuff of their own lives.

Of his prose, mention has been made elsewhere.

He was a frequent collaborator—more from need than from inclination one would wager—but his individual characterisations are clearly marked, and unmistakable. He was first and foremost a poet, with a poet's intuition of life, and in neither comedy nor tragedy is there that objective realism we find in Jonson and his followers. In his lighter plays he interprets the frailties and weaknesses of mankind with something of Shakespeare's imaginative observation, not with the incisive satire of Jonson; in his more serious plays, he shows the poet's insight into character, and his women are vital and expressive. Last, but not least, he was a singer of rare sweetness and delicacy, "Poetry enough for anything," as Lamb significantly and truly said of him.

THOMAS RANDOLPH, also a follower of Ben Jonson, was born at Newnham-cum Badby in Northants, in 1605, and educated at Westminster and Cambridge; after a life of dissipation in London, his health failed, as did his pecuniary resources, and at the age of thirty he died of small-pox.

Notwithstanding his comparatively early death, Randolph had written six plays, *Aristippus* (1629) and *The Conceited Pedlar*, published in 1630, *The Jealous Lovers* in 1632, *The Muses' Looking Glass*, and *Amyntas* appearing after his death in 1638, in company with a volume of *Poems*.

Randolph was a clever and showy writer, with a taste for verse as well as for the drama, and had a distinct gift for comedy writing. His best work, probably, is *The Muses' Looking Glass*, which is a brilliant and spirited comedy set in the framework of the Morality Play.

Good also, in its way, is the pleasant pastoral, *Amyntas*.

It is less as an original force than as a talented and well-read adaptor and imitator, that Randolph will be remembered. Jonson's influence in his work is strong, and his special abilities lay certainly in the direction of the Jonsonian drama.

The last name of particular note is WILLIAM ROWLEY. He is best known as the collaborator of Fletcher, Middleton, Massinger, Webster, and Dekker, having a special knack of comic construction. He was in great request for amusing subplots, and excelled in depicting the humours of low life. In the work for which he is supposed to be solely responsible, such as *A Match at Midnight*, he shows the same comic power, together with a certain constructive neatness and homeliness of situation.

WILLIAM ROWLEY (*c.* 1585–*c.* 1642) was a member of the Queen's company of players in 1610, as well as playwright. In addition to the comedies—*A New Wonder* (1632), *All's Lost by Lust*, and *A Match at Midnight* (1633), *A Shoemaker is a Gentleman* (1638)—he also wrote an amusing picture of London life, *A Search for Money*, published in 1709.

Among the lesser lights of the day are Sir ASTON COCKAINE, a follower in the Jonsonian train, with a faculty for farcical situations. HENRY GLAPTHORNE, the friend of Lovelace, enjoyed some vogue as a writer of tragedy and comedy, and was passably good in both, without excelling in either. One of his plays which caught the ear of the public was a dramatised version of the *Arcadia: Argalus and Parthenia*. Davenant helped to produce a remarkable change in the nature of the English drama, of which mention is made elsewhere; this fact is of more importance than the actual dramatic work accomplished by him—work, fair in quality of workmanship, though marred by the halting verse. THOMAS NABBES, and DAVENPORT, both of whom belong to the Jonsonian school, did good work in comedy; the *Microcosmus* (1634) of Thomas Nabbes (a semi-masque), and the *City's Night Cap* of Davenport, may be particularised. A notable point about the work of Nabbes, is that he rises above the dirty humour that too often served for light relief in the drama of the day. There is a wholesome freshness about his work; and had his powers as an artist been higher, he would undoubtedly have taken a distinguished position among the playwrights of the day.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER

From 1607 to 1613, these "twin souls of the drama" lived together a bachelor life in an old house on the Bankside, within easy reach of the theatres; they possessed all things in common, and shared even "their cloathes and cloaks between them." This happy state of affairs lasted until Beaumont married an heiress and set up an establishment of his own.

We are told by a contemporary that there was "a wonderful consimility of phansy" between Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, which caused that "dearness of friendship between them"; and also that "it was Mr. Beaumont's business to correct the superflewings of Mr. Fletcher's wit."

FRANCIS BEAUMONT, born at Grace Dieu in Leicestershire (*c.* 1584), was the son of a Judge of Common Pleas, and educated at Pembroke College (then known as Broadgates Hall), Oxford; here

he remained till the death of his father in 1598, when he left suddenly without taking a degree. With the intention of following his father's profession he was entered at the Inner Temple in 1600, but the hilarious circle that frequented The Mermaid, The Sun, or the Triple Tun, had greater attractions for him than the dusty tomes of the Temple Library and the solemn company of the Common Room.

In 1602 he appears as the author of a poem, *The Metamorphosis of Tobacco*, which certainly reeks more of the Mermaid than the Temple; and in the following year with *Salamacis and Hermaphroditus*, though Beaumont's authorship of the latter has been questioned. After this he commenced writing for the stage in collaboration with Fletcher and other well-known dramatists. Several of Jonson's plays were produced with commendatory poems by Beaumont, notably *Volpone*, *The Silent Woman*, and *Catiline*, and it is thought that Beaumont's may have been the "second hand" that Jonson speaks of in the preface to *Sejanus*.

His last work was a masque for the Benchers of Gray's Inn on the occasion of the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth to the Elector Palatine; about the same time his own marriage took place to Ursula, daughter and co-heiress of Henry Isley, of Sundridge, Kent; unfortunately their happiness was of short duration. In 1616, at the age of twenty-eight, Beaumont died and was buried in Westminster Abbey. He left one baby daughter Elizabeth, and another, Frances, was born after his death.

JOHN FLETCHER, who was five years Beaumont's senior, was born at Rye in Sussex in 1579, and the son of the Dr. Richard Fletcher, afterwards Bishop of London, who thrust his unwelcome religious ministrations upon the ill-fated Mary Stuart. As a pensioner student he entered Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, where his father had formerly been president, and though showing signs of great scholarship and brilliance, there is no record of his taking a degree. In 1593 his father died, somewhat embarrassed in circumstances, and had but a few books to leave to be divided between his two sons, Nathaniel and John.

After his brilliant career as a dramatist, whether alone or in company with Beaumont and others, he was taken suddenly ill and died, it is said of the Plague, and was buried on August 29, 1625, in St. Saviour's Church, Southwark, close to the Bankside where he and his friend had lived their early life together.

In all, about fifty-two plays are assigned to these dramatists, alone and in collaboration. Of these it has been somewhat difficult to define those that can be said with certainty to have been their individual work; the latest division of the principle plays, after much research by scholarly critics,[1] is given as follows:

BEAUMONT.—*The Woman Hater* (1607); *The Masks of the Gentlemen of Gray's-Inne, and the Inner-Temple*, 1613.

FLETCHER.—*The Faithfull Shepheardesse*, printed before May 1610; *Wit without Money*, 1614; *The Loyal Subject*, 1618; *The Mad Lover*, before March 1619; *The Humorous Lieutenant*, 1619; *Women Pleas'd*, 1619 or 1620; *The Pilgrim*, 1621; *The Wild Goose Chase*, acted 1621, printed 1652; *The Island Princess*, 1621; *A Wife for a Month*, licensed May 27, 1624; *Rule a Wife and have a Wife*, licensed October 19, 1624, printed 1640.

BEAUMONT and FLETCHER.—*The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, acted about 1608, printed 1613; *The Scornful Ladie*, acted 1609 or 1610, printed 1616; *The Coxcomb*, acted about 1610; *Philaster*, acted about 1610, printed 1620; *The Maides Tragedy*, acted about 1611, printed 1619; *A King and no King*, licensed 1611, printed 1619; *Cupid's Revenge*, acted about 1612, printed 1615.

It is generally supposed that, in the work of collaboration, Fletcher represented the creative force, Beaumont the critical. These men have left behind a large output of dramatic work, larger than that allocated to any other dramatist. Fletcher survived Beaumont for several years, and his own work is marked by grace and charm, and a wonderful fluency that borders on prolixity. He was particularly fond of an irregularity of metre, that whilst it gives the impression often of carelessness, and lack of art, seems to have been used designedly to give flexibility and ease to the style.

Examining the joint plays, we find abundance of prose (Fletcher never favoured prose); and a bright quality of humour, quite different from the boisterous fun with which Fletcher's own plays often abound. It is quite possible that Beaumont had more imaginative power than he is often credited with, but we have insufficient data to decide the mere question of respective qualities of genius. At the most, we can but guess from internal evidence at the share of each poet in the work of collaboration. One thing is certain, they blend in their best work in the happiest way, giving the impression of a single mind—and a mind of singular breadth and intensity.

One of the finest, if not the finest of the series, is *The Maid's Tragedy*. The scene is placed at Rhodes. The King has made one of the Court ladies, Evadne, his mistress, though this is unknown, and he contrives a marriage between her and a young courtier, Amintor. Amintor is loath to fall in with this arrangement, as he is in love with Aspatia and she with him, but he holds it his duty to obey the King's commands. So he makes the best of it, and is impressed at any rate by the beauty and charm of his bride, not guessing at her awful secret. No sooner is she wedded than with brutal directness she informs her husband of her liaison with the King, and warns him it must continue. Amintor, with an abjectness inconceivable to modern minds, acquiesces in this hateful arrangement. But when Evadne's brother learns of the dishonour, he vows vengeance against the King. Evadne, stirred by his anger, vows she will take the matter into her own hands, and be her own avenger. Then one night when the King has visited her, she murders him in a scene of tragic horror. Melantius seizes the palace, and is subsequently pardoned by the King's successor, but Evadne and Aspatia die.

The repentance of Evadne is not very convincing, nor is the passive futility of the virtuous Aspatia attractive. Indeed, none of the characters,

[1] See *Cambridge History of English Literature*.

save that of the brother, Melantius, hold our sympathies; and the real grip of the play lies in the poignant writing of the big situations. There is certainly astounding force and passion in the dreadful murder scene, as well as in the even more horrible scene of Amintor's disillusionment.

Philaster also strikes the tragic note, and presents a fine study in jealousy; there is passion relieved by comedy in *A King and No King*; but for modern readers the attractiveness of these dramatists lies in their high spirits and the good, straightforward fun which we find in such comedies as *The Scornful Lady*, *The Spanish Curate*, *The Wild Goose Chase*—a kind of Elizabethan version of Shaw's *Man and Superman*—and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, with its delightful touches of middle-class life.

Mention must be made of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, in which it is supposed Shakespeare had a hand; probably not in the characterisation but in the writing, which here and there has certainly the authentic flavour. If it be not Shakespeare's, it is a wonderful imitation.

Regarding the distinctive merits of the two dramatists, it may be said that, so far as we can judge, Beaumont excels in tragic dignity, probably also in constructive power; also he shows more delicacy, more insight in his characterisation; Fletcher, on the other hand, has greater flexibility, more variety and movement, and a greater sense perhaps of stage effects. If not a great artist, he was an extremely able craftsman, and if his imagination sounds no profound depths, runs frequently into charming fancies. As a lyrist, he is among the best of his kind; with a wide range of mood, from graceful erotics, "Tell me, dearest, what is love?" to the boisterous conviviality of "Sit, soldier, sit and sing."

THE KNIGHT OF THE BURNING PESTLE

Enter SPEAKER OR THE PROLOGUE

Speaker of the Prologue. From all that's near the court, from all Cheapside's great, within the compass of the city-walls, we now have brought our scene——

CITIZEN *leaps on the Stage.*

Citizen. Hold your peace, goodman boy!

S. of Prol. What do you mean, sir?

Cit. That you have no good meaning: this seven years there hath been plays at this house, I have observed it, you have still girds at citizens; and now you call your play "The London Merchant." Down with your title, boy! down with your title!

S. of Prol. Are you a member of the noble city?

Cit. I am.

S. of Prol. And a freeman?

Cit. Yes, and a grocer.

S. of Prol. So, grocer, then, by your sweet favour, we intend no abuse to the city.

Cit. No, sir! yes, sir! if you were not resolved to play the Jacks, what need you study for new subjects, purposely to abuse your betters? why could not you be contented, as well as others, with "The Legend of Whittington," or "The Life and Death of Sir Thomas Gresham, with the building of the Royal Exchange," or "The Story of Queen Eleanor, with the rearing of London Bridge upon woolsacks?"

S. of Prol. You seem to be an understanding man: what would you have us do, sir?

Cit. Why, present something notably in honour of the commons of the city.

S. of Prol. Why, what do you say to "The Life and Death of Fat Drake, or the Repairing of Fleet-Privies"?

Cit. I do not like that: but I will have a citizen, and he shall be of my own trade.

S. of Prol. Oh, you should have told us your mind a month since; our play is ready to begin now.

Cit. 'Tis all one for that; I will have a grocer, and he shall do admirable things.

S. of Prol. What will you have him do?

Cit. Marry, I will have him——

Wife. (*Below.*) Husband, husband!

Ralph. (*Below.*) Peace, mistress.

Wife. (*Below.*) Hold thy peace, Ralph: I know what I do, I warrant ye. Husband, husband!

Cit. What sayest thou, cony?

Wife. (*Below.*) Let him kill a lion with a pestle, husband! let him kill a lion with a pestle!

Cit. So he shall—I'll have him kill a lion with a pestle.

Wife. (*Below.*) Husband! shall I come up, husband?

Cit. Ay, cony.—Ralph, help your mistress this way.—Pray, gentlemen, make her a little room. I pray you, sir, lend me your hand to help up my wife: I thank you, sir.—So.

WIFE *comes on the Stage.*

Wife. By your leave, gentlemen all: I'm something troublesome: I'm a stranger here: I was ne'er at one of these plays, as they say, before: but I should have seen *Jane Shore* once, and my husband hath promised me, any time this twelvemonth, to carry me to "The Bold Beauchamp," but in truth he did not. I pray you, bear with me.

Cit. Boy, let my wife and I have a couple of stools and then begin; and let the grocer do rare things.

[*Stools are brought.*

S. of Prol. But, sir, we have never a boy to play him: every one hath a part already.

Wife. Husband, husband, for God's sake, let Ralph play him! Beshrew me, if I do not think he will go beyond them all.

Cit. Well remembered, wife—Come up, Ralph.—I'll rout you, gentlemen; let them but lend him a suit of reparel and necessaries, and, by God, if any of them all blow wind in the tail on him, I'll be hanged.

RALPH *comes on the Stage.*

Wife. I pray you, youth, let him have a suit of reparel!—I'll be sworn, gentlemen, my husband tells you true: he will ask you sometimes at our house, that all the neighbours cry out on him; he will fetch you up a rousing part so in the garret, that we are all as feared, I warrant you, that we cuake again; we'll fear our children with him: if they be never so unruly, do but cry, "Ralph comes, Ralph comes!" to them, and they'll be as quiet as lambs.—Hold up thy head, Ralph; show the gentlemen what thou canst do; speak a huffing part: I warrant you, the gentlemen will accept of it.

Cit. Do, Ralph, do.

Ralph. By Heaven, methinks, it were an easy leap
To pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon;
Or dive into the bottom of the sea,
Where never fadom-line touched any ground,
And pluck up drowned honour from the lake of hell.

Cit. How say you, gentlemen, is it not as I told you?

Wife. Nay, gentlemen, he hath played before, my husband says, Mucedorus, before the wardens of our company.

Cit. Ay, and he should have played Jeronimo with a shoemaker for a wager.

S. of Prol. He shall have a suit of apparel, if he will go in.

Cit. In, Ralph, in, Ralph: and set out the grocery in their kind, if thou lovest me.

[*Exit* RALPH.

Wife. I warrant, our Ralph will look finely when he's dressed.

S. of Prol. But what will you have it called?

Cit. "The Grocer's Honour."

S. of Prol. Methinks "The Knight of the Burning Pestle" were better.

Wife. I'll be sworn, husband, that's as good a name as can be.

Cit. Let it be so.—Begin, begin; my wife and I will sit down.

S. of Prol. I pray you, do.

Cit. What stately music have you? you have shawms?

S. of Prol. Shawms! no.

Cit. No! I'm a thief, if my mind did not give me so. Ralph plays a stately part, and he must needs have shawms:
I'll be at the charge of them myself, rather than we'll be without them.

S. of Prol. So you are like to be.

Cit. Why, and so I will be: there's two shillings;—(*gives money*)—let's have the waits of Southwark; they are as rare fellows as any are in England; and that will fetch them all o'er the water with a vengeance, as if they were mad.

S. of Prol. You shall have them. Will you sit down, then?

Cit. Ay.—Come, wife.

Wife. Sit you merry all, gentlemen; I'm bold to sit amongst you for my ease.

[CITIZEN *and* WIFE *sit down.*

S. of Prol. "From all that's near the court, from all that's great
Within the compass of the city walls,
We now have brought our scene. Fly far from hence
All private taxes, immodest phrases,
Whatever may but show like vicious!
For wicked mirth never true pleasure brings,
But honest minds are pleased with honest things"—
Thus much for what we do; but for Ralph's part you must answer for yourself.

Cit. Take you no care for Ralph; he'll discharge himself, I warrant you.

[*Exit* SPEAKER OF PROLOGUE.

Wife. I'faith, gentlemen, I'll give my word for Ralph.[1]

THIERRY AND THEODORET

Scene: *Before the Temple of Diana.*

Enter THIERRY *and* MARTELL.

Mart. Your grace is early stirring.

Thi. How can he sleep,
Whose happiness is laid up in an hour
He knows comes stealing toward him?
Oh, Martell,
Is't possible the longing bride, whose wishes
Out-run her fears, can, on that day she's married,
Consume in slumbers? or his arms rust in ease,
That bears the charge, and see the honoured purchase
Ready to gild his valour? Mine is more,
A power above these passions; this day France
(France, that in want of issue withers with us,
And, like an aged elve, runs his head
Into forgotten ways) again I ransom,
And his fair course turn right. this day, Thierry,
The son of France, whose manly powers like prisoners
Have been tied up and fettered, by one death,
Gives life to thousand ages; this day beauty,
The envy of the world, the pleasure, glory,
Content above the world, desire beyond it,
Are made mine own, and useful.

Mart. Happy woman,
That dies to do these things!

Thi. But ten times happier
That lives to do the greater! Oh, Martell,
The gods have heard me now! and those that scorned me,
Mothers of many children, and bleak fathers,
That see their issues like the stars unnumbered,
Their comforts more than them, shall in my praises
Now teach their infant songs; and tell their ages
From such a son of mine, or such a queen,
That chaste Ordelia brings me. Blessèd marriage,
The chain that links two holy loves together!

And in the marriage more than blest Ordelia,
That comes so near the sacrament itself,
The priests doubt whether purer!

Mart. Sir, you are lost.

Thi. I prithee, let me be so.

Mart. The day wears;
And those that have been offering early prayers
Are now retiring homeward.

Thi. Stand, and mark them.

Mart. Is it the first must suffer?

Thi. The first woman.

Mart. What hand shall do it, sir?

Thi. This hand, Martell;
For who less dare presume to give the gods
An incense of this offering?

Mart. Would I were she!
For such a way to die, and such a blessing,
Can never crown my parting.

[*Two Men pass over the Stage.*

Thi. What are those?

Mart. Men, men, sir, men.

Thi. The plagues of men light on 'em!
They cross my hopes like hares!

[*A Priest from the Temple passes over Stage.*

Who's that?

Mart. A priest, sir.

Thi. Would he were gelt!

Mart. May not these rascals serve, sir,
Well hanged and quartered?

Thi. No.

Mart. Here comes a woman.

Enter ORDELIA, *veiled.*

Thi. Stand, and behold her then.

Mart. I think, a fair one.

Thi. Move not, whilst I prepare her. May her peace,
(Like his whose innocence the gods are pleased with,
And offering at their altars gives his soul
Far purer than those fires), pull Heaven upon her!
You holy powers, no human spot dwell in her!
No love of any thing but you and goodness
Tie her to earth! fear be a stranger to her,
And all weak blood's affections but thy hope
Left her bequeath to women! Hear me, Heaven!
Give her a spirit masculine and noble,
Fit for yourselves to ask and me to offer!
Oh, let her meet my blow, dote on her death;
And, as a wanton vine bows to the pruner,
That by his cutting off more may increase,
So let her fall to raise me fruit!—Hail, woman,
The happiest and the best (if thy dull will
Do not abuse thy fortune) France e'er found yet!

Ord. She's more than dull, sir, less and worse than woman,
That may inherit such an infinite
As you propound, a greatness so near goodness,
And brings a will to rob her.

Thi. Tell me this, then;
Was there e'er woman yet, or may be found
That for fair fame, unspotted memory,
For virtue's sake, and only for itself-sake,
Has or dare make a story?

Ord. Many dead, sir;
Living, I think, not many.

Thi. Say, the kingdom
May from a woman's will receive a blessing,
The king and kingdom, not a private safety,
A general blessing, lady?

Ord. A general curse
Light on her heart denies it!

Thi. Full of honour,
And such examples as the former ages
Were but dim shadows of and empty figures?

Ord. You strangely stir me, sir; and were my weakness
In any other flesh but modest woman's,
You should not ask more questions. May I do it?

Thi. You may; and, what is more, you must.

Ord. I joy in't
Above a moderate gladness. Sir, you promise

[1] *The Knight of the Burning Pestle.*

It shall be honest?
Thi. As ever time discovered.
Ord. Let it be what it may then, what it dare,
I have a mind will hazard it.
Thi. But, hark you:
What may that woman merit makes this blessing?
Ord. Only her duty, sir.
Thi. 'Tis terrible!
Ord. 'Tis so much the more noble.
Thi. 'Tis full of fearful shadows.
Ord. So is sleep, sir,
Or any thing that's merely ours and mortal:
We were begotten gods else: but those fears,
Feeling but once the fires of nobler thoughts,
Fly, like the shapes of clouds we form, to nothing.
Thi. Suppose it death!
Ord. I do.
Thi. And endless parting
With all we can call ours, with all our sweetness,
With youth, strength, pleasure, people, time, nay, reason?
For in the silent grave, no conversation,
No joyful tread of friends, no voice of lovers,
No careful father's counsel; nothing's heard
Nor nothing is, but all oblivion,
Dust and an endless darkness: and dare you, woman,
Desire this place?
Ord. 'Tis of all shapes the sweetest;
Children begin it to us, strong men seek it,
And kings from height of all their painted glories
Fall like spent exhalations to this centre:
And those are fools that fear it, or imagine
A few unhandsome pleasures or life's profits
Can recompense this place; and mad that say it,
Till age blow out their lights, or rotten humours
Bring them dispersed to the earth.
Thi. Then you can suffer?
Ord. As willingly as say it.
Thi. Marvell, a wonder!
Here is a woman that dares die.—Yet, tell me,
Are you a wife?
Ord. I am, sir.
Thi. And have children?
She sighs and weeps.
Ord. Oh, none, sir!
Thi. Dare you venture,
For a poor barren pride you ne'er shall hear,
To part with these sweet hopes?
Ord. With all but Heaven,
And yet die full of children: for that reads me,
When I am ashes, is my son in wishes,
And those chaste dames that keep my memory,
Singing my yearly remembrance, are my daughters.
Thi. Then there is nothing wanting but my knowledge,
And what I must do, lady.
Ord. You are the King, sir,
And what you do I'll suffer; and that blessing
That you desire, the gods shower on the kingdom!
Thi. Thus much before I strike, then; for I must kill you,
The gods have willed it so: they've made the blessing
Must make France young again and me a man,
Keep up your strength still nobly.
Ord. Fear me not.
Thi. And most death like a measure.
Ord. I am steadfast.
Thi. Thou shalt be sainted, woman; and thy tomb
Cut out in crystal, pure and good as thou art;
And on it shall be graven, every age,
Succeeding peers of France that rise by thy fall,
Till there last there like old and fruitful Nature,
Der'st thou behold thy happiness?
Ord. I dare, sir. *(Pulls off her veil.)*
Thi. Ha! *(Lets fall his sword.)*
Ord. Oh, sir, you must not do it!
Thi. No, I dare not!
There is an angel keeps that paradise,
A fiery angel, friend. Oh, virtue, virtue,
Ever and endless virtue!
Ord. Strike, sir, strike! *(Kneels.)*
And if in my poor death fair France may merit,
Give me a thousand blows! be killing me
A thousand days!
Thi. First, let the earth be barren,
And man no more remembered! Rise, Ordelia,
(Raises her.
The nearer to thy Maker; and the purest
That ever dull flesh showed us!—Oh, my heartstrings!
[Exit.
Mart. I see you full of wonder; therefore noblest
And truest among women, I will tell you
The end of this strange accident.
Ord. Amazement
Has so much won upon my heart, that truly
I feel myself unfit to hear. Oh, sir,
My lord has slighted me!
Mart. Oh, no, sweet lady!
Ord. Robbed me of such a glory by his pity
And most unprovident respect—
Mart. Dear lady,
It was not meant to you.
Ord. Else where the day is,
And hours distinguish time, time runs to ages,
And ages end the world, I had been spoken,
Mart. I'll tell you what it was, if but your patience
Will give me hearing.
Ord. If I have transgressed,
Forgive me, sir!
Mart. Your noble lord was counselled
(Grieving the barrenness between you both,
And all the kingdom with him) to seek out
A man that knew the secrets of the gods:
He went, found such an one, and had this answer:
That, if he would have issue, on this morning,
(For this hour was prefixed him), he should kill
The first he met, being female, from the temple,
And then he should have children. The mistake
Is now too perfect, lady.
Ord. Still, 'tis I, sir;
For may this work be done by common women?
Durst any but myself, that knew the blessing
And felt the benefit, assume this dying?
In any other 't had been lost and nothing,
A curse and not a blessing: I was figured;
And shall a little fondness bar my purchase?
Mart. Where should he then seek children?
Ord. Where they are;
In wombs ordained for issues; in those beauties
That bless a marriage-bed, and make it proud
With kisses that conceive and fruitful pleasures:
Mine, like a grave, buries those loyal hopes,
And to a grave it covets.
Mart. You are too good,
Too excellent, too honest. Rub not us,
And those that shall hereafter seek example,
Of such inestimable worths in woman.
Your lord of such obedience, all of honour,
In coveting a cruelty is not yours,
A will short of your wisdom? make not error
A tombstone of your virtues, whose fair life
Deserves a constellation! Your lord dare not,
He cannot, ought not, must not run this hazard;
He makes a separation Nature shakes at,
The gods deny, and everlasting Justice
Shrinks back and sheathes her sword at.
Ord. All's but talk, sir;
I find to what I am, reserved and needful;
And though my lord's compassion makes me poor,
And leaves me in my best use, yet a strength
Above mine own, or his dull fondness, finds me;
The gods have given it to me. *[Draws a dagger.*
Mart. Self-destruction? *(Holds her.)*
Now all good angels bless thee! Oh, sweet lady,
You are abused! this is a way to shame you,
And with you all that know you, all that love you;
To ruin all you build! Would you be famous?
Is that your end?
Ord. I would be what I should be.
Mart. Live, and confirm the gods then! live, and be
loaden

With more than olives bear or fruitful autumn!
This way you kill your merit, kill your cause,
And him you would raise life to. Where or how
Got you these bloody thoughts? what devil durst
Look on that angel-face, and tempt? do you know
What 'tis to die thus? how you strike the *skies*
And all good things above? do you feel
What follows a self-blood? whither you venture,
And to what punishment? Excellent lady,
Be not thus cozened, do not fool yourself!
The priest was never his own sacrifice,
But he that thought his hell here.
Ord. I am counselled.
Mart. And I am glad on't; lie, I know, you dare not.
Ord. I never have done yet.
Mart. Pray, take my comfort,
Was this a soul to lose? two more such women
Would save their sex. See, she repents and prays!
Oh hear her, hear her! if there be a faith
Able to reach your mercies, she hath sent it.
Ord. Now, good Martell, confirm me.
Mart. I will, lady,
And every hour advise you; for I doubt
Whether this plot be Heaven's, or hell's your mother.
And I will find it, if it be in mankind
To search the centre of it. In the mean time,
I'll give you out for dead, and by yourself,
And show the instrument; so shall I find
A joy that will betray her.
Ord. Do what's fittest,
And I will follow you.
Mart. Then ever live
Both able to engross all love and give!

[*Exeunt.*]

JOHN WEBSTER (c. 1580–c. 1625). Of Webster's parentage and early life we have little record. He probably followed the trade of a tailor as a means of livelihood, for we find he was made a freeman of their Company in 1603. Previous to this, however, in 1601, he began to write for the stage, collaborating with Marston in *The Malcontent*, and probably with Dekker for Philip Henslowe. Of his four plays—*The White Devil* (1612), *The Duchess of Malfi* (c. 1614), *The Devil's Law Case* (1623), and *Appius and Virginia* (1654)—*The Duchess of Malfi* has been the only one of his plays presented on the modern stage: by Samuel Phelps in 1851, and Mr. William Poel, who has done so much for the Elizabethan drama, in 1892.

Webster, like Beaumont, was partial to collaboration, but there is a sufficient body of single-handed work from his pen, and it is not hard to estimate his characteristics. These plays are *The Duchess of Malfi*, *The White Devil*, *The Devil's Law Case*, and *Appius and Virginia*. Webster's reputation rests on the first two of these, the two latter being poor and negligible. Opinions differ as to which is the better. *The Duchess of Malfi* would probably win on a suffrage; but for freshness and intensity of passion, it seems to me, *The White Devil* is Webster's masterpiece.

In passionate vigour, Webster is inferior to Beaumont and Fletcher, but for downright imaginative beauty and pathos, Webster is unapproachable, save by Shakespeare. Take for instance this:

"I have liv'd
Riotously ill, like some that live in Court,
And sometimes when my face was full of smiles
Have felt the maze of conscience in my heart:
Oft gay and honoured robes their torturers try;
We think cag'd birds sing when indeed they cry."[1]

[1] *Thierry and Theodoret*, Act iv. sc. 1.

There is much pathos and beauty also in *The Duchess of Malfi*, especially in the scene of the murder; though the play as a whole strikes one as less fresh in conception and more obvious in its claim upon our sympathies. Yet there are memorable lines such as:

"Cover her face; mine eyes dazzle; she died young."

And one at least excellent sketch in the villainous Bosola.

Both these plays present a study in Revenge—a subject dear to the heart of the Elizabethan dramatist. In Shakespeare's hands, there is a high note of duty that often ranges our sympathies, as in the case of Hamlet, with the avenger. But with Webster as with Tourneur, revenge is rather a fever of the blood than an impulse for justice; and in *The Duchess of Malfi*, our sympathies are entirely on the side of the unfortunate victim.

The story of *The Duchess of Malfi* is drawn, as so many of Shakespeare's were, from Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, and it is probable that Sidney's *Arcadia*, so fruitful an inspiration to many contemporaries, influenced the style and treatment of the subject.

Webster's strength as a dramatist lay in his insight into character, and his sensitive poetic imagination. In these two tragedies, he reveals himself as in no other of his work, a great dramatist, with all the great dramatist's economy of effort, and his power to grip the imagination by subtle suggestions.

THE WHITE DEVIL

Re-enter GIOVANNI

Monticelso. Your son, the Prince Giovanni. See, my lords,
What hopes you store in him; this is a casket
For both your crowns, and should be held like dear.
Now is he apt for knowledge; therefore know,
It is a more direct and even way
To train to virtue those of princely blood
By examples than by precepts: if by examples,
Whom should he rather strive to imitate
Than his own father? be his pattern, then;
Leave him a stock of virtue that may last.
Should fortune rend his sails and split his mast.
Branchiano. Your hand, boy: growing to a soldier?
Giovanni. Give me a pike.
Francisco. What, practising your pike so young, fair cuz?
Giov. Suppose me one of Homer's frogs, my lord,
Tossing my bullrush thus. Pray, sir, tell me,
Might not a child of good discretion
Be lowder to an army?
Franc. Yes, cousin, a young prince
Of good discretion might.
Giov. Say you so?
Indeed, I have heard, 'tis fit a general
Should not endanger his own person oft;
So that he make a noise when he's o' horseback,
Like a Danak drummer,—O, 'tis excellent!—
He need not fight;—methinks his horse as well
Might lead an army for him. If I live,
I'll charge the French foe in the very front
Of all my troops, the foremost man.
Franc. What, what!
Giov. And will not bid my soldiers up and follow,
But bid them follow me.
Branch. Forward, lapwing!
He flies with the shell on's head.
Franc. Pretty cousin!
Giov. The first year, uncle, that I go to war,
All prisoners that I take I will set free
Without their ransom.

Franc. Ha, without their ransom!
How, then, will you reward your soldiers
That took those prisoners for you?
Gio. Thus, my lord;
I'll marry them to all the wealthy widows
That fall that year.
Franc. Why, then, the next year following,
You'll have no men to go with you to war.
Gio. Why, then, I'll press the women to the war,
And then the men will follow.
Mont. Witty prince!
Franc. See, a good habit makes a child a man,
Whereas a bad one makes a man a beast.
Come, you and I are friends.
Brunch. Most wishedly;
Like bones which, broke in sunder, and well set,
Knit the more strongly.
Franc. Call Camillo hither.
[*Exit* MARCHELLO.
You have received the rumour, how Count Lodowick
Is turned a pirate?
Brunch. Yes.
Franc. We are now preparing
Some ships to fetch him in. Behold your duchess.
We now will leave you, and expect from you
Nothing but kind entreaty.
Brunch. You have charmed me.[1]

THOMAS MIDDLETON, of gentle birth and good education, was born in London about 1570. In conjunction with William Rowley he began to write for the stage in 1599; he collaborated also with Webster, Munday, and Drayton, in *Cæsar's Fall*, for which they received the not very munificent sum of £5 paid in advance by Philip Henslowe.

For a time Middleton held the post of City Chronologer, and was in great request as a composer of speeches for special public occasions; one of his most famous being on the occasion of the opening of the New River in 1613—probably the dramatist was related to Hugh Myddelton of New River fame.

In 1624 he got into serious trouble with his play *A Game of Chess*, in which he used as characters several well-known public people, both Spanish and English. The Spanish Ambassador, Condomar, complained to King James concerning "a very scandalous comedy" that was being acted by the King's players. James, who was in no wise anxious to incur a breach with Spain, took immediate action, and commanded both author and actors to be punished. However, as they were able to prove that the play had been "seen and allowed" by the Master of the Revels, they escaped any further punishment than a severe reprimanding. *The Game of Chess* was only running for nine days but was presented to crowded houses, and brought the sum of £1500 to the author, so we may be sure it was with regret that he was forced to withdraw it.

In 1627 Middleton died in needy circumstances, and his wife, a Miss Morbeck, daughter of a Clerk in Chancery, shortly after his death was compelled to apply to the corporation of the City for relief.

Middleton's first play was *The Mayor of Quinborough* (*c.* 1596), printed in 1661; *A Faire Quarrell* (1617); *A Mad World, my Masters* (1608); *The Roaring Girl* (with Dekker) 1611; *The Old Law* (with Massinger and Rowley); *The Changeling* (1623).

Middleton stands on the same level as Webster, as a dramatist of high though spasmodic, imaginative power. He has less play of fancy than Webster, less power of pathos; but on the other hand he has a rich comedy vein, quite out of the range of Webster. Of his serious plays, the finest is *The Changeling*. It has that displeasing piling up of horrors that we can rarely escape from in post-Shakespearean writers, but the picture of the stormy and guilty Beatrice and of her diabolical accomplice De Flores, is drawn with extraordinary force.

On the other side, he is an admirable painter of manners, a vigorous forerunner of the Restoration comedies; he has a lively humour, skill in conducting an intrigue, and an agreeable knack of easy dialogue. As a rule, he eschews any romantic flavouring, though that he could give this, and give it well, he showed in the comedy *The Spanish Gipsy*, and frankly aims at amusing the spectator without troubling himself much about probabilities of plot or characterisation. Among his successful efforts are *A Mad World, my Masters*, 1608; *Anything for a Quiet Life*, *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, and a satire on the Puritans, *The Family of Love*.

Middleton did best when collaborating; Rowley's help in *The Changeling* seems to have called forth Middleton's finest work. The opening of the play with the characters of Beatrice and of De Flores, sketched in outline, is by Rowley; Middleton, taking up the thread of the story in Act II, subsequently makes of these characters splendid studies. The character of De Flores, the success of which is due to the mingling imagination of the two dramatists, is a masterpiece in its way of insistent horror. Middleton never reached so high a poetic level in other of his work, any more than he produced finer comedy than is afforded by certain scenes in *Women beware Women*.

Regarding his work as a whole, one is struck by its great inequality, both technically and intellectually. But there is scarcely anything of his without some redeeming feature; and at times he shows astonishing powers of tragic force and ironic portraiture, while his boundless energy gives life and ease to his style, even when it may be lacking in grace and dignity.

THOMAS HEYWOOD is certainly one of the most prolific writers of the day, if not the most prolific, and boasted to having a finger in two hundred and twenty plays. Perhaps, from the fragments of his work that have come down to us, it is impossible to place him so high as Beaumont and Fletcher, Webster and Middleton at their best. But many will find him a more generally attractive writer, and he had no inconsiderable power in the domain of both comedy and tragedy.

His most remarkable work is *The Woman Killed with Kindness*, where the injured husband by his tolerance and tenderness strikes compunction and remorse into the heart of his successful rival, and of the wife false to her vows. The character of the husband is somewhat too weak to impress, as Heywood meant it should, but despite this flaw, the pathos of the play is undeniable, and is achieved by simple and unforced methods. His chronicle plays are frankly written to appeal to the groundlings, but when he comes to his own times as in *The*

[1] *The White Devil*, Act II. sc. 1.

Fair Maid of the West, and *The English Traveller*, he shows as keen an appreciation as Middleton of contemporary manners.

Heywood, if not a great dramatist, is certainly an extremely versatile one, and did well both in the chronicle play, the comedy of manners, the romantic drama, and the mythological fantasy. Where he left the most individual impress of his abilities, however, was in the play of simple domestic emotions. This side of the drama is rarely touched by other contemporary writers, and the simplicity he achieved here was a quality not sought after in an age where flamboyant qualities and coarsely flavoured humour were so greatly in request. The domestic note, however, lies implicit where not explicit in many Elizabethan dramas; its appeal was sure to a certain class; and when the rocketing of the Restoration was over, the novelists of the next age found how deeply it attracted the middle class, tired and sated with the extravagances of romanticism and the salacities of the comedy of manners.

Meanwhile, it is well to remember that in the sentimental domesticities where the genius of Richardson found such ample expression, Heywood had been undoubtedly a pioneer. Steele was in the theatrical line of descent; but the sentimental drama of the eighteenth century fell far below, both in popularity and excellence, the sentimental novel. The Drama, so long in the ascendant, fell then to a secondary position.

In *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, Heywood definitely sounded this domestic note. The drama of the home has its roots in some of the old mediæval ballads; it finds its early flowering in *Arden of Feversham* (1592), and *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (1608), where it is blended with the crude horror of the old drama of blood. Shakespeare rarely touched it; if he does so it is rather for farcical purposes as in *The Taming of the Shrew*, or *The Merry Wives*; or to illustrate the elemental passions, as in *King Lear*.

The phrase "to kill a wife with kindness" that gives Heywood's play its title, is taken from a well-known proverb, quoted, by the way, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, produced only a few years previous to Heywood's drama.

The picture of the penitent woman is drawn with power and intensity, and here, rather than in the character of the magnanimous husband, much of the compelling strength of the play may be found. The whole story is set in a vivid background of contemporary English country life, with hawking in the morning and cards at night.

Here, indeed, lay his best claim to remembrance. Elsewhere he is the skilful playwright, here the dramatist of power.

THE WOMAN KILLED WITH KINDNESS

Anne. O with what face of brass, what brow of steel,
Can you unblushing speak this to the face
Of the espoused wife of so dear a friend?
It is my husband that maintains your state,
Will you dishonour him that in your power
Hath left his whole affairs? I am his wife,
Is it to *me* you speak?

Wendoll. O speak no more;
For more than this I know and have recorded
Within the red-leaved table of my heart.
Fair and of all beloved, I was not fearful
Bluntly to give my life unto your hand,
And at one hazard all my worldly means,
Go, tell your husband; he will turn me off
And I am then undone: I care not, I,
'Twas for your sake. Perchance in rage he'll kill me;
I care not, 'twas for you. Say I incur
The general name of villain through the world,
Of traitor to my friend. I care not, I,
Beggary, shame, death, scandal, and reproach
For you I'll hazard all—why, what care I?
For you I'll live and in your love I'll die.

JOHN DAY, born in 1574, the son of a Norfolk farmer, was educated at Caius College, Cambridge. Little, however, is known of him. Henslowe's *Diary* mentions him as collaborating with Chettle, Dekker, and Haughton, at the close of the sixteenth century. His own plays include *The Isle of Gulls* (1606), *Law Tricks* and *Humour out of Breath* (1608), and his more famous *Parliament of Bees* (1641).

Day is a writer of considerable wit and fancy, with nothing of the tragic qualities of other contemporaries discussed previously, and with no special faculty for depicting the manners of the age. His imagination is lively and romantic, and he finds the happiest expression in such quaint satirical allegories as *The Parliament of Bees*. His work shows some affinity with the poetical temper of Sidney's mind, and with the fantastic side of Jonson's work.

There is little deep imaginative power in his work, for he had not the courage to break away from the tradition of his time; yet there are traces of freshness of treatment, that in bolder hands might have led to much.

For instance, his dialogue displays a taste for neat turns of speech, foreshadowing the brilliance of the Restoration comedy. It is sufficiently developed to give an agreeable quality to the work, but lacks the force and vitality that distinguished primarily the Shakespearean and Jonsonian schools. There is merit in *The Isle of Gulls*, suggested probably by Nash's *Isle of Dogs*, but *The Parliament of Bees* gives Day at his best; alert, fanciful, and agreeably bitter-sweet.

HUMOUR OUT OF BREATH

O early sorrow art got up so soon?
What, ere the sun ascendeth in the east?
O what an early waker art thou grown!
But cease discourse and close unto thy work,
Under this drooping myrtle will I sit,
And work awhile upon my corded net;
And as I work, record my sorrows past,
Asking old Time how long my woes shall last.
And first—but stay! alas! what do I see?
Moist gum-like tears drop from this mournful tree.
And see, it sticks like birdlime; 'twill not part,
Sorrow is even such birdlime at my heart.
Alas! poor tree, dost thou want company?
Thou dost, I see't, and I will weep with thee;
Thy sorrows make me dumb, and so shall mine,
It shall be tongueless, and so seem like thine.
Thus will I rest my head unto thy bark,
Whilst my sighs ease my sorrows.

CYRIL TOURNEUR (*c.* 1575–1626) is best known as the author of *The Atheist's Tragedy* (1611), but also served the King. On December 23, 1613, he was "granted 41*s.* for his charges and paines in

carrying letters for his Majestie's service to Brussells." He accompanied the ill-fated expedition to Cadiz as secretary to Sir Edward Cecil, on board his flagship the *Queen Anne*, but was taken ill on the return journey, landed at Kinsale in the south of Ireland with one hundred and sixty others who were sick, and died there.

His work is more akin to Webster's, though less artistic, perhaps, and assuredly overweighted with frantic ferocities of the "blood and thunder" school introduced by Kyd. At his best, as in *The Atheist's Tragedy*, and *The Revenger's Tragedy*, he has passages of fine force—but a good deal of his work lacks the vivid intensity achieved by Webster and Massinger, by reason of its crude extravagance of violence, and lack of subtlety.

When we tear aside much of the fustian with which these tragedies are decked, we realise a genuine poetic power at work—a power embittered and darkened by an unwholesome outlook on life, yet a power none the less. Webster also took a sombre view of human life; but there was a greatness about his conception and a high beauty of vision, that places him far above Tourneur.

THE ATHEIST'S TRAGEDY

Scene: *In the Grounds of* D'ARVILLE'S *Mansion.*

Enter D'ARVILLE, BORACHIO, *and* ATTENDANTS.

D'Ars. I saw my nephew Charlemont but now
Part from his father. Tell him I desire
To speak with him. [*Exit* SERVANT.
Borachio, thou art read
In nature and her large philosophy.
Observ'st thou not the very self same course
Of revolution, both in man and beast?

Bor. The same, for birth, growth, state, decay and death;
Only a man's beholding to his nature
For the better composition o' the two.

D'Ars. But where that favour of his nature is
Not full and free, you see a man becomes
A fool, as little-knowing as a beast.

Bor. That shows there's nothing in a man above
His nature; if there were, considering 'tis
His being's excellency, 'twould not yield
To nature's weakness.

D'Ars. Then, if Death ends up
Our total sum of joy and happiness
Let me have all my senses feasted in
The abundant fulness of delight at once,
And, with a sweet insensible increase
Of pleasing surfeit, melt into my dust.

Bor. That revelation is too short, methinks.
If this life comprehends our happiness,
How foolish to desire to die so soon!
And if our time runs home unto the length
Of nature, how improvident it were
To spend our substance on a minute's pleasure,
And after, live an age in misery!

D'Ars. So then concludst that pleasure only flows
From the stream of riches?

Bor. Wealth is lord
Of all felicity.

D'Ars. Tis, oracle,
For what's a man that's honest without wealth?

Bor. Both miserable and contemptible.

D'Ars. He's worse, Borachio. For if charity
Be an essential part of honesty,
And should be practised first upon ourselves,
Which must be granted, then your honest man
That's poor, is most dishonest, for he is
Unmerciful to the man whom he
Should most respect. But what doth this touch me
That seem to have enough?—thanks industry,
'Tis true, had not my body spread itself
Into posterity, perhaps I should
Desire no more increase of substance, than
Would hold proportion with mine own dimensions
Yet even in that sufficiency of state,
A man has reason to provide and add.
For what is he hath such a present eye,
And so prepared a strength, that can foresee,
And fortify his substance and himself
Against those accidents, the least whereof
May rob him of an age's husbandry?
And for my children, they are as near to me
As branches to the tree whereon they grow;
And may as numerously be multiplied.
As they increase, so should my providence;
For from my substance they receive the sap,
Whereby they live and flourish.

Bor. Sir, enough.
I understand the mark whereat you aim.[1]

Three other dramatists of distinction, and more or less genius, remain to be noted, before closing this account of Shakespeare's immediate successors—Massinger, Ford, and Shirley.

Massinger continues the comedy of manners, started by Middleton, and contributed to it some remarkable pieces of vigorous characterisation; Ford, following in the wake of Webster, shows that the Elizabethan inspiration for tragic passion is on the decline. His work, though not devoid of poetic beauty and passion, can show nothing equal to the best scenes in Webster and Beaumont and Fletcher. Shirley, successful both in comedy and tragedy, excelled in tragedy. He is, perhaps, the best all round of the dramatists now under consideration; but the whole trend of the drama shows not merely a marked and gradual decline in power and beauty, but where it does shine out, it points to the emergence of a new school altogether.

Jonson's influence has persisted rather than Shakespeare's. His followers help to inaugurate the Restoration Drama; the followers of Shakespeare straggle aimlessly along, with no guiding ideal, imitating their Master's worst faults, and with little of his genius to give them insight and grip.

PHILIP MASSINGER was born in 1583, his father being a member of an old Wiltshire family. As was customary he became, while a boy, page to the Earl of Pembroke and Wilton, and is said to have been Queen Elizabeth's messenger on several occasions.

Educated at St. Alban's Hall, Oxford, where "he applied his mind more to poetry and romances than to logic and philosophy," it is not surprising that he left without taking a degree.

Unfortunate throughout life, death came very suddenly on March 16, 1640; the register of his burial in St. Saviour's, Southwark, merely records the fact that he was "a stranger."

Massinger is believed to have had a part in preparing both *Henry VIII* and *Two Noble Kinsmen*. His principal works are *The Virgin Martyr* (1622), with Dekker; *The City Madam* (1632); *A New Way to pay Old Debts* (1633); *The Unnatural Combat* (1639); *The Maid of Honour* (1628); *Empire of the East* (1631); and with Field wrote *The Fatal Dowry* in 1632.

Like many of his contemporaries, Massinger did

[1] *The Atheist's Tragedy*, Act I sc. i.

a good deal of collaboration, as, for instance, *The Virgin Martyr*, written by Massinger and Dekker. In such early work as *The Unnatural Combat*, he shows nearly all the weaknesses of the Shakespearean school, though the versification is spirited and at times dignified. Better than this is *The Duke of Milan*, especially if we regard the matter rather than the manner. Best of all is *The New Way to pay Old Debts*.

Plot, never a strong point with these dramatists, is at its weakest in Massinger, and this play is no exception; but the force and ingenuity with which certain situations are here devised, and the characterisation of Sir Giles Overreach—based on the extortioner, Mompesson—is wholly admirable.

The City Madam also is rich in comedy, and despite some strong passages in the more serious writings of his later years—e.g. *The Roman Actor*—he is at his best in dramatic comedy. In addition to this he will be remembered for the skill and plastic ease of his blank verse, which, if rarely rising to any great heights of beauty or strength, is frequently musical and agreeably smooth, and at times forceful and dignified.

One cannot leave Massinger without paying a tribute to the excellence of his technique as a dramatist. There is progressive excellence in his workmanship, and *The Roman Actor* affords a good example of later neatness and dexterity with which he manipulated the raw material of his work.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Massinger was happier in his male than his female characterisations, strongly and vigorously drawn as they are. Paris, the Roman actor, and among the women the repentant Domusa, are fine presentations of widely different temperaments.

Subtlety is a term one would not apply to Massinger's psychology at any time. He paints boldly and firmly, but there is little light and shade. But within certain defined limits, he was an admirable dramatist, with an astonishing level excellence, when the prodigality of his output is considered.

Of JOHN FORD little is known except that he was a shy, reserved, melancholy man, born about 1586 at Islington in Devonshire, who came of good stock, his mother being a daughter of Lord Chief Justice Popham.

Leaving Devonshire for London in 1602, he was admitted at the Middle Temple, and wrote the plays by which he is known. He collaborated with Rowley and Dekker and saw their joint plays produced, but was over forty before he had the gratification of seeing one of his own—*The Lover's Melancholy* (1628)—staged at the Blackfriars and Globe. About the time of Massinger's death in 1639, Ford returned to his native county to end his days, and during the Civil Wars, being a strong Royalist, suffered hardly at the hands of the Parliamentarians. The date of his death is uncertain.

Ford, like his comrades of the pen, was a ready collaborator, but his claim to remembrance rests practically on two plays: *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1627), and *The Broken Heart* (1629). His other work calls for no special comment, being fifth-rate and imitative, but in these two plays he displays a fine vein of poetical imagination, and has had the good fortune to find enthusiastic champions in Charles Lamb and Swinburne, but the student who reads their laudations may well take as a corrective the caustic criticism of Hazlitt, a captious, erratic, but rarely negligible critic.

Of these two plays, the more interesting is the first, though it may well be, as Hazlitt said, "It has been lamented that the play had a less exceptionable subject. I do not know, but I suspect that the exceptionableness of the subject is that which constitutes the chief merit of the play."

There is no question, however, about the spasmodic power of Ford in both plays, whether in the flamboyant death scene of Calantha, the more sternly tragic one of Orgilus in *The Broken Heart*, or the fierce intensity of the Annabella and Giovanni scenes of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*.

Ford, unlike many of his needy comrades, was always in affluent circumstances, and his choice of tragedy was certainly not the art expression of any tumultuous soul expression. But he was of a melancholy cast of mind—west countrymen not unfrequently are—and Suckling, in his *Sessions of the Poets*, speaks thus of him:

> "In the dumps John Ford alone by himself sat
> With folded arms and melancholy hat."

Of humour he has no trace, and he has no faculty for painting contemporary life, such as Middleton, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Massinger have. But he could write good, occasionally fine verse, shows great cleverness, and flashes of genius, in his treatment of crucial situations, and has a gift of song which, had it been equalled by insight into life and character, would have put him among the great dramatists of the age.

THE BROKEN HEART

Enter TECNICUS, *and* ORGILUS *disguised like one of his Scholars.*

Tec. Tempt not the stars; young man, thou can'st not play
With the severity of fate; this change
Of habit and disguise in outward view
Hides not the secrets of thy soul within thee
From their quick-piercing eyes, which dive at all times
Down to thy thoughts: in thy aspect I note
A consequence of danger.
Org. Give me leave,
Grave Tecnicus, without foredooming destiny,
Under thy roof to ease my silent griefs,
By applying to my hidden wounds the balm
Of thy oraculous lectures. If my fortune
Run such a crooked by-way as to wrest
My steps to ruin, yet thy learned precepts
Shall call me back and set my footings straight.
I will not court the world.
Tec. Ah, Orgilus,
Neglects in young men of delights and life
Run often to extremities: they care not
For harms to others who contemn their own.
Org. But I, most learnèd artist, am not so much
At odds with nature that I grudge the thrift
Of any true deserver; nor doth malice
Of present hopes so check them with despair
As that I yield to thought of more affliction
Than what is incident to frailty: wherefore
Impute not this retired course of living
Some little time to any other cause
Than what I justly render—the information
Of an unsettled mind; as the effect
Must clearly witness.

Tec. Spirit of truth inspire thee!
On these conditions I conceal thy change,
And willingly admit thee for an auditor.—
I'll to my study.
Org. I to contemplations
In these delightful walks. [*Exit* TRONCOSO.
Thus metamorphosed
I may without suspicion hearken after
Perithea's usage and Euphranea's faith.
Love, thou art full of mystery! the deities
Themselves are not secure in searching out
The secrets of those flames, which, hidden, waste
A breast made tributary to the laws
Of beauty. physic yet hath never found
A remedy to cure a lover's wound.—
Ha! who are those that cross yon private walk
Into the shadowing grove in amorous foldings?[1]

JAMES SHIRLEY was born in London, 1596, and educated at Merchant Taylor's School and Oxford. In 1623 he was appointed master of St. Alban's Grammar School, and two years later began his work as a dramatist, but having joined the Roman Church and gained the patronage of the Queen, Henrietta Maria, he threw in his lot with the Royalists and served with them during the Civil War. In 1636 he settled in Dublin, where he wrote *The Gamester* and *The Lady of Pleasure* (1637) for a newly opened theatre. Singularly fortunate and prosperous during his early career as a playwright, he fell on evil times when the drama was banned by Parliament in 1642, and for twenty years seems to have lived a precarious existence; his home was burnt in the Great Fire of London, and he and his wife died on the same day in 1666.

Of his plays, the best known is *The Maid's Revenge* (1626), others are *The Wedding* (1626), *The Grateful Servant* (1629), *The Witty Fair One* (1628), *The Traitor* (1631), and among his masques are *A Contention for Honour and Riches* (1633), *The Triumph of Beauty* (1646), and *Cupid and Death* (1653).

Shirley's work constituted a respectable tableland of merit. There are no peaks, but neither are there any dismal abysses of dullness and repulsive violence. He is versatile and could adapt his work to the prevalent requirements of the day. His serious dramas, such as *The Traitor*, contain fine lines and striking scenes; and his lighter plays have a mercurial gaiety and nimbleness of treatment, such as we rarely find outside of Wycherley and Congreve. In some ways he is the most proficient dramatist of manners before the Restoration, lighter in his touch than Massinger, with a pleasant extravagance, that suggests the first-rate writer of farces. He was also skilled in the writing of masques, *e.g. The Duke's Mistress*, the *Contention for Honour and Riches*, and could hold his own with some of the best lyrists of his time.

THE TRAITOR

Let me look upon my sister now:
Still she retains her beauty,
Death has been kind to leave her all this sweetness.
Thus in a morning have I oft saluted
My sister in her chamber: sat upon
Her bed and talked of many harmless passages.
But now 'tis night, and a long night with her:
I shall ne'er see these curtains drawn again
Until we meet in heaven.

II. PROSE: (a) The Bible and the English Divines: (i) The Bible and its Literary Influence—(ii) The English Divines.

(a) THE BIBLE AND THE ENGLISH DIVINES

(i) THE BIBLE AND ITS LITERARY INFLUENCE

THE literary influence of the Bible is twofold. There is the rhetorical influence of the Old Testament, and the conversational influence of the New.

The Hebrew language had, from the time of Cædmon's hymns and Alfred's prose, proved a shaping force upon our literature. The reason for this may be found in the fact that much of the Old Testament is sheer poetry, and it was poetry of such a kind as found a peculiarly fitting expression in English prose. English verse is indebted to Hebrew song, for dignity and richness; but the two characteristics peculiar to Hebrew poetry, rhythm and parallelism, find ampler expression in prose. To understand this, we must realise clearly, in the first place, the nature of the Hebrew language.

Hebrew is notably deficient in abstract terms. It is amazingly concrete; and its intensely lyrical quality precludes any marked divergence between its verse and prose. Elemental, definitely simple, pictorial—we have in it the very stuff of which poetry is made:

"Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord?
And who shall stand in his holy place?
He that hath clean hands and a pure heart. . . ."

Saxon verse proved a more favourable medium than Saxon prose for exhibiting these Hebraic qualities; but as French and classical influences were brought to bear upon our tongue, even the distinctive beauty of Hebrew poetry was more clearly and conventionally expressed in English prose.

"The Bible," said Selden, "is rather translated into English words, than into English phrase. The Hebraisms are kept and the phrase of that language is kept."

There were special circumstances that made our prose so peculiarly adapted for the purpose. These need some consideration.

The prose of the Elizabethan age had in it a certain poetic quality characteristic of the age. This was all in its favour when the translators began the task of fashioning the Bible for English readers.

There is beauty in Wyclif's translation; but the Authorised Version is based almost entirely on that of Tyndale and Coverdale; for the prose of that time is free of mediæval cumbrousness. In addition to this poetic quality, there is something in the temper of the Elizabethan age, its exaltation, its high seriousness, that put it in spiritual touch with the Hebrew writers. Happily, moreover, in the Septuagint and Vulgate, the translators possessed versions of natural literary excellences. Availing themselves of these, they found to their hand a native

[1] *The Broken Heart*, Act. i. sc. 3.

prose, just ready for the shaping faculty that should make full use of the stark and simple grace of the Saxon tongue, recently enriched by the sonorous music of the ancient classics. The effect of this glorification of our prose may easily be seen in the writers of the succeeding age.

Bacon owed little to the Bible; his style was framed chiefly on classical models; but Milton's debt is a considerable one, inasmuch as whenever he achieves distinction in prose, it is by means of the Hebraic cadences. The historians, Clarendon and Fuller, catch some measure of the stately rhetoric of the Old Testament; while Sir Thomas Browne in his quaint *Religio Medici*, Robert Burton with his discursive *Anatomy of Melancholy*, and Jeremy Taylor, in varying ways, testify to its influence. Nor is the Old Testament the only literary force. Mention has been made of the conversational element in the New Testament. Both Old and New are seen in John Bunyan, whose style owes more to the Bible, probably more than does any other man of letters. The simple, flowing narrative of the Evangelists, the colloquial ease and force of the parabolic teaching, meet us in almost every page of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Addison's conversational essay is certainly influenced by them; just as Swift reflects the sterner qualities of the prophetic books. While in our own day, it is sufficient to recall the stormy vigour of Carlyle, and the ironic eloquence of Ruskin, to realise the spell of Hebraism over our masters of prose.

Nor has the austere simplicity of the Bible failed to touch our poetry. If it did little to touch the artificial verse of the eighteenth century, it did much for the pioneers of the Romantic Revival, and the naked power of Wordsworth, the subtle suggestiveness of Coleridge, the fine restraint (even more than the fine excess) of Keats' best work, find their ultimate inspiration in the homely diction and elevated nobility of the Authorised Version.

(ii) The English Divines (from Fisher to Jeremy Taylor)

One of the reasons for the decaying power of the mediæval Church lay in the neglect of the art of Preaching. In an age when printing was still a thing of the future, and letters a solace and delight to the cultured few, the appeal to the mass of the people lay necessarily in spectacle and the spoken word.

Of the part played by the Religious drama in the life of the people, much has already been said. With the advent of the Reformation it is obvious why religious teaching by means of the drama should seem a perilous matter; and the Church sought to regain its pristine power through the more direct and unequivocal medium of the homily.

Preaching revived with John Fisher, son of a wealthy landowner in Yorkshire. Born about 1459 at Beverley, he was educated at York and Cambridge, taking his degree in 1487, and successively became Fellow, Senior Proctor, Master of his college in 1497, Vice-Chancellor of the University 1501, Bishop of Rochester 1504, and Cardinal 1535, just before his death.

Appointed chaplain in 1497, to Margaret Countess of Richmond, mother of Henry VII, he immediately interested her in the New Learning, and set to work to raise the standard of study and the financial condition of the University, just then at a very low ebb. A Chair of Divinity, and lectureships in Greek and Hebrew were endowed, and later Christ's College and St. John's mainly founded by his exertions.

A man of strict life and "grete and singular virtue," he had no sympathy with the divorce principles of Henry VIII; suspected of this, he was imprisoned and his goods sequestered. As a churchman and supporter of the Papal cause he was strongly opposed to the King's supremacy, and for refusing, in company with Sir Thomas More, to subscribe to the Act of Succession in its entirety, was committed to the Tower; a calm, dignified, feeble old man, he was executed on June 22, 1535.

Fisher was an effective rhetorician with a gift for homely simile, and an unremitting zeal that enabled him to do a vast amount of speaking throughout his long and active life, and his eloquent account of the Lady Margaret, Countess of Richmond, whose Confessor he was, did more to enshrine the memory of that patroness of learning, than even the sculpture of Torrigiano.

Colet, his successor, was more of the scholar than Fisher; as an exponent of the Renascence learning he had already made a name in Oxford lecture-rooms, and he carried his systematic exploration of the Scriptures into his work at St. Paul's.

As one of the Progressive clergy Colet, like More, preludes, rather than belongs to, the Reformation Movement. But he attacked the lethargy and loose living of the clergy with as much vigour as did Latimer himself, nor did he hesitate to speak of the Pope as "wickedly distilling poison to the destruction of the Church." "O Jesus Christ," he exclaimed, "wash for us not our feet only, but also our hands and our *head!* Otherwise our disordered church cannot be far from death." Preaching to Convocation in 1511, he urged the clergy to reform themselves. But they neglected his exhortation, and Parliament shortly took the matter out of their hands.

Less rhetorical than Fisher, he is fully as earnest and direct, and courageous to a degree, never hesitating to reprove Wolsey or censure Henry VIII. when occasion arose.

The next man of note is Hugh Latimer, far less literary than his predecessors, yet unequalled for racy directness and pungent force.

Hugh Latimer, the son of a farmer, an ecclesiastic unspoiled by success, was born at Thurcaston, Leicestershire, about 1485, educated at Cambridge, elected a Fellow of Clare Hall 1510, and ordained 1522. For not paying the customary fees, the Bachelor of Divinity degree conferred upon him by his University was cancelled in 1524.

His fearless defence of a woman unjustly imprisoned at Cambridge, combined with his support of the King's supremacy, brought him under the notice of Henry VIII, who appointed him chaplain to Anne Boleyn. In 1535 he became Bishop of Worcester, but on his committal to the Tower he resigned his see.

A sturdy upholder of the doctrines of the Reformers, and a strong advocate of freedom in preaching, he seems to have caused some contention among the congregation at St. Margaret's, Westminster, as an item appears in the church accounts "for mending divers pews that were broken when Dr. Latimer did preach."

Having given an evasive answer to the Bishop of Ely's request for a sermon to confute the doctrines of Luther, which, as the Bishop said, "smelt of the pan," Latimer, in 1525, was inhibited in the Ely diocese.

From 1532 to 1554—according to the pleasure of the reigning powers—Latimer was continually in and out of prison for the straightforward expression of his opinions, and in company with Cranmer and Ridley met death with fortitude on October 16, 1556.

While at Cambridge, he gave promise of vigorous individuality, amply fulfilled in the sermons preached before Edward VI. No man gained the ear of the populace more effectually than he, or wielded a wider influence, till we come to the age of Wesley and Whitfield. His humour, his fiery impetuosity, his easy colloquial manner, are strangely at variance with the stately, ornate methods of the age. At times we are more reminded of our latter-day Spurgeon than of the Elizabethan divine, for he has an eye for a dramatic story and a witty anecdote, when he can best fix attention that way. He made the Bible stories living realities because he related them so closely with the history of the time. There is no more original figure in the ecclesiastical world, and if we miss the imaginative grace of Fisher and the ripe erudition of Colet, we get compensating qualities of special value in those troublous times.

Latimer girded with great freedom and audacity at the lethargy of the clergy, and once, in a sermon at Paul's Cross, declared "There is one that . . . is the most diligent prelate in all England. And will ye know who it is? I will tell you! It is the Devil! Among all the pack of them that have cure, the Devil shall go for my money, for he applieth his business. Therefore, ye impreaching prelates, learn of the Devil to be diligent in your office. If ye will not learn of God, for shame learn of the Devil."

Frequently also he reprimanded the King himself, and to the King's face. Henry received these homilies with good-humoured tolerance, and went his own way again.

A fine and noble-hearted soul, HOOPER, who succeeded, has some of Latimer's qualities, but is far less rich in sympathetic insight. RIDLEY, a shrewd and able man, interests us more as a personality than a preacher. JOHN BRADFORD and THOMAS LEVER carry on the Latimer tradition, Lever especially excelling in homely humour and fervent power.

THOMAS CRANMER: classical and biblical scholar, lawyer, courtier, sportsman, and accomplished gentleman, came of an old Norman family, was born at Aslacton, Notts, in 1489, and educated under a "marvellous, severe, and cruel schoolmaster." Entering Jesus College, Cambridge, at the age of fourteen, he became Fellow at twenty-one. After a further study of philosophy, logic, and the classics, he was appointed lecturer and tutor at Buckingham Hall, now Magdalen College, and took Orders in 1523.

An ardent supporter of the divorce between Henry VIII and Queen Catherine, promotion was rapid; he was appointed Royal Chaplain, sent on embassies to the Pope and Emperor of Germany, and, though hesitating at first on account of his marriage to accept "the high and chargeable office of primate and archbishop" offered him by the King, he afterwards accepted the see of Canterbury, and was consecrated March 30, 1533, "albeit a poor wretch and most unworthy."

A tool used by Henry to further his own ends, he at length receives the measure meted out to all that monarch's whilom favourites. For the courage of his opinions and with bitter repentance for the past, the gentle, vacillating Cranmer met death fearlessly at Oxford in 1556.

The Reformation Preachers

The era of the great preachers at Paul's Cross begins in the reign of Henry VIII, the previous preachers were all court officials. Not that under Henry there was a lack of engineered doctrine, but there were also, now and later, many vigorous independent preachers, both Catholic and Protestant.

There was at the east end of St. Paul's Cathedral an open piece of ground, where the citizens in mediæval times assembled for the folk-moot, and for making parade of arms for keeping the King's peace. Here it was that Paul's Cross was situate; here also was the huge clangorous bell which bade the citizens attend folk-moot, or called them to the muster of arms.

In the earlier years of Stow the Bell Tower was still standing, and he refers to it thus:

> "Near unto the school (St. Paul's) on the north side thereof, was of old time a great and high Clochier or Bell House, with four bells, the greatest that I have heard; these were called Jesus bells, and belonged to Jesus Chapel, but I know not by whose gift. The same had a great spire of timber, covered with lead, with the image of St. Paul on the top; but it was pulled down by Sir Miles Partridge, Knight, in the reign of Henry VIII. The common speech then was, that he did set one hundred pounds upon a cast at dice against it, and so won the said Clochier and bells of the King; and then causing the bells to be broken as they hung, the rest was pulled down."

Sir Miles subsequently lost his head on Tower Hill, for matter "concerning the Duke of Somerset," and Stow records the fact with a certain amount of complacency.

In the time of Richard the First, the place had served a purpose, much as the Marble Arch does to-day, as a rallying-ground for Reformers of all kinds; and here did the craftsmen inveigh against the governing classes.

A Proclamation had been issued at Paul's Cross in the reign of Edward the Fourth, by Bishop Braybrooke, against barbers shaving on Sundays; forbidding the sale of merchandise in the Cathedral, and among other things, against the playing of ball either within or without the church, which had led to the breaking of the stained-glass windows.

Stow tells us that "time out of mind it hath been a laudable custom on Good Friday in the afternoon" for "some special learned man" to preach a sermon at Paul's Cross dealing with the Passion.

"On the three Easter holidays, on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, other learned men should preach in the forenoon at the Spital Cross on the Resurrection; and then on Low Sunday, one other learned man is to make rehearsal on these four former sermons, either commending or reproving them as to him is thought convenient." What would be thought, I wonder, if one cleric to-day was called upon to criticise publicly the sermons of his brother clerics?

The sermons of Archbishop Morton were pointed in the most practical way. In 1487 he delivered a discourse on "Cease to do evil, learn to do good," the moral being, "Vote liberal supplies to the King." In 1489, when he wanted £100,000 for his royal master, he gave out his text, "The eyes of the Lord are over all the righteous"—which was a pleasing way of putting the matter.

During the closing years of the fifteenth century, it became the custom for penances to be performed at Paul's Cross. "Upon Passion Sunday (1497)," relates Fox, "one Hugh Glover bare a fagot before the Procession of Paul's and after with the fagot stood before the preacher all the sermon while at Paul's Cross." The fagot symbolised, of course, the death which the bearer had merited, and escaped only through undergoing the penance.

The story of *James Baynham, Lawyer and Martyr*, illustrates the fate of those who persisted in heresy. According to Fox, Sir Thomas More took a prominent part in the persecution of this unfortunate man. It is to be hoped that all he alleges against the author of the *Utopia* is not true; though it is to be feared that, however misinformed he may be in details, there is sufficient circumstantial evidence in other directions to show More's attitude at times to have been hard and intolerant. After suffering torture in the Tower, Baynham abjured at Paul's Cross in the customary manner, but subsequently repented his weakness, and publicly confessed the same. He had stamped himself now as a heretic beyond recall; but, before his death, and in order to "save his soul," the authorities tortured him in various ways, and, failing to break his spirit, burned him at Smithfield.

Another case where penance was followed by death, is that of Elizabeth Barton, "The Holy Maid of Kent." She seems to have been a poor, hysterical creature, whose ravings were utilised by others for sensational purposes. She was brought before the Star Chamber; but although she and her companions abjured at Paul's Cross, they were put to death—"hanged and headed," as Stow puts it.[1]

Penance was prescribed for matters other than heretical. In 1506 a priest did penance for having two wives—a double offence. And in the same year we hear that "a man did penance for transgressing Lent, holding two pigs ready dressed, whereof one was upon his head, having brought them to sell." How far the man himself was significantly impressed by the ceremony, or the spectators edified, is not related.

Hardy as our ancestors were, even they found these rallyings at Paul's Cross no pleasurable matter. Latimer himself says in one of his sermons:

"I do much marvel that London, being so rich a city, hath not a burying place without; for, no doubt, it is an unwholesome thing to bury within the City, especially at such a time when there is great sickness—so that many die together. I think verily that many a man taketh his death in Paul's Churchyard; and this I speak of experience, for I myself when I have been there in some morning to hear the sermons, have felt such an ill-favoured, unwholesome savour, that I was the worse for it a great while after. And I think no less but it be the occasion of much sickness and disease."

In the earlier years of Elizabeth's reign, however, we look vainly for great preachers. The noblest among the Protestants had perished at the stake: the Catholics were not in authority. The new clergy, as yet ill-educated, are represented as ignorant and riotous. If the clergy of the old Faith had fallen into evil ways, there is not much to be said in favour of these earlier Protestants. The charges against them are too uniform, too constant, to be dismissed as prejudiced, even while making allowances for exaggeration here and there.

The destruction of ancient forms and rites had led to a great deal of irreverence. Some churches were used for stabling horses. Pedlars plied their business during service times, and morris dancers lounged about in costume, "so as to be ready for the frolics which generally followed prayers."

Then again, some of the Catholics attended services only to laugh and talk, and show their contempt generally for the New Religion.

When we come to the time of JEWEL and SANDYS, things are different. Jewel has learning and imagination; Sandys that charm and simplicity often allied with culture and historical knowledge; and no doubt they helped to form the eloquent and lucid style of a greater than themselves—RICHARD HOOKER. Hooker's work has been dealt with elsewhere, and it is sufficient to say here that in addition to his literary power, he was one of the first of the Elizabethan controversialists to show how it is possible to argue with an enemy without being scurrilous and abusive. It is a pity his example was not taken to heart by many of the Pamphleteers.

Hooker addressed himself to the few; another contemporary, Henry Smith, to the many. Smith has something of Latimer's homely force and humour. Some of the preachers, the pious Bishop Andrewes for instance, yielded too freely to the literary affectations of the day, and an undue affection for far-fetched metaphors and confused conceits obscured the work of such brilliant men of the Andrewes school as John Donne.

But, making allowance for this, there is extraordinary beauty of thought and expression in such men as Donne, that have given their sermons a vitality long outliving their day and generation.

[1] More looked upon the whole matter after penance as "a determined hypocrisy," previous to that he had been favourably impressed by the girl's good faith.

With the deepening seriousness of public life that we meet with in the earlier years of the Caroline period, it is not surprising to encounter a goodly number of great preachers. There are THOMAS TRAHERNE, rich in spiritual intensity and poetic imagery; RICHARD BAXTER, whose *Saints' Everlasting Rest* has become a classic of its kind, and whose grave and tender piety, and easy clarity, profoundly impressed his contemporaries. HENRY HAMMOND, sometimes called "The Father of English Biblical criticism," and JAMES USSHER, the Irishman; both men of large erudition and democratic sympathy. Of ROBERT SANDERSON, later on one of the Restoration Bishops, one recalls the testimony of Charles I, "I carry my ease to other preachers, but I carry my conscience to hear Dr. Sanderson." It might have been better for the unfortunate monarch had he left his conscience in this resting-place.

WILLIAM CHILLINGWORTH, godson of Laud, excelled in dialectic. He has few literary graces; but has the virtues of the greater Puritan spirits of the time: intense moral earnestness, and a tolerant charity. Liberty is his watchword, Liberty and free inquiry. Of his style we may take this illustration: "The difference between a Papist and a Protestant is this, that the one judges his guide to be infallible, the other his way to be manifest." His chief work is his *Religion of Protestantism; a safer Way to Salvation*; and Chillingworth's safe way is certainly beset by no narrow dogmatic restrictions.

Equally charitable, and cast in a more subdued and peaceful mould, is the gentle recluse, JOHN HALES. Starting as a Calvinist, he forsook the great theologians, and in the even tenor of his thought and the reposeful piety of his spirit had much in common with GEORGE HERBERT. Herbert's verse has received mention elsewhere; scarcely less notable was his prose as exhibited in *A Country Parson*, of which book Izaak Walton said it was "so full of plain, prudent and useful rules, that that country parson, that can spare twelve pence, and yet wants it, is scarce excusable." For us perhaps the "useful rules" appeal less than the tranquil sweetness of atmosphere and the fragrant charm of a benign personality.

Very different is the great figure of WILLIAM LAUD; one who carried on the policy of the Tudors into an alien age that would ill brook it. Vigorous, keen as a controversialist, he has little personal magic, and many men of lesser note and inferior mental powers are more attractive than he.

Nearing the close of our era is the name of JOHN GAUDEN, a somewhat Machiavellian ecclesiastic, with undoubted power as a debater, and a remarkable skill in gliding skilfully over awkward topics. To him is attributed that notable historical work *Eikon Basilikè*, asserted by some to have been written by Charles I. As a skilful *ex parte* statement of Charles' theory of kingship sentimentalised, it makes an effective document for the Stuart cause. Written in direct and simple language, it produced a powerful impression, and ran through many editions.

Not more interesting than Gauden, as a man, though undoubtedly more gracious and attractive, is JEREMY TAYLOR, the last of the Caroline divines. A prolific writer and a great controversialist, he will survive in literature by virtue of his rich, impressive style and stately rhetoric. A man of catholic sympathies and of wide culture, we read him to-day neither for his learning nor for his divinity, but for his happy allusiveness, his mellow temper, and his musical phrasing.

II. PROSE: (5) Art of Criticism (Bacon to Dryden).

(5) THE ART OF CRITICISM (FROM BACON TO DRYDEN)

"It is not good to stay too long in the theatre," observes Bacon drily, and this remark may serve as a text for his critical work. He has no great respect for literature as such; and although as a maker of literature the author of the *Essays* and the stylist of the *New Atlantis* has claims upon all lovers of literature, his contribution to the interpretation of literature is of the slightest.

The *Essays* furnish us with no hints of any value, and we must turn to the *Advancement of Learning* for any real consideration of criticism. Here there are some sane judicial comments, as when he accuses the Renascence writers of hunting "more after words than matter, more after the choiceness of phrase, and the round and clear composition of the sentence, and the sweet falling of the clauses . . . than after the weight of matter, worth of subject, soundness of argument, life of invention, or depth of judgment." But he is unwilling to admit that form or manner is of any particular merit (his own style the whole time giving the lie to his attitude). Science is the be-all of all things. Poetry is a pleasant solace, a comforting drug, that is the gist of his reflections. Quite clearly, form interests him merely because it makes his favourite philosophy more palatable. That is probably how he would have justified his own style, and his arid imagination puts us in mind of Newton's reference to poetry as "ingenious nonsense."

Undoubtedly the greatest critic of the age before Dryden is Ben Jonson. It were more debateable to question his greatness as a dramatist than his greatness as a critic. Of course, even Jonson was not proof against the spirit of the age, but allowing for this, no writer of the time did more to draw attention to points of form and style. The burden of his exegesis may be found in the *Discoveries*, which were never published until after the author's death, in 1641. He lauds the art of blotting, and regrets Shakespeare's parsimony in this respect. He criticises Spenser for his linguistic affectations, he "would have him read for his matter," and in his phrase "Language most shows a man," he comes near to Carlyle's epigram, "The style is not the coat but the skin of a man." In the matter of his criticism, Jonson was probably indebted to the ancients and to contemporary Italian critics; but

there is no need to slight his work on that account. It was a borrowing age, and a frankly borrowing one; the significance lies not in the absolute originality of this or that remark, but the tact and judgment shown in his selection of what was wise and pertinent, and an additional value is given to these dicta by Jonson's own shrewd brain and clear and apposite style. His own ordered reasonableness of method leads him naturally to come down rather severely on the *Essays* of Montaigne. His own temperament impelled him naturally, moreover, to see the defects of Montaigne's discursiveness, without appreciating the corresponding good qualities.

Likewise his censure of Marlowe is comprehensible enough; while his tribute to Shakespeare is the more weighty when we realise how entirely opposed he was in theory to his great contemporary's dramatic methods. Bacon, whose literary style is not unlike Jonson's, with its faculty for fine compression and its range of powers, is warmly praised.

Jonson is the precursor of Dryden and the new age of English prose. He sounds the reaction from Romanticism and prepared the way for Dryden. Between Jonson and Dryden there is little to recount. Milton takes up again Daniel's creed against rhyme, confuting his own arguments, as Daniel did, in his own poetry. Sir William Davenant in his preface to Gondibert—taking the form of a letter to his friend Hobbes—reminds us in substance of Sidney's eloquent defence of Romance. Hobbes, in his reply, narrows down poetry to that which should treat of "the manner of men." No one would quarrel with his dictum against those who "take for poesy whatsoever is writ in verse"; yet when he excludes not only didactic verse, but sonnets and eclogues, obviously, critical ideals were in process of transition, and flattering as Hobbes may be to his friend's work, it is clear that by poetry he means something other than the pleasure-giving music of the Elizabethan age and the Renascence.

II. PROSE: (c) Miscellaneous Prose Writers (Robert Burton to James Harrington).

(c) MISCELLANEOUS PROSE WRITERS OF THE LATE RENASCENCE

There are a number of writers in the earlier years of the seventeenth century, who exemplify in their work the transitional influence of the period; some, like the ingenious Robert Burton, retaining the ornate prolixity of the Elizabethan in style, while reflecting often in matter the graver and austerer spirit of the succeeding age; others, like Sir Thomas Overbury, presenting a strange medley of the literary affectations of the past, and the concrete "humours" that developed into the character study of the eighteenth-century essayist.

Robert Burton, born at Lindley in Leicestershire in 1577, entered Christ Church, Oxford, as a student in 1599. After taking Orders he became successively vicar of the College living of St. Thomas', Oxford, in 1616, and rector of Segrave, Leicestershire, in 1630. His most popular work, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, published 1621, in which he appears in the character of Democritus Junior, was the only book, says Johnson, "that ever took me out of bed two hours sooner than I wished to rise." In 1606 he published *Philosophaster*, a Latin comedy acted in the college hall of Christ Church in 1618.

Though afflicted with depression of spirits throughout his life, he was, when free from this trouble, an amusing companion, "most learned, and full of sterling good sense." He died in 1640.

Burton's great, and only, literary achievement, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, is highly characteristic of the time. It is as characteristic indeed as is Lyly's *Anatomy of Wit*, and Stubbes' *Anatomy of Abuses*, characteristic of an earlier period. It is essentially a Jacobean inspiration.

Burton in prose is not unlike Donne in verse; elaborate and fantastic conceits give place suddenly to sombre meditation; and no sooner is the serious note struck, than a curious sardonic humour takes its place. The book is a wilderness of varied learning, a masterpiece of ingenious discursiveness; often amazingly involved in style, yet with none of that windy vagueness belonging to many of his predecessors. Burton has full command over his matter; if he will he can be as terse and pithy as Bacon himself; as succinct and lucid as Jonson; or as rhetorical as Sir Thomas Browne.

Here is a passage of *The Anatomy* dealing with "The Cause of Religious Melancholy":

> "What power of Prince, or penal law, be it never so strict, could enforce men to do that which for conscience sake they will voluntarily undergo? As to fast from all flesh, abstain from marriage, rise to their prayers at midnight, whip themselves, with stupend fasting and pennance, abandon the world, wilfull poverty, perform canonical and blind obedience, to prostrate their goods, fortunes, bodies, lives, and offer up themselves at their superior's feet, at his command! What so powerful an engine as superstition? which they right well perceiving, are of no religion at all themselves: *Primum enim* (as Calvin rightly suspects, the tenor and practice of their life proves) *arcanæ illius Theologiæ, quod apud eos regnat, caput est, nullum esse deum*, they hold there is no God, as Leo 10 did, Hildebrand the Magician, Alexander 6, Julius 2, meer Atheists, and which the common proverb amongst them approves. 'The worst Christians of Italy are the Romans, of the Romans the Priests are wildest, the lowdest Priests are preferred to be Cardinals, and the baddest man amongst the Cardinals is chosen to be Pope,'[1] that is an Epicure, as most part the Popes are, Infidels and Lucianists, for so they think and believe: and what is said of Christ to be fables and impostures, of heaven and hell, day of judgment, paradise, immortality of the soul, are all
>
> 'Rumores vacui, verbaque inania,
> Et par sollicito fabula somnio.'[2]
>
> Dreams, toys, and old wives' tales. Yet as so many whetstones to make other tools cut, but cut not themselves, though they be of no religion at all, they will make others most devout and superstitious, by promises and threats, compel, enforce from, and lead them by the nose like so many bears in a line: When as their end is not to propagate the Church, advance

[1] S. Ed. Sands in his *Relation*. [2] Seneca.

God's Kingdom, seek his glory or common good, but to enrich themselves, to enlarge their territories, to dominer and compel them to stand in awe, to live in subjection to the See of Rome. For what otherwise were they?"

John Selden, son of a Sussex farmer, was born at Worthing in 1584, educated at Chichester and Oxford, studied law at Clifford's Inn and the Inner Temple, and has been called the "Champion of Human Law." In 1621, for disputing the King's doctrines with regard to the privileges of Parliament, he suffered a short term of imprisonment, and again in 1630 was sent to the Tower for the part he took against the levying of tonnage and poundage. A politician of moderate views, he was elected member for Lancaster, and represented his University in the Long Parliament. For many years Selden was a member of the household of the Earl of Kent, and it was popularly believed that he married the Earl's widow; he, however, died in her house in 1654, and is buried in the Temple Church.

Selden's biggest English work is *Titles of Honour*, 1614; his most important, *Table Talk*, published in 1689. In the *History of Tithes* (1618), he denied the divine right of kings and incurred the displeasure of both king and clergy.

Selden lives in literature by the *Table Talk*, collected by his secretaries, and published long after his death. These abound in sharp, somewhat acid-natured aphorisms, exhibiting rough common-sense though little imagination, and foreshadowing the later Essay. Neither his legal learning nor historical and religious dicta appeal greatly to the modern reader; but his gnomic wisdom will always delight.

Thus for instance:

"We cry down a rotten pear and approve a rotten medlar, and yet I warrant you, the pear thinks as well of itself as the medlar does."

"Commonly, we say, a judgment falls upon a man for something in him we cannot abide."

"Syllables govern the world."

"Take a straw and throw it up into the air, you may see by that which way the wind is."

"Equity is a roguish thing: for law we have a measure, know what to trust to; equity is according to the conscience of him that is Chancellor, and as that is larger or narrower, so is equity. 'Tis all one as if they should make the standard for the measure we call a foot, a Chancellor's foot; what an uncertain measure would this be! One Chancellor has a long foot, another a short foot, a third an indifferent foot: 'tis the same thing in the Chancellor's conscience.

. . . . . .

"That saying, 'Do as you would be done to,' is often misunderstood, for 'tis not thus meant that I, a private man, should do to you, a private man, as I would have you do to me, but do as we have agreed to do one to another by public agreement. If the prisoner should ask the judge whether he would be content to be hanged were he in his case, he would answer 'No.' Then, says the prisoner, 'Do as you would be done to.' Neither of them must do as private men, but the judge must do by him as they have publicly agreed: that is, both judge and prisoner have consented to a law that if either of them steal they shall be hanged."[1]

Sir Thomas Browne, born in 1605, was the son of a London merchant, and educated at Winchester and Oxford, after which he studied on the Continent, receiving the M.D. of Leyden University in 1633, and of Oxford in 1637. Settling in Norwich, Browne practised there as a physician up to the time of his death in 1682, and is buried in St. Peter Mancroft. During the Civil Wars he favoured the King's party and was knighted by Charles II on his visit to Norwich in 1671.

Of his writings, *Religio Medici*, *Pseudodoxia*, *Urn Burial*, and *The Garden of Cyrus*, have each in its way claims upon the attention of the literary student.

Religio Medici is an excellent prose companion to the metaphysical verse of the age. In each case we have an ardent fancy, a tinge of melancholy, a quaint pietism, and a tangled growth of erudition. The tangle is not so overgrown and bewildering as in Burton's case, being balanced by a sense of practicality; the pietism is more tempered than we find it in Vaughan and Crashaw, by a genial worldliness. In short, Browne mirrors in little most of the characteristics of his time, without developing any to excess. But it is as a stylist of modulated, harmonious English prose that we most esteem him.

Religio Medici, written about 1635, was printed in 1642. It is ostensibly a defence of himself from the charge of irreligion; and in the broadest sense of the word there is no doubt he makes out an excellent case. How far his temper of mind agreed with any well-defined theological position is, however, another matter.

Pseudodoxia, or Vulgar Errors, is less wide in its appeal; its style is less attractive, and its desultory, ambiguous character far more marked. His sceptical habit of mind, decorously veiled before, has here full expression, and nowhere perhaps has his gift of delicate irony more abundant illustration than when dealing with the heterogeneous collection of legends and beliefs, scientific and otherwise, brought together in this discursive medley.

Urn Burial gives us of the meditative melancholy of the man, and is written in a loftier and more poetical style. It is a wonderful prose-fugue on Death and Decay.

The Garden of Cyrus is an antiquarian fantasy, remoter in its appeal than *Urn Burial*, but is rich in quaint conceits and rhetorical effects.

"In vain do individuals hope for immortality, or any patent from oblivion, in preservations below the moon; men have been deceived even in their fatteries, above the sun, and studied conceits to perpetuate their names in heaven. The various cosmography of that part hath already varied the names of contrived constellations: Nimrod is lost in Orion, and Osyris in the dog-star. While we look for incorruption in the heavens, we find they are but like the earth; durable in their main bodies, alterable in their parts: whereof, beside comets and new stars, perspectives begin to tell tales, and the spots that wander about the sun, with Phaethon's favour, would make clear conviction.

"There is nothing strictly immortal, but immortality. Whatever hath no beginning, may be confident of no end; which is, the peculiar of that necessary essence that cannot destroy itself; and the highest strain of omnipotency, to be so powerfully constituted as not to suffer even from the power of itself: all others have a dependent being and within the reach of destruction. But the sufficiency of Christian immortality frustrates all earthly glory, and the quality of either state after

[1] *Table Talk*.

death makes a folly of posthumous memory. God, who can only destroy our souls, and hath assured our resurrection, either of our bodies or names, hath directly promised no duration. Wherein there is so much of chance, that the boldest expectants have found unhappy frustration; and to hold long subsistence, seems but a scape in oblivion. But man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnizing nativities and deaths with equal lustre, not omitting ceremonies of bravery in the infamy of his nature." [1]

Another interesting antiquary was THOMAS FULLER, born in 1608 at Aldwinkle, Northampton (also the birthplace of Dryden), the son of a clergyman and educated at Cambridge. After taking Orders he was successively rector of Broadwinsor, Dorset, Lecturer at the Savoy, and Chaplain to Charles II, and won fame as a preacher. He was an ardent Royalist and refused to subscribe to the Solemn League and Covenant in 1643; in 1644 he was in Basing House siege. In 1648 he was made perpetual curate of Waltham Abbey by the Earl of Carlisle. During the Commonwealth he was deprived of his various preferments, but on the Restoration these were restored. On August 12, 1661, while preaching at the Savoy, he was taken ill, and died four days later.

As a writer of popular Church history, not painfully addicted to accuracy, he obtained a considerable vogue. He had a witty sententiousness of speech that appealed to many, and this quality, indeed, constitutes his best claim upon the modern reader, and is amply illustrated in his most considerable work, *The Worthies of England*, published in 1662 by his son.

His dry antithetical humour appealed strongly to Coleridge and Lamb, and the peculiarities of his style were indeed thoroughly esteemed by those latter Elizabethan enthusiasts. We can understand the delight of *Elia* in reading concerning short prayers that "the soldier may at the same time shout out his prayer to God and aim his pistol at the enemy, the one better hitting the mark for the other."

Lacking the splendour of Browne and the opulent variety of Burton, he is, none the less, no inconsiderable ornament to the prose writers of the time.

DRAKE'S VOYAGE

"On the 9th of January following (1579) his ship, having a large wind and a smooth sea, ran aground on a dangerous shoal and struck twice on it, knocking twice at the door of death which no doubt had opened the third time. Here they stuck from eight o'clock at night till four the next afternoon, having ground too much, and yet too little to land on, and water too much, and yet too little to sail in. Had God, who as the wise man saith (Prov. xxx. 4) *holdeth the winds in his fist*, but opened his little finger, and let out the smallest blast, they had undoubtedly been cast away, but there blew not any wind all the while. Then they conceiving aright that the best way to lighten the ship was first to ease it of the burthen of their sins by true repentance, humbled themselves by fasting under the hand of God. Afterwards they received the communion, dining on Christ in the sacrament, expecting no other than to sup with him in heaven. Then they cast out of their ship six great pieces of ordnance, threw overboard as much wealth as would break the heart of a miser to think on it, with much sugar, and packs of spice, making a candle of the sea round about. Then they betook themselves to their prayers, the best lever at such a dead lift indeed, and it pleased God that the wind, formally their mortal enemy, became their friend, which, changing from the starboard to the larboard of the ship, and rising by degrees, cleared them off to the sea again, for which they returned unfeigned thanks to Almighty God." [1]

IZAAK WALTON was born at Stafford in 1593, of yeoman stock. In early life he migrated to London, where he made a modest fortune in business, from which he retired in 1643. He was twice married, first to Rachel Floud, a descendant of Archbishop Cranmer, his second wife being half-sister to Thomas Ken, Bishop of Bath and Wells.

Sir Henry Wotton having collected material for a life of Donne which he did not live to write, formed the nucleus of the *Lives* afterwards published by Walton between 1640 and 1678. His most famous work, *The Compleat Angler*, was published in 1653.

Walton's later years were spent at Winchester, where he died at the age of ninety, in the house of his son-in-law, Prebendary Hawkins, and lies buried in Winchester Cathedral.

His works are slight in bulk but admirable in quality. *The Compleat Angler* is, in its way, a little masterpiece, while the *Lives* abound in delightfully happy touches. As with many another writer of the age, the subject matter is of secondary importance. One may love *The Compleat Angler* without being in any sense a sportsman, and as for the *Lives*, there is little of real note that he tells us of his men, but the vital and intimate manner in which he pictures Donne, Hooker, Herbert, for us is beyond praise. The sober brevity and simplicity of style to some extent remind us of Bunyan; the Elizabethan arabesque of divers colours is absent here, and the mellow, unobtrusive learning, and pensive Quakerlike atmosphere, exercise a remarkable charm upon the student of letters.

"But turn out of the way a little, good scholar, towards yonder high hedge: we will sit whilst this shower falls so gently upon the teeming earth, and gives a sweeter smell to the lovely flowers that adorn the verdant meadows.

"Look, under that broad beech-tree I sat down when I was last this way a-fishing, and the birds in the adjoining grove seemed to have a friendly contention with an echo whose dead voice seemed to live in a hollow cave near to the brow of that primrose-hill. There I sat, viewing the silver streams glide silently towards their centre, the tempestuous sea, yet sometimes opposed by rugged roots and pebble-stones, which broke their waves and turned them into foam: and sometimes viewing the harmless lambs, some leaping securely in the cool shade, whilst others sported themselves in the cheerful sun, and others were craving comfort from the swollen udders of their bleating dams. As thus I sat, these and other sights had so fully possessed my soul that I thought—as the poet has happily expressed it:

> 'I was for that time lifted above earth;
> And possessed joys not promised in my birth.'

"As I left this place, and entered into the next field, a second pleasure entertained me; 'twas a handsome milkmaid that had cast away all care, and sung like a nightingale. Her voice was good, and the ditty fitted for it; 'twas that smooth song which was made by Kit Marlow, now at least fifty years ago; and the milkmaid's mother sung an answer to it, which was made by Sir Walter Raleigh in his younger days." [2]

[1] *The Holy State.*

[2] *The Compleat Angler*, Part I, chap. iv.

[1] *Urn Burial.*

Along with Walton may be noted Sir THOMAS URQUHART, born in 1611, and educated at King's College, Aberdeen. He fought against the Covenanters in 1639. Had travelled in France, Spain, and Italy, and is said to have died from uncontrollable laughter at the news of the Restoration in 1660. Among his eccentric writings was a genealogy of his family traced to Adam and Eve, with himself as the one hundred and fifty-third in the line of succession; in 1653 he published the first part of his translation of Rabelais, a second portion in conjunction with a Frenchman, Peter Anthony Motteux, appearing in 1693.

An original figure, with a taste for fantasy that outran even Browne's. His translation of Rabelais is written in an elaborately whimsical style that will attract the admirers of Burton, but as Professor Saintsbury has humorously said: "It must be admitted that it was well he left no school."

Finally, there is JAMES HARRINGTON (1611–1677) (not to be confused with Sir John Harrington, godson of Queen Elizabeth, who translated Ariosto) the companion of Charles I in his captivity, and the author of the Utopian picture *Oceana* (1656). The Oceana is a distinct addition to the literature of ideal republics, and is wrought with much of the quaint whimsicality and fantastic learning of the later Elizabethan writers. But it is something more than this. It is at once a picture and a criticism of Cromwell's England in thin romantic guise. As compared with More's *Utopia*, and Bacon's *New Atlantis*, it is greatly inferior in literary power, lacking the grace of More and the lucidity of Bacon. There are also other differences. More is preoccupied with social and ethical considerations, Bacon's mind is teeming with scientific suggestions. Harrington's *Oceana* is more strictly a study in political theory, and his main thesis is that the form of government should follow the distribution of property. Equality should be the keystone of the situation. "Where there is inequality of estates there must be inequality of power, and where there is inequality of power there can be no commonwealth."

Equality cannot be obtained by means of a solatium to the chief magistracy secured by the suffrage of the people given by the ballot.

Incidentally, Harrington's work contained a vigorous criticism of Hobbes' theory of political absolutism.

II. PROSE: John Bunyan.

(d) JOHN BUNYAN

If Puritanism has Milton as its singer, in John Bunyan is found its storyteller.

Born in 1628 at Elstow, near Bedford, the world-famed author of *The Pilgrim's Progress* came of "low and inconsiderable generation," and assures us that his "father's house" was of that "rank that is meanest and most despised in the land." An elementary education at the village free school was the best he could hope to receive, for at an early age poverty forced him to follow his father's calling, that of a tinker or brazier.

All through his life Bunyan had been peculiarly afflicted by a strange spiritual conflict ever taking place within him; a continual struggle with doubts and temptations; and possessed, moreover, with a sense of sin that to his introspective mind became magnified out of all proportion. As a child he had been subject to the most abject fits of despair, even during his play hours, and the few innocent sports he indulged in were eventually put aside, one by one, in response to an inward call for renunciation.

When sixteen he was called upon to mourn the loss of a beloved mother, and on his father marrying again only two months later, the lad left home and enlisted in the army. For two years he served with the Parliamentarians in the Low Countries. On one occasion being chosen by lot to take part in a siege, he, fortunately both for himself and for posterity, exchanged places with a comrade who was "shot in the head and died."

With characteristic self-abasement he acknowledges to have led a careless life, and to have been "the ungodliest fellow for swearing they ever heard"; whether or no we are to credit him with all the dreadful doings of these youthful days, remains doubtful. However, on his leaving the army a fresh interest came into his life. He fell in love with a young woman whose sole fortune consisted of two pious books given to her by her father, and her companionship was to have a marked influence for the future. Though but nineteen, they married, notwithstanding they were "as poor as poor might be, not having so much as a dish or spoon betwixt them"; but this union, that might have been considered so improvident in most cases, was contracted by them in simple faith and trust, and with the happiest domestic results; unfortunately it was only too brief. Bunyan's good help-meet died about seven years later, leaving to their father's care two boys and two girls, one of whom was blind.

Three years after his marriage John Bunyan wrote his first work—*Sighs from Hell, or the Cries of a Damned Soul*—and about the same time was baptized and received into "full Church privileges" by the Baptists of Bedford; his life henceforward to be dedicated to the delivering of his spiritual message, by word of mouth as well as pen.

Forceful and popular as a village preacher, he exercised a tremendous influence upon his hearers; but his fearless denunciation of vice and Puritan doctrines caused considerable friction among the Church people, so that it was not long before those in authority found an opportunity to thrust him into prison. On November 12, 1660, he was committed to prison for three months as "a common upholder of several unlawful meetings," and until 1672 was continually in and out of Bedford Gaol. At first he was treated with much leniency and indulgence by his gaolers, being allowed out secretly to preach and conduct meetings; however, this unusual proceeding coming under the notice of the

authorities, he was subject to a more rigid surveillance and forbidden "even to look out at the door."

In 1661, during one of his terms of freedom, finding it expedient for the sake of his motherless children, Bunyan married again, his choice falling on a strong, noble, good-hearted woman, who did all in her power to procure his release when he was again imprisoned. Having petitioned the judges three times without success, she journeyed to London and pleaded his cause before the House of Peers, but much as they sympathised with her, no action was taken in the matter. Indeed, it seemed of little use to give Bunyan his freedom, for immediately he was released, he qualified for prison again.

But during these twelve years of life in Bedford Gaol, Bunyan was by no means idle. His family had to be supported, so he earned a small pittance by making "tagged laces," and unable to preach he began to write. Four of his famous works are assigned to this period—*The Holy City, or the New Jerusalem* (1665), *Grace Abounding* (1666), *Justification by Jesus Christ* (1671), and *Defence of the Doctrine of Justification* (1672).

In 1671, notwithstanding that Bunyan was still a prisoner, the Baptists of Bedford appointed him as their minister, and on his release in 1672, he received one of the first licences to preach under the new Act of Declaration of Indulgence, that granted liberty of conscience to Roman Catholic and Nonconformist alike—a concession that was withdrawn by the repeal of the Act three years later.

Act or no Act, it was not in the nature of honest John Bunyan to refrain from giving forth his message to the world, and for his temerity in doing so he again suffered: however, if a ban is placed upon his speech, he can still use his pen, and it was during this period that he wrote his most popular work, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the first part of which was published in a cheap form in 1678, *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* in 1680, *The Holy War* (1682), and two years later appeared the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

Not only did the fame of "the inspired tinker" as an author reach London, but also his fame as a preacher, and "Bishop Bunyan," as he was frequently styled, received many calls to preach his doctrines in the great city. On one of these memorable occasions we are told that, in Southwark, on a cold week-day morning in winter, he preached to twelve hundred people, and on Sundays to a congregation of over three thousand, and to reach the pulpit he was "pulled across the heads of the people."

Ever ready to do his best for all men, his well-known kind-heartedness cost him dear. Asked to intercede in some difference between a father and son, he journeyed to Reading for the purpose, but while passing through London on his return home caught a chill, which resulted in his death after a few days' illness at the house of his friend John Strudwick, at the sign of the Star, Snow Hill, Holborn, on August 31, 1688; and all that is mortal of the great John Bunyan was laid to rest in Bunhill Fields. His wife survived him, as did six of his children, and his life's savings amounted to £100.

But his legacy to posterity in his marvellous output of sixty books and tracts cannot be estimated in figures, for surely no man with so few worldly advantages, and in the face of so many difficulties, left so great an influence to be carried down to future generations.

English Puritanism found its first allegorist in Spenser; but the abstractions of Spenser pale into phantasmal figures beside the concrete embodiments of Bunyan. The literary significance of Bunyan's work—*The Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* in particular—lies in his concrete vitality and narrative power. It would be overstating the matter to call him founder of the modern novel; that distinction must be shared by Daniel Defoe. But it is quite true to call him the pioneer of the modern novel. Bunyan had the qualities of the great story-teller; he had insight into character, humour, pathos, and the visualising imagination of the dramatic artist.

Despite all its moralising and theological passion, the greatness of the *Pilgrim's Progress* is the greatness of every genuine work of art. It was not written primarily to convert the unbeliever, or to express a school of religious experience; it was written to please its author.

> "I did not think
> To shew to all the world my pen and ink,
> . . . nor did I undertake
> Thereby to please my neighbour; no, not I:
> I did it mine own self to gratifie."

Bunyan's chief writings are: *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666), a kind of spiritual autobiography, not unlike the *Confessions of St. Augustine*; *The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to that which is to Come* (1678–1679); *The Holy War* (1682); and *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* (1680).

Of these *The Pilgrim's Progress* is unquestionably the most important. The idea of a Heavenly City inspiring the earthly pilgrim was not peculiar to Bunyan, for another writer, De Guileville, in his *Pilgrimage of the Soul*, had already pictured it. But there is no need on this account to question Bunyan's originality. Even had he known of this other book, the differences of treatment are wide enough, and, as Dr. Brown says in his estimate of Bunyan, "The looking for a city with eternal foundations was a New Testament idea as accessible to Bunyan as to the Monk of Chalis; while the house of Grace Dieu and the Palace Beautiful, like the house of Mercy in the *Faerie Queene*, may well have been suggested by the old houses of Entertainment prepared for pilgrims and travellers on their way."

The scenic setting of the book is obviously inspired by the country around Bedford.

The influence of the Bible upon Bunyan's style has already been noted. In the *Pilgrim's Progress* it is seen at its best; the style is terse, simple, vivid, and its appeal is at once to the unlettered and to the cultured. "This is the great merit of the book," said Dr. Johnson, "that the most cultivated man cannot find anything to praise more highly, and the child knows nothing more amusing."

The Holy War is also an allegory; but the characters are far less alive, and there is little of that variety and salt of humanity that give *The Pilgrim's Progress* its compelling appeal. On the other hand, there is no small measure of descriptive vigour, and the account of the first Siege of Mansoul is in Bunyan's happiest vein.

Mr. Badman is a work of another type, and is second in value and literary significance to the great allegory. It is a realistic novel, a picture of low life, such as Nash had first essayed in English fiction, and Defoe carried to a high level of excellence. As a picture of the shadier side of country life in Stuart times, it has considerable historical interest, especially to the student of the development of English fiction. Christian is converted; Mr. Badman lives and dies in his "City of Destruction," or, in the author's words, he "went to school with the Devil, from his childhood to the end of his life."

Bunyan seems to breathe a different air from that enjoyed by most of the great writers of the Renascence. Anything less like the Elizabethan spirit of a Spenser, a Shakespeare, a Jonson, we can scarcely imagine than this intensely earnest, unlettered, brooding tinker. Milton's austere Puritanism could not conceal his varied scholarship and love of beauty. But Bunyan seems to belong to another age. Yet Bunyan was, deep down, a child of the Renascence, and had far more affinity with the poets and dramatists of Elizabeth's day than with the era of satire and good sense that followed it.

His prose is in lineal descent from Jonson and Raleigh; and if in its simple clarity and directness it reminds us rather of the age of Dryden than of Shakespeare, that is really due to the happy accident of Bunyan's limited education. It shows precisely how much the translation of the Bible had done for unlettered folk. Weighted by no scholarship, troubled by no school of style, he derived straight from the English Bible. Had it been for nothing else, his link with the Renascence and Reformation would be clear enough. But there is something more.

Bunyan's nature was elemental, passionate, swinging violently from one emotional extreme to another. An interesting, vital man, he threw all the energising power, the whole-hearted rapture, that the Elizabethans gave to the world of sense, into the world of religious experience. What beauty was to Spenser, and power to Marlowe, righteousness was to Bunyan. Yet he was no fanatic, no hysterical extremist. A large-boned, sturdily built, red-faced country tinker, he did not suggest the stuff of which the world's great dreamers are made. Nor was his environment such as to inspire the imagination of the religious enthusiast. Nature came to the help of a John Knox, and a Calvin; but the placid meadow-land and lazily winding Ouse, the broad, flat spaces near Elstow, seem more likely to nurse a Jane Austen than a Bunyan. Yet, in this country, lapped round with all the dull, commonplace routine of the country life, he found himself in a hell of spiritual conflict.

Beneath the placid exterior of the man there burned a fierce fire. Violence of imagination had been his from early days; and as he grew older, the fire burned more fiercely, turning to ashes all the amusements of youth, however harmless, torturing him with dreams of his own worldliness, and urging him to find peace for his racked spirit.

Let us regard him, therefore, as a genuine child of the Renascence, in a Puritan framework. A greater moral contrast with Marlowe it would be hard to imagine, while Pope in his pulpit moments would have seemed a congenial spirit. Yet he had a striking temperamental affinity with Marlowe; and a whole world of feeling and experience divided the author of the *Holy War* from the author of *The Essay on Man*.

The Pilgrim's Progress

Now, I beheld in my dream that they had not journeyed far, but the river and the way for a time parted, at which they were not a little sorry; yet they durst not go out of the way. Now the way from the river was rough, and their feet tender by reason of their travel; so the souls of the pilgrims were much discouraged because of the way. (Num. xxi. 4.) Wherefore, still as they went on, they wished for a better way. Now, a little before them, there was on the left hand of the road a meadow, and a stile to go over into it, and that meadow is called By-path Meadow. Then said Christian to his fellow, If this meadow lieth along by our wayside, let us go over into it. Then he went to the stile to see, and behold a path lay along by the way on the other side of the fence. 'Tis according to my wish, said Christian. Here is the easiest going; come, good Hopeful, and let us go over.

Hope. But how if this path should lead us out of the way?

Chr. That is not likely, said the other. Look, doth it not go along by the wayside? So Hopeful, being persuaded by his fellow, went after him over the stile. When they were gone over, and were got into the path, they found it very easy for their feet; and withal they, looking before them, espied a man walking as they did, and his name was Vain-confidence: so they called after him, and asked him whither that way led. He said, To the Celestial Gate. Look, said Christian, did not I tell you so? By this you may see we are right. So they followed, and he went before them. But, behold, the night came on, and it grew very dark; so that they that were behind lost sight of him that went before.

He therefore that went before (Vain-confidence by name), not seeing the way before him, fell into a deep pit (Isa. ix. 16), which was on purpose there made by the prince of those grounds, to catch vain-glorious fools withal, and was dashed to pieces with his fall.

Now Christian and his fellow heard him fall, so they called to know the matter; but there was none to answer, only they heard a groaning. Then said Hopeful, Where are we now? Then was his fellow silent, as mistrusting that he had led him out of the way; and now it began to rain, and thunder, and lighten, in a most dreadful manner, and the water rose amain.

Then Hopeful groaned within himself, saying, Oh that I had kept on my way!

Chr. Who could have thought that this path should have led us out of the way?

Hope. I was afraid on't at the very first, and therefore gave you that gentle caution. I would have spoken plainer, but that you are older than I.

Chr. Good brother, be not offended. I am sorry I have brought thee out of the way, and that I have put thee into such imminent danger. Pray, my brother, forgive me; I did not do it of an evil intent.

Hope. Be comforted, my brother, for I forgive thee; and believe, too, that this shall be for our good.

Chr. I am glad I have with me a merciful brother.

But we must not stand here; let us try to go back again.

Hope. But, good brother, let me go before.

Chr. No, if you please, let me go first, that, if there be any danger, I may be first therein; because by my means we are both gone out of the way.

Hope. No, said Hopeful, you shall not go first; for your mind being troubled, may lead you out of the way again.—Then for their encouragement they heard the voice of one saying, "Let thine heart be towards the highway, even the way that thou wentest: turn again." (Jer. xxxi. 21.) But by this time the waters were greatly risen, by reason of which the way of going back was very dangerous. (Then I thought that it is easier going out of the way when we are in, than going in when we are out.) Yet they adventured to go back; but it was so dark, and the flood so high, that in their going back they had like to have been drowned nine or ten times.

Neither could they, with all the skill they had, get again to the stile that night. Wherefore at last, lighting under a little shelter, they sat down there until daybreak; but being weary, they fell asleep. Now there was, not far from the place where they lay, a castle, called Doubting Castle, the owner whereof was Giant Despair; and it was in his grounds they now were sleeping. Wherefore he, getting up in the morning early, and walking up and down in his fields, caught Christian and Hopeful asleep in his grounds. Then with a grim and surly voice he bid them awake, and asked them whence they were, and what they did in his grounds. They told him they were pilgrims, and that they had lost their way. Then said the giant, You have this night trespassed on me, by trampling in and lying on my grounds, and therefore you must go along with me. So they were forced to go, because he was stronger than they. They also had but little to say, for they knew themselves in a fault. The giant, therefore, drove them before him, and put them in his castle, in a very dark dungeon, nasty and stinking to the spirits of these two men. Here, then, they lay from Wednesday morning till Saturday night, without one bit of bread, or drop of drink, or light, or any to ask how they did: they were, therefore, here in evil case, and were far from friends and acquaintance. (Ps. lxxxviii. 8.) Now in this place Christian had double sorrow, because it was through his unadvised counsel that they were brought into this distress.

Now Giant Despair had a wife, and her name was Diffidence: so, when he was gone to bed, he told his wife what he had done; to wit, that he had taken a couple of prisoners, and cast them into his dungeon for trespassing on his grounds. Then he asked her also what he had best do further to them. So she asked him what they were, whence they came, and whither they were bound; and he told her. Then she counselled him that when he arose in the morning he should beat them without mercy. So when he arose he getteth him a grievous crab-tree cudgel, and goes down into the dungeon to them, and there first falls to rating of them as if they were dogs, although they never gave him a word of distaste; then he fell upon them and beat them fearfully, in such sort that they were not able to help themselves, or to turn them upon the floor. This done he withdraws, and leaves them there to condole their misery, and to mourn under their distress: so all that day they spent their time in nothing but sighs and bitter lamentations. The next night she, talking with her husband further about them, and understanding that they were yet alive, did advise him to counsel them to make away with themselves. So, when morning was come, he goes to them in a surly manner as before, and perceiving them to be very sore with the stripes that he had given them the day before, he told them that, since they were never like to come out of that place, their only way would be forthwith to make an end of themselves, either with knife, halter, or poison. For why, said he, should you choose life, seeing it is attended with so much bitterness? But they desired him to let them go. With that he looked ugly upon them, and rushing to them, had doubtless made an end of them himself, but that he fell into one of his fits (for he sometimes, in sunshiny weather, fell into fits), and lost for a time the use of his hands. Wherefore he withdrew, and left them, as before, to consider what to do. Then did the prisoners consult between themselves whether it was best to take his counsel or no; and thus they began to discourse:

Chr. Brother, said Christian, what shall we do? The life that we now live is miserable. For my part, I know not whether it is best to live thus or to die out of hand. "My soul chooseth strangling rather than life" (Job vii. 15); and the grave is more easy for me than this dungeon! Shall we be ruled by the giant?

Hope. Indeed our present condition is dreadful, and death would be far more welcome to me than thus for ever to abide. But yet, let us consider, the Lord of the country to which we are going hath said, "Thou shalt do no murder,"—no, not to another man's person; much more then are we forbidden to take his counsel to kill ourselves. Besides, he that kills another can but commit murder upon his body; but for one to kill himself, is to kill body and soul at once. And, moreover, my brother, thou talkest of ease in the grave; but hast thou forgotten the hell whither for certain murderers go? for "no murderer hath eternal life," &c. And let us consider, again, that all the law is not in the hand of Giant Despair; others, so far as I can understand, have been taken by him as well as we, and yet have escaped out of his hands. Who knows but that God, who made the world, may cause that Giant Despair may die, or that, at some time or other, he may forget to lock us in; or that he may in a short time have another of his fits before us, and may lose the use of his limbs? And if ever that should come to pass again, for my part, I am resolved to pluck up the heart of a man, and to try my utmost to get from under his hand. I was a fool that I did not try to do it before; but, however, my brother, let us be patient, and endure awhile. The time may come that may give us a happy release; but let us not be our own murderers. With those words Hopeful at present did moderate the mind of his brother; so they continued together in the dark that day, in their sad and doleful condition.

Well, towards evening, the Giant goes down into the dungeon again, to see if his prisoners had taken his counsel; but when he came there, he found them alive. And, truly, alive was all; for now, what for want of bread and water, and by reason of the wounds they received when he beat them, they could do little but breathe. But, I say, he found them alive; at which he fell into a grievous rage, and told them that, seeing they had disobeyed his counsel, it should be worse with them than if they had never been born.

At this they trembled greatly, and I think that Christian fell into a swoon; but coming a little to himself again, they renewed their discourse about the giant's counsel, and whether yet they had best take it or no. Now Christian again seemed for doing it; but Hopeful made his second reply as followeth:

Hope. My brother, said he, remembered thou not how valiant thou hast been heretofore? Apollyon could not crush thee, nor could all that thou didst hear, or see, or feel in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. What hardship, terror, and amazement hast thou already gone through, and art thou now nothing but fears? Thou seest that I am in the dungeon with thee, a far weaker man by nature than thou art; also this giant has wounded me as well as thee, and hath also cut off the bread and water from my mouth; and with thee I mourn without the light. But let us exercise a little more patience: remember how thou playedst the man at Vanity Fair, and wast neither afraid of the chains nor cage, nor yet of bloody death. Wherefore let us (at least to avoid the shame that becomes not a Christian to be found in) bear up with patience as well as we can.

Now, night being come again, and the giant and his wife being in bed, she asked him concerning the prisoners, and if they had taken his counsel. To which he replied, They are sturdy rogues; they choose rather

to bear all hardships than to make away with themselves. Then, said she, Take them into the castle-yard to-morrow, and show them the bones and skulls of those that thou hast already dispatched, and make them believe, ere a week comes to an end, thou also will tear them in pieces, as thou hast done their fellows before them.

So when the morning was come, the giant goes to them again, and takes them into the castle-yard, and shows them as his wife had bidden him. These, said he, were pilgrims, as you are, once, and they trespassed on my grounds, as you have done; and when I thought fit, I tore them in pieces; and so within ten days I will do you. Get you down to your den again: and with that he beat them all the way thither. They lay, therefore, all day on Saturday in a lamentable case, as before. Now, when night was come, and when Mrs. Diffidence and her husband the giant were got to bed, they began to renew their discourse of the prisoners; and, withal, the old giant wondered that he could neither by his blows nor counsel bring them to an end. And with that his wife replied,—I fear, said she, that they live in hopes that some will come to relieve them, or that they have picklocks about them, by the means of which they hope to escape. And sayest thou so, my dear? said the giant; I will therefore search them in the morning.

Well, on Saturday, about midnight, they began to pray, and continued in prayer till almost break of day.

Now, a little before it was day, good Christian, as one half amazed, brake out into this passionate speech:—What a fool, quoth he, am I, thus to lie in a stinking dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty! I have a key in my bosom, called Promise, that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle. Then said Hopeful, That's good news, good brother; pluck it out of thy bosom and try.

Then Christian pulled it out of his bosom, and began to try at the dungeon-door, whose bolt, as he turned the key, gave back, and the door flew open with ease, and Christian and Hopeful both came out. Then he went to the outward door that leads into the castle-yard, and with his key opened that door also. After that, he went to the iron gate, for that must be opened too. But that lock went desperately hard; yet the key did open it. Then they thrust open the gate to make their escape with speed; but that gate as it opened made such a creaking that it waked Giant Despair, who, hastily rising to pursue his prisoners, felt his limbs to fail, for his fits took him again, so that he could by no means go after them. Then they went on, and came to the King's highway again, and so were safe, because they were out of his jurisdiction.

Now, when they were gone over the stile, they began to contrive with themselves what they should do at that stile, to prevent those that should come after from falling into the hands of Giant Despair. So they consented to erect there a pillar, and to engrave upon the side thereof this sentence: "Over this stile is the way to Doubting Castle, which is kept by Giant Despair, who despiseth the King of the Celestial Country, and seeks to destroy his holy pilgrims." Many, therefore, that followed after, read what was written, and escaped the danger. This done they sang as follows:

Out of the way we went, and then we found
What 'twas to tread upon forbidden ground:
And let them that come after have a care
Lest heedlessness makes them as we to fare;
Lest they, for trespassing, his pris'ners are
Whose Castle's Doubting, and whose name's Despair.[1]

III. POETRY: (a) John Milton and the Puritan Note.

(a) MILTON AND THE PURITAN NOTE

The father of Milton was a man of culture, a classical scholar, and a musician of no mean ability, who, having cast in his lot with the Reformers, was disinherited by an irate parent and compelled to work for his living, choosing the profession of a scrivener, which he practised at the sign of The Spread Eagle in Bread Street, Cheapside, in the City of London; his mother, the daughter of a Welsh gentleman named Caston. Their son John, who was born on December 9, 1608, thus speaks of his childhood:

"My father," he says, "destined me from my infancy to the study of polite literature, which I embraced with such avidity, that from the age of twelve, I hardly ever retired from my books before midnight. This proved the first source of injury to my eyes, whose natural weakness was attended with frequent pains in the head; but as all these disadvantages could not repress my ardour for learning, my father took care to have me instructed by various preceptors, both at home and at school."

Milton's first instructor was Thomas Young, an Essex clergyman, who, when his pupil was fifteen, became a voluntary exile on account of religious persecution. In 1623 he was sent to St. Paul's School, under Alexander Gill, the following year being admitted a pensioner at Christ's College, Cambridge, where he composed most of his Latin poems, and made the acquaintance of Edward King, whose death he laments in *Lycidas*.

As a youth, Milton was possessed of a singularly pleasing appearance, for which he was nicknamed the "Lady" by his college; in later life he always looked much younger than his years, and his beautiful grey eyes never betrayed their sad secret.

The young Milton, as we have seen, soon showed signs of remarkable literary promise. It seems fitting that one who became such a master of sonorous rhythm should have shaped well as an organist, but his whole-hearted allegiance was given to literature. Proud and austere even at college, he conceived as lofty a view of the poet's calling as did Wordsworth two centuries later, and, like Wordsworth, felt himself to be a consecrated spirit. Nor was this a mere idle boast. In an age of considerable licence and loose manners, Milton set a fine example by his sobriety of life. It was said of him by a contemporary, that when travelling abroad he offended the Italians by his strict morality and outspoken attacks on Popery.

In 1638 he lodged at a tailor's house in St. Bride's Churchyard, which he changed later on for a "pretty garden house" in Aldersgate Street, at that time a quiet neighbourhood. With him lived two young nephews, who found in their uncle a kindly though Spartan mentor.

In 1640 the Long Parliament met, and Episcopal government was violently attacked. Milton's religious sympathies were at once aroused, and with all alacrity he plunges into the fray.

Three pamphlets issued from his pen: *Of Reformation touching Church Discipline in England*

[1] *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Part I.

(May–June 1641), *Prelatical Episcopacy* (June–July), *Animadversion upon the Remonstrance Defence*. In the last he attacks Joseph Hall, the champion of the Episcopal cause. These pamphlets were not signed, though no mystery was made of their authorship. Also, in 1641 Milton wrote under his own name a pamphlet, *The Reason of Church Government urged against Prelacy*.

In 1641 Milton married Mary Powell, the seventeen-year-old daughter of a Cavalier gentleman residing in Oxfordshire. This marriage was not a happy one from the first; the change from a life of youthful gaiety to that of the companionship of an austere Puritan student so many years her senior was not congenial to this young girl, and on visiting her father's house shortly after their marriage she refused to rejoin her husband. Milton, urging "unfitness and contrariety of mind," thought of suing for a divorce; however, in 1645 a reconciliation took place, and seven years later his wife died, leaving him with three small daughters. In 1656 he married Katharine Woodcock, who died the following year. His third wife, Elizabeth Minshull, chosen for him by his friend Dr. Paget, was but twenty-five when she linked her life with that of the blind poet in 1663, and lived for fifty-three years after his death.

In 1645 Milton found a more spacious dwelling in Barbican, which two years later he leaves for a small house in High Holborn, near Lincoln's Inn Fields. During the whole of the period from 1639 to 1649 he devoted himself almost entirely to politics, and what he believed to be the call of duty to his country. Then, in 1649, came the offer of the Latin Secretaryship. Hitherto he had been a political free lance; now he was offered an official post in a government, many of whose leaders—Hutchinson, Fairfax, Cromwell—had long stirred his enthusiasm and admiration.

It was an important step for a student to take, for it brought him for the first time into the very thick of the fight. It gave him an insight into the actualities of the day, which otherwise he would not have got. His worldly experiences are not turned to much poetical use, but there is certainly a reminiscence of Whitehall in the celestial description in *Paradise Lost*. His chief duty was to translate foreign despatches into "dignified Latin." At first he had rooms in Whitehall, but subsequently moved to another "pretty garden house" in Westminster. This house became No. 19 York Street, and is associated also with the names of Bentham, James Mill, and Hazlitt. It no longer exists, having been demolished in 1877.

Blindness made his duties difficult, and rendered assistance imperative. Among those who helped him in the discharge of his duties was Andrew Marvell.

Milton served through the Protectorate. The persecution of the Vaudois, which he had officially to protest against on behalf of his country, called forth from the poet one of his finest sonnets.

At the Restoration he was arrested, but subsequently released on "paying his fees." He lived quietly and frugally at Artillery Walk, Bunhill Fields—blind, infirm, and weary, but unchanged in resolution formed years before. The resolution found expression in *Paradise Lost*, begun in 1658, finished in 1664, and published three years later. Milton was offered by his publisher the munificent sum of "five pounds down, five pounds more upon the sale of each of the first three editions." Ten pounds in all came into the poet's hands in 1669. After his death the copyright was sold by his widow for about eight pounds more. This agreement is now in the British Museum, to which it was given by Samuel Rogers, the banker-poet.

The Epic was published in "Little Britain," the booksellers' quarter, which stretched from Botolph Church, Aldersgate, to Bartholomew's Hospital, and for a while lay unnoticed on the bookstalls. The story goes that the Earl of Dorset was in Little Britain, hearing about for books to his taste. There was *Paradise Lost*. He was surprised by some passages he struck upon, dipping here and there, and bought it. The bookseller begged him to speak in its favour if he liked it, for that they lay on his hands as waste paper. My lord took it home, read it and sent it to Dryden, who in a short time returned it, with the comment, "This man outs us all out, and the Ancients too."

Perhaps the poem in which the man, if not the poet, found fullest utterance is *Samson Agonistes*, 1671; *Paradise Regained* was published also the same year. Among his many other works may be mentioned those relating to *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, 1643; *The Four Chief Places of Scripture which treat of Marriage*, 1645; in 1644, his great prose work, *A Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*; previous to this, while living at Horton, near Windsor, he wrote *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, 1632; *Arcades*, 1633; *Comus*, 1634; and *Lycidas*, 1637.

In addition to his blindness he was a sufferer from chronic gout. After months of ill-health, "the gout struck in." He died on November 8, 1674, and lies buried in St. Giles', Cripplegate, beside his father.

His Work

In his literary parentage Milton owes somewhat to both Donne and Spenser, and in a slight degree to Ben Jonson. But his debts were slight as compared with the rich legacy he gave to English poetry; and it has been justly said that he represented the fourth great influence in English prosody. Chaucer had transformed Middle English into a robust force; and Spenser and Shakespeare gave—the one to narrative, the other to dramatic poetry—a sweetness and variety impossible to overrate. Then there came a period largely of imitation and elaboration, rather than of any great originality. English poetry between the time of Shakespeare and Milton has many gifts and graces, but the quality of greatness is denied it, and it was left for Milton to restore this quality to our poetry. He is the last word in the English Renascence. Gradually but surely its splendour had been fading away, but in Milton it flames up into a glorious sunset, and, like the sunset, is touched by a grave and pensive beauty peculiarly its own.

The serious and meditative spirit infused by

Puritanism into the poetry of the time turned Milton's thoughts from such subjects as the Arthurian Legend (once considered by him), and his epic genius found perfect expression in the Biblical story of the Fall of Man. Nothing is more characteristic of the poet than the arduous mental development he deliberately set before himself in order to grapple with his task. The earlier years of his life were spent in hard study and preparation; then for a while he plunged into fierce political controversy in the cause of civil and religious liberty; finally, in the last years of his life he gave us, as the fruit of his mature genius, *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*.

Sense of Beauty.—Possessing a sense of beauty, as keen though less unrestrained than that possessed by the Elizabethans, Milton's devotion to form and coherence separates him from the great Romantics, and gives to the beauty of his verse a delicacy and gravity all its own. Like Jonson, he favoured the classical conventions rather than the happy-go-lucky methods of romanticism; but unlike Jonson he never allowed his scholarship to chill his creative imagination. Nowhere is this quality of beauty better displayed than in the early poems, in *Allegro*, *Penseroso*, *Comus*, and *Lycidas*. They have all the freshness and charm of youth, and exhibit the lighter and more fanciful side of Milton's genius.

As an illustration, take the image in his address to Melancholy:

"Come, pensive nun, devout and pure."

A Stateliness of Manner.—With this sense of beauty is combined a stateliness of manner which gives a high dignity to Milton's poetry, that has never been surpassed, and rarely equalled in our literature.

The dramatic possibilities of blank verse had been developed to a wonderful degree by Marlowe and Shakespeare, but in their successors it had to some extent deteriorated. Jonson's classical severity was not combined with any considerable beauty or distinction; and the increasing looseness of texture in the plays favoured a slovenly tendency in the blank verse of the day. In the lighter form of verse, and in the lyric, there was no such falling off; but the more ambitious and elaborate forms of non-dramatic poetry stood in need of some influence at once chastening and inspiring. In his great epic, Milton is extraordinarily fertile in the methods he adopts to avoid monotony. He strengthens blank verse without cramping it; he gives it grace without making it vapid, and rounds off with finished care the single line without ever sacrificing the organic unity of the entire poem. He is like a great organist who, while never losing sight of the original melody, adorns it with every conceivable variation which serves to exhibit, in place of obscuring, the freshness and sweetness of the simple theme.

The decadence of the drama was in itself a sufficient testimony to the disintegrating forces of the day. Austerity was needed by any man of letters who would raise our literature again to a noble level. And none used this quality with more unflinching purpose than Milton. No doubt it made him unpopular. Perhaps no great poet was ever accounted so little by his own generation as Milton. But his greatness was not for long undiscovered.

The modern reader may regard with but languid interest the celestial pageant that Milton unrolls before him in his lengthy epics, but the merits of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* do not depend upon the reader's taste in theology, but upon the stark grandeur of many descriptive passages, and the passionate love of Nature which glows throughout the poet's work. It meets us first in the fresh sweetness of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*:

> "Russet lawns and fallows grey,
> Where the nibbling flocks do stray
> Mountains on whose barren breast
> The labouring clouds do often rest
> Meadows trim with daisies pied,
> Shallow brooks and rivers wide";

gains strength and dignity in *Lycidas*:

> "While the still morn went out with sandals grey";

and thrills us with sublime splendour in *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes*:

> ". . . airs, vernal airs
> Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
> The trembling leaves while Universal Pan,
> Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,
> Led on the Eternal Spring."

Of Milton's prose writings it may be said that uncompromising directness and passionate vehemence characterise all these documents. His avowed object had been, he says, "to write plainly and roundly," for he had resolved "to vindicate the spotless truth from an ignominious bondage whose native worth is now become of such low esteem that she is like to find small credit with us for what she can say . . ."

The last pamphlet differs from those preceding, for in place of dealing with the question historically he approaches it from a philosophic standpoint. His method is discursive and speculative, and he certainly adopts a larger point of view than before.

What interests us here is the extraordinary display in the pamphlets of Milton's passion for Independence. He feels far too strongly to write and reason temperately: fierce and bitter denunciation, tempestuous personalities are hurled against his opponents. That acute sense of the righteousness of his own cause, which has always characterised the Puritan, and made of him so merciless an opponent, animates Milton's political writings.

And these tracts are the more remarkable when we recall the fact that they came from a quarter where Puritanism was seldom found. The scholar of the time, saturated with academic traditions, sensitive to the romantic appeal of Shakespeare and his school, had more in common with the Cavaliers than with the party of the Roundheads. Yet this admirer of Shakespeare, this writer of masques, this precise scholar, chooses to side with the party which frowned on amusements and despised profane letters. And although the literary student will miss in his prose nearly all those qualities which give desirability and distinction to his poetry, the pamphlets indicate the man even more fully than the epics. One is not accustomed to think of Milton as one thinks of Sir Thomas More and

Shelley, and yet there is as much of the Utopian dreamer about him. "I did but prompt the age to quit their clogs," he said. And assuredly, it was the aspiration for a cleaner, juster, sweeter world that fed the fire of his passion for liberty. Behind the violent, scurrilous pamphleteer was the idealist. Always is he on the side of liberty, whether it be religious or civil, and although I could quite imagine Charles Stuart would have proved a more congenial companion for Milton than Cromwell, yet he approves the fate of the King and welcomes Cromwell warmly.

The least ephemeral of the tracts, and the best known, is the *Areopagitica*—a speech for the liberty of unlicensed Printing. This was published in 1644, and was cast in the form of a speech addressed to the Parliament. After complimenting them, he declares so highly does he esteem their wisdom that he will pay them the "supreme compliment" of questioning one of their ordinances. Forthwith he quotes the Printing Ordinance, June 14, 1643, enacting that no book, pamphlet, or paper should henceforth be printed unless it had previously been approved and licensed by the official censors or one of them.

Books, he says, were things of which a Commonwealth ought to take no less vigilant charge than of their living subjects. "For books do contain a potency of life in them, to be as active as that soul whose progeny they are. . . . As good almost kill a man as kill a good book; who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book kills reason itself. . . . A good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life . . . What if the principle of State licensing were carried out?" he asks. "Shall the State regulate singing, dancing, looking out at windows, standing on balconies, eating, drinking, dressing, love-making?" Even, he argues, if the end were honestly the suppression of bad books, and that were practicable, all would depend on the qualification of the licensers. As to these gentlemen, Milton expresses himself with his usual frankness.

Milton sympathised as little with the Presbyterian party as he did with the Episcopal, which indeed logically he could scarce help doing. And there is a passage where he shows clearly how comical a notion the idea of an official "minister of religion" has become. He calls it "being religious by deputy . . . or the use of a Popular London Clergyman." It is certainly extremely interesting from the light it throws on the psychology of the Puritan, and in its mocking humour will remind the modern reader of certain passages in *Fors Clavigera*. Here is an extract:

"A wealthy man, addicted to his pleasure and profits, finds Religion to be a traffic so entangled, and of so many peddling accounts, that of all mysteries he cannot skill to keep a stock going on that trade. What should he do? Fain would he have the name to be religious; fain would he bear up with his neighbours in that. What does he therefore but resolves to give over toiling and to find himself out some factor to whose care and credit he may commit the whole managing of his religious affairs. . . . To him he adheres; resigns the whole warehouse of his religion, with all the locks and keys, into his study, and indeed makes the very person of that man his religion, esteeming his associating with him a sufficient evidence and commendation of his own piety. So that a man may say his Religion is now no more within himself but . . . goes and comes near him according as that good man frequents the house. He entertains him . . . lodges him . . . and after the Malmsey or some well-spiced beverage, and better breakfasted than He whose appetite would have gladly fed on green figs between Bethany and Jerusalem, his Religion walks abroad at eight, and leaves his kind entertainer in the shop, trading all day without his religion."

It is quite true that in the theory of toleration advocated by the *Areopagitica*, Milton is not inclined to go so far as some of his contemporaries, but here, as in many other cases, the principle advocated carries its exponent far beyond that of which he wots in its advocacy.

And nothing could be fuller or more explicit than his demand—"Give me the liberty to know and to argue freely according to my conscience, above all liberties."

The Influence of Milton.—Variety, flexibility, lyric passion; these are qualities for which we may search Milton in vain; and in these matters Shakespeare is supremely great. But in loftiness of thought, splendid dignity of expression, and rhythmic felicities, Milton has few peers, no superior. Wordsworth owed much, Landor and Tennyson something, to his prosodic genius. The matter of his work is necessarily limited in its interest and significance, but there has been no finer exponent of the "grand manner," and it is impossible to exaggerate the influence of his wonderful diction upon the history of poetry from his own day down to the day of William Watson.

IL PENSEROSO

Thus night oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited Morn appear,
Not trick'd and frounced as she was wont
With the Attic boy to hunt,
But kerchief'd in a comely cloud,
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or usher'd with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute drops from off the eaves.
And when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
To arched walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown that Sylvan loves
Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude axe with heaved stroke
Was never heard the Nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallow'd haunt.
There in close covert by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee with honied thigh,
That at her flow'ry work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feather'd sleep;
And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings in airy stream
Of lively portraiture display'd,
Softly on my eyelids laid.
And as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,
Or the unseen Genius of the wood.

But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloisters pale,
And love the high embowèd roof,
With antic pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light:
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full voiced quire below,
In service high, and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all heav'n before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that heav'n doth show,
And every herb that sips the dew;
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.
These pleasures Melancholy give,
And I with thee will choose to live.

SAMSON AGONISTES

. . . But chief of all,
O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!
Blind among enemies! O worse than chains,
Dungeon or beggary, or decrepit age!
Light, the prime work of God, to me is extinct,
And all her various objects of delight
Annulled, which might in part my grief have eased.
Inferior to the vilest now become
Of man or worm, the vilest here excel me:
They creep, yet see; I, dark in light, exposed
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,
Within doors or without, still as a fool,
In power of others, never in my own—
Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.
O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day!
O first-created beam, and thou great Word,
Let there be light, and light was over all,
Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree?
The Sun to me is dark
And silent as the Moon,
When she deserts the night,
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.
Since light so necessary is to life,
And almost life itself; if it be true
That light is in the soul,
She all in every part, why was the sight
To such a tender ball as the eye confined,
So obvious and so easy to be quenched,
And not, as feeling, through all parts diffused,
That she might look at will through every pore?
Then had I not been thus exiled from light;
As in the land of darkness, yet in light
To live a life half dead, a living death,
And buried; but, O yet more miserable!
Myself my sepulchre, a moving grave;
Buried, yet not exempt
By privilege of death and burial
From worst of other evils, pains, and wrongs
But made hereby obnoxious more
To all the miseries of life,
Life in captivity
Among human foes.

SABRINA *rises, attended by* WATER-NYMPHS, *and sings.*

By the rushy-fringèd bank,
Where grows the willow and the osier dank,
My sliding chariot stays;
Thick set with agate, and the azure sheen
Of turkis blue, and emerald green
That in the channel strays;
Whilst from off the waters fleet,
Thus I set my printless feet
O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
That bends not as I tread;
Gentle swain, at thy request I am here.[1]

ON HIS BLINDNESS

When I consider how my light is spent,
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide,
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide;
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
I fondly ask: But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work, or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best: his state
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

III. POETRY: (*b*) Jacobean Poetry—(i) The School of Spenser (Allegorical and Descriptive); (ii) The School of Donne (Metaphysical and Lyric); (iii) Other Jacobean and Caroline Lyrists.

(*b*) JACOBEAN POETRY

(i) THE SCHOOL OF SPENSER—ALLEGORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE

Spenser's immediate influence is shown in the work of Giles and Phineas Fletcher and William Browne.

GILES FLETCHER was vicar of Alderton in Suffolk, 1621, and is the author of a poem in four cantos entitled *Christ's Victory and Triumph*. The allegorical vein of Spenser is adopted, and some measure of his faculty for rich imagery is displayed, for instance, "White and red roses for her face were placed, and for her tresses marigolds were spilt."

PHINEAS FLETCHER, a clergyman in East Anglia, also favoured the allegory, but his most considerable work *The Purple Island*, though picturesque at times, is less happy in its imagery, on the whole, than the work of Giles.

The third follower, WILLIAM BROWNE, was a man of more generous literary sympathies than the two Fletchers. He was a student of Chaucer, and on friendly personal terms with, as well as an admirer of, Drayton, Jonson, and Chapman. A native of Devon, he was educated at Oxford, and probably did scholastic work there for a number of years. His first work, *Britannia's Pastorals*, was published in 1613, a pleasantly discursive narrative poem, written in couplets and interspersed, according to the convention of the time, with lyrics. He is not a good story-teller, but his fluent style, and gift of scenic painting, impart an agreeable quality to his work. After this poem came *The Shepherd's Pipe*, and here something of Chaucer's ease as well as Spenser's sweetness may be traced. Though a follower on the whole of Spenser, he was a follower by temperament rather than by literary imitativeness, as the Fletchers are for the most

[1] *Comus*.

part, and if not a great creative power, is a poet of considerable originality, technical skill, and genuine charm.

Henry More and Joseph Beaumont are less well known than the foregoing, not without good reason. Spenser's spaciousness is carried by them to a merciless extent. In an age when long-winded romances were accepted without demur, their philosophical poems *The Song of the Soul* and *Psychozoia* may have found appreciative readers with a genius for patience. But they are the least favourable specimens of their school.

(ii) The School of Donne—Metaphysical and Lyric

John Donne,[1] son of a wealthy merchant, a descendant of John Heywood of epigrammatic fame, and also of Sir Thomas More, was born in London 1537, and educated at home till he was eleven, then sent to Oxford, and at fourteen to Cambridge. Of a Roman Catholic family who were unwilling that he should subscribe to the oath required, he did not take a degree at either university though a most diligent student and eventually a learned theologian. While studying law at Lincoln's Inn, he abjured the old religion for the doctrines of the Reformers, and travelled in Spain and Italy. On his return to England he was appointed secretary to the Earl of Ellesmere, but a secret marriage with the Countess' niece procured his ignominious dismissal—with reluctance, it must be admitted, on the part of the Earl, who regrets losing "a friend, and such a secretary as was fitter to serve a king than a subject." For his clandestine marriage he was imprisoned, and on writing to his wife subscribed his letter "John Donne, Anne Donne, Un-done!"

After a career of many vicissitudes the couple were eventually forgiven by Sir George More, who presented his daughter with a belated though welcome marriage portion of £800.

The *Pseudo Martyr* (1610) being brought to the notice of James I, is highly approved by that monarch as a contribution to anti-Catholic controversy, and it is suggested that Donne shall be ordained. Reluctant at first, considering himself unworthy, he however applies himself to further studies in Greek and Hebrew, and eventually consenting, is at once appointed Chaplain to the King, and divinity lecturer to Lincoln's Inn, with rapid preferment to livings in Huntingdonshire and Kent; subsequently he was sent on a diplomatic mission to Germany with Lord Doncaster in 1619.

In 1621, on the removal of Dr. Curcy, then Dean of St. Paul's, to the see of Exeter, Donne is commanded to attend on the King at dinner, the King explaining why he is thus honoured:

> "Dr. Donne, I have invited you to dinner; and though you sit not down with me, yet I will carve to you of a dish that I know you love well; for, knowing you love London, I do therefore make you Dean of St. Paul's; and, when I have dined, then do you take your beloved dish home to your study, say grace there to yourself, and much good may it do you."

Soon after his appointment to the deanery the advowson of St. Dunstan-in-the-West fell to him; which enabled him to show much charity to the poor and generosity towards his friends. "Always preaching to himself," as his biographer, Izaak Walton, says, "as if in a cloud, but in none."

Eloquent and popular, he was appointed by the King to preach many sermons, and also chosen Prolocutor to the Convocation in Parliament.

Busybodies were to the fore, no doubt through jealousy, who endeavoured to poison the King's mind against the Dean by insinuating that Donne in one of his sermons had accused the King of a leaning towards Popery, and of a dislike to his method of government. His Majesty took offence at this, and it almost proved the severance of their friendship. The Dean was, however, able to set matters right, and the King "was right glad he rested no longer under suspicion."

A few years later Donne fell into ill-health, and in 1631 died of a fever at his daughter's house in Essex, and is buried in St. Paul's Cathedral.

Beside the *Pseudo-Martyr* his best known works are *The Progress of the Soul*, 1601; *An Anatomy of the World*, an elegy, 1611; and *Epithalamium*, 1613.

His Work

In many ways it is not unfair to summarise Donne's remarkable genius by saying that he was an Elizabethan Browning, and placed beside Spenser, the two poets shine somewhat in the same fashion as Tennyson and Browning did in the Victorian age. His metrical roughness, his obscurities of method, his bewildering allusiveness, his ardent imagination, his taste for metaphysics, and his unexpected divergence into sweet and delightful music, all these things may remind the modern reader of the author of *Sordello*, and *Men and Women*. Nor is this comparison without foundation in fact, for Browning was an emphatic admirer of Donne's work, put the *Mandrake Song* to music, and was influenced by him to no inconsiderable extent. He has a far keener wit than Browning, though in the excessive voluptuousness of his early work there is no parallel with the virile though reticent passion of the Victorian. One of the most interesting things about him is his emphatic revolt from the smooth sweetness of most Elizabethan verse; and although he had the power to utter dulcet and harmonious sounds, he seems to have deliberately adopted a harsh and often staccato method in order to break away from contemporary tradition. It is not surprising to find that while an admirer of Jonson, he is more interested in Shakespeare and the song writers generally. His great originality precluded any pronounced literary formative influences; but of the two countries that influenced English literary methods at the time, Italy and Spain, he certainly owed far more to Spain. His work was pretty widely circulated in literary circles, and exercised a great and not very happy influence; for imitators found it far easier to assume his harshness and obscurity, than to display the thought and imagination that render these things tolerable. Jonson, who admired him heartily and not uncritically, predicted he would perish from not being understood.

[1] Pronounced Dun.

His poetry falls naturally into three divisions: (1) Amorous, (2) Metaphysical, (3) Satirical. The amorous work includes his earliest work, and the mingling at times of sensuality and cynical wit reminds one of Byron. His metaphysical and satirical work bulks the most largely, and towards the end of his life he wrote little verse, devoting his powers entirely to homiletical literature. An illustration of the metaphysical may be found in his curious poems *The Progress of the Soul* and *Metempsychosis*, in which he pursues the vital spark through various transmigrations, including those of a bird and a fish. As an illustration of his satires may be instanced his fourth satire detailing the character of a Boro. These were framed in rhyming couplets on the Latin model, and influenced both Dryden and Pope.

His faults as a writer are the defects of his virtues, and characteristic of the time; the graceful and subtle fancies are worked occasionally to death, and like Browning he has no respect for the reader who cannot follow his keen and incisive thought; while his poetry is the more difficult to construe because of its careless versification and excessive terseness.

It will be seen by the foregoing that Donne, unlike most of his contemporaries, excelled in reflective imagination. The Elizabethan imagination was on the whole a richly observant one; there were scores of writers overflowing with a wealth of perceptive life; but, save in Shakespeare, there is singularly little metaphysical power in the men of the age.

With Donne it may be said Elizabethan poetry closes, and the Caroline poetry begins. With certain marked characteristics in common, the poetry of the late Renascence differs from that preceding it by its more philosophic tone. To say that it is more serious would be inaccurate. There is a great sobriety about the bigger minds such as Donne (save in his early years) and Milton; but the prevalent note is less that of sobriety than of meditation, varying from the quietly pensive to the inquisitively fantastic. The note of meditation marks even the song writers of the time. The influence of Shakespeare and of Spenser is clear enough in certain directions, but it is less powerful than that of Jonson and Donne.

The Message

Send home my long-strayed Eyes to me!
Which, O, too long have dwelt on thee.
Yet since there they have learnt such ill,
Such forced fashions
And false Passions,
That they be
Made by thee
Fit for no good sight: keep them still?

Send home my harmless Heart again!
Which no unworthy thought could stain.
But if it be taught by thine
To make jestings
Of protestings,
And break both
Word and oath;
Keep it! For then, 'tis none of mine!

Yet send me back my Heart and Eyes!
That I may know and see thy lies;
And may laugh and joy, when thou
Art in anguish;
And doth languish
For some one,
That will none!
Or prove as false as thou art now!

The Funeral

Whoever comes to shroud me; do not harm,
Nor question much,
That subtle wreath of hair which crowns my arm!
The mystery, the sign, you must not touch!
For 'tis my outward Soul!
Viceroy to that which, unto Heaven being gone,
Will leave this to control
And keep these limbs, her provinces, from dissolution.

For if the sinewy thread, my brain lets fall
Through every part,
Can tie those parts, and make me one of all;
The hairs, which upward grew, and strength and Art
Have from a better brain,
Can better do't! except She meant that I
By this, should know my pain;
As prisoners then are manacled, when they're
Condemned to die.

Whate'er She meant by't; bury it with me!
For since I am
Love's Martyr, it might breed idolatry,
If into other hands these relics came!
As 'twas humility
To afford to it, all that a soul can do;
So 'tis some bravery,
That, since you would have none of me, I bury some of you!

She, whose fair body no such prison was
But that a soul might well be pleased to pass
An age in her; she, whose rich beauty lent
Mintage to other beauties, for they went
But for so much as they were like to her;
She, in whose body (if we dare prefer
This low world to so high a mark as she),
The western treasure, eastern spicery,
Europe and Afric, and the unknown rest
Were easily found, or what in them was best;
And when we've made this large discovery
Of all, in her some one part then will be,
Twenty such parts, whose plenty and riches is
Enough to make twenty such worlds as this;
She, whom had they known, who did first betroth
The tutelar angels and assigned one both
To nations, cities, and to companies,
To functions, offices, and dignities
And to each several man, to him and him,
They would have giv'n her one for every limb;
She, of whose soul if we may say 'twas gold,
Her body was th' electrum and did hold
Many degrees of that; we understood
Her by her sight; her pure and eloquent blood
Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought
That one might almost say, her body thought;
She, she thus richly and largely hous'd is gone
And chides us, slow-paced snails who crawl upon
Our prison's prison earth, nor think us well
Longer than whilst we bear our brittle shell.

Dear love, for nothing less than thee
Would I have broke this happy dream.
It was a theme
For reason, much too strong for fantasy:
Therefore thou wak'dst me wisely; yet
My dream thou brok'st not, but continued'st it:
Thou art so true, that thoughts of thee suffice
To make dreams true, and fables histories;
Enter these arms, for since thou thought'st it best
Not to dream all my dream, let's act the rest.

As lightning or a taper's light
Thine eyes, and not thy noise, wak'd me;
Yet I thought thee
(For thou lov'st truth) an angel at first sight,
But when I saw thou saw'st my heart
And knew'st my thoughts beyond an angel's art,
When thou knew'st what I dreamt, then thou knew'st when
Excess of joy would wake me, and cam'st then;
I must confess, it would not choose but be
Profane to think thee anything but thee.

Coming and staying show'd thee thee,
But rising makes me doubt that now
Thou art not thou.
That love is weak where fears are strong as he;
'Tis not all spirit, pure and brave,
If mixture it of fear, shame, honour, have.
Perchance as torches which must ready be
Men light, and put out, so thou deal'st with me.
Thou cam'st to kindle, goest to come; then I
Will dream that hope again, or else would die.

Of his more remarkable followers may be mentioned, Robert Herrick, Thomas Carew, Crashaw, Henry Vaughan, George Herbert, and Lord Herbert of Cherbury.

Robert Herrick (1591–1674) also supported the Royalist cause. After serving an apprenticeship as a goldsmith he went to Cambridge, took Orders, and in 1629 became Rector of Dean Prior in Devonshire. This living being in the gift of the King, Herrick was ejected in 1647, and after living a more or less free life supported by the charity of wealthy Royalists, was reinstated at Dean Prior in 1662. His principal poems are collected in the volumes *Hesperides* and *Wit's Recreation*.

His work, like that of Donne, falls into three divisions: the amatory, the religious verse, and a number of epigrams. The epigrams are negligible; Herrick was no wit, and his inventive fancy found no suitable medium in this form of literature. The religious poems show a lively if not deep piety, more remarkable perhaps for awe and fear in presence of the inscrutable than for trust and hope.

The happiest expression of Herrick's powers may be found in the love poems, abounding in quaint and charming fancies, set in a lively west-country atmosphere. He is certainly more at home in celebrating the great God Pan, than any other Deity.

Many of the numbers in the *Hesperides* have found their way, and deservedly, into the best anthologies of our verse, such as the well-known lines *To Anthea*, and the delightful *Corinna Maying*. He has much in common with the Elizabethan song-writers, but there is about even his exquisite trifling, a touch of pensive fantasy, and in his religious verse a meditative flavour, that makes for his inclusion in the school of Donne.

To Daffodils

Fair Daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon:
As yet the early-rising Sun
Has not attain'd his noon
Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the even-song;
And, having pray'd together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a Spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay
As you, or anything.
We die,
As your hours do, and dry
Away
Like to the Summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

More strongly influenced by Donne, however, was Herrick's contemporary Thomas Carew. He also belonged to the West of England.

Born at West Wickham about 1594, Thomas was the son of Sir Matthew Carew, of Cornish blood. After a tour in Italy with his kinsman Sir Dudley Carleton, he accompanied Lord Herbert of Cherbury to France in 1619, and on his return received an appointment in the Royal Household, where he lived the careless life of the courtiers at that time, and died in 1639.

As a lyric writer he is among the finest of his age, and if lacking the spontaneity and freshness of Herrick, is his superior in fine workmanship. His amatory verse is less fanciful and more fiercely sensual than the languorous eroticism of Herrick, and his best work is less considerable in bulk. His indebtedness to Donne lies in the flexibility of his style and in a certain strength, but he was a wise disciple who eschewed his master's infirmities, and he is never obscure nor uncouth.

A good idea of his metrical ability may be gained from the study of his *Persuasions to Love*, a clever piece of rhythmic cadence, artfully devised, and happily successful. He is far from being the mere "elegant Court trifler" that the brilliant and capricious Hazlitt dubs him.

Mediocrity in Love rejected

Give me more love, or more disdain!
The Torrid, or the Frozen, Zone
Bring equal ease unto my pain;
The Temperate affords me none!
Either extreme of love, or hate,
Is sweeter than a calm estate!

Give me a storm! If it be love;
Like Danaë, in that golden shower,
I'll swim in pleasure! If it prove
Disdain; that torrent will devour
My vulture hopes! and he's possessed
Of Heaven, that's but from Hell released!
Then crown my joys; or cure my pain!
Give me more love, or more disdain!

Coming to Crashaw, we approach a writer of quite another temperament from those preceding. Herrick had religious sensibilities, without being really religious. Carew was an accomplished courtier with a fine taste for the more serious problems of life; but to Crashaw religion meant everything. He has less intellectual breadth than Carew, less imaginative by-play than Herrick, but his work, though extremely uneven, rises at times to heights of rare excellence.

Richard Crashaw (1613–1649), an eloquent Puritan divine, was educated at Charterhouse and Cambridge, but for refusing to sign the Solemn League and Covenant was expelled from his Fellowship, went to Paris and joined the Roman Catholic Church. He fell into great poverty, but through

the influence of the Queen, Henrietta Maria, received the appointment of Secretary to Cardinal Palotta. He died a sub-canon of the Roman Church in 1649.

His secular poems were called *Delights of the Muse*; his sacred, *Steps to the Temple*, though the latter title was apparently the choice of his editors.

He is at his best in religious verse; his best work lies undoubtedly in *The Flaming Heart*, though some of his lighter things have a pleasant grace about them, notably, *Wishes, to his Unknown Mistress*.

WISHES FOR THE SUPPOSED MISTRESS

Whoe'er she be,
That not impossible She
That shall command my heart and me;

Where'er she lie,
Lock'd up from mortal eye
In shady leaves of destiny:

Till that ripe birth
Of studied Fate stand forth,
And teach her fair steps to our earth;

Till that divine
Idea take a shrine
Of crystal flesh, through which to shine:

—Meet you her, my Wishes,
Bespeak her to my blisses,
And be ye call'd, my absent kisses.

I wish her beauty
That owes not all its duty
To gaudy tire, or glist'ring shoe-tie.

Something more than
Taffata or tissue can,
Or rampant feather, or rich fan.

A face that's best
By its own beauty drest,
And can alone command the rest:

A face made up
Out of no other shop
Than what Nature's white hand sets ope.

Sydnian showers
Of sweet discourse, whose powers
Can crown old Winter's head with flowers.

Whate'er delight
Can make day's forehead bright
Or give down to the wings of night.

Soft silken hours,
Open suns, shady bowers;
'Bove all, nothing within that lowers.

Days, that need borrow
No part of their good morrow
From a fore-spent night of sorrow:

Days, that in spite
Of darkness, by the light
Of a clear mind are day all night.

Life, that dares send
A challenge to his end,
And when it comes, say, "Welcome, friend."

I wish her store
Of worth may leave her poor
Of wishes; and I wish—no more.

—Now, if Time knows
That Her, whose radiant brows
Weave them a garland of my vows;

Her that dares be
What these lines wish to see:
I seek no further, it is She.

'Tis She, and here
Lo! I unclothe and clear
My wishes' cloudy character.

Such worth as this is
Shall fix my flying wishes,
And determine them to kisses.

Let her full glory,
My fancies, fly before ye;
Be ye my fictions:—but her story.

HENRY VAUGHAN, a Welshman, who styled himself "Silurist," was born in 1622, educated at Oxford, studied law, and finally became a physician, practising in his native Wales. A staunch Royalist, he, with his twin brother Thomas, suffered imprisonment. A serious illness in 1651 led to deep religious fervour, which thereafter appeared in his poems. His first work, *Poems, with the Tenth Satire of Juvenal Englished*, appeared in 1646, and a collection of poems and translations published anonymously in 1651. *Silex Scintillans* (Sparks from the Flint) is his best known work and contains *The Retreat*, and *Beyond the Veil*. He died in 1695.

Vaughan, like Crashaw, was at heart a mystic, but more at home in sacred than in secular verse. His work never rises to the heights reached by Crashaw, but he had a considerable gift of fantasy and used it to decorate his serious muse, rather than to weave garlands for his pagan love. He was a man of good intellectual power, and some originality. As compared with Crashaw, he is like a gentle stream beside an impetuous waterfall. Lacking the force and vigour of his contemporary, he has a more uniform clarity and the waters are less remarkable to contemplate, but they are never muddy as is the fiercer torrent, while their tranquil windings bear with them a crystalline charm of their own.

THE RETREAT

Happy those early days, when I
Shined in my Angel-infancy!
Before I understood this place
Appointed for my second race,
Or taught my soul to fancy aught
But a white, celestial thought;
When yet I had not walk'd above
A mile or two from my first love,

And looking back, at that short space
Could see a glimpse of his bright face;
When on some gilded cloud or flower
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity;
Before I taught my tongue to wound
My conscience with a sinful sound,
Or had the black art to dispense,
A several sin to every sense,
But felt through all this fleshly dress
Bright shoots of everlastingness.

O how I long to travel back,
And tread again that ancient track!
That I might once more reach that plain,
Where first I left my glorious train;
From whence th' enlighten'd spirit sees
That shady City of Palm trees!
But ah! my soul with too much stay
Is drunk, and staggers in the way:—
Some men a forward motion love,
But I by backward steps would move:
And when this dust falls to the urn,
In that state I came, return.

"The model of a man, a gentleman, and a clergyman." Such was the encomium passed by Coleridge on GEORGE HERBERT, brother of Lord Herbert of Cherbury. Educated at Westminster School and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was public orator 1619–27. A Court favourite during the reign of James I, he eventually became acquainted with Nicholas Ferrar of Little Gidding, took Orders in 1626, was prebend of Leighton Bromswold, and in 1630 Rector of Bemerton, near Salisbury, where he died at the early age of forty. Before his death he sent all his manuscripts to Nicholas Ferrar to publish or destroy as he thought fit.

Herbert's chief claim upon us lies in his volume *The Temple*, which has always held the popular imagination. Of all the school of Donne he is the most widely read, by reason of his clearness of presentment and his happy knack for using conceits sufficiently obvious to most people. His treatment of religious themes has the simple, unstudied earnestness of Longfellow; for devout as he is, it is the devotion rather of the gentle moralist than of the genuine mystic. Along with this delicate didactic vein, he shows a quaintness and daintiness characteristic of the time. The discerning reader will note also a welcome salt of humour in his work that preserved him from the extravagance into which so many of his contemporaries fell. His earlier work was bright and witty. Later on, his art served as handmaid to his piety. His brother, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, is inferior in sweetness and power, as a verse writer, and is best remembered as the author of an autobiography, and as a poet who first used the metre, long after made famous by Tennyson in *In Memoriam*.

THE WORLD

Love built a stately House: where Fortune came,
And spinning fancies, she was heard to say,
"That her fine cobwebs did support the frame!"
Whereas they were supported by the same.
But Wisdom quickly swept them all away.

Then Pleasure came: who (liking not the fashion)
Began to make balconies, terraces,
Till she had weakened all by alteration;
But rev'rend Laws, and many a Proclamation,
Reformed all, at length, with menaces.

Then entered Sin: and with that sycamore
(Whose leaves first sheltered Man from drought and dew),
Working, and winding slily, evermore,
The inward walls and summers cleft and tore:
But grace shored these and cut that, as it grew.

Then Sin combined with Death in a firm hand,
To raze the building to the very floor;
Which they effected. None could them withstand!
But Love and Grace took Glory by the hand,
And built a braver Palace than before.

HENRY KING, born 1592, a son of the Bishop of London, was also a Westminster boy. Taking his degree at Oxford, he was ordained in 1616, and received rapid preferment: was Dean of Rochester in 1639, and Bishop of Chichester in 1642. He wrote many elegies in Latin and English on Royal persons, and was the friend of Ben Jonson, Donne, and Izaak Walton. He died in 1669.

As a poet he has no slight share of Donne's subtlety, though little of his strength. He wrote several exquisite love-songs, among them *Tell me no more how Fair She is*; was very popular in his day, and certainly deserved and has achieved what many popular stars did not, anthological fame.

Some Reflections on the School of Donne.—It may be gathered from these brief comments on a small but interesting group of writers, that they stand somewhat apart from the crowd of song writers that follow hard upon Elizabethan times, extending into the light-hearted transports of the Restoration writers. The spiritual fervour that gave its impelling power to Puritanism, and vitality to the Catholic reaction, is traceable in nearly all its adherents, though necessarily in varying intensity. The frank eroticism of the Elizabethan, however, in many cases still persists, but coexists with supersensual rapture. The love of a man for a maid, that fans the fire of most lyricism, is blended here with an acute perception of the mutability of life and the transient character of pleasure. Some, like Herrick and Carew, are stirred by these premonitions to dwell with even greater intensity on the physical joys and raptures of existence. Let us make the best of them while they are here, is their burden, *Gather ye Rosebuds while ye may*; others, like Crashaw and Herbert, seek more permanent comfort in the delights of spiritual experience. We have now to consider a contemporary group, differing remarkably in temperament and spirit from these, though akin to them in lyric grace.

(ii) OTHER JACOBEAN AND CAROLINE LYRISTS

Despite the glowing eulogy of Charles Lamb, it is hard to believe that George Wither will be remembered save for a few short pieces of verse. He was a writer of great fertility and variety, but unlike Drayton, did not excel in many directions. His satires are laboured, his religious musings dull and flat, and it is chiefly when he writes love songs that the lamp of his muse burns brightly and steadily. Chiefly, I say, because here and there he shows a gift of description—as in *Philarete*—and Spenserian sweetness.

Born in 1588, near Alton, Hampshire, GEORGE WITHER was a student of law. In 1613 he was imprisoned for his satire *Abuses Stript and Whipt*, during which time he wrote a large number of poems, which he collected and published in 1622 as *Juvenilia*. In 1639 he took arms against the Scots, but during the Civil War turned his coat and raised a troop of horse for the Parliamentarians and was taken prisoner by the Royalists. He died in 1667, the last years of his life being full of trouble.

As a writer of amatory lyrics, he has little of that fantastic vein and sudden moods of pensive reflection peculiar to the little band recently considered. He is frank and fervent, and surprisingly respectable for his age, in his amatory enthusiasms, while his famous song *Shall I, wasting in Despair*, is an excellent example of his lyrical power.

THE MANLY HEART

Shall I, wasting in despair,
Die because a woman's fair?
Or my cheeks make pale with care
'Cause another's rosy are?

Be she fairer than the day
Or the flowery meads in May—
If she be not so to me,
What care I how fair she be?

Shall my foolish heart be pined
'Cause I see a woman kind;
Or a well disposèd nature
Joinèd with a lovely feature?
Be she meeker, kinder, than
Turtle-dove or Pelican,
If she be not so to me,
What care I how kind she be?

Shall a woman's virtues move
Me to perish for her love?
Or her merit's value known
Make me quite forget mine own?
Be she with that goodness blest
Which may gain her name of Best;
If she seem not such to me,
What care I how good she be?

'Cause her fortune seems too high,
Shall I play the fool and die?
Those that bear a noble mind
Where they want of riches find,
Think what with them they would do
Who without them dare to woo;
And unless that mind I see,
What care I though great she be?

Great or good, or kind or fair,
I will ne'er the more despair;
If she love me, this believe,
I will die ere she shall grieve;
If she slight me when I woo,
I can scorn and let her go;
For if she be not for me,
What care I for whom she be?

Edmund Waller led a most adventurous life; born 1606 at Coleshill, Bucks, he was admitted at Lincoln's Inn in 1622, and in 1647 was one of the commission who sat at Oxford to meet the King, and nearly lost his life for complicity in a plot to hold London for King Charles. Exiled in 1644, and fined £10,000, the sentence of banishment was revoked in 1651, and four years later he received a political appointment.

A contemporary says "he was the delight of the house; and even at eighty he said the liveliest things of any amongst them." He died in 1687.

His reputation, as in so many cases, rests upon his songs; though he showed skill in the couplet afterwards used with such power by Dryden. He is graceful and accomplished always, on occasion fervent; and once at any rate, in his later years, highly imaginative, as in this fine image:

"The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
Lets in new light thro' chinks that time hath made."

Among his lyric verses, such pretty pieces as *Go, Lovely Rose*, and *On a Girdle* may be instanced. Opportunistic as a man, his opportunism is equally clear in the readiness with which he adopts every new literary fashion. Sincerity and single-heartedness are jewels he has no wish to wear. One recalls his reply to Charles II, who considered his loyal compliments less remarkable than those he had so readily bestowed on Cromwell: "Poets, sir," replied Waller, with greater wit than integrity, "succeed better in fiction than in truth."

On a Girdle

That which her slender waist confined
Shall now my joyful temples bind;
No monarch but would give his crown
His arms might do what this has done.

It was my Heaven's extremest sphere,
The pale which held that lovely deer;
My joy, my grief, my hope, my love
Did all within this circle move.

A narrow compass! and yet there
Dwelt all that's good, and all that's fair;
Give me but what this ribband bound,
Take all the rest the Sun goes round.

Go, Lovely Rose!

Go, lovely Rose!
Tell her, that wastes her time and me,
That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that's young
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That hadst thou sprung
In deserts, where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired:
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired.

Then die! that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee:
How small a part of time they share
That are so wondrous sweet and fair!

Abraham Cowley is more interesting *qua* pioneer than *qua* poet. He stands midway between the metaphysical verse writers and the common-sense school of Dryden. His prose, more remarkable on the whole than his verse, will be considered elsewhere.

The son of a London tradesman, Cowley was born in 1618, educated at Westminster School and Cambridge, and during the Civil War was expelled for his championship of the Royal cause. Fearing to remain in London, he crossed over to Paris in 1646, and gave all the assistance he could to the Queen in exile, by acting as the medium of correspondence between her and the King. Returning to England in 1656, he brought out a collected edition of his poems, was arrested as a spy and placed under bail. At the Restoration, not receiving the Mastership of the Savoy as he had hoped, and receiving a grant of land from the Crown, he retired to Chertsey, where he died of a fever in 1667, and is buried near Spenser in Westminster Abbey.

His couplet pieces are ingenious and clever, foreshadowing the eighteenth-century methods, but are not inspiring reading. His lyrics are often sweet and graceful, but here, as in most of his work, a curious irresolution of attitude chills the reader. He is neither wholly with the song writers, nor with the clear and vigorous satirists of the new age. But as the harbinger of Dryden and Pope, his work has an historical importance that must not be overlooked.

A Supplication

Awake, awake, my Lyre!
And tell thy silent master's humble tale
In sounds that may prevail;
Sounds that gentle thoughts inspire:
Though so exalted she
And I so lowly be
Tell her, such different notes make all thy harmony.

Hark! how the strings awake:
And, though the moving hand approach not near
Themselves with awful fear
A kind of numerous trembling make.
Now all thy forces try;
Now all thy charms apply:
Revenge upon her ear the conquest of her eye

Weak Lyre! thy virtue sure
Is useless here, since thou art only found
To cure, but not to wound,
And she to wound, but not to cure.
Too weak too wilt thou prove
My passion to remove;
Physic to other ills, thou'rt nourishment to love.

Sleep, sleep again, my Lyre!
For thou can'st never tell my humble tale
In sounds that will prevail,
Nor gentle thoughts in her inspire:
All thy vain mirth lay by,
Bid thy strings silent lie,
Sleep, sleep again, my Lyre, and let thy master die.

Lovelace and Suckling are inseparably connected in popular imagination, by reason of their common misfortunes as men, and of their equal charm as Caroline lyrists.

John Suckling (1609–1642) was educated at Cambridge. On inheriting a large fortune from his father in 1629, he travelled abroad. Witty and generous, he was a great favourite at the Court of Charles the First, but plotting to rescue Strafford from the Tower obliged him to seek safety out of England, and he died in Paris, it is thought by his own hand.

Suckling has a pretty wit, and there are few situations in life in which he cannot find food for laughter. Nor is the laughter coarse and cynical as with many of his successors; it is a pleasant, mercurial quality, that disarms the most captious.

Take such an agreeable illustration as

"Out upon it! I have loved."

Or the more widely known

"Why so pale and wan, fond lover?"

"Out upon it! I have loved
Three whole days together!
And am like to love three more,
If it prove fair weather.

Time shall moult away his wings,
Ere it shall discover
In the whole wide world again
Such a constant lover!

But the spite on't is, No praise
Is due at all to me!
Love with me had made no stays,
Had it any been but She!

Had it any been but She,
And that very face:
There had been, at least, ere this,
A dozen in her place!"

Encouragement to a Lover

Why so pale and wan, fond lover?
Prithee, why so pale?
Will, if looking well can't move her,
Looking ill prevail?
Prithee, why so pale?

Why so dull and mute, young sinner?
Prithee, why so mute?
Will, when speaking well can't win her,
Saying nothing do't?
Prithee, why so mute?

Quit, quit, for shame! this will not move,
This cannot take her;
If of herself she will not love,
Nothing can make her;
The D——l take her!

Richard Lovelace, "the most amiable and beautiful person that ever was beheld," was born in 1618, and educated at Oxford. In his enthusiasm for the Royalist cause he impoverished himself and twice suffered imprisonment, during which he wrote *Lucasta* and some of his most famous lyrics, and at the age of forty died in poverty.

Lovelace strikes a more serious note, as witness the poignant lyrics especially associated with him: *To Althea from Prison*, and *On Going to the Wars*. His work is less sustained in merit than that of Suckling, but if only for the verses above quoted, he would deserve immortality.

To Althea from Prison

When Love with unconfinèd wings
Hovers within my gates,
And my divine Althea brings
To whisper at the grates;
When I lie tangled in her hair
And fetter'd to her eye,
The birds that wanton in the air
Know no such liberty.

When flowing cups run swiftly round
With no allaying Thames,
Our careless heads with roses crown'd,
Our hearts with loyal flames;
When thirsty grief in wine we steep,
When healths and draughts go free—
Fishes that tipple in the deep
Know no such liberty.

When, linnet-like, confinèd, I
With shriller throat shall sing
The sweetness, mercy, majesty
And glories of my king;
When I shall voice aloud how good
He is, how great should be,
Enlargèd winds, that curl the flood,
Know no such liberty.

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage;
If I have freedom in my love
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty.

To Lucasta

If to be absent were to be
Away from thee;
Or that when I am gone
You or I were alone;
Then, my Lucasta, might I crave
Pity from blustering wind, or swallowing wave.

Though seas and land betwixt us both,
Our faith and troth,

Like separated souls,
All time and space controls:
Above the highest sphere we meet
Unseen, unknown, and greet as Angels greet.

So then we do anticipate
Our after-fate,
And are alive i' the skies,
If thus our lips and eyes
Can speak like spirits unconfined
In Heaven, their earthly bodies left behind.

Another lyric writer of fine power is ANDREW MARVELL, son of a Yorkshire clergyman. Born in 1621, educated at Cambridge, he became tutor to the daughter of Lord Fairfax, and afterwards acted in the same capacity to the nephew of Cromwell. Notwithstanding a strong republican tendency he was a great favourite of Charles II, who offered him an appointment at Court which was refused. In 1657 he became Latin secretary to Milton, and Member of Parliament for Hull three years later, retaining his seat until his death in 1678. The town of Hull wished to perpetuate his memory by the erection of a monument which, however, was forbidden by the Court. After the Restoration he wrote a contemptuous work on the *Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government in England* (1677). A collection of his poems appeared in 1680–1, and a second collection on *Affairs of State* in 1689.

Puritanism is at once the source of his best and worst inspiration. It gives power and sustenance to his early work, and generated into scurrilous violence in his latest. In technique he was admirable, and while displaying no small measure of the charm and grace of the Cavalier lyrists, he unites with them a sobriety and restraint that are rarely found outside of Milton. Perhaps his finest poem is the noble *Horatian Ode to Cromwell*; while such verses as *The Nymph, regretting the loss of her Faun*, show him no less favourably in a lighter mood.

THOUGHTS IN A GARDEN

How vainly men themselves amaze
To win the palm, the oak, or bays,
And their incessant labours see
Crown'd from some single herb or tree,
Whose short and narrow-verged shade
Does prudently their toils upbraid;
While all the flowers and trees do close
To weave the garlands of Repose.

Fair Quiet, have I found thee here,
And Innocence thy sister dear?
Mistaken long, I sought you then
In busy companies of men:
Your sacred plants, if here below,
Only among the plants will grow:
Society is all but rude
To this delicious solitude.

No white nor red was ever seen
So amorous as this lovely green.
Fond lovers, cruel as their flame,
Cut in these trees their mistress' name:
Little, alas, they know or heed
How far those beauties her exceed!
Fair trees! where'er your barks I wound,
No name shall but your own be found.

When we have run our passion's heat
Love hither makes his best retreat:
The gods, who mortal beauty chase
Still in a tree did end their race:
Apollo hunted Daphne so
Only that she might laurel grow:
And Pan did after Syrinx speed
Not as a nymph, but for a reed.

What wondrous life is this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head;
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine;
The nectarine and curious peach
Into my hands themselves do reach;
Stumbling on melons, as I pass,
Ensnared with flowers, I fall on grass.

Meanwhile the mind from pleasure less
Withdraws into its happiness;
The mind, that ocean where each kind
Does straight its own resemblance find:
Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other worlds, and other seas;
Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade.

Here at the fountain's sliding foot
Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest aside
My soul into the boughs does glide;
There, like a bird, it sits and sings,
Then whets and claps its silver wings,
And, till prepared for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light.

Such was that happy Garden-state
While man there walk'd without a mate:
After a place so pure and sweet,
What other help could yet be meet!
But 'twas beyond a mortal's share
To wander solitary there:
Two paradises are in one,
To live in Paradise alone.

How well the skilful gardener drew
Of flowers and herbs this dial new!
Where, from above, the milder sun
Does through a fragrant zodiac run:
And, as it works, th' industrious bee
Computes its time as well as we.
How could such sweet and wholesome hours
Be reckon'd, but with herbs and flowers!

FRANCIS QUARLES was certainly one of the most prolific versifiers of the time. A Kentish man, born in 1592, he studied at Cambridge and later at Lincoln's Inn. He was appointed cup-bearer to Elizabeth of Bohemia in 1613, and on returning to England became secretary to Archbishop Ussher of Ireland. Ten years later he is Chronologer to the City of London.

He supported the Royalists during the Civil War, and grief at the loss of his library, which contained some rare manuscripts stolen by the Parliamentarians, brought about his death in 1644.

His most popular work, *Emblems*, was published in 1635, before which he had written *A Feast for Worms*, 1620; *Hadassa*, 1621; and *Sion's Elegies*, 1625.

He had a fatal facility for verse making that has given his commentators some trouble in sifting from his work the precious ore.

THE WORLD'S EMPTINESS[1]

She's empty: hark, she sounds: there's nothing there
But noise to fill thy ear.
Thy vain enquiry can at length but find
A blast of murmuring wind.
It is a cask that seems as full as fair
But merely tunned with air.

[1] An illustration to Emblem x. Bk. ii. shows the figure of a small child striking a hollow globe, while an angel stands by watching.

Fond youth, go build thy hopes on better grounds;
The soul that vainly founds
Her joys upon this world but feeds on empty sounds.

She's empty: hark, she sounds; there's nothing in't.
The spark-ingendring flint
Shall sooner melt, and hardest rancor shall first
Dissolve and quench thy thirst
Ere this false world shall still thy stormy breast
With smooth-faced calms of rest.
Thou mayst as well expect meridian light
From shades of black-mouthed night
As in this empty world to find a full delight.

She's empty: hark, she sounds; 'tis void and vast.
What if some flattering blast
Of flatuous honour should perchance be there
And whisper in thine ear.
It is but wind, and blows but where it list,
And vanishes like a mist,
Poor honour earth can give. What generous mind
Would be so base to bind
Her heaven-bred soul a slave to serve a blast of wind?

She's empty: hark, she sounds; 'tis but a ball
For fools to play withal.
The painted film but of a stronger bubble,
That's lined with silken trouble.
It is a world whose work and recreation
Is vanity and vexation.
A hag repaired with vice-complexion, paint,
A quest-house of complaint.
It is a saint, a fiend—worse fiend when most a saint.

She's empty: hark, she sounds; 'tis vain and void.
What's here to be enjoyed
But grief and sickness, and large bills of sorrow,
Drawn now and crossed to-morrow?
Or what are men but puffs of dying breath
Revived with living death?
Fond lad! O build thy hopes on surer grounds
Than what dull flesh propounds.
Trust not this hollow world; she's empty: hark, she sounds.

William Davenant, the son of an innkeeper, succeeded Jonson as Laureate, and was a playhouse manager during early Stuart times. Falling foul of the Puritan party he was cast into prison, and was saved from peril by no less a man than Milton. This kindness he repayed later on by helping Milton at a critical period. Report associates him with the three greatest men of the age. In his youth he seems to have some connection with Shakespeare, later on he was on cordial terms with Milton, and late in life enjoyed the friendship of Dryden. Unlike most of the poets of the time, Davenant favoured descriptive romance, that however bore little resemblance to the allegorical romances of Spenser. At this period French influences were beginning to affect our literature, and the spell of Spain and the lure of Italy were on the wane. Sir William, together with William Chamberlayne, based their weighty poems *Gondibert* and *Pharonnida* on the Gallic form of romance. It was a distinct departure, much fresher and more interesting than the ordinary Spenserean imitation, more popular than the classical epic, and a change from the inexhaustible fount of lyric verse. *Gondibert* is laid in Lombardy, and deals with those indispensable ingredients of romance, fighting and love making. *Pharonnida* has for its setting the near East, and if inferior in narrative interest to *Gondibert*, is more than its equal in poetic beauty.

Daybreak

The lark now leaves his watery nest,
And, climbing, shakes his dewy wings;
He takes this window for the East,
And to implore your light, he sings.
Awake! awake! the morn will never rise
Till she can dress your beauty at her eyes.

The merchant bows unto the seaman's star;
The ploughman from the sun his season takes;
But still the lover wonders what they are
Who looks for day before his mistress wakes.
Awake! awake! break through your veils of lawn
Then draw your curtains and begin the dawn!

PART III

THE AGE OF DRYDEN AND POPE

Introductory—New Literary Ideals—Decline of Romanticism—Social Aspects of the Age—The Plague—The Fire—The Coffee-house and its Influence—Rise of Journalism.

INTRODUCTION

"You that delight in wit and mirth
And love to hear such news
As comes from all parts of the earth,
Dutch, Danes, and Turks and Jews;
I'll send ye to a rendezvous
Where it is smoking new:
Go, hear it at a Coffee House,
It cannot but be true."

THOMAS JORDAN (1675).

About the middle of the seventeenth century a change began to come over the spirit of English literature. This change is due to no mere fluctuation of literary fashion, but is deeply rooted in the life of the time. The age of the Renascence was an age of spiritual and material expansion. Englishmen realised for the first time their solidarity as a nation; and released suddenly from Continental struggles, especially from the dread of Spanish supremacy, they found an outlet for their excited emotions in drama and song. Loyalty to Elizabeth became an article of faith; pride and delight in their country's past a religious creed. This spirit is reflected in the *Faerie Queene*, and in the historical plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare.

But the emotional fervour was too high-pitched to last. Already in the early years of the seventeenth century its splendid exuberance had degenerated into extravagance and violence. The lofty idealism that had steadied the venturesome luck of Elizabethan poesy was growing attenuated, and the great minds in the closing years of the age, like Bacon and Milton, reflect in their writings the dawn of fresh interests. The purification of civic and political life emerges more and more into the forefront. Shakespeare and Ben Jonson stand aloof from the political problems of the hour. Bacon and Milton are active politicians no less than great writers; but until the Restoration the full significance of this change is not realised. It shows us first of all in the later poems of Abraham Cowley, and in the polished verse of Edmund Waller and Sir John Denham, it frankly and unmistakably proclaims itself a new note in our literature with the coming of Dryden.

Increasingly during the seventeenth century were men's thoughts directed to problems of civic and national life. The wild speculative interests and imaginative fervour of the Renascence, gave place to a practical application of these ideals to actual existence; and naturally enough literature itself became involved with the problems of practical politics. France no less than England shared in this reaction from Romanticism, this enthusiasm for affairs rather than ideas, and at this juncture political conditions connected with the Restoration brought the influence of France into special contact with English life and letters.

One may speak therefore of three features in the literature of the new age. The triumph of the classical ideal was, after all, a natural result of the Renascence. The Romantic spirit had been aroused among other things by a study of Greek and Roman classics, and while it was the *substance* that excited men at first, when the early exhilaration had worn off, the *methods* of the old writers attracted more and more attention. It was seen even in Elizabeth's day that the weaknesses of Romanticism lay in its lack of form, its variability, its proneness to extravagance and turgidity.

None saw this more clearly than Jonson, and his influence was, as we have noted, thrown entirely on the classical side.

This classicism was fostered and encouraged by the political needs of the age; but even then the change might have been more gradual, less decisive, had it not been for the fact that a brilliant set of writers had arisen in France, actuated by classical methods, who excited a profound influence upon the literature of Europe. The influence upon England was especially marked, for Court reasons. Much of Charles' exile had been spent in France; he had been attracted towards its literature, and did his best to enforce the ideals he saw there, actuating English literature. Psychologically, the new spirit involved the substitution of the critical for the imaginative spirit.

Such a change is inevitable when literature is made the vehicle of attacking the political life of the day. The creative imagination moves on the plane of primal human qualities; it is concerned with the interpretation of human nature, and although passing movements may give "a local habitation and a name" to some of its dioramic pictures, the main object is not to criticise the life of the day, but to interpret it.

The new spirit, however, is above all critical and analytic, not creative and sympathetic; it brings the intellect rather than the poetic imagination into play. And the merits of the new school are to be

found in its intellectual force and actuality; just as its demerits lie in its lack of deep imagination and tendency to deal with manners and superficialities, rather than with elemental things and the larger issues of life.

Obviously then, this change was better adapted for a kind of literature which aimed especially at clearness, conciseness, and concentrated force. The less attractive aspect of this ideal is seen in the verse of the day; the finer and more valuable aspects in its prose.

The object of the leading writers of the time was to avoid extravagance and emotionalism. This in many cases they did so successfully as to suppress altogether the emotional and basic qualities of great poetry, though their method found congenial expression in the satire.

Poetry, starved of emotional sustenance, had to fall back on epigram, but the "good sense" ideal formulated in 1673 by Boileau was an admirable one for prose that had suffered from Romantic extravagances. For if we examine the aims of the prose writers of the day, we shall find that their supreme object is to be simple in style and natural in manner.

"The Royal Society," declared the Bishop of Rochester, "have exacted from all their members a close, marked, natural way of speaking; positive expressions, clear sense, a native easiness, bringing all things as near the mathematical plainness as they can; and preferring the language of artisans, countrymen, and merchants, before that of wits and scholars."

This is unequivocal enough, and as we shall see, when we consider the prose of the age, the ideal here enunciated was triumphantly put into practice. In the drama alone, which had come to be a courtier's game, is artificiality of prose upheld. There, for the sake of amusement, lucidity and directness are made subsidiary to brilliance of wit and stylic graces.

Summing up, therefore, the aspects of the change, we may say: There was (1) the academic aspect—the substitution of Classicism for Romanticism; (2) the political aspect, due (*a*) to the general influence of France at this time, and (*b*) the particular influence through the medium of the King and his Court; (3) the psychological aspect that underlay these, signifying surely more than a change of fashion, a change of attitude. While influencing all of them was the general drift of the age, towards matters of civil and national interest.

Before noting how far this literary revolution is expressed in the literature of the time, it may be well to review the external changes that took place in the life of the new age.

The horrors of the Plague that darkened the careless gaiety of Restoration London, and the Great Fire that led to the transformation of its architecture under Wren, are reflected in the literature of the time. The Plague was no new scourge. From mediæval times it had exacted its grim toll over and anon. The Black Death of 1349, the Sweating Sickness of 1507, were not soon forgotten. Worst of all was the Plague that broke out first in Tudor times, with repeated visits during the seventeenth century.

The peculiar virulence of the visitation in 1665 has been commented upon by more than one writer. Pepys touched upon it lightly, and Thomas Vincent, in his *God's Terrible Voice in the City* (1667), pictured its horrors in impressive language:

"Most of the rich," said the Rev. Thomas Vincent, "are now gone and the middle sort will not stay behind; but the poor are forced through poverty to stay and abide the storm. The very sinking fears they have had of the Plague hath brought the plague and death upon many souls, by the sight of a coffin in the streets have fallen into a shivering, and immediately the disease has assaulted them; and the Sergeant Death hath arrested them, and clapt to the doors of their houses upon them, from whence they have come forth no more till they have been brought to their graves."

"People fall as thick as the leaves in Autumn when they are shaken by a mighty wind."

Dr. Hodges' *Loemologia* (translated in 1720) deals graphically with it, but its sinister terrors find best expression in Daniel Defoe's masterly *History of the Plague* (1722).

After the Plague—the Fire!

Perhaps the horrors of the Great Plague had numbed the public imagination. Certainly, London folk could have been forgiven for believing that they could be freed from either of their dread visitants for a while. Be that as it may, the disaster of 1666 came unheralded. There was not even a lightning flash of warning to prelude the fiery storm. Note how Pepys introduces the episode:

"*September* 2 (Lords day).—Some of our maids sitting up late last night to get things ready against our feast to-day, Jane called us up about three in the morning to tell us of a great fire they saw in the City. So I rose and slipped on my night-gown and went to the window; and thought it to be on the back-side of Marke-lane at the farthest, but being unused to such fires as followed, I thought it far enough off; and so went to bed again and to sleep."

To bed again and to sleep!

By morning, the Diarist was able to gain a clearer idea of the immensity of the fire. But still he seems to have had no idea of a visitation which was to entail the destruction of five-sixths of the City within the walls, as well as a great space beyond. His first guess as to the place of origin had been fairly accurate. The fire began at the house of the King's baker, who had a shop in Pudding Lane, close by Fish Street Hill. Wren's Monument, of course, marks the spot to-day.

The first district devastated was Lower Thames Street, where the houses happened to be chiefly composed of timber, lath, and plaster. The fire had reached this spot when the irrepressible Jane finally persuaded Pepys that it would be worth while strolling towards the City in order to see what was happening.

"So I made myself ready presently and walked to the Tower, and there got up upon one of the high places."

Once in the neighbourhood of the conflagration, even the easy-going Samuel was impressed. He took note of the men who flung their household goods into the lighters upon the river; of the poor folk who stayed by hearth and home until the very fire touched them and drove them to the boats; even of "the poor pigeons" who were "loth to leave their houses but hovered about the windows

and balconys, until they burned their wings and fell down."

If Pepys was slow to realise the disastrous nature of the fire, many other Londoners were even slower. No organised effort was made to stay the burning, everyone being fully occupied in removing their goods first to a neighbouring house and then farther on and farther on still, until in most cases the all-embracing flames had their way at last. It was not until after Pepys had taken boat for White Hall and reported to the King and the Duke of York, that the Diarist's obviously sensible suggestion—to pull down the houses before the fire—was adopted. However, probably nothing would have been of real avail. The houses were too "full of matter for burning, as pitch and tar, in Thames Street; and warehouses of oyle, and wines and brandy and other things."

By this time it was twelve o'clock and dinner time. Directly the meal was over, Pepys and his friend Moone walked into the City, to find the streets packed with horses and carts laden with goods "ready to run over one another and removing goods from one burned house to another. They now removing out of Canning Street (which received goods in the morning) into Lumbard Street and further."

From that time, the disaster increased in immensity. When Pepys, his wife and a few friends met in St. James's Park in the afternoon and went on to the river, it was easy enough to see why so little could be done to stop the progress of the fire. "All over the Thames, with one's face in the wind, you were almost burned with a shower of fire drops." By night-fall the thing had become "a most horrid, malicious, bloody flame."

"We staid till it being darkish, we saw the fire as only one entire arch of fire from this to the other side of the bridge, and in a bow up the hill for an arch of above a mile long. It made me weep to see it. The churches, houses and all on fire, and flaming at once; and a horrid noise the flames made, and the crackling of the houses at their ruine. So home with a sad heart."

"September 2.—About four o'clock in the morning my Lady Batten sent me a cart to carry away all my money and plate and best things to Sir W. Rider's at Bednallgreene."

During the whole of the 4th of September the fire raged on. "Now begins the practice of blowing up houses in Tower Street, those next the Tower, which at first did frighten people more than anything." On the 5th, the destruction had reached Barking Church, "which is the bottom of our lane." So Pepys collected his £2350 worth of gold-pieces; and carried his good dame away to Woolwich. As it turned out, the precaution was unnecessary, for at the porch of Barking Church the flames were stayed. So much for East London.

Unfortunately, the City and the district reaching towards Westminster were faring even worse. The Exchange was in ruins, Cheapside and Newgate Market all burned. Throughout the day and night of the 5th of September, the same tale of utter desolation was being told everywhere. On the 7th the progress of the fire had been stayed, and Pepys ventured to explore as far as the Strand.

"A lamentable sight of Paul's Church, with all the roofs fallen, and the body of the quire fallen into St. Fayth's. Paul's School also, Ludgate and Fleet-street. My father's house, and the church and a good part of the Temple, all in ruins."

The Great Fire of London had entailed a loss of upwards of ten millions sterling. Four City gates, eighty-nine churches, four hundred streets, and thirteen thousand two hundred houses were destroyed. There was nothing for it but to rebuild the town upon the hot ashes.

The opportunity made the man—CHRISTOPHER WREN.

The task which Wren set himself was to endow the Gothic pile with the vesture of its old-time sanctity. He had earlier made recommendations about the reconstruction of St Paul's, but before anything was done the Great Plague had overtaken London. Wren chose to leave England and live in Paris, until the earlier conditions in his own country were restored. He was still known as "The Astronomy Professor," but during the visits to the French capital the essential features of Wren's architectural style were developed.

A letter from Christopher Wren to his friend Dr. Bateman, proves clearly what a great part the Palace of the Louvre must have played in this respect.

"I have busied myself," he writes, "in surveying the most esteemed Fabricks of Paris and the Country round; the Louvre for a while was my daily object, where no less than a thousand Hands are constantly employed in the Works, some in laying mighty Foundations, some in raising the Stories, Columns, Entablements, &c., with vast Stones by great and useful Engines; others in Carving, Inlaying of Marbles, Plaistering, Painting, Gilding, &c., which altogether make a School of Architecture the best, probably of this day in Europe."

It was with the memory of Perrault's great building ever before him that Wren came to the task of rebuilding the Cathedral Church of St. Paul after the Great Fire.

It is, however, typical of the philosophic breadth of vision of Wren that he was by no means content to merely suggest the building of a new St. Paul's. Both Evelyn and Wren set to work upon plans for the rebuilding of a new London directly the extent of the damage was realised. Evelyn mentions that Wren was the quicker in placing a scheme before Charles II.

Unfortunately, Wren's scheme for the rebuilding of London upon a definite plan fared less well than his refashioned cathedral. Lack of sufficient funds, the innate conservatism of the citizens of London, and the anxiety to "get something done," proved obstacles which even Wren's level-headed enthusiasm could not overcome. Nevertheless, by means of his wonderful series of City churches, the architect of St. Paul's left almost as definite an impression upon London as if he had, in truth, designed the whole.

Imagine London without the steeples of St. Bride's, Fleet Street; of St. Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside; and the spire of St. Margaret Pattens—to mention only three of the fifty churches which Wren rebuilt after the Fire. Seventeen have since been taken down, but the rest form us enduring a

monument to the memory of Christopher Wren as St. Paul's itself.

Wren died on February 25, 1723. It had been his custom to drive to the Cathedral once a year, and sit for a while within the great pile. After one of these visits he returned to his home at Hampton Court. A short while after he was found by his servant dead in his chair. He had passed away in his sleep. The body was laid in the crypt of St. Paul's.

"Si monumentum requiris, circumspice."

The characteristics of an age are more faithfully reflected in its imaginative literature than in its formal histories and chronicles. Pope reflects the hard brilliance, the somewhat facile optimism of his generation in much the same way as Tennyson mirrors in his work the religious perplexities and social ideals of the Victorian England; and Addison is the Thackeray of his age, in his pictures of the tastes, the fashions, and the follies of the "Town."

We are approaching now the existence in London of a definite literary class. The poet, the dramatist of the ages preceding, depended for his livelihood upon a patron.

Patronage still exists, and Pope made his fortune by what has been called "a kind of joint-stock patronage," where the aristocratic patron found it convenient to induce his friend to subscribe towards the maintenance of the poet. But the older system was dying out.

At first the poet or the pamphleteer attaches himself to some influential Minister, using his pen on behalf of this gentleman's cause. Afterwards, when the Minister found he could get his work done more cheaply than by hiring men of taste, the literary man was thrown upon the suffrages of a public then rising into existence.

The coffee-house, and later the clubs, were centres around which radiated the thoughtful and intelligent. What Addison did to systematise the fluctuating sentiments and opinions of these will be seen hereafter. It is sufficient to note here that politicians, lawyers, clergymen, literary men, met at these places and discussed the problems of the hour. Thus the author and his public were forced into intimate proximity. If you admired a man's writings, you hastened to his coffee-house, where you might hear him holding forth to his own special friends. Perhaps you brought with you a companion. And thus the circle of discipleship grew.

What of the coffee-house, which plays so important a share in the life of the day?

It arose in this fashion.

The coffee-house was the lineal descendant of the barbers' shops (monastic or lay), the university dining and debating halls, and the taverns of the Middle Ages. Here had been the home of the idea; the "baiting-place of wit," the forge where the rough thought was welded into policy. Here the political philosopher could hob-nob with the demagogue—as in the days when Jack Cade and his rebel crew took possession of the "Whyt Harte, in Whyt Harte-yard," Southwark, on July 1, 1450. The inn boasted the largest sign-board in London except the "Castle," in Fleet Street, so Cade's followers found their leader readily enough. The natural disinclination on the part of the citizen of the town to welcome the firebrand explains Cade's speech to his rebel friends:

"Will you needs be hanged with your pardons about your necks? Hath my sword therefore broke through London Gates, that you should leave me at the 'Whyt Harte' in Southwark?"

It will be remembered that two days of experience of Jack Cade and his ways were sufficient to prove to the citizens of London that they would have been wiser to have left the rebel on the south side of London Bridge.

Nor was this all. In earlier times, not a few notable taverns had been well-known marrying houses. The "Cock" and the "Hand and Pen," near old Fleet Bridge, were two inns provided with chapels and chaplains ready to solemnise a marriage at any time of the day or night.

Coffee was introduced into London in 1657 by a Turkish merchant who set up his coffee-house in Lombard Street, with a portrait of himself as a sign over the door. "That excellent, and by all physicians approved, China drink . . . Tea" was to be had, as well as "Cophee," but the former was a very expensive luxury as yet, and was regarded, much as tobacco was on its introduction, as a medicine. Tea, or Tee, was pronounced as *Tay*. Pope refers to:

". . . Gentle Anna, whom three realms obey,
Does sometimes counsel take, and sometimes Tea."

Coffee-houses now multiplied rapidly, and soon each house had its distinctive clientèle—lawyers favouring one, politicians another, and so forth. The famous "Wills'" in Covent Garden (the west corner of Bow Street) was patronised by Pepys and Dryden. This place was termed the "Wits' Coffee-house." It was a home for scandal and lampoons. Dryden was an agreeable, good-natured, somewhat self-opinionated man. He enjoyed a great reputation as a conversationalist, in much the same way as did Addison who succeeded him.

The host of the coffee-house hears all the town gossip, and to him naturally the visitor turns upon his entrance: "What news have you, master?"

Here is a contemporary picture of West End life (1722):

"We rise at nine, and those that frequent great men's levées found entertainment at them till eleven; or, as in Holland, go to tea tables. About twelve the *beau monde* assembles in several coffee- or chocolate-houses, the best of which are the 'Cocoa Tree' and 'White's' Chocolate-House, 'St. James',' 'The Smyrna,' . . . Coffee-houses, and all these so near to one another that in less than an hour you see the company of them all. We are carried to these places in chairs, which are here very cheap, a guinea a week, or one shilling per hour, and your chairmen serves you as porter to run on errands. . . . If it is fine weather we take a turn in the park till two, when we go to dinner. . . . The general way here is to make a party at the Coffee-house to go to dine at the Tavern, where we sit till six, when we go to the play, unless you are invited to the table of some great man."

Swift also came to "Buttons'," and one evening, Addison and his friends being present, "the mad Doctor," as he was called, accosted a countryman who had just come in.

"'Excuse me, sir, have you ever seen such good weather in this world?'

"'Yes, sir,' was the wondering reply. 'Thank God, I have seen many good days.'

"'That is more than I can say,' retorted Swift, 'I cannot remember any weather which was neither too hot, too wet, nor too dry; but God Almighty manages to arrange it so that it all comes to the same thing at the end of the year.'"

Politicians met here, but they had little circles or clubs of their own, and these met often in taverns. The Tory "October Club" met in a tavern at Westminster; the Whig "Kitcat Club" in a Strand tavern.[1]

Theologians and scientists did not disdain the coffee-house. Sir Isaac Newton repaired of an evening to the "Grecian"; and Laurence Sterne preached lay sermons there—probably more interesting than his formal discourses. On one occasion, it is said, he gave out as his text: "It is better to go into the house of mourning than into the house of feasting," and continued: "I dispute that!" Which we may well believe.

Here is a handbill which extolled the virtue of coffee:

"A simple, innocent thing, and makes the heart lightsome; it is good against sore eyes, and the better if you hold your head over it and take in the steam that way. It is good for a cough. It is excellent to prevent and cure the dropsy, gout, and scurvy. . . . It keeps the skin white and clear."

The satirists of the day did not spare coffee. One of them "calls on Ben Jonson's manly ghost, and the noble phantoms of Beaumont and Fletcher, who drank pure nectar, with 'rich canary ennobled,' while these coffee men, these 'sons of nought,' gave up the pure blood of the grape for a filthy drink—'syrup of soot, essence of old shoes.'"

A good number objected to the smell of this new beverage. In December 1657 some of the burghers complain of a barber, Farr, who sold coffee and offended them by the "stink" while it was being manufactured. But the popularity of the drink grew apace, despite these objections.

The influence of the coffee-house as a centre for politics is well illustrated by the attempt of Charles to suppress them in 1675, "because the multitude of coffee-houses lately set up and kept within this kingdom, and the great resort of the idle and disaffected persons in them, have produced very evil and dangerous effects, whilst they especially tended to spread disunion, and to tempt tradespeople to neglect their business, and that this idle waste of time and money was becoming an injury to the commonwealth." But the regulation was not enforced, so strong was the feeling against it.

The coffee-house of the time was, as we see, the school of wit and dialectic. What the tavern had been to the sixteenth century, the coffee-house was to the seventeenth and eighteenth. It reached the height of its popularity in the eighteenth, but before its close had passed into practical oblivion.

At one time, it is said, there were no less than three thousand coffee-houses in London; and these resorts were for all sorts and conditions of men.

[1] The "Cat and Fiddle," the shop of a pastry-cook named Christopher Kat.

Each profession, almost each business, had its particular rendezvous. In the better class smoking was allowed; but conversation was compulsory. You paid your twopence for a cup of coffee or tea, and then chatted to a neighbour.

The well-known writers of the day congregated at these places and talked to their friends—not unfrequently at them. It was at a coffee-house that Pope found Dryden; and here it was that Addison discoursed to a select circle; and Johnson delivered many of his sententious periods.

Defoe declared that:

"The best company (after the play) generally go to 'Tom's' or 'Will's' Coffee-houses, near adjoining, where there is playing at picquet and the best of conversation till midnight. According to a contemporary, a man is sooner asked about his Coffee-house than about his Lodgings. . . . They smoak Tobacco, game, and read papers of intelligence; here they treat of matters of state, make Leagues with Foreign Princes, break them again, and transact affairs of the last consequence to the whole world."

Snuff-taking was a favourite practice at this time. It came in towards the end of the sixteenth century, and enjoyed a great vogue during the eighteenth. Women took snuff freely; and the modish lady of the day never travelled without her box. Women of the poorer classes, whom one may see nowadays with a clay pipe, refreshed themselves with snuff. It was an age of snuff: tobacco took a second place.

The *Tatler* recommended everyone to prepare himself before entering the coffee-house, with "three dishes of bohea"; and two pinches of snuff completed the prescription—thus to "purge his brains."

Here is the *Spectator* discussing among the coffee-house politicians his own treatment of political questions:

"I was yesterday in a Coffee-house not far from the Royal Exchange, where I observed three Persons in close Conference over a Pipe of Tobacco; upon which, having filled one for my own use, I lighted it at a little Wax-Candle that stood before them; and after having thrown in two or three whiffs amongst them, sat down and made one of the Company. I need not tell my Readers that lighting a Man's Pipe at the same Candle is looked upon among Brother-smokers as an Overture to Conversation and Friendship. As we here laid our Heads together in a very amicable manner, being intrenched under a Cloud of our own raising, I took up the last *Spectator*, and casting an Eye over it, the *Spectator*, says I, is very witty to-day; upon which a lusty lethargick old gentleman, who sat at the Upper-end of the table, having gradually blown out of his Mouth a great deal of Smoke, which he had been collecting for some time before, Ay, says he, more witty than wise, I am afraid. His Neighbour, who sat at his right Hand, immediately coloured, and being an angry Politician, laid down his Pipe with so much Wrath that he broke it in the Middle, and by that Means furnished me with a Tobacco stopper. I took it up very sedately, and looking him full in the face, made use of it from time to time all the while he was speaking: This Fellow, says he, can't for his Life keep out of Politiks. Do you see how he abuses four great Men here? I fixed my eye very attentively on the Paper, and asked him if he meant those who were represented by Asterisks. Asterisks, says he, do you call them? they are all of them Stars. He might as well have put Garters to 'em. Then pray do not mind the two or three next Lines: Ch-rch and P-dd-ng in the same Sentence! Our Clergy are very much beholden

to him. Upon this the third Gentleman, who was of a mild Disposition, and, as I found, a Whig at Heart, desired him not to be too severe upon the *Spectator* neither; For, says he, you find he is very cautious of giving Offence, and has therefore put two Dashes into his Pudding. A Fig for his Dash, says the angry Politician. In his next Sentence he gives a plain Innuendo, that our Posterity will be in a sweet P-ckle. What does the Fool mean by his Pickle? Why does he not write it at length, if he means honestly? I have read over the whole Sentence, says I; but I look upon the Parenthesis in the Belly of it to be the most dangerous part, and as full of Insinuations as it can hold. . . .

"At my leaving the Coffee-house, I could not forbear reflecting with myself upon that gross Tribe of Fools who may be termed the Over-wise, and upon the Difficulty of writing anything in this censorious Age, which a weak Head may not construe into private Satire and personal Reflexion."

So opinions were formed and circulated. But potent as were the semi-public meetings in the tavern and the coffee-house for the distribution of news and opinions, they were insufficient for the general needs. A debating agency of an even more public sort was required. During the seventeenth century London folk came slowly to understand that none was more promising than the newspaper, "an open Forum where all mortals vent their opinions, state their grievance; a Forum free to every citizen who has three fingers and a smattering of grammar," as Carlyle put it in an oft-quoted passage.

The earliest London "newspapers" were the "Corantos," which were mainly concerned with foreign affairs. Indeed, as Mr. J. R. Williams points out in his *History of English Journalism*, the first newspaper circulating in London was in reality a news book. It was the *Mercurius Gallobelgicus*, a bound book, written in Latin and printed at Cologne. It was concerned with the story of the German Wars. The first number, a thick quarto octavo of 625 pages, was published in March 1594, and contained a chronicle of events from 1588. It was the *Mercurius Gallobelgicus*, by the way, which suggested the title of many later London periodicals.

In 1622 came a weekly pamphlet—translated from the Dutch, and issued by two London booksellers, Thomas Archer and Nicholas Bourne. Its purpose is sufficiently indicated by the general title of the second number, which runs:

"The 23 of May. Weekely Newes from Italy, Germanie, Hungaria, Bohemia, the Palatinate, France, and the Low Countries, &c."

The *Weekly Newes* was the precursor of many similar pamphlets. These "Coruntos" were followed by a series of sheets concerned with the dissemination of news, dictated for the most part by the needs of one or other of the great political parties. When it is added that the first advertisement appeared in the *Mercurius Britannicus* coranto on February 1, 1625, it will be seen that the modern newspaper was already in a fair way towards establishment. It is interesting to note that the first traders to realise the advantage of the new method of selling their goods were the booksellers.

Still the slow evolution went on. The years of the Long Parliament saw the coming and going of many news sheets, *Mercury* and *Diurnal* being the titles generally preferred.

Unfortunately the reputation of the writers of the various pamphlets did not progress so rapidly as the popularity of the institution they were seeking to found. "Liar" was the term ordinarily applied to the newspaper writer. When a critic permitted himself a little more latitude, the results were startling. Here is the view of a Royalist upon the press of the day:

"They call him a Mercury, but he becomes the Epithet like a little negro mounted on the elephant, just such another blot rampant. He defames a good title as much as most of our modern noblemen, those Wens of greatness, the body politics most peccant humours blistered into Lords. To call him an historian is to knight a mandrake, 'tis to view him through a perspective, and by that glass hyperbole to give the reputation of an engineer to a maker of mouse-traps."

The purloining of newspaper titles being no longer customary, the identification of a particular sheet with a definite political or social philosophy was possible.

I. POETRY: (from Dryden to Prior).

JOHN DRYDEN

"Every age has a kind of universal Genius,"[1] and perhaps in no poet are his own words more truly verified than are those of John Dryden.

Born in 1631, in the little village of Aldwinkle in Northamptonshire, John was the son of its rector, the Rev. Erasmus Dryden, and Mary Pickering his wife, both of whom belonged to old county families with strong Puritan tendencies. There is scant record of his boyhood; his early schooling appears to have been more solid than that usually imparted in country villages, for in writing to a friend a few years before his death he speaks of the pleasure with which he had read an English translation of the works of the Greek historian Polybius "before he was ten years of age," and that "even then he had some dark notions of the prudence with which he conducted his design." On proceeding to Westminster School, then under the famous headmastership of Dr. Busby, the boy was thus able to appreciate and benefit by the excellent classical education he there received, which is continually in evidence throughout his literary work. At Westminster he made his first attempt at verse-making in an elegy to the memory of a schoolfellow, Lord Hastings, and translated the third satire of Persius as a school task.

Trinity College, Cambridge, has the honour of being his *Alma Mater*, which he entered in 1650, but two years later came into conflict with the Vice-Master for "disobedience and contumacy in taking his punishment"—of the form of punishment we are left in ignorance. At Cambridge he also wrote some not very memorable verse.

On leaving Cambridge in 1657, he came to London as secretary to Sir Gilbert Pickering, a kinsman of

[1] *Essay on Dramatic Poetry.*

his mother's and chamberlain to Oliver Cromwell, and we may imagine the young man was glad of the opportunity of adding somewhat to the small income of £40 a year which came to him on the death of his father three years before. His marriage in 1664 to Lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of the Earl of Berkshire, brought another £100 a year to the family exchequer, but not a corresponding amount of happiness, the Lady Elizabeth lacking that strong and purposeful character so characteristic of her husband.

Up to this time Dryden had done little to establish the great reputation that was subsequently to be his. He had written some purely official verses in 1659, on the death of the Protector, which contrast oddly with his eulogy of Charles the Second on his coronation, in *Astræa Redux*, the following year. His best efforts are shown unmistakably in his early verses addressed to Dr. Charlton in 1663.

From 1663–1681 Dryden courted the dramatic muse; he knew his genius was not towards the drama, but it was the most lucrative branch of the literary profession at that time, and he essayed it, not always with success, it must be told. "I confess," he said, "my chief endeavours are to delight the age in which I live. . . . I know I am not so fitted by nature to write comedy. . . . Reputation in them is the last thing in which I shall pretend."

His first effort, *The Wild Gallant* (1663), was a failure; Pepys said it was "so poor a thing as I never saw in my life almost." Dryden himself confessed that having made the town his judges, "the greater part condemned it."

The Rival Ladies (1664) was more successful; but *The Indian Emperor* in 1667 established his reputation as a playwright. About twenty plays came from his pen, all more or less coarse, one according to Pepys being "very smutty"; and even that not over particular playgoer said, "I was troubled at it . . . nothing so good as *The Maiden Queen* or *The Indian Emperor*."

The Œdipus (1679), written in collaboration with Nathaniel Lee, gave rise some years later to one of Dryden's trenchant remarks to a cynical acquaintance who said that it was "easy enough to write like a madman." "No," remarked Dryden, "it is hard enough to write like a madman, but easy enough to write like a fool."

In 1665, while the Great Plague was raging, Dryden thought well to give London a wide berth, and retired to his father-in-law's house at Charlton with his wife. Here he wrote his first great poem, *Annus Mirabilis* (1667), which he chose to write, as he explained to Sir Robert Howard, "in quatrains or stanzas of four in alternate rhyme, because I have ever judged them more noble and of greater dignity, both for sound and number, than any other verse in use amongst us." This poem, dealing with the Great Fire and the war with Holland, was dedicated to the City of London, and contains one of those pithy sentences which fell so easily from his pen: "I have heard, indeed, of some virtuous persons who have ended unfortunately, but never of any virtuous nation; Providence is engaged too deeply when the cause becomes so general."

Two years later appeared the critical *Essay on Dramatic Poesy*, a prose work written in the form of a dialogue, and in 1670 the first political recognition of his work came to him when he was asked to accept the appointments of Poet Laureate and Historiographer Royal, with their accompanying pensions of £200 a year. This placed Dryden in affluent circumstances; good profits were coming in from his literary work, and he had also no inconsiderable share in the King's playhouse.

Jealousy soon sprang up among the literary men of the day at the public notice taken of Dryden and his work, and the following year George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, in company with Samuel Butler, Sprat, and others, produced *The Rehearsal*, that celebrated satire on the heroics of the existing drama, making a special point of ridiculing Dryden. However, the poet could afford to wait, so he took no notice of this insult at the time; he could see the trend of political affairs, and wisely waited his opportunity. Later, when the Earl of Shaftesbury was scheming to secure the succession of the Duke of Monmouth, Dryden took advantage of the political struggle between Shaftesbury and the Crown to write his brilliant satire *Absalom and Achitophel*, in which the King, Shaftesbury, Monmouth, and Buckingham are all attacked, and in the notice taken of this masterpiece of brilliant characterisation, Dryden considered himself amply avenged.

The acquittal of Shaftesbury on the charge of high treason preferred against him, was made the occasion of issuing a medal to commemorate the event. Dryden also commemorated it by another *Medal* (1682), a brilliant piece of satirical work.

The jealousy of his literary rivals took the form of violent abuse and caricatures of Dryden's works. Elkanah Settle wrote an amusing parody, *Absalom and Achitophel Transposed*, which was of no moment compared to the brutal and repulsive attack made in *The Medal of John Bayes*, written by Shadwell, who was the principal poet of the Whig party. This naturally provoked bitter enmity between the rival poets, and Dryden fully revenged himself by the publication of *MacFlecknoe* in October 1682 (the model for Pope's *Dunciad*), that gave Dryden's enemies an unenviable reputation for some considerable time. However, these jealousies of literary men are not pleasant reading, so we will pass on.

In 1686 Dryden announced his allegiance to the Church of Rome, whether from conscientious conviction or time-serving instincts it is difficult to say; but the change in his religion inspired his next work, *The Hind and the Panther, a Defence of the Roman Church* (1687), which, if it accorded the poet some fame, it is certain he received no pecuniary gain from its publication.

The following year, when William and Mary came to the throne, and Protestantism was in the ascendant, Dryden fell on evil days; the pensions accompanying his public appointments were withdrawn, and worst of all he had the chagrin of seeing Shadwell appointed to the Laureateship that had been his for eighteen years.

A feeling that arose about this time for the study of classical literature in translations inspired him to undertake several from the Latin of Juvenal and Persius, and his *Virgil*, published in 1697, opened up

a new source of income which he did not live long to enjoy.

Of the *Ode to St. Cecilia's Day*, written three years before his death, there is given by a contemporary a striking instance of the vitality of the man. Lord Bolingbroke, a great admirer of the poet, was paying him a morning visit, and finding him unusually agitated, inquired the cause: "I have been up all night," replied Dryden; "my musical friends made me promise to write them an ode for the feast of St. Cecilia; I have been so struck with the subject which occurred to me, that I could not leave it till I had completed it; here it is, finished at one sitting."

The Fables, his last work, consisting of a collection adapted from the works of Chaucer and Boccaccio, were published the year he died, in 1700.

In appearance, Dryden is said to have been handsome, and of a manly bearing in his youth; in old age, ruddy-faced and portly, and according to Pope "not very conversible"—but he was the idol of the young literary men who frequented Wills' coffee-house, where they always accorded him the warmest seat by the fire in winter and the shadiest corner of the balcony in summer.

"Time-server" he has been called; perhaps he was in youth; it is to his credit, however, that in old age he remained steadfast to his principles, and even when "struggling with want," as he tells us, and "oppressed with sickness," was "not dispirited" by his adversities. Could a more fitting resting-place be found for him than at the feet of Chaucer, where he lies in Westminster Abbey?

His Writings

Dryden's literary significance is threefold, and is expressed in his prose, his dramas, and his verse. In this section we are dealing exclusively with Dryden the poet.

The early verse of Dryden scarcely calls for attention. It was unoriginal and uninspired. He did not start movements; but he had a singular power of taking advantage of a movement, and of stamping his vigorous and keen intellect upon experimental forms that lesser and more courageous men had initiated.

The change from the romantic to the classical manner was already in evidence before Dryden was born. Dryden saw which way the literary wind was blowing, and set his craft cheerfully in the same direction. Waller, already, had done creditable things with the couplet. Dryden gauged its possibilities and did brilliant things. He saw what kind of verse the people of his day wanted, and made it his business to give it them. It is quite clear from a study of his plays, how surely he was developing the qualities of ease, flexibility, and lucidity that he brought into English verse, particularly the satire.

Then, at the age of fifty, after a prosperous career as a serious poet, and a dramatist, he suddenly became famous in the direction where, after all, lies his especial claim on future generations—the field of satire.

His four remarkable satires were fired off in rapid succession. The first part of *Absalom and Achitophel*, directed against Shaftesbury, in 1681; *The Medal*, dealing also with Shaftesbury, in 1682; *Mac-Flecknoe*, aimed at the Whig poet Shadwell, later in 1682; and some weeks later still, the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel*. Of these the finest is the Absalom (Monmouth) and Achitophel (Shaftesbury) satire, Part I.

English poetical life is pictured in a vigorous and keen manner, very little disguised by its slight Hebrew setting. The Whig leaders of the day are satirised freely and trenchantly, Monmouth alone (for Court reasons) being treated in friendly fashion. Some of the portraits are etched in with admirable precision and point. Never before had the heroic couplet been used with such telling effect.

In *The Medal*, we miss the tart flavour of the personalities that give piquancy to the earlier work, and despite Dr. Johnson's encomium, it is certainly inferior in interest, though in workmanship it is no whit less able, and in one passage at any rate, that sarcastically comments on the instability of public opinion, it can hold its own with his best work.

The religious controversies of the time, the disputes between the Catholics and Anglicans, and the fierce dissensions of the Nonconformists, are depicted in *Religio Laici* (1683), an argumentative poem coloured by Catholic sympathies; and *The Hind and the Panther* (1687), a clever and curious piece of work, with a very elaborate allegorical framework—the Panther being the English Church and the Hind the Church of Rome. The Presbyterian fared the worst in the poem, described as a wolf with "belly gaunt, and famished face."

Dryden's sympathies, as has been said, were Catholic; but his attitude was remote enough for the mystics. Man must have some authority, he contended in the *Religio Laici*, and the only infallible authority is the Ancient Church of Christendom. Better, he argues, leave other matters alone:

> "For points obscure are of small use to learn,
> But common quiet is the world's concern."

With the coming of the Revolution of 1688—one of the smoothest revolutions ever accomplished, though none the less effectual on that account—the taste for classical literature became even more pronounced than heretofore. Dryden, with his watchful fingers on the public pulse, fell in with the fashion, and did a great deal of translation work, from the Latin and Greek poets. The most remarkable of these was his translation of Virgil, that occupied three years, being published in 1697.

The grace and finish of the original were qualities Dryden was not competent to impart, but his splendid force and vigour give power and colour to many passages.

Already he had written an *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*, and once again that festival inspired him to another ingenious effort—*Alexander's Feast*, on the power of music (1697). It is hard to find a more suitable description of these poems than is conveyed by the term "ingenious." Clever and skilful they certainly were, yet the attempt made to wed music and poetry in the lines cannot be called successful. It demanded the lyric faculty of a Shelley or a Swinburne. Perhaps Swinburne alone of all our

poets has had the power to make one art the medium of conveying the esthetic content of another.

As a lyric writer, he is judged better by the songs with which his plays are interspersed, and a number of hymns that are attributed to him. As compared with the great lyric writers of the previous age, Dryden must occupy a modest place in the second rank.

Significance and Trend of His Poetic Work.—At the end of his life, Dryden described himself as one "who had done his best to improve the language, and especially the poetry," of his country. To a considerable extent he was justified in saying this: for even putting aside his really great activities in English prose, he had clarified and freshened English verse, brushing away much of the picturesque yet confusing tangle of ornamental undergrowth, and giving it point and actuality.

His dramatic verse at its best is eloquent and spirited; his non-dramatic verse extraordinarily varied. If not achieving special excellence in his lyrics or his narrative verse, he is rarely banal, always easy and dexterous, whilst in didactic verse he is a master. He raised it from an indifferent form of workmanship into the front rank, and whether in long flights as in *Absalom and Achitophel*, or in the shorter flights, illustrated in his Prologues, Epilogues, and Fables, he is amazingly alive and original. The term "original" as applied to Dryden needs this qualification. In the sense in which it is applied to the creative shapings of high imagination, Dryden was not original. In other words, originality of conception is not his. But in the matter of *treatment* he is uniformly original. He invented nothing, but the crude inventions of other men he perfected, and what he said of his countrymen might well be applied to himself. "The genius of our countrymen [is] rather to improve an invention than to invent themselves."

Absalom and Achitophel

Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide;
Else, why should he, with wealth and honour blest,
Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?
Punish a body which he could not please,
Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease?
And all to leave what with his toil he won
To that unfeathered two-legged thing, a son,
Got, while his soul did huddled notions try,
And born a shapeless lump, like anarchy,
In friendship false, implacable in hate,
Resolved to ruin or to rule the state;
To compass this the triple bond he broke,
The pillars of the public safety shook,
And fitted Israel for a foreign yoke;
Then, seized with fear, yet still affecting fame,
Usurped a patriot's all-atoning name.
So easy still it proves in factious times
With public zeal to cancel private crimes,
How safe is treason and how sacred ill,
Where none can sin against the people's will,
Where crowds can wink and no offence be known,
Since in another's guilt they find their own!
Yet fame deserved no enemy can grudge;
The statesman we abhor, but praise the judge.
In Israel's courts ne'er sat an Abbethdin
With more discerning eyes or hands more clean,
Unbribed, unsought, the wretched to redress,
Swift of despatch and easy of access.
Oh! had he been content to serve the crown
With virtues only proper to the gown,
Or had the rankness of the soil been freed
From cockle that oppressed the noble seed,
David for him his tuneful harp had strung,
And Heaven had wanted one immortal song.
But wild ambition loves to slide, not stand,
And fortune's ice prefers to virtue's land.
Achitophel, grown weary to possess
A lawful fame and lazy happiness,
Disdained the golden fruit to gather free
And lent the crowd his arm to shake the tree.
Now, manifest of crimes contrived long since,
He stood at bold defiance with his Prince,
Held up the buckler of the people's cause
Against the crown, and skulked behind the laws.
The wished occasion of the Plot he takes;
Some circumstances find, but more he makes.
By buzzing emissaries fill the ears
Of listening crowds with jealousies and fears
Of arbitrary counsels brought to light,
And proves the King himself a Jebusite.
Weak arguments! which yet he knew full well
Were strong with people easy to rebel.
For governed by the moon, the giddy Jews
Tread the same track when she the prime renews;
And once in twenty years their scribes record,
By natural instinct they change their lord.
Achitophel still wants a chief, and none
Was found so fit as warlike Absalom.
Not that he wished his greatness to create,
For politicians neither love nor hate;
But, for he knew his title not allowed
Would keep him still depending on the crowd,
That kingly power, thus ebbing out, might be
Drawn to the dregs of a democracy.
Him he attempts with studied arts to please
And sheds his venom in such words as these,

Ode to St. Cecilia's Day

From harmony, from heavenly Harmony
This universal frame began;
When Nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high,
Arise, ye more than dead.

Then cold and hot and moist and dry
In order to their stations leap,
And Music's power obey.
From harmony, from heavenly harmony
This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in man.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell?
When Jubal struck the chorded shell,
His listening brethren stood around,
And, wondering, on their faces fell
To worship that celestial sound:
Less than a god they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell,
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell?

The trumpet's loud clangor
Excites us to arms
With shrill notes of anger
And mortal alarms.
The double double double beat
Of the thundering drum
Cries, hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat.

The soft complaining flute
In dying notes discovers
The woes of hopeless lovers,
Whose dirge is whispered by the warbling lute.

Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains and height of passion,
For the fair, disdainful dame.

But oh! what art can teach,
What human voice can reach
The sacred organ's praise?
Notes inspiring holy love,
Notes that wing their heavenly ways
To mend the choirs above.

Orpheus could lead the savage race,
And trees uprooted left their place,
Sequacious of the lyre;
But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher:
When to her organ vocal breath was given,
An angel heard, and straight appeared,
Mistaking the earth for heaven.

Grand Chorus

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the blessed above:
So when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky.

Contemporary with Dryden was SAMUEL BUTLER, his senior by twenty years, and he died just twenty years before him. The son of a Worcestershire farmer, Butler was born at Strensham in 1612 and educated at Worcester Cathedral School. After acting as secretary to Mr. Jefferies at Earl's Croome, he was appointed in 1628 a page to the Countess of Kent, at Wrest in Bedfordshire, where he was also the companion of John Selden. On the Restoration, as secretary to the Lord President of Wales, he was appointed Steward of Ludlow Castle (1660), and about this time married Mrs. Herbert, a widow who was possessed of a small fortune. During these years he had made the acquaintance of all the prominent men of his day, most of whom he satirised in his famous *Hudibras*, the first part of which was published in 1663, the second in 1664, and the third in 1678. This work was immensely popular, though Pepys, after paying two shillings and sixpence for it, said: "When I came to read it, it is so silly an abuse of the Presbyter knight going to the wars, that I am ashamed of it; and by and by meeting a Mr. Townsend at dinner, I sold it to him for 18*d*."

Notwithstanding his popularity and influential friends, Butler died in poverty in 1680.

"While Butler, needy wretch, was yet alive,
No generous patron would a dinner give.
See him, when starv'd to death and turn'd to dust,
Presented with a monumental bust!
The poet's fate is here in emblem shown:
He ask'd for bread, and he receiv'd a stone."[1]

Butler was by temperament a lover of sober common-sense and the sworn foe of enthusiasm. Equally with Dryden is he an expression of the new mood that had seized the nation as a whole. Inferior to Dryden in craftsmanship and versatility, he is richer in sarcastic humour; indeed there is more than a touch of savagery in it; but it is a mistake to regard it as merely spiteful fun indulged in for personal reasons. Less splendid in his scorn than Swift, inferior to Pope in polish, his humour has undeniable breadth and power.

His most important work was a long octosyllabic poem, which we know as *Hudibras*; and indeed it is as the author of *Hudibras* that Butler is for the most part known. It was a long, savage attack upon the Parliamentary party and pleased the fancy of the time; though some, who loved not the Puritan, like Pepys, were repelled by its sustained note of scorn.

Hudibras is in lineal descent from the comic doggerel of Skelton, who, indeed, paved the way for the Restoration satirists. None before, and few after, ever used this particular metre with such happy effect as Butler.

It is probable that he modelled his style very largely upon his contemporary Scarron, who satirised his own day in his travesty of Virgil; Scarron's methods and Skelton's spirit contributed much towards the making of *Hudibras*.

The name "Hudibras" comes from the *Faerie Queene*. In Butler's poem he is a blusterous, ignorant, repulsive-looking Presbyterian knight, with a squire in keeping with his master. They set out in pseudo-romantic fashion, and are soon engaging in an anti-bear-baiting crusade. Bear-baiting, of course, was a popular pastime, and Butler more than amplifies Macaulay's well-known jibe on the Puritan objection to it; from the artistic point of view the poem certainly fails in the unqualified contemptibility of the objects of its attack.

The poem, however, with its echoes of Rabelais and Cervantes, and its wild burlesque and preposterous buffoonery, is rich in genuine flashes of comic insight.

For instance:

"He that complies against his will
Is of his own opinion still."

The Presbyterians who

"Compound for sins they are inclined to
By damning those they have no mind to;"

and by their unloveliness in disposition, are

"Still so perverse and opposite
As if they worshipped God for spite."

Such absurd comparisons as:

"And like a lobster boiled, the Morn
From black to red began to turn."

And the consolations of Hudibras:

"Who
Cheered himself with the ends of verse
And sayings of Philosophers."

Such felicitously ridiculous rhymes as "duty" for "shoe-tie," give effect and variety to the monotony of the metre; and in this respect Byron and Calverley, in our own day, owe no small debt to him.

Limited in his gifts and certainly not squeamish in his methods, Butler is a remarkable figure in the poetic development of his time; and is one of our best exponents of satirical verse.

HUDIBRAS

Friend Ralph, thou hast
Outrun the constable at last.

[1] C. Wesley.

Some forces whole regions, in despite
O' geography, to change their site;
Make former comers shake hands with latter,
And that which was before, come after;
But those who write in rhyme still make
The one verse for the other's sake;
For one for sense, and one for rhyme,
I think's sufficient at one time.

Doubtless the pleasure is as great
Of being cheated, as to cheat.

With crosses, relics, crucifixes,
Beads, pictures, rosaries and pixes;
The tools of working out Salvation
By mere mechanic operation.

The social condition of Restoration life, its artificial gaiety, the growing importance of London as a pleasure resort for the courtier poet, the increasing vogue of the coffee-house and park, to which reference has been made in our introductory sketch, the growth of the political pamphlet and the journal, all these things favoured the development of satirical verse.

To the social conditions may be added also the classical taste of the day, favouring a type of literature which should be clear, concise, and topical above all things. Denham dealt with the politics of the hour in his four *Instructions to a Puritan*; Andrew Marvell, a much greater literary figure and a lyrist of sweetness and power, fell in with the fashion, and was astonishingly successful in his *Last Instructions to a Puritan*; *Advice to a Puritan*; and *Britannia and Raleigh*.

John Oldham, a more powerful satirist than either of the others, wrote an ironical poem—*Satire against Virtue*—and was even more successful in his *Satire upon a Woman who by her falsehood and scorn was the death of my friend*. His last work was his *Satire upon the Jesuits*, perhaps the richest and most telling of his poems.

Oldham is less of the pamphleteer in verse than Marvell or Denham; he takes his subject far more seriously, as a literary artist. But he has neither Dryden's masterly technique, nor Butler's ingenious humour. He writes persistently with the loud pedal on; and some of his work is like a prolonged hoarse scream. On the other hand he had the merits of these defects; plenty of native force, and an exuberance of imagination, expressing itself for his time in some striking, vital phrase, as when he speaks of Charles IX, in connection with St. Bartholomew's Day, saying:

"... he scorned retail
I' th' trade of Death;"

and of the victims:

"... so quick their fate
Their very prayers and wishes came too late."

The ballad was a popular vehicle for satire; and was in great request in town and country taverns, while literary art is at its lowest here. The humour is rough and ready, and scurrility seems to be the great thing aimed at. To these ballads were fitted well-known tunes that had already caught the public ear in opera and play. Among these tunes the *Irish* was a favourite, with its three lines of verse and "*Libera nos Domine*" refrain. Another tune boasted the catch phrase, "Hey boys, up go we," which occurred about the end of the eighth line. Among the known ballad composers of the time (many ballads were anonymous for obvious reasons), Purcell was the most famous. In general popularity Thomas D'Urfey, courtier and playwright, with his *Now the Fight's done* ... *Sawney will never be my Love again*, was no doubt his superior. But Purcell's *Lilli burlero* achieved a fame accorded to no similar effusion. It conferred distinction on Thomas, Lord Wharton's doggerel stuff, and was used afterwards again and again, for even still worse matter.

With the coming of Pope a new school of satire arose, lighter than the older one, and if less sincere in some respects, certainly far more agreeable. Of this something will be said in a later chapter.

THE COURT POETS OF THE RESTORATION

The drama when it recovered from the crushing blow dealt it by Puritanism, used all its resources to lampoon its late enemy. Similarly in the Court poetry of the Restoration we may trace the violent Puritan reaction of the time.

Satire, as we shall see, usurped the place once taken by the descriptive verse of Spenser and his school; the political squib displaced the amorous sonnet, and although the lyric could still claim votaries, it shared in the general change of atmosphere. Wit was esteemed above fervency; salacity above fantasy; for the song writer was no longer, save rarely, a man of adventurous life, with a deep vein of seriousness in his nature, but a gay, irresponsible, and flippant courtier. "Every Fop wrote songs," said Sedley, one of the most brilliant of the verse writers; the fop element was certainly very obvious in the lyric making, for no longer did the poet rely on masculine virtues, and woo his lady with hints of prowess. He wooed as Grammont did, with "pocket looking-glass ... essences and other small wares of love."

Love, indeed, is scarcely the word for the amorous ditties of the time, the witty, gay, licentious verse of the Restoration could boast no sincerity of feeling, no tinge of passion. It was a game for courtiers; a game skilfully and amusingly conducted by a few, but at its best a clever pose, with none of those flushes of deep feeling and charming fancy that illumine the hot, full-blooded music of the Elizabethans.

Among these triflers in song, the names of Rochester, Buckhurst, and Sedley are conspicuous; but unlike many of their fellows, they were men of action as well as men of letters, with deeds of daring to their credit.

Rochester is the most interesting personality of this band; born in 1648 near Woodstock, he had a good education and proved an exceedingly apt scholar. After the usual travels, he returned to Court an accomplished personage, with abundant personal charm, still more abundant impudence. His histrionic sense was strongly developed, and to figure as the hero of some strange out-of-the-way adventure is what he loved above everything. One

of his most diverting rôles was that of a foreign astrologer, and as such he set up in Tower Street and scattered abroad wild promises of cures for all manner of diseases. Perhaps his most popular cry was his recipe for youth and beauty.

Middle-aged women had best submit to his treatment and they should look like young girls. So well did he play his part that none penetrated his disguise for a long while. Often as Charles quarrelled with him because of his boundless insolence, he speedily made it up; for wit Charles esteemed highly, and none were wittier than Rochester.

The nearest approach to genuine feeling in this little coterie is made by the writer in some of his lyrics; as for instance, "I cannot change as others do"; but the mood of mockery somehow suits him better, and many will prefer such songs as *Love and Life*, with its delightful finish:

> "Then talk not of inconstancy,
> False hearts and broken vows,
> If I by miracle can be,
> This livelong minute true to thee
> 'Twas all that Heav'n allows."

Scarcely inferior to him in wit and accomplishment, though less versatile as a personality, is Sir Charles Sedley. When James II took his daughter for a mistress and made her Countess of Dorchester, he observed, "I hate ingratitude; the King has made my daughter a Countess, I can do no less than try to make his daughter a Queen."

Although he essays various forms of poetry, he is essentially a song writer. Less careful than Rochester in his art, he had a happy knack of agreeable song, as is proved by the well-known *Phyllis is my only joy*.

Lord Buckhurst (Earl of Dorset) was largely esteemed by his contemporaries, but to us to-day he seems on a decidedly lower level than either Rochester or Sedley—as surely as his character ranks above theirs.

His most attractive song is the familiar ditty, *To all you Ladies now on Land*, written at sea, in the first Dutch War, says the poet gravely. The specific statement may be valued in the same way as we value Defoe's *Memoirs of a Cavalier*.

Less distinguished writers are: the Earl of Mulgrave, fluent, facile, and commonplace for the most part; and the Earl of Roscommon, a somewhat austere gentleman for those times, with but one weakness—gambling. He was a decent scholar and critic, and won occasional success in epigrammatic lines. But he was too earnestly desirous of writing good sense, to achieve good poetry.

ALEXANDER POPE

The influence of the French literature of the day, considerable in Dryden's time, became even more marked in the age of his successor Pope. This meant that increasing attention would be given to lucidity of expression and elegance of form. Freshness of utterance was of less moment than perfection of manner; or as Pope himself said:

> "True wit is Nature to advantage dressed,
> What oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed."

Literature had now become quite frankly a literature of the Town; we can tell, even more accurately than in Shakespeare's age, the manners of the day, for in Pope's own verse the social life of the time is reflected as in a *camera obscura*. We wander in the pleasure gardens where "quality" caroused and flirted: we note the frivolous ritual of the boudoir, hear the tapping of the inevitable snuff-box, from gallants resplendent in lace ruffles; we learn the drab story of Grub Street and its denizens; the jealousies and bickerings of authors, and throughout it all there sounds the smug, complacent Deism which was as much a fashion of the time as the fluttering fan of the ladies.

At the house of a linen-draper in Lombard Street was born, in 1688, a sickly and delicate child—Alexander Pope. His talent was of the precocious order; fashioned for a life of study, he knew no other pleasure than that which comes from the poring over books. Epics and tragedy he knocks off readily while in his early teens, and throughout his youth he reads, reads, reads—Homer, Tasso, Ariosto, Virgil, Ovid—classical and modern writers, poetry, criticism, drama, either in the original or in translation, until almost he dies of overmuch study.

His great search is not the search of Paracelsus for Truth; it is for style. Wycherley, now in his old age, acts as mentor to the ambitious young man; Pope smarts under his frank criticism, and finally breaks with him.

But his promise has attracted Dryden—and when yet on the threshold of manhood he completed his *Essay on Criticism*, the reading public felt that a new star had arrived. What kind of radiance the star would shed was another matter.

In appearance he was singularly unimpressive.

A body of miserable weakness was a heritage from birth—headaches from his mother and a crooked figure from his father. In a moment of bitter insight, Pope once spoke of "that long disease, my life," while Swift said of him that "two bites and a sup more than your stint will cost you more than others pay for a regular debauch."

By middle life, Pope's physical weakness was so constant that he could not dress without aid. Cold affected him so greatly that he was compelled to wear a fur doublet under his course linen shirt.

"When he rose," writes Johnson, "he was invested in bodices made of stiff canvas, being scarcely able to hold himself erect till they were laced, and he then put on a flannel waistcoat. One side was contracted. His legs were so slender that he enlarged their bulk with three pairs of stockings, which were drawn on and off by the maid."

Nor did disabilities end here. He came of Papist stock in days when English Catholics were condemned to pay double taxation. His father was no more than a minor London merchant. The boy's education was of the most miscellaneous description. "Small Latin and less Greek" seems an odd description to apply to so famous a translator of Homer—yet it was true.

What fate did not deny to the man, Alexander Pope, was an all-dominating love for the craft of poetry. According to the light which was given

him, Pope was never content with less than the polished best.

Pope came of a Roman Catholic family, and during his early years there was no Faith that stood more in the way of a man's worldly advancement than that. His education was fragmentary and superficial, and all of it that mattered he imbibed for himself, not from the seminary near Winchester, whither for a time he had gone. Thrown on his resources, sickly in body and lonely in spirit, he found his only delight in books; and these he read, as he tells us, "like a boy gathering flowers in the fields just as they fell his way." He was extremely precocious, and "lisped in numbers from an early age." His earliest work, a set of Pastorals, was quite in the fashion of the day, with the usual conventional Strephons and Daphnes, and orthodox Pagan deities in an English religious setting of the most artificial type. The verse is uninspired but carefully modulated. There was never anything slipshod about Pope's work, and the book attracted favourable notice. In his next publication, the *Essay on Criticism*, he found himself, his public, and fame. This was followed in 1712 by *The Rape of the Lock*. The artificial tone of the age, the frivolous aspect of femininity, is nowhere more exquisitely pictured than in this poem. It is the epic of trifling; a page torn from the petty, pleasure seeking life of a fashionable beauty; the *mise-en-scène* the toilet chamber and the card table. In short, the veritable apotheosis in literary guise of scent, patches, and powder.

From *The Rape of the Lock* to *Windsor Forest*, is from Pope at his happiest to Pope at his worst. Pope's rhapsody on scenic charm is a melancholy thing. Far more interesting is his translation of the *Iliad* of Homer.

Quite apart from its literary merits, this translation, the fruit of ten years' arduous labour, is a remarkable achievement for one of Pope's delicate health and limited knowledge of Greek. Bentley's caustic criticism of it as "a very pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but not Homer," is one hard to traverse, for the Homeric breadth and vigour was ill-suited to the fastidious niceties of Pope's muse, but it has never militated against its popular success. For "a pretty poem" it certainly is; rich in felicities of the eighteenth-century pattern.

The *Iliad* was published in six volumes, for which Lintot, the publisher, paid £200 a volume, in addition to furnishing a large number of free copies for the subscribers. These numbered five hundred and seventy-five, and they took six hundred and fifty-four sets at a guinea a volume. The *Odyssey* brought Pope in £3500, after considerable sums had been paid to assistants. So that rather more than £9000 was netted by the author alone. In addition, Lintot made a fortune.

By the year 1718 Pope was in a position of independence, and was able to take the house at Twickenham which is always so closely associated with his memory. The spot had much to recommend it. Both by road and river it was within easy reach of London. The poet's friends could readily come down for a chat. The plot of land around the house was large enough to secure absolute peace. Within a few years the ideal of graceful symmetry, which is so characteristic alike of Pope and his age, pervaded every part of the garden. Some well-known lines by Pope himself suggest a lively picture of the place where half of the witty wisdom of the early eighteenth century was born.

> "His garden next your admiration all
> On every side you look, behold the wall
> No pleasing intricacies intervene,
> No artful wildness to perplex the scene
> Grove nods at grove, each alley has a brother,
> And half the platform just reflects the other."

If a less ordered picture is preferred, there is a little sketch by Horace Walpole which may be quoted:

> "Pope had twisted and twirled and harmonised this, till it appeared two or three sweet little lawns, opening and opening one beyond another, and the whole surrounded with impenetrable woods."

Here Swift, Bolingbroke, Congreve, and Gay were wont to exchange wit and wisdom and, perchance, to forge the weapons which were to be used in the war with the Dunces—the war which was waged on behalf of a single valueless Truth:

> "Out with it, Dunciad: let the secret pass,
> That secret to each fool—that he's an ass."

Here strange schemes were proposed and discussed for the launching of those literary shafts upon the wandering world. The early spurious editions of the *Dunciad*, for instance; the simultaneous publication in Dublin and London, and the like. Here it was that Bolingbroke sketched the first rough philosophical propositions eventually polished into the *Essay on Man*. And here it was that Pope, with only the silence for company, wove the tiny slips of paper upon which he was wont to jot his disjointed ideas into an harmonious whole.

> "Now backs of letters, though design'd
> For those who more will need 'em,
> Are fill'd with hints and interlin'd
> Himself will scarcely read 'em.
> Each atom by some other struck
> All turns and motions tries,
> Till in a lump together stuck
> Behold a poem rise."

Lastly, it was at Twickenham, on May 30, 1744, that the restless spirit of the poet finally quitted the world which it had never loved. The bruised body was buried in Twickenham church. The better part of the man—his work—is with us still in the form of the pithy couplets in which Alexander Pope embodied the crystal-hard wisdom of his age and *The Rape of the Lock*.

His Work: Influence and Significance in Literature

The three poems in which Pope is emphatically the spokesman of his age are *The Rape of the Lock*, picturing its frivolities; the *Dunciad*, unveiling its squalor; the *Essay on Man*, echoing its philosophy. His own attitude towards literature is nicely expressed in the *Essay on Criticism*, where the merits and limitations of the eighteenth-century school of poetry are clearly exhibited. What they admire, what they dislike, is patent to the most casual reader. The neatness of his rapier wit is

happily shown in the passing allusion to the churlish old critic JOHN DENNIS (1657–1734), author of a tragedy, *Appius and Virginia*:

"But Appius reddens at each word you speak."

Of his work as a whole it may be said that he was a master of literary mosaic. There is nothing of the easy breadth and vigour of Dryden in his satirical verse; on the other hand, he excelled his predecessor in exquisite finish and in detailed touches. His poems have no solidarity or homogeneity, with the exception, perhaps, of *The Rape of the Lock*. Rather may they be likened to polished fragments, cunningly fitted in to form a whole, and remarkable for workmanship rather than integral beauty.

Using the Drydenean couplet, he imparted to it a gossamerlike delicacy of touch, that more than compensated for the lack of strength. If at times the glitter and sparkle fade into dullness, the occasions are comparatively rare, and the amazing thing is that he sustained his mercurial smartness and aptness for so long. There are few graces of style beyond crispness and lightness. The beauties, though abundant, are of the obvious kind. No one can dress up a commonplace sentiment or humdrum thought in finer clothes than he; but there is no hint in his work of high imagination, of subtle fancy, no sense of mystery, no romance, no depth of feeling, no greatness of impulse. In the era that followed, the deficiencies of Pope in this respect were so glaring as to call down on him undeserved contempt. With Jane Austen, we must grant him the "two inches of ivory," and within these limitations there is no more skilful artist. If he is not to be reckoned with the master-spirits of English literature, he was at any rate an incomparable craftsman and a delightful wit. And that is no small matter.

"Avoid extremes; and shun the fault of such
Who still are pleased too little or too much.
At every trifle scorn to take offence,
That always shows great pride, or little sense:
Those heads, as stomachs, are not sure the best,
Which nauseate all, and nothing can digest.
Yet let not each gay turn thy rapture move;
For fools admire, but men of sense approve:
As things seem large which we through mists descry,
Dullness is ever apt to magnify.
Some foreign writers, some our own despise;
The ancients only, or the moderns prize.
Thus wit, like faith, by each man is applied
To one small sect, and all are damned beside.
Meanly they seek the blessing to confine,
And force that sun but on a part to shine,
Which not alone the southern wit sublimes,
But ripens spirits in cold northern climes;
Which from the first has shone on ages past,
Enlights the present, and shall warm the last;
Though each may feel increases and decays,
And see now clearer and now darker days.
Regard not, then, if wit be old or new,
But blame the false, and value still the true."[1]

"Eye Nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,
And catch the manners living as they rise;
Laugh where we must, be candid where we can,
But vindicate the ways of God to man."

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast;
Man never is, but always to be blest.
The soul, uneasy, and confin'd from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.

Lo! the poor Indian, whose untutored mind
Sees God in clouds, and hears Him in the wind."[2]

"Pretty! in amber to observe the forms
Of hairs, or straws, or dirt, or grubs, or worms!
The things we know, are neither rich nor rare,
But wonder how the devil they got there."

"Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike."

"Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
As shallow streams run dimpling all the way."

"While pensive poets painful vigils keep,
Sleepless themselves to give their readers sleep."

"And gentle Dullness ever loves a joke."

"The right divine of kings to govern wrong."[3]

[1] *Essay on Criticism.*

Among minor verse writers of the age are the sturdy Whig, SAMUEL GARTH (1661–1719), the physician whose *Dispensary* (1699) is an amusing description of a doctor's quarrel, written in the versification of Dryden, with a fair amount of the master's skill; unfortunate Sir RICHARD BLACKMORE, also a physician, with a taste for rhetoric which brought him continual ridicule from the wits of the time. His piety and Whiggery pleased Addison, and one of his poems, *Creation*, is a respectable piece of work but his talents were not such as to procure the approbation of his fellows, and they were insufficient to please those who came after. Congreve was a song writer of the Restoration type, and could hold his own with craftsmen like Sedley and Dorset. AMBROSE PHILIPS, rejoicing in the nickname of "Namby-Pamby," sufficiently indicates thereby the character of his muse. TICKELL, an Oxford man, and, like Philips, a friend of Addison, wrote two good elegies on his friend, and had the gift of sonorous verse. JOHN BYROM, a North of England physician, was a vigorous and dexterous versifier, though perhaps posterity will more gratefully acclaim him as the first teacher of a good system of shorthand.

From these men we may turn to two of greater weight and power—Matthew Prior, the father of English "light verse," and John Gay, a whimsical and delightful versifier of Town and its ways.

MATTHEW PRIOR, "beloved by every Muse," was a Dorset man, born near Wimborne in 1664, who by the generosity of an uncle was educated at Westminster School, and at St. John's College, Cambridge, under the patronage of the Earl of Dorset. During this period he collaborated with Charles Montagu, in *The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse*, a burlesque on *The Hind and the Panther* of Dryden. On leaving Cambridge several diplomatic appointments were conferred upon him, including that of Secretary of State in Ireland (1697), and Under-Secretary of State in England (1699). Two years later he was elected member for East Grinstead, at this time changing his political coat from Whig to Tory. The Tories made him Commissioner of Customs (1711–14), during which time he took some part in formulating the Peace of Utrecht, and was Queen Anne's ambassador at Paris until

[1] *Essay on Man.* [2] *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot.*
[3] *The Dunciad.*

her death. In 1715 he was impeached and for two years imprisoned.

Having made £4000 by the publication of a folio edition of his works in 1719, Lord Harley added a similar sum in order to make some provision for Prior's old age; unfortunately, Prior only lived two years to enjoy his good fortune, dying in 1721.

Prior wrote two long poems: *Solomon on the Vanity of the World*, and *Alma, or the Progress of the Mind*.

Alma is Hudibrastic in method, but is far from successful, and gives little impression of the real strength of the writer as a maker of verse.

Solomon follows Dryden in its use of the heroic couplet: it is agreeable in parts, but the subject is not in reality congenial with the pleasant, superficial, whimsical attitude most characteristic of Prior.

Prior's reputation rests almost entirely upon his lighter efforts. He is an expert in the making of literary *soufflé*, and no one better than he could fling off some audacious trifle, or dainty sentimentality. The airy deftness of his touch is delicious, and deludes the reader at times into rating him as merely a light-hearted jester. But he is more than a professional jester, he is a true humorist, with a sense of tears as well as of laughter, as witness the "Lines written in the beginning of Mezeray's *History of France*," and throughout all his bright and tender whimsicalities there runs a cheerful, tolerant outlook on life.

Solomon, on the Vanity of Human Wishes

If the great master will descend to hear
The humble series of his handmaid's care;
O! while she tells it, let him not put on
The look that awes the nations from the throne!
O! let not death severe in glory lie
In the king's frown and terror of his eye!
Mine to obey, thy part is to ordain;
And, though to mention be to suffer pain,
If the king smile whilst I my woe recite,
If weeping, I find favour in his sight,
Flow fast my tears, full rising his delight,
O! witness earth beneath, and heaven above!
For sun I hide it? I am sick of love;
If madness may the name of passion bear,
Or love be called what is indeed despair,
Thou Sovereign Power, whose sacred will controls
The inward heat and motion of our souls!
Why hast thou placed such infinite degrees
Between the cause and cure of my disease?
The mighty object of that raging fire
In which unpitied, Abra must expire.

To Chloe

What I speak, my fair Chloe, and what I write, shows
The difference there is betwixt Nature and Art;
I court others in verse, but I love thee in prose;
And they have my whimsies, but thou hast my heart.

The god of us verse-men—you know, Child—the Sun,
How after his journeys he sets up his rest;
If at morning o'er earth 'tis his fancy to run,
At night he reclines on his Thetis's breast.

So when I am weary with wandering all day,
To thee, my delight, in the evening I come;
No matter what beauties I saw in my way,
They were but my visits, but thou art my home.

John Gay was born in 1685 at Barnstaple in Devon and lost both his parents when ten years old. Coming of an impoverished family, he tried his fortune as apprentice to a London silk mercer, and later on drifted (by one of those lucky tides that carried him, despite his lazy self, into comfortable harbours) into a secretaryship to the Duchess of Monmouth. He had a rich gift for vivid description—a rural scene or the delights of the town, it mattered not to Gay; he could do either equally well.

Lacking the originality of Prior, he had a goodly share of humour, considerable technical skill, whether in turning out the favourite couplet of the time, or evolving a lyric. In fact, his good, all-round power and attractive manner compensated for his singular ineptitude in turning his fortune to better account. Among his best works may be noted *Rural Sports*; *Trivia, or the Art of Walking the Streets of London*; the famous *Black-Eyed Susan*; the equally agreeable if less well-known lyrics—*Philleda*, and *'Twas when the Seas were Roaring*; and some capital *Fables*.

"A soft and civil companion," said Johnson of him, truly enough. Easy good humour marks both Prior and Gay. They are typical products of their age, genuine artists in their way; and modest as that way might be, rarely dull save when they tried to be serious, taking life in the spirit of Horace's *carpe diem* philosophy.

The Strand

Thro' the long *Strand* together let us stray;
With thee conversing I forget the way.
Behold that narrow street which steep descends,
Whose building to the slimy shore extends;
Here *Arundel's* fam'd structure rear'd its fame,
The street alone retains an empty name;
Where Titian's glowing paint the canvas warm'd,
And *Raphael's* fair design, with judgment, charm'd,
Now hangs the bellman's song, and pasted here
The colour'd prints of *Overton* appear.
Where statues breath'd, the works of *Phidias'* hands,
A wooden pump, or lonely watch-house stands.
There *Essex'* stately pile adorn'd the shore,
There *Cecil's, Bedford's, Villiers'*, now no more.
Yet *Burlington's* fair palace still remains;
Beauty within, without proportion reigns.
Beneath his eye declining art revives,
The wall with animated picture lives;
There *Handel* strikes the strings, the melting strain
Transports the soul, and thrills thro' every vein;
There oft I enter (but with cleaner shoes),
For *Burlington's* below'd by ev'ry Muse.

St. Clement's

Where the fair columns of *St. Clement* stand,
Whose straiten'd bounds encroach upon the *Strand*;
Where the low penthouse bows the walker's head,
And the rough pavement wounds the yielding tread
Where not a post protects the narrow space,
And strung in twines, combs dangle in thy face;
Summon at once thy courage, rouse thy care,
Stand firm, look back, be resolute, beware.
Forth issuing from steep lanes, the collier's steeds
Drag the black load; another cart succeeds,
Team follows team, crouds heap'd on crouds appear
And wait impatient till the road grow clear.
Now all the pavement sounds with tramping feet,
And the mixt hurry hurricanes the street.
Entangled here, the waggon's lengthen'd team
Cracks the tough harness; here a pond'rous beam
Lies overturn'd athwart for slaughter fed
Here lowing bullocks raise their horned head.

Now oaths grow loud, with coaches coaches jar,
And the smart blow provokes the sturdy war;
From the high box they whirl the thong around,
And with the twining lash their shins resound:
Their rage ferments, more dangerous wounds they try,
And the blood gushes down their painful eye.
And now on foot the frowning warriors light,
And with their pond'rous fists renew the fight;
Blow answers blow, their cheeks are smear'd with blood,
Till down they fall, and grappling roll in mud.

"'Tis woman that seduces all mankind:
By her we first were taught the wheedling arts."

"If the heart of a man is depress'd with cares,
The mist is dispell'd when a woman appears."[1]

"The fly that sips treacle is lost in the sweets."[1]

"When yet was ever found a mother
Who'd give her booby for another?"[2]

With Prior to reflect the careless urbanities and semi-cynical moods of the day, Gay to mirror its manners and outward show, we have two excellent guides, after Pope, to the life of eighteenth-century London.

Three poets of the time stand apart from their fellows, as marking the transitional spirit between the school of Dryden and Pope and the Romantic movement in verse that started with Thomson's *Seasons*. Edward Young, Thomas Parnell, and Lady Winchelsea stood to some extent for the new spirit; in their treatment of external nature they belonged more to the Romantic than to the Critical movement. Lady Winchelsea, for instance, was singled out for commendation by Wordsworth because of her *Nocturnal Reverie*. Parnell made a notable break away from the eternal couplet of the time, and Young, for all his pretentiousness, showed a gloomy gravity quite different from the easy-going sententiousness of Pope and his school.

It is probable, however, that none of these were conscious of any innovating tendencies. The difference in tone is due rather to temperamental peculiarities than to any deliberate change of literary attitude. Young, in his *Universal Passion* (1725–8), proved almost as skilful a satirist as Pope himself. His most characteristic work is the *Night Thoughts*, a lengthy poem of contentious reflection, showing considerable technical skill in his management of blank verse, but is handicapped by a stilted, theatrical phraseology.

Parnell, like Young, suffered vicissitudes and disappointments, that are found reflected in his verse. More varied than Young, he achieved some excellent translations, and showed freshness and observation as well as metrical power, in *The Night-piece on Death* and *Hymn to Contentment*.

Lady Winchelsea (1660–1725) was closely in touch with the literary wits of the age—indeed she is Pope's Ardelia—and presents a curious and sometimes piquant mixture of the old and the new in her methods. While not sufficiently original to break away from the literary conventions of her time, she none the less had a more genuine feeling for nature, and was far truer and more sincere in her pictures of natural scenery than any of her contemporaries. In some respects *The Nocturnal Reverie* is better entitled to be regarded as the pioneer of the Nature poetry of the new age than even Thomson's *Seasons*; it is less rhapsodical, less conventional in its phraseology. If we give Thomson the preference, it is because of a greater ambition in his effort, a more conscious effort to leave the methods of the day.

It is quite evident that we have come to the parting of the ways. Before leaving it, let us recall the solid merits of the school that were undervalued and slighted rather unfairly by the brilliant critics of the Romantic period; these in particular, the finished art of its satire; the creation of a delightful type of butterfly poetry in the *vers de société*; above all, the clarity and succinctness introduced into English verse.

II. PROSE: (*a*) The Pioneers of the Essay. (*b*) The Great Essayists (Addison—Steele—Defoe—Swift). (*c*) Lesser Prose Writers.

(*a*) THE PIONEERS OF THE ENGLISH ESSAY

Among the great Elizabethan writers there are suggestions here and there of a plainer, simpler, more straightforward prose. Bacon in his *Essays*, and Jonson in his *Discoveries*, diverge certainly at times from the elaborate Elizabethan pattern, wrought to such cunning perfection by men like Browne, and Burton, and Sir Walter Raleigh.

None the less, the prose as a whole is the prose of an age of poetry, and even in the plainer writers, rhetoric is never far away; but the prose of the new age is far better adapted to an age richer in political and philosophic speculation than to poetry; in the art of critical exposition and journalistic realism than in work of creative imagination.

Cowley may be regarded as the initial pioneer of the new movement. He is a pioneer by no means certain of his medium, nor even constant to it; yet, both in his essays and his *Discourse concerning the Government of Oliver Cromwell* (1661), the change of literary attitude is clearly apparent.

[1] *Beggar's Opera.*
[2] *The Mother, the Nurse, and the Fairy.*

"There is no saying shocks me so much as that which I hear very often, 'that a man does not know how to pass his time.' It would have been but ill-spoken by Methusalah in the nine hundred and sixty-ninth year of his life, so far it is from us, who have not time enough to attain to the utmost perfection of any part of any science, to have cause to complain that we are forced to be idle for want of work. But this, you will say, is working for the learned others are not capable either of the employment or divertisements that arrive from letters. I know they are not and therefore cannot much recommend solitude to a man totally illiterate. But, if any man be so unlearned as to want entertainment of the little intervals of accidental solitude which frequently occur in almost all conditions (except the very meanest of the people, who have business enough in the necessary provisions of life), it is truly a great shame both to his parents and himself; for a very small portion of any ingenious art will stop up all those gaps of our time; either music, or painting, or designing, or chemistry, or history, or gardening, or twenty other

things, will do it usefully and pleasantly; and if he happen to set his affections upon poetry (which I do not advise him too immoderately) that will over-do it: no wood will be thick enough to hide him from the importunities of company or business, which would obstruct him from his beloved." [1]

Dryden's importance in the domain of prose is even more remarkable than in that of verse, and this for reasons which will be quite obvious to all students of his work. His peculiar gifts—his ease, his force, his clearness, his intellectual vigour—are qualities more serviceable in prose, and especially serviceable at this stage in the history of our literature, when prose had suffered from over-riotous living.

His well-known *Essay on Dramatic Poesy* was begun about 1665, and quite apart from its brilliant analysis of dramatic principles, it is "a model of the new prose," without which we should fail to appreciate those qualities that went to build up the English Essay of the eighteenth century.

Of this *Essay* there are three editions, all clearly showing the pains taken by the critic in the direction of clarity and correctness.

In his early prose Corneille probably was the dominant formative influence; some critics have seen in his later work the influence of Montaigne. However this may be, the essay model of Montaigne seems persistent, and he certainly did much to rouse general interest in the Essay as a form of literary production.

Dryden's prose is nearly always strong, flexible, and delightfully straightforward. The epithet "Glorious"—so long attached to him—may seem to some as somewhat curious, for great as his powers were, they lacked that touch of high imagination which would reconcile us to the term. But in granting the phrase in terms of breadth rather than depth, we may assuredly say "Amen" to it. If he does not range from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven, his terrestrial range is one of extraordinary variety.

[1] I will not excuse, but justify myself for one pretended crime for which I am liable to be charged by false critics, not only in this translation, but in many of my original poems, that I Latinise too much. It is true that when I find an English word significant and sounding, I neither borrow from the Latin or any other language: but when I want at home I must seek abroad. If sounding words are not of our growth and manufacture, who shall hinder me to import them from a foreign country? I carry not out the treasure of the nation which is never to return; but what I bring from Italy I spend in England; here it remains, and here it circulates; for if the coin be good, it will pass from man hand to another. I trade both with the living and the dead for the enrichment of our native language. We have enough in England to supply our necessity; but if we will have things of magnificence and splendour, we must get them by commerce. . . . But every man cannot distinguish betwixt pedantry and poetry; every man, therefore, is not fit to innovate." [2]

Sir William Temple, son of Sir John Temple, Master of the Rolls in Ireland, was born in 1628, educated at Cambridge, and became a member of the Irish Parliament in 1660. He travelled considerably on the Continent and was British Ambassador at the Hague for many years, during which he negotiated the marriage of William of Orange and the Princess Mary. On his return to England in 1679, Charles II took him into his confidence in diplomatic arrangements, but Temple, not feeling that he could agree on all points with his Sovereign, thought it wiser to retire to his house at Sheen, and afterwards to Moor Park, with Swift as his secretary, and occupy his leisure in essay writing and gardening. His wife, the famous Dorothy Osborne, that most delightful and natural of letter writers, predeceased him. Sir William died in 1699.

His *Essays* on various subjects—Health, Gout, Gardening, and Poetry—are written in a clear, agreeable, unaffected style, rising at times to a rhythmic beauty, as in the *Essay on Poetry*. They certainly show that the ease and intimacy of the new school need not be divorced from dignity and charm.

Of Poetry

I know very well that many who pretend to be wise by the forms of being grave are apt to despise both poetry and music as toys and trifles too light for the use or entertainment of serious men: but whoever find themselves wholly insensible to those charms, would, I think, do well to keep their own counsel, for fear of reproaching their own temper, and bringing the goodness of their natures, if not of their understandings into question; it may be thought at least an ill sign, if not an ill constitution, since some of the fathers went so far as to esteem the love of music a sign of predestination; as a thing divine and reserved for the felicities of heaven itself. While this world lasts, I doubt not but the pleasures and requests of these two entertainments will do so too; and happy those that content themselves with these, and any other so easy and innocent; and do not trouble the world, or other men, because they cannot be quite themselves, though nobody hurts them! When all is done, human life is at the greatest and the best but like a froward child that must be played with and humoured a little to keep it quiet till it falls asleep and then the care is over.

Temple's contemporary, Lord Halifax (George Savile), was a Yorkshireman, born at Thornhill in 1633. For his share in the Restoration he was created Baron Savile and Viscount Halifax in 1668, and was the chief dissentient to the bill for excluding the Duke of York from the succession. Twice made Lord Privy Seal, he was forced to resign in 1690, and died in 1696.

Halifax was a political force as well as a man of letters; achieved fame with his pamphlet *The Character of a Trimmer*, which indicates accurately his own political attitude; became famous as a parliamentary speaker; and in a volume of *Miscellanies* (c. 1688), which contained essays on various subjects and a few notable pamphlets, showed grace, lucidity, and terseness. He writes more like the man of the world than Temple, and his aphorisms have a pleasant, satirical flavour, as that on *An Empty Woman*: "Such an one is seldom serious but with her tailor;" or this, "You may love your children without living in the nursery."

In all these writers the influence of Montaigne is very marked, none more so perhaps than in Halifax, who had no small measure of Montaigne's happy faculty for metaphor.

Of other famous contemporaries, forerunners of the great prose age, Tillotson and Bunyan, I speak elsewhere. Bunyan really stands by himself: there

[1] *Essay on Solitude.* [2] *Essay on Dramatic Poesy.*

are no traces of foreign models and classical influences in him. He is the child of Puritanism, and the Bible and his own native genius are the only outstanding factors. That is why he was treated in the last phase of the Renascence, rather than in the first phase of the classical reaction.

(b) THE GREAT ESSAYISTS

Joseph Addison (1672–1719)

Speaking of the statue set up to Addison in Westminster Abbey, Macaulay has said:

"Such a mark of national respect was due to the unsullied statesman, to the accomplished scholar, to the man of pure English eloquence, to the consummate painter of life and manners. It was due, above all, to the great satirist who alone knew how to use ridicule without abusing it, who, without inflicting a wound, effected a great social reform, and who reconciled wit with virtue after a long and disastrous separation, during which wit had been led astray by profligacy and virtue by fanaticism."

The eulogy is remarkable, but few would deny its essential justice.

Long after feudalism had perished as a political force, it lingered on as a social and literary influence. Intensely individualistic as was the spirit of the Renascence, it left untouched by its anti-feudal tendencies, many old customs. Sentiment at the Restoration favoured the continuance and vitality of these survivals—ancient habits of thought and life. So looking at the life of the period, we can detect two contrary currents of opinion, the one fed by puritanism, the other by feudalism. At a later period, the trends of thought which we designate Liberalism and Conservatism arose from these. But there have always existed, ever since mediæval times, the two camps. Neither has conquered its enemy. Each has modified the other. And the greatest masters of our literature have been those who have wrung from both their measure of fruitfulness. The best instincts of the nation had recoiled alike from the narrow rigidity of the Puritan ideal and the shallow self-indulgence of the Restoration hedonists. In religious matters they had found a *via media*; they now sought one in their social and political life. In this work of reconciliation it is hard to overestimate the influence of Joseph Addison.

Born May 1, 1672, he went to school at the Charterhouse, leaving that in 1687 for Queen's College, Oxford. Later on he was associated with Magdalen College; and the picturesque walk by the Cherwell, with its formal line of elm-trees and air of serene repose, remains as a reminder of the quiet, studious scholar. His scholastic reputation became considerable, and Johnson warmly praised his Latin poem.

The star of Congreve was rising, that of Dryden declining, at this time; and Congreve, it is said, introduced Addison to Montague, Chancellor of the Exchequer. Addison wrote a poem to the King in 1695, and dedicated a Latin poem on the Peace of Ryswick (1697) to Montague himself. This was pleasantly acknowledged by a pension of £300 obtained for the youthful poet by Montague. This enabled him to travel abroad and enrich his education. From the account of his wanderings through France and Italy, it is clear that he is more interested in classic associations than in scenic beauties, and that he views Catholic practices with an impatience and austerity almost Miltonic. Clearly this cultured loyalist has something of the Puritan in his constitution. On his return to England, he remained for a considerable time without employment, but when the Whigs came into favour, Addison's lot became happier. Then came a period of preferments and of official poetry which need not concern us here. His poetry was never great at any time, though graceful, scholarly, and facile. He had the gift of friendship, and by his social qualities attracted towards himself many illustrious men, very divergent in temperament. Among them were Steele and Swift. Of Swift he thought very highly, and to him dedicated a copy of his *Italian Travels*:

"To the most agreeable companion, the truest friend, and the greatest genius of his age."

Pope has declared that Addison spent much of his time at coffee-houses with his friends, a habit which Pope himself found injurious to health. It is probable that Addison's social proclivities led him into habits of intemperance, which probably shortened his life. But there is no doubt that "Canary wine and Barbadoes water" frequently unlocked a flood of rich eloquence and fine suggestion. One recalls the witty saying of Coleridge, that "some men are like musical glasses; you only get the finest tones from them when they are wet."

He was an excellent talker; scarcely an effective conversationalist. He belonged to the genus of Coleridge and Carlyle rather than that of Hazlitt and Macaulay.

Steele and Addison were educated at the same school, and were friends at Oxford. But while Addison shaped as the "good little boy," Steele's career suggested a collegiate Harry Sandford. Throughout life he reminds one rather of Thomas Nash or Robert Greene, those famous Elizabethan Bohemians, for, like them, "sinning and repenting," he spent most of his days. But he is a shade less impetuous than those worthies, and the puritan element which showed up unexpectedly in Greene was very clearly discernible in Steele's work. A fine portrait is given of him in *Esmond*.

In April 1709 Steele started the *Tatler*. Addison contributed a few papers to the earlier numbers, but not till the eighty-first number did he become a frequent contributor.

Of Addison's help, Steele remarked: "When I had once called him in I could not subsist without dependence on him."

The *Tatler* started by detailing news mingled with essays and stories and dramatic criticism. It was through the influence of Addison that the essay became the most important constituent.

January 2, 1711, saw the death of the *Tatler*, and the following March 1, the birth of the *Spectator*. It ran for 555 numbers, continuing until December 6, 1712. The essay, which had proved so great a success in the *Tatler*, became the one ingredient of the *Spectator*. The sobriety and moderation dis-

played by the writers, the humour, the genial moralising, these qualities made for the stupendous success of the journal. It has been well said that "the *Spectator* made a mark in English literature, and fixed a form which was adopted with servile fidelity by many periodicals till the end of the century."

In his supreme characterisation—the mellow Sir Roger de Coverley—all that is finest in the old feudalism finds expression.

Steele sketches him in the second *Spectator*; but he is most richly embroidered in the fifteen *Spectators* by Addison, where Sir Roger is introduced in his own country house.

After journalism came playwriting. *Cato* was produced at Drury Lane, and despite its dramatic tameness, scored a great success. Pope had written an elegant prologue for it, and Swift, it is said, attended one of the rehearsals.

Then came another period of essay writing, this time for the *Guardian*, the successor to the *Spectator*. In August 1716 he married the Countess of Warwick. The marriage was not a happy one, and, according to Johnson, resembled the marriage in which a Sultan gives his daughter a man to be her slave; and it has been said, "Holland House, although a large house, could not contain Addison, the Countess of Warwick, and one guest—Peace."

In 1718 his health began to break, and he retired on a good pension, with literary work on hand (though apparently of no great interest) which he never completed. A quarrel with his old friend Steele—largely due to the fact that another had supplanted him in Addison's estimation—embittered his remaining months. The quarrel was never made up.

In June 1719 asthma, which had plagued him all his life, returned; then dropsy supervened. He died on the 17th, at Holland House, at the age of forty-seven.

His Work

The character and genius of Addison are best exemplified in the pages of the *Spectator*. It is hard to better the comment of his latest biographer, Mr. Courthope, that he "may be said to have almost created and wholly perfected English prose as an instrument for the expression of social thought." If we compare Addison's prose with the prose of Milton or Hooker or Bacon, we shall realise the delightful plasticity, the delightful nuances of mood and fancy for which Addison finds expression. The earlier stylists were rich in eloquence, and in the gift of noble declamation; but they speak in full dress from, as it were, a rostrum. In the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, we have the beginning of that genial intimacy of the writer with the reader, which was to find so rare a following at a later time in Elia, in Hazlitt, and in Thackeray. Indebted to the great writers who preceded him, Addison, none the less, has a manner quite his own; and it is obvious how deep are the obligations of the modern generation of essayists, in whom the personal note is predominant.

With all this flexibility and ease there is no slipshod writing. So fastidious is his workmanship, that, according to Warton, he would stop the press, on occasion, to alter a preposition or conjunction. Thus for the manner. For the matter, the happy blend of the Puritan spirit and the Renascence spirit proved greatly to the taste of his countrymen. There had been moralists before in plenty; the stately moralist in Hooker; the quaint moralist in Sir Francis Bacon; the fiery moralist in Milton. Addison exemplified the happy moralist. "I have," he said truly enough, "brought philosophy out of closet and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell at clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses."

Nowhere is Addison more delightful than in illustrating the contrast between the country and town life; the clash of rural feudalism with urban manners. An excellent commentary on the London life of the day is furnished by Sir Roger's opinions on matters theatrical, on Westminster Abbey, on town fashions, where this fine old fellow leaves the country house where he is seen to such advantage among his friends and retainers. He wishes to see the Prince "Eugenio," as he persists in calling Prince Eugene; and he accompanies the Spectator on the water to Spring Gardens, or to the theatre to see *The Distressed Mother* played.

The Spectator was probably a picture of Addison himself. He is a gentleman who, after studying soberly and well at the University, betakes himself to London, and there notes all the phases of life to be observed: he listens to the wits at Will's; smokes with "the philosopher of the Grecian," maybe with the politician at the "St. James's," and with the merchants in the "Exchange."

Here in its picture of the town and country are all the materials for the modern novel of social life.

Small wonder that, at a time when Richardson was quietly performing his work as compositor, and Fielding indulging in schoolboy exploits; when Smollett and Goldsmith and Sterne were yet unborn, a public should be found for this picture of contemporary life and manners.

Even Pope, his bitter rival, said of him: "His conversation had something in it more charming than I have found in any other man."

The "Spectator" and its Social and Literary Importance

The trend of the essays in the *Spectator* is thus characterised by their author: "The great and only end of these speculations is to banish vice and ignorance out of the territories of Great Britain."

It is the first attempt made by journalism to give form and consistency to public opinion; the first serious effort made, in fact, to organise public opinion by clarifying and systematising the infinite discussions that went on at the clubs and coffee-houses.

From the outset Addison's face is set against the shameless licence and shallowness of Restoration manners: he attacks the fashionable youths and cynical men about town who are "knight-errants" of vice. To him they are "a sort of vermin." When he wishes he can smite hard; but his favourite mood is a mood of delicate and playful satire, and here

he is at his happiest. Swift is his superior at the sledge-hammer work.

"The ruled," he writes, "is their great scene of business, and the right enjoyment of their hair the principal employment of their lives. The sorting of a suit of ribands is reckoned a very good morning's work; and if they make an excursion to a mercer's or a toy shop, so great a fatigue makes them unfit for anything else all the day after. Their more serious occupations are sewing and embroidering, and their greatest drudgery the preparation of jellies and sweetmeats. This, I say, is the state of ordinary women: though I know there are multitudes of those of a more elevated life and conversation that move in an exalted sphere of knowledge and virtue, that join all the beauties of mind to the ornaments of dress, and inspire a kind of awe and respect, as well as of love into their male beholders. I hope to increase the number of these by publishing this daily paper . . . and divert the minds of my female readers from greater trifles."

Of Addison's verse there is less to say. There is little here that has survived the exacting criticism of posterity. The Latin poems are brilliant exercises—nothing more; while of the others, the hymns alone impress the reader as work out of the ordinary. Lacking the delicate charm of a Herbert, and the fine fervour of a Wesley, they have a graciousness, a distinction, a sober beauty of their own singularly pleasing. His plays have no lasting quality about them. Neither he nor Steele had the dramatic gift. Sentiment and humour there is—especially in the opera of *Rosamond* (1707); but his faculty of characterisation, so happily displayed in the essays, finds no congenial outlook in terms of the theatre. *Cato*, so famous in his day, is one of the dullest plays ever written by a great writer.

Richard Steele (1672–1729)

Genial, impulsive, good-natured, improvident "Dick" Steele was the son of a Dublin attorney who died when his son was five years old. Educated at the Charterhouse with Addison, he proceeded to Christ Church, and afterwards to Merton College, Oxford, which he left without taking a degree.

Without counting the cost, Steele always did that which appealed most strongly to his own inclinations. The Battle of the Boyne was in the air, and the fever of war fired his blood; failing to obtain a commission in the army, he enlisted as a private in the Coldstream Guards, to the disgust of his uncle, who disinherited him. He, however, soon rose from the ranks and became the favourite and secretary of his colonel, Lord Cutts, to whom he dedicated *The Procession* (1695), some elegiac verses written on the death of Queen Mary.

In 1701 he wrote *The Christian Hero*, "to fix upon my own mind a strong impression of virtue and religion in opposition to a stronger propensity towards unwarrantable pleasure." The following year, as a counterblast to his sermon, appeared *The Funeral*; in 1704 *The Lying Lover*, which Steele said was "damned for its piety"; *The Tender Husband* in 1705, and after a lapse of seventeen years, *The Conscious Lovers*, in which Mrs. Oldfield and Colley Cibber took parts.

Steele was twice married; his first wife died shortly after their marriage, and left him an estate in the West Indies. His second wife, his "dear, dear Prue," appears to have been "coy ill to live with," but as her brilliant husband was incorrigibly extravagant and hopelessly erratic in his domestic movements, she had perhaps some cause for her irritable and peevish nature.

In 1707 Steele was appointed editor to the official organ of the Government, the *London Gazette*. In 1709 he started, as we have seen, the *Tatler*, and later the *Spectator* and the *Guardian*, all of which added to his fame as an essayist.

Steele also took an active part in the politics of the day, and was twice chosen Member of Parliament; an ardent supporter of the Hanoverian succession, he was knighted in 1715, the year in which he received the patent for Drury Lane.

The last five years of his life were spent in retirement on the borders of Wales. He had played various parts on the stage of life, and had suffered many vicissitudes, but he was hopeful and brave to the end, and when paralysis seized him, although unable to speak, we are told that "he retained his cheerful sweetness of temper to the last; and would often be carried out in a summer's evening, when the country lads and lasses were assembled at their rural sports, and with his pencil, give an order on his agent, the mercer, for a new gown for the best dancer." Thus he died at Carmarthen on September 1, 1729, and by his own wish was buried in St. Peter's church.

Steele's journalistic work on the *Tatler* and *Spectator* has been discussed already, when dealing with Addison. He was too conscientious a moralist in his writing to be a good playwright, and his attempt to redeem the drama from the grossness and licence of the Restoration drama, led him into many sentimental inepitudes. There is more vitality in his plays than in those of Addison, but he has no sense of construction, and as with Addison, it is to his *Essays* we must look for the rich expression of his genius.

Addison and Steele were admirably suited as co-craftsmen, for each could give what the other lacked. Steele brought to his work a wide experience of life, generous sympathies, and a sunny humour; Addison brought a wide experience of literature, a polished style, and just a pleasant tang of acidity in his humour. Both were moralists at heart, with much the same outlook on the society of their day. Yet there were sufficient differences in temperament and in gifts to be of real service, in giving breadth and diversity to the work they accomplished.

The Tatler

I went to visit Lhuimel, the vainest thing in town, where I knew would drop in Colonel Picket, just come from the camp, her professed admirer. He is of that order of men who have much humour and merit, but wicked a coxcomb; the other of that set of females, who has innocence and wit, but the first of coquets. It is easy to believe these must be admirers of each other. She says the colonel rides the best of any man in England; the colonel says she talks the best of any woman. At the same time, he understands wit just as she does horsemanship. You are to know, these extraordinary persons use each other daily; and they themselves, as well as the town, think it will be a match: but it can never happen that they can come to the point; for,

instead of addressing each other, they spend their whole time in the reports of themselves: he is satisfied if he can convince her he is a fine gentleman, and a man of consequence; and she in appearing to him an accomplished lady and a wit, without further design. Thus he tells her of his manner of posting his men at such a pass, with the numbers he commanded on that detachment; she tells him how she was dressed on such a day at court, and what offers were made her the week following. She seems to hear the repetition of his men's names with admiration, and waits only to answer him with as false a matter of lovers. They talk to each other, not to be informed, but approved. Thus they are so like that they are to be ever distant, and the parallel lines may run together for ever, but never meet.

Daniel Defoe (c. 1660-1—1731)

To many people Defoe is chiefly known as the author of *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), and a few other tales dealing with low life. And yet, fiction was merely an incident in Defoe's astoundingly varied career. He was fifty-eight when he wrote *Robinson Crusoe*, and before that time he had been a merchant, a manufacturer, a satirist, a public official, and an editor.

Defoe was born in London at St. Giles', Cripplegate (c. 1660-1). His father was a butcher, his grandfather a Northamptonshire yeoman. Intended for the ministry, like many another literary man, he spent five years in a training academy, and then found himself unsuited for it, deciding characteristically it was not for him—"being neither honourable, agreeable, nor profitable." So, apprenticed to a hose factor, he took to writing political tracts instead, against the King, Charles II. He, however, was careful not to sign them, and was astute enough to keep in the background whenever prudence suggested it, for although he took part (he tells us) in Monmouth's rising, none knew anything about it till years after, when it was safe to mention the fact.

He started a hosiery business in Cornhill, but greatly disliked being referred to as a "shopkeeper," in later years explaining that he had merely been a "trader in hosiery." In connection with his business he travelled to Spain, and varied these trips abroad by escaping from his creditors to some other part of England.

Defoe uses his business experiences in *The Complete English Tradesman for the Instruction of Young Beginners*; and advises the young tradesman to stick to his work and not fancy himself a politician or a man of letters, by running off to the coffee-house. He is not to go too fast, but to "keep wagging and always go on," like the carrier's waggon.

His first known pamphlet was written in verse, and published during the Revolution of 1688, and was exuberantly loyal. Here he declares he had never written before, and would never write again unless his pamphlet took effect. Either this is a rhetorical exuberance, or else he justified early the reputation he was afterwards to gain, of being the most practised liar of his age.

Everything that Defoe says about himself must be taken with reservation, and when possible, substantiated elsewhere, for from his earliest years he seemed constitutionally unable to tell the truth, and even his name is an experiment in fiction, his father's name being Foe.

In 1692, rumour has it that he fled to Bristol for the same reasons that drove Dick Swiveller to indirect methods of reaching his house, and was known there as the 'Sunday Gentleman"—because he appeared on that day and that day only, remaining indoors for the rest of the week through fear of the bailiffs.

But this did not greatly worry him. Like another of Dickens' famous experimentalists in life, he remained cheerful, waiting for something else to turn up; he was sure it would, and it usually did.

Certainly Defoe was wise in remaining in England, for he made himself useful to the Government—a quality not unrecognised by them. We are told that from 1694 until the end of the reign of William III, was the most prosperous and honourable period of Defoe's life.

When affluence arrived, it should always be remembered that he paid many of his debtors in full, ignoring the arrangement for a composition. Probably he would have paid all, but another business—a pantile factory—proving a failure, checked his laudable intent.

He served William in good stead by his pamphlet in defence of a standing army and by some ingenious lines on *The True Born Englishman*. These verses, coming at a time when popular feeling was against the King and his Dutch followers, are a tribute, moreover, to Defoe's courage. He reminded Englishmen that when they boasted of their descent, they forgot those creative elements that had contributed to their making:

> "A true born Englishman's a contradiction,
> In speech an irony, in fact a fiction."

With William's death in 1702, Defoe's era of prosperity closed. Under Anne the High Church party became dominant, and bitterness towards Dissenters was the order of the day. This evoked one of the most remarkable of Defoe's pamphlets, and one that established him beyond doubt as an artist in fiction. In 1702 appeared anonymously *The Shortest Way with Dissenters*, in which, with ironic skill, he reduced to absurdity the High Church position. If these Dissenters are so bad, such is the drift of the pamphlet, the best way is to kill them. Unhappily, the irony was too subtle to be appreciated, and both Churchmen and Dissenters were furious. To use his own words, "The world flew at him like a dog with a broom at his tail."

As a matter of fact, he had merely put plainly and forcibly the sentiments of an extreme High Tory Churchman. Suppress Dissent with the hangman's rope. Fines are useless. "Crucify the thieves."

As he urged later, this he intended as an exposure of the cant of the non jurors: and he looked to the Dissenters to applaud his humour. But they failed to see the joke; so did the Churchmen. To one churchman, however, the brutal extremity of the plea appealed like a message from above, and he solemnly ranked Defoe's *jeu d'esprit* "as next to

the Bible." All the same he was tried, found guilty of seditious libel, fined, and subjected to the pillory.

He stood before the Royal Exchange in Cornhill, on the three last days of July, 1703; but had no bad time of it, for admirers clustered round and threw flowers in place of garbage, since he was a popular favourite.

A Hymn to the Pillory

The first Intent of Laws
Was to correct the Effect, and check the Cause:
And all the Ends of Punishment,
Were only future mischiefs to prevent.
But Justice is inverted when
Those Engines of the Law,
Instead of pinching vicious men,
Keep honest ones in awe:
Thy business is, as all men know,
To punish villains, not to make men so.

Whenever then, thou art prepared
To prompt that vice, thou should'st reward,
And by the terrors of thy grisly Face
Make man turn rogues to shun disgrace;
The End of thy Creation is destroyed;
Justice expires of course, and Law's made void.

What are thy terrors? that, for fear of thee,
Mankind should dare to rink their humanity?
He's bold to impudence that dare turn knave,
The scandal of thy company to save
He that will crimes he never knew confess,
Does, more than if he knew those crimes, transgress:
And he that fears thee, more than to be base
May want a heart, but dare not want a face.

Thou, like the Devil, dost appear,
Blacker than really thou art, by far;
A wild chimeric notion of Reproach;
Too little for a crime, for none too much.
Let none th' indignity resent;
For Crime is all the shame of Punishment.
Thou Bugbear of the Law stand up and speak,
Thy long misconstrued silence break,
Tell us, who 'tis, upon thy Ridge stands there,
So full of fault, and yet so void of fear;
And from the Paper in his hat,
Let all mankind be told for what:

Tell them it was because he was too bold,
And told those truths which should not have been told.
Retard the justice of the land,
Who punish what they will not understand.
Tell them he stands exalted there
For speaking what we would not hear;
And yet he might have been secure,
Had he said less, or would he have said more.
Tell them that this is his reward.
And worse is yet for him prepared,
Because his foolish virtue was so nice,
As not to sell his friends, according to his friends' advice.

And thus he's an example made,
To make rest of their honesty afraid;
That for the Time to come, they may
More willingly, their friends betray;
Tell them, the men that placed him here,
Are asc'anda'ls to the Times,
Are at a loss to find his guilt,
And can't commit his crimes.

While in prison at Newgate, he was treated with leniency, but had to consort with the usual Newgate company. This did not disturb him, for he saw a way of turning his imprisonment into a profitable adventure.

In 1704 there emanated from Newgate the first number of a *Review* written by Defoe. It was a political newspaper, and he showed in this "weekly history of Nonsense, Impertinence, Vice, and Debauchery," of domestic and foreign politics, that power of arresting attention, while using an apparently matter-of-fact, circumstantial manner, that was to stand him in good stead when he essayed the novel.

In this paper he showed, moreover, some of the qualities of Cobbett: incisive and independence, and a command of vigorous, flexible English. When rebuked for his sharply-expressed opinions, and asked what business it was of his to meddle in public affairs, he says:

"I saw a parcel of people caballing together to ruin property, corrupt the laws, invade the Government . . . and in short, enslave and embroil the Nation, and I cried 'Fire,' or rather I cried 'Water'—for the fire was begun already. I see all the nation running into confusions and directly flying in the face of one another and cried out, 'Peace.' . . And what had I to do with this? Why yes, gentlemen, I had the same right as every man that has a footing in his country, or that has a posterity to possess liberty and claim right, must have, to preserve the laws, liberty and government of that country to which he belongs; and he that charges me with meddling in what does not concern me, meddles himself with what 'tis plain he does not understand."

But he was not really an independent critic. He could not afford to be. The Government, he knew, would pounce down on him at the first attack on them. So on some matters he was "reticent" as he afterwards explained, distinguishing between reticence and falsehood.

In July 1706 appeared *The True Relation of the Apparition of one Mrs. Veal*, that gave further proof of his power to create that illusion of truth which is the very life force of fiction.

When Godolphin was dismissed, and Harley came back to office, the *Review* changed politics. This is one of the evils of "patronage." Defoe was not squeamish; neither better nor worse than the majority of his day. In his heart Defoe was Whig, and when he could do so safely, he served the Whigs with his pen.

About 1718 politics became more humdrum, and Defoe, after another visit to prison (for libel), looked for fresh worlds to conquer.

On April 25, 1719, appeared the first volume of *Robinson Crusoe*, founded on the four years' residence of Alexander Selkirk in the Island of Juan Fernandez. Captain Roger, who released Selkirk, had told the story, so also had Steele in the *Englishman*.

Defoe sold his book to William Taylor, a publisher, who made a fortune by it. Owing to its enormous success, a second volume was written, and a book of *Crusoe's Serious Reflections* followed.

Then came *Captain Singleton* (1720), *Moll Flanders* (1721), *Colonel Jack* (1721), *Journal of the Plague Year* (1722), *Roxana* (1724), *A Tour through Great Britain* (1724–6), *A New Voyage round the World* (1725), *The Complete English Tradesman* (1726–7), *The Political History of the Devil* (1726), *System of Magic* (1726), and the *Essay on the Reality of Apparitions* (1727).

During his later years, Defoe lived at Stoke Newington, with stables and pleasure grounds, and kept a coach. We have a picture of him by a

contemporary, referring to his gardening hobbies and his profitable exertions, who also mentions that he "met usually at the tea table, his (Defoe's) three lovely daughters, who were admired for their beauty, their education, and their prudent conduct."

This contemporary—Mr. Baker, a naturalist—subsequently took more interest in the daughters than in the father, settled his mind on one and, doubtless inspired by her prudence, started a businesslike discussion with the father for her hand. In short, he wanted Sophia Defoe *and* a dowry; nor would he conclude matters till the dowry was arranged according to his satisfaction.

The last few years of Defoe's life are enveloped in some mystery. He was writing a book—*The Complete English Gentleman*—when he broke it off in September 1729, and fled. Why, is not clear. He wrote incoherently about it, accusing his son of infamous conduct. The son had certainly behaved badly to his mother and sister, but not so badly as the letter implies. He, however, never returned home, but died at a lodging in 1731, in Moorfields; possibly the avoidance of his creditors in the interest of his family was the reason for his disappearance; anyhow he did not die in distress; and his affection for his daughters is shown to the last.

Characteristics of his Work

(*a*) *The Realistic Imagination.*—"Lies are not worth a farthing if not calculated for the effectual deceiving of the people they are designed to deceive."

Defoe's imagination was realistic in the sense that it imparted to the reader the illusion of reality, that the storyteller hitherto had despised—"Fact . . . I can assure you"—he is always whispering to the reader.

Everybody likes the air of verisimilitude. The novel reader asks to be "taken in," and he likes it to be done well. Defoe managed it in style. If he could amuse the public and at the same time induce them to think his stories were founded on fact, as indeed to an extent some were, so much the better. He always identified himself thoroughly with his subject, asking himself what he should have done in his character's place, and Crusoe is an idealised portrait of himself. The contingency of shipwreck was no unlikely one for him, and he always had a horror of the sea and its ways.

The elaborate Diary, the reflections of Crusoe, are highly typical of the eighteenth-century Englishman. Here we see his practical genius asserting itself. These things were bound to appeal to the English mind, so his readers were spellbound by his air of veracity and ready inventions, and not willing to cavil at occasional inconsistencies, as when the Spaniards gave Friday's father an agreement, although they had neither paper nor ink; or when the hero stuffed his pockets with biscuits, although he had flung off his clothes before swimming to the wreck.

In short, Defoe proved himself an accomplished liar; and since all good story-telling is the art of lying brilliantly, his success as a novelist is quite comprehensible.

Let us look, for instance, at the *Mrs. Veal* story. Defoe gives circumstantial evidence in favour of the apparition. He does not try to hide the flaws; he dwells on them. This is effective.

Mrs. Veal appears the day after her death in a dress of scoured silk. Why scoured silk? When Mrs. Bargrave is telling Mrs. Watson of this she says, "'Scoured silk!'—Mrs. Veal and I alone know that; I helped her to make it up."

How does she talk? She talks of trivial things; jewels; annuity; of her own looks.

(*b*) *His Power of Detail.*—The entire fascination of *Robinson Crusoe* lies in its details. Children love details. They want to know how many biscuits he ate, and how often the parrot spoke. That all this is wildly unessential does not matter. Defoe knew its effectiveness and told them.

The detail is lucidly given; it is not flung in an undigested heap at the reader, it is not oppressively technical. It is clear, orderly, and sufficient. The style of Defoe is admirably suited to this method. No one could make an inventory or catalogue more appetising than he, and his instinct for reality usually kept him reticent at the right moment. He never overdoes his detail, or exceeds his power.

For instance in *Roxana*, he stops short in his narrative and observes artfully, she "fell into well-deserved misery," without further specification.

Nowhere is the power of detail better used than in the *History of the Plague Year*. At the time of the Plague, Defoe was only six years old; it is obvious, therefore, that beyond a few childish impressions he could not draw upon personal experience for his detailed and vivid account. But he had heard, no doubt from friends and relations, about the visitation, and in any case there were many books dealing with the event in his library upon which he could draw. For the rest, there was the literary genius of the man—a genius that achieved its effects by the apparent simplicity of its means.

"A Journal of the Plague Year: being observations or memorials of the most remarkable occurrences as well public as private, which happened in London during the last visitation in 1665, written by a Citizen who continued all the while in London, never made public before."

Here, at the outset, is struck the note of matter-of-fact realism, and never throughout the work is the illusion removed that you are reading the strictly veracious account of an eye-witness; as for instance, the ghastly scene in Tokenhouse Yard, Lothbury, where a woman looking out of window "gave three frightful screeches, and then cried, 'Oh! death, death, death!' in a most inimitable tone, and which struck me with horror and a chilliness in my very blood."

(*c*) *His Interest in Contemporary Life.*—Defoe had a thorough knowledge of men and women, not of the noblest souls perhaps, but of good average humanity. He knew the infirmities of our nature, realising that there was something of a rogue in most men, and no little of the rake in most women, and that even the most virtuous and straitlaced like to read about the shady side of life.

So he gave his public—pirates and pickpockets, and loose women, and even threw in a few backslidings

in the case of Crusoe; and the public read, enjoyed, and thanked Heaven they were not as these creatures were.

Defoe might have treated the flotsam and jetsam of life very differently. He might have shed a humanitarian glow around them as Dickens would: he might have shocked us by painting in real colours all the depravity, and hopelessness, and animalism, as Gorky would. He might have taken them with the tolerant humour and easy good-nature of Thomas Nash; but he was not built like that, and though no doubt he could have made them much more *alive* than he did, he had to suit his public. We must not be too hard on him for that.

His interest in contemporary life made him realise exactly what the Englishman is; what his likes and dislikes are; and he reproduces these in *Crusoe*. He meets a savage and preaches at him with true missionary zeal. He carried his prejudices into other countries. They must give way to him, for he is an *Englishman*. But if he has the limitations of the Saxon, he has also his finer qualities; a sense of justice, and a dislike of humbug.

What does this mean?

It means that he eschewed the sentimental appeal; he let the facts of his story carry with them their own implication.

To the general reader this is somewhat of a disadvantage, especially when we recall Defoe's avowedly moral aim. Dotting the i's, crossing the t's are not always necessary to drive home a point of view; but it established a kind of personal sympathy with the reader, and precludes misunderstanding. On the other hand, English writers are so prone to excess of sentimentalism, and to so much underlining, that the restraint and bald impersonality of Defoe are not without compensation; and in his pamphlets he can be as unequivocal and as *ad captandum*, as his famous predecessor in the art of pamphleteering—Milton.

In *The Poor Man's Plea* (c. 1698) he had attacked, with uncompromising directness, the injustice of the laws against immorality, of the distinction between the law for the rich and the poor. Mr. Blatchford himself could not have written with greater force and ardour. It made him many enemies, but Defoe loved a fight (boxing was an early delight), and he had all Cobbett's intense indignation with anything that smacked of social injustice. He was an accomplished journalist *par excellence*: but a journalist with a mission. It was the kind of journalism we may find to-day in such papers as *Justice* and the *Clarion*; and class criticism in those days was a far different matter. To-day it involves little discomfort beyond reduced advertisement. It meant, then, often imprisonment and punishment.

As a writer he helped to kill the high-falutin romance, so long a favourite; and while his lack of imaginative depth and tenderness give pronounced limitations to his work, and his didacticism is often oppressive, yet with obvious failings he combines considerable and often underrated merits. He was fair-minded and good-hearted, no small matter in those days: a good fighter, who fought honestly in the open, and if his ideals were not very inspiring, he never pretended they were: in short, a sincere, just, kindly, unaffected man.

Jonathan Swift (1667–1745)

Of English parentage, Jonathan Swift was born in Dublin November 30, 1667. After a brief school career at Kilkenny, he went to Trinity College, Dublin; and despite conflict with the college authorities, and no very studious turn of mind, he took his degree in 1686. From his earliest days he grumbled at his position, and abused his uncle who had given him a good education. The maligned relative died in 1688, and Swift was left to rely on his own exertions. Coming to England, he became secretary to Sir William Temple, then living in retirement near Farnham. Lady Temple had been related by kindred to Swift's mother, Abigail Enoch, and Temple took a kind and indulgent interest in his young protégé. Swift's supersensitive nature rebelled gainst the dependency of his position. He considered he was "treated as a schoolboy," and took no account of the disparity between his age and that of Temple, only too ready to construe every passing humour of his patron as a deep slight.

Temple seems to have done all he could for the young man, but was unable to secure him any definite position, beyond obtaining for him, through Lord Capel, the prebend of Kilroot, near Belfast in Ireland, shortly after he had taken priest's orders in 1694. There he stayed for two years, returning to Temple in 1696.

At Kilroot we hear of Swift's first love affair with Miss Waring, an heiress, known to us as "Varina," to whom he proposed by letter in 1696, a definite answer to which was left in abeyance by the lady. He, however, corresponded with her till 1700, when a final letter of Swift's, by no means to his credit, ended the matter between them.

Greatly as Swift had grumbled at his position, he seems to have preferred secretarial work for his patron in England to immolation in Ireland. He was certainly of service to Temple, and in turn had opportunity of studying both men and books that served him in excellent stead at a later period. During this time he acted as tutor to Esther Johnson, a humble dependant of Temple's, a child when Swift first met her, who grew up to be a beautiful woman, destined as "Stella" to play a big part in Swift's emotional life.

Sir William Temple died in 1699, and made Swift his literary executor. Up to this time Swift had published nothing of his own work, but had "writ and burnt," as he wrote to a brother cleric, "and writ again upon all manner of subjects, more than perhaps any man in England." *The Battle of the Books* was written in 1697, but did not appear till it was published with *The Tale of A Tub* in 1704.

The year following Temple's death, Swift returned to Ireland with Lord Berkeley, then Deputy, as his secretary and chaplain; in addition to this he was also appointed to a group of small livings near Dublin that brought him an income of £200 a year. Lady Berkeley had "a pious love of sermons," and Swift was called upon to read Boyle's *Discourses* to her. The chaplain, beginning to find Boyle rather

wearisome, wrote his famous *Meditation on a Broomstick*, imposed it on the credulous lady as genuine Boyle, and had the gratification of hearing her praise it to her visitors. Another practical joke perpetrated by him was the well-known one on Partridge the astrologer, who also took it seriously.

Returning to England with Lord Berkeley in 1701, Swift was soon in the midst of a political crisis, throwing all his energies into the cause of the Whigs, and writing on their behalf his pamphlet *On the Dissensions in Athens and Rome*, notwithstanding that, as a churchman, his sympathies were on the whole more in accordance with the policy of the Tories. Neither party, however, realising his hopes, he threw up politics for the time being, and in disgust returned to Ireland in 1709.

All Swift's ambitions were for the Church, he was never a self-seeking man, and his change of politics and final adherence to the Tories arose from their eventually allowing his claim for "First Fruits," after which he aided their cause to the utmost of his power with pen and personal influence. His Tory pamphlet, *The Conduct of the Allies*, appeared on November 27, 1711; a few days later a second edition was printed and sold out in a few hours, and 11,000 were in circulation by the end of January.

While he was in the hey-day of his triumphs in political circles and, as Dr. Johnson has said, "predominating over his companions with very high ascendancy, and probably would bear none over whom he could not predominate," there was another side of the man shown to us in his *Journal to Stella*, a series of letters written to Esther Johnson, whom he had known intimately as a child.

On April 23, 1713, Swift was appointed Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin; this was the first personal recognition of his political work, but as it involved a payment of £1000 for house and fees, was perhaps not so great a reward as it appeared.

Swift seems to have felt acutely the change from the rush of politics and congenial companionship to the loneliness and comparative obscurity of his life in Dublin. "The best and greatest part of my life I spent in England," he wrote about this time; "there I made my friendships and there I left my desires." However this may be, Ireland was in the throes of famine and crime consequent upon the passing of an Act in 1696 restricting trade with the Colonies, and prohibiting the export of woollen manufactures. Swift's sense of justice rebelled at this, and in 1720 he wrote the *Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufactures*, wherein he begs every man and woman to make an earnest resolution "never to appear with one single shred that comes from England." Four years later appeared the famous *Drapier Letters*, which were published anonymously; on their author's identity being disclosed, Swift became the idol of the poor in Ireland, and so greatly did they believe in him that a crowd, having assembled to witness an eclipse, dispersed immediately when some wag said that it had been postponed by order of the Dean.

In 1708 Swift had made the acquaintance of "Vanessa"—Hester Vanhomrigh—an intellectual and accomplished woman whose love for him was the tragedy of her life; his rage at a letter she had written to "Stella" brought their friendship of fifteen years to an abrupt conclusion, and caused her death from grief and jealousy, in 1723. Leaving directions in her will that Swift's poems and letters to her should be published, the poems appeared in 1728 under the title of *Cadenus and Vanessa*, but the letters were not published till after his death.

Gulliver's Travels was published in 1726. Two years later (1728) Swift's beloved "Stella" died—"the truest, most virtuous, and valuable friend that I, or any other person, was ever blessed with."

The loss of his friend Sheridan in 1738, and the gradual passing away of all those great intellects with whom he had fraternised, combined with the shadow of insanity that was overclouding his brain, made his last years more and more lonely and helpless, and at length he lost all means of communication with the world. Death came and released him on October 19, 1745, and he lies buried with "Stella" in his own cathedral of St. Patrick's, Dublin.

His Work

"Swift was a wild beast who worried and baited all mankind almost, because his intolerable arrogance, vanity, pride, and ambition were disappointed." Thus Horace Walpole. Here is another verdict in a very different key: "By far the greatest man of that time, I think, was Jonathan Swift. . . He saw himself in a world of confusion and falsehood, no eyes were clearer to see it than his." Such are the words of Thomas Carlyle.

In these varying tributes we may read the judgment of the eighteenth century and the judgment of the Victorian age, on this great prose satirist.

Each era on the side of exaggeration; Walpole's coolly clever and languidly brilliant gifts, his easy-going nature and dilettante cast of mind, were so remote from Swift's powers in quality and character, as to make appreciation a mental impossibility. Carlyle's intense earnestness and his eye for forceful personality, certainly gave him far greater insight into Swift's character and genius, but made him unduly tolerant of those faults and weaknesses, that assuredly must be considered if we wish to deal fairly with the man in relation to his age.

Some clue may be found, perhaps, if we consider what the special quality was of Swift's satire.

In certain respects Swift resembles Defoe. There is direct vigour and matter-of-factness about his satire, and like Defoe, he uses irony to drive home a point. Less wide in his range than Defoe, and more savage in his methods, he sounds profounder depths, and exhibits a more cosmic humour than his contemporary. The humour is often as bitter as gall, but its power and appositeness are beyond question. Tragedy is written across Swift's life. His intellectual audacity stood in his own pathway. There could be no preferment for the churchman who so mercilessly ridiculed theology in *The Tale of a Tub*; no happiness for a lover so capricious and inscrutable as he; no content for a man who, in an age when the emotional life was kept so sternly subjected, looked out upon life with such fierce and passionate intensity of feeling. He is like a man

born out of due time; and though he stands alone among the men of his age, unable to endure the easy cynicism of men like Gay, who held life to be a jest, or to follow the genial humanity of Steele and the graceful urbanities of Addison, yet he was not great enough to rise above them. On the critical side he is supremely great; none could despise the world and mankind with such brilliant fury. But he had no alternative; nothing to put in the place of material ambition. He is at heart as worldly as Defoe; and it is part of his tragedy that he recognises the fact.

The interest of *The Battle of the Books*—Swift's first important work—for the literary student to-day lies entirely in the flashes of satiric fancy with which he lights up his subject. The academic controversy of modern *versus* ancient which excited so many of Swift's contemporaries seems to us both foolish and futile. Yet, however indifferent we may be to the controversial merits of the essay, it is worth reading for its amusing apologue of the bee and the spider. The inconclusive finish to the battle is a good touch. Literary combatants are never slain.

To an extent also the musty flavour of ancient controversies hangs over *The Tale of a Tub*; but the work stands on a much higher level. There is no fiercer satire in the language than this attack on the churches. Written from the point of view of an Anglican who wished to show up the folly and wickednesses of other religious communions, Swift practically riddles his own church with the shot intended only for the enemy—and the end of the onslaught sees all theologies in ruin. As an ironic exposure of human infirmities, *The Tale of a Tub* is a masterpiece, though its unrelieved cynicism makes it oppressive reading. Beside Swift's philosophy of life, even Schopenhauer's seems comparatively cheerful. There is a far deeper pessimism in Swift's description of happiness as a perpetual possession of being well deceived than the German thinker's definition of it being a condition of negative pain: After all, why not be well deceived, says Swift in effect: even the madman has his advantages, and illusions are essential to our well-being in life. So let us be fools among knaves, if we would have any regard for our comfort. Less elaborate, though very little inferior in intellectual power, is Swift's brilliant "argument to prove that the abolishing of Christian England may, as things now stand, be attended with some inconvenience." Swift's profound contempt for the average man is tremendous. Beside the cold fury of his sarcasm, Carlyle's dictum, "Thirty millions—mostly fools," reads like a mere flash of petulance. Swift disbelieved absolutely in freedom of discussion and joined issue with the Deists who held that Religion, being based on reason, would be strengthened by free inquiry. "Free inquiry!" sneered the Dean: "why, the bulk of the people are as well qualified for flying as for thinking." Free thought must inevitably lead to anarchy and immorality. This is the rationale of Swift's religious standpoint. We need religion as the one security for social order.

But Swift is not always using heavy artillery, and there are some agreeable specimens of his fancy shooting in the *Rules to Servants*, and his burlesque, *Petition of Frances Harris*: better still in his *Lines on the Death of Dr. Swift*, which are not disfigured by the foulness that besmirches so much of his satire:

"See, how the dean begins to break!
Poor gentleman! he droops apace!
You plainly find it in his face.
That old vertigo in his head
Will never leave him till he's dead.
Besides his memory decays:
He recollects not what he says;
He cannot call his friends to mind;
Forgets the place where last he dined;
Plies you with stories o'er and o'er—
He told them fifty times before.
How does he fancy we can sit
To hear his out-of-fashion wit?
But he takes up with younger folks,
Who for his wine will bear his jokes.
Faith, he must make his stories shorter,
Or change his comrades once a quarter:
In half the time he talks them round,
There must another set be found.

For poetry he's past his prime,
He takes an hour to find a rhyme:
His fire is out, his wit decayed,
His fancy sunk, his Muse a jade.
I'd have him throw away his pen—
But there's no talking to some men.

And then their tenderness appears
By adding largely to my years:
'He's older than he would be reckoned,
And well remembers Charles the Second.
He hardly drinks a pint of wine;
And that, I doubt, is no good sign.
His stomach, too, begins to fail
Last year we thought him strong and hale;
But now he's quite another thing;
I wish he may hold out till spring.'
They hug themselves and reason thus:
'It is not yet so bad with us.'

In such a case they talk in tropes,
And by their fears express their hopes.
Some great misfortune to portend
No enemy can match a friend.
With all the kindness they profess,
The merit of a lucky guess.
(When daily How-d'ye's come of course,
And servants answer: Worse and worse!)
Would please them better than to tell,
That, 'God be praised! the dean is well.'
Then he who prophesied the best,
Approves his foresight to the rest:
'You know I always feared the worst,
And often told you so at first.'
He'd rather choose that I should die,
Than his prediction prove a lie.
Not one foretells I shall recover,
But all agree to give me over.

. . . . . .

My good companions, never fear:
For, though you may mistake a year,
Though your prognostics run too fast,
They must be verified at last.

Behold the fatal day arrive!
How is the dean? 'He's just alive.'
Now the departing prayer is read;
'He hardly breathes.' 'The dean is dead.'

Before the passing-bell begun,
The news through half the town is run:
'Oh! may we all for death prepare!
What has he left? and who's his heir?'
'I know no more than what the news is:
'Tis all bequeathed to public uses.'
'To public uses! there's a whim!
What had the public done for him?

Mere envy, avarice and pride:
He gave it all—but first he died.
And had the dean in all the nation
No worthy friend, no poor relation?
So ready to do strangers good,
Forgetting his own flesh and blood!' . . .

Now Curll his shop from rubbish drains:
Three genuine tomes of Swift's *Remains!*
And then to make them pass the glibber,
Revised by Tibbalds, Moore, and Cibber.
He'll treat me as he does my betters,
Publish my will, my life, my letters;
Revive the libels born to die,
Which Pope must bear, as well as I.

Here shift the scene, to represent
How those I love my death lament.
Poor Pope will grieve a month, and Gay
A week, and Arbuthnot a day.
St. John himself will scarce forbear
To bite his pen, and drop a tear.
The rest will give a shrug, and cry:
'I'm sorry—but we all must die!' . . .

One year is past; a different scene!
No further mention of the dean,
Who now, alas! no more is missed,
Than if he never did exist.
Where's now the favourite of Apollo?
Departed; and his works must follow;
Must undergo the common fate;
His kind of wit is out of date.

Some country squire to Lintot[1] goes,
Inquires for Swift in verse and prose.
Says Lintot: 'I have heard the name;
He died a year ago.' 'The same.'
He searches all the shop in vain:
'Sir, you may find them in Duck-lane.
I sent them, with a load of books,
Last Monday to the pastry-cook's.'

No understanding of Swift's undoubted fascination for women is possible, however, without studying his *Journal to Stella* and the verses to Vanessa. The first is especially important, for it reveals beneath the harsh violence of the man, a vein of curious tenderness and whimsicality. The *Journal* is written in a kind of sentimental shorthand, the writer using queer abbreviations for his caressing endearments:

"And now let us come and see what this saucy dear letter of M.D. (my dear) says. Come out letter, come out from between the sheets; here it is underneath and it will not come out. Come out again, I say. . . . Here it is. . . . Hold up your head then like a good letter. . . . Farewell M.D. M.D. M.D."

Of all Swift's books, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726–7) has proved the most popular. The reason is not hard to seek, for the earlier portions appeal both to the child and to the grown-up, and the parable he tells is thrown into the form of a pseudo-realistic narrative, whose secret he had learned from Defoe. There is playfulness of fancy, a lightness of touch about the early books, a simplicity of treatment, that gives it a readier access of appeal. The later books are clouded by the insanity of Swift's last days, and the pleasant fantasy degenerates into nauseous bitterness. Yet, while allowing the superior attractiveness of Gulliver, the greater originality and intellectual power of *The Tale of a Tub* is equally incontestable. That work exhibits best, Swift's genius as a satirist.

As a force in letters, Swift has impressed our own time more than he did his own. No ironist save Defoe, or Fielding in *Jonathan Wild*, proved as clear and unequivocal as he; and Swift's irony, unlike theirs, glows with consuming intensity of feeling. The words are like molten lead. Like other great stylists of the time—Pope and Addison—he achieves a triumphant clarity; but unlike Pope he is never epigrammatic, unlike Addison he has little plasticity of form. He is plainly and forcefully clear, with a greater strength than theirs; all the more striking and cogent for his lack of ornament. There is no contemporary who impresses one more by his marked sincerity and concentrated passion.

Swift's great value as a writer lies in his challenge to an easy, complacent optimism, and yet even here the man is greater than his work. He remains a tragic and sombre figure, reviling his age and crushed by it; an Ajax defying the lightning and smitten with blindness. Yet we realise his underlying greatness of genius the more clearly as we place him beside other writers of the time—Pope, Addison, Steele—and see how they dwindle in importance. For the issues he touched upon and the imagination he brought to bear upon them, vastly transcended theirs. No finer thing has been said of his tragic life than was said by Thackeray: "To think of him is like thinking of the ruin of a great Empire."

Preface to "The Tale of a Tub"

But to return: I am sufficiently instructed in the principal duty of a preface, if my genius were capable of arriving at it. Thrice have I forced my imagination to make the tour of my invention, and thrice it has returned empty; the latter having been wholly drained by the following treatise. Not so my more successful brethren the moderns; who will by no means let slip a preface or dedication, without some notable distinguishing stroke to surprise the reader at the entry, and kindle a wonderful expectation of what is to ensue. Such was that of a most ingenious poet, who, soliciting his brain for something new, compared himself to the hangman, and his patron to the patient: this was *insigne, recens, indictum ore alio*. When I went through that necessary and noble course of study, I had the happiness to observe many such egregious touches, which I shall not injure the authors by transplanting: because I have remarked, that nothing is so very tender as a modern piece of wit, and which is apt to suffer so much in the carriage. Some things are extremely witty today, or fasting, or in this place, or at eight o'clock, or over a bottle, or spoke by Mr. What'd'y'call'm, or in a summer's morning: any of the which, by the smallest tranposal or misapplication, is utterly annihilate. Thus wit has its walks and purlieus, out of which it may not stray the breadth of a hair, upon peril of being lost. The moderns have artfully fixed this mercury, and reduced it to the circumstances of time, place, and person. Such a jest there is, that will not pass out of Covent Garden; and such a one that is nowhere intelligible but at Hyde Park Corner. Now, though it sometimes tenderly affects me to consider, that all the towardly passages I shall deliver in the following treatise, will grow quite out of date and relish with the first shifting of the present scene, yet I must needs subscribe to the justice of this proceeding: because, I cannot imagine why we should be at the expense to furnish wit for succeeding ages, when the former have made no sort of provision for ours: wherein I speak the sentiment of the very newest, and consequently the most orthodox refiners, as well as my own. However, being extremely solicitous that every accomplished person, who has got into the taste of wit calculated for the present month of August, 1697, should descend to the very bottom of all the sublime, throughout this treatise; I hold fit to

[1] A bookseller.

lay down this general maxim: whatever reader desires to have a thorough comprehension of an author's thoughts, cannot take a better method than by putting himself into the circumstances and postures of life, that the writer was in upon every important passage, as it flowed from his pen: for this will introduce a parity, and strict correspondence of ideas, between the reader and the author. Now, to assist the diligent reader in so delicate an affair, as far as brevity will permit, I have recollected, that the shrewdest pieces of this treatise were conceived in bed in a garret; at other times, for a reason best known to myself, I thought fit to sharpen my invention with hunger; and, in general, the whole work was begun, continued, and ended, under a long course of physic, and a great want of money. Now, I do affirm, it will be absolutely impossible for the candid perusor to go along with me in a great many bright passages, unless, upon the several difficulties emergent, he will please to espacitate and prepare himself by these directions. And this I lay down as my principal *postulatum*.

Because I have professed to be a most devoted servant of all modern forms, I apprehend some curious wit may object against me, for proceeding thus far in a preface, without declaiming, according to the custom, against the multitude of writers, whereof the whole multitude of writers most reasonably complain. I am just come from perusing some hundreds of prefaces wherein the authors do, at the very beginning, address the gentle reader concerning this enormous grievance. Of these I have preserved a few examples, and shall set them down as near as my memory has been able to retain them.

One begins thus:—For a man to set up for a writer, when the press swarms with, &c.

Another:—The tax upon paper does not lessen the number of scribblers, who daily pester, &c.

Another:—When every little would-be wit takes pen in hand, 'tis in vain to enter the lists, &c.

Another:—To observe what trash the press swarms with, &c.

Another:—Sir, It is merely in obedience to your commands that I venture into the public; for who upon a less consideration would be of a party with such a rabble of scribblers, &c.

Now, I have two words in my own defence against this objection. First, I am far from granting the number of writers a nuisance to our nation, having strenuously maintained the contrary, in several parts of the following discourse. Secondly, I do not well understand the justice of this proceeding; because I observe many of these polite prefaces to be not only from the same hand, but from those who are most voluminous in their several productions. Upon which I shall tell the reader a short tale.

A mountebank, in Leicester Fields, had drawn a huge assembly about him. Among the rest, a fat unwieldy fellow, half stifled in the press, would be very fit crying out, "Lord! what a filthy crowd is here! pray, good people, give way a little. Bless me! what a devil has raked this rabble together! z——ds! what squeezing is this! honest friend, remove your elbow." At last a weaver, that stood next him, could hold no longer. "A plague confound you (said he) for an overgrown sloven; and who, in the devil's name, I wonder, helps to make up the crowd half so much as yourself? Don't you consider, with a pox, that you take up more room with that carcass than any five here? Is not the place as free for us as for you? Bring your own guts to a reasonable compass, and be d——n'd, and then I'll engage we shall have room enough for us all."

There are certain common privileges of a writer, the benefit whereof, I hope, there will be no reason to doubt; particularly, that where I am not understood, it shall be concluded, that something very useful and profound is couched underneath: and again, that whatever word or sentence is printed in a different character, shall be judged to contain something extraordinary either of wit or sublime.

As for the liberty I have thought to take of praising myself, upon some occasions or none, I am sure it will need no excuse, if a multitude of great examples be allowed sufficient authority: for it is here to be noted, that praise was originally a pension paid by the world; but the moderns, finding the trouble and charge too great in collecting it, have lately bought out the fee-simple; since which time the right of presentation is wholly in ourselves. For this reason it is, that when an author makes his own eulogy, he uses a certain form to declare and insist upon his title, which is commonly in these or the like words, "I speak without vanity:" which I think plainly shows it to be a matter of right and justice. Now I do here once for all declare, that in every encounter of this nature through the following treatise, the form aforesaid is implied; which I mention, to save the trouble of repeating it on so many occasions.

It is a great ease to my conscience, that I have written so elaborate and useful a discourse, without one grain of satire intermixed; which is the sole point wherein I have taken leave to dissent from the famous originals of our age and country. I have observed some satirists to use the public much at the rate that the pedants do a naughty boy, ready horsed for discipline: first, expostulate the case, then plead the necessity of the rod from great provocations, and conclude every period with a lash. Now, if I know anything of mankind, these gentlemen might very well spare their reproof and correction: for there is not, through all nature, another so callous and insensible a member as the world's posteriors, whether you apply to it the toe or the birch. Besides, most of our late satirists seem to lie under a sort of mistake; that because nettles have the prerogative to sting, therefore all other weeds must do so too. I make not this comparison out of the least design to detract from these worthy writers; for it is well known among mythologists, that weeds have the pre-eminence over all other vegetables; and therefore the first monarch of this island, whose taste and judgment were so acute and refined, did very wisely root out the roses from the collar of the order, and plant the thistles in their stead, as the nobler flower of the two. For which reason it is conjectured by profounder antiquaries, that the satirical itch, so prevalent in this part of our island, was first brought among us from beyond the Tweed. Here may it long flourish and abound; may it survive and neglect the scorn of the world, with as much ease and contempt as the world is insensible to the lashes of it. May their own dullness, or that of their party, be no discouragement for the authors to proceed; but let them remember, it is with wits as with razors, which are never so apt to cut those they are employed on as when they have lost their edge. Besides, those whose teeth are too rotten to bite, are best, of all others, qualified to revenge that defect with their breath.

Preface to "The Battle of the Books"

Satire is a sort of glass wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own; which is the chief reason for that kind reception it meets with in the world, and that so very few are offended with it. But, if it should happen otherwise, the danger is not great; and I have learned from long experience never to apprehend mischief from those understandings I have been able to provoke: for anger and fury, though they add strength to the sinews of the body, yet are found to relax those of the mind, and to render all its efforts feeble and impotent.

There is a brain that will endure but one scumming; let the owner gather it with discretion, and manage his little stock with husbandry; but, of all things, let him beware of bringing it under the lash of his betters, because that will make it all bubble up into impertinence, and he will find no new supply. Wit without knowledge being a sort of cream, which gathers in a night to the top, and by a skilful hand may be soon whipped into froth; but once scummed away, what appears underneath will be fit for nothing but to be thrown to the hogs.

On Genteel and Ingenious Conversation

Perhaps the critics may accuse me of a defect in my following system of polite conversation; but there is one great ornament of discourse, whereof I have not produced a single example; which indeed I purposely omitted, for some reasons that I shall immediately offer; and, if those reasons will not satisfy the male part of my gentle readers, the defect may be applied in some manner by an appendix to the second edition; which appendix shall be printed by itself, and sold for six-pence, stitched, and with a marble cover, that my readers may have no occasion to complain of being defrauded.

The defect I mean is, my not having inserted into the body of my book all the oaths now most in fashion for embellishing discourse, especially since it could give no offence to the clergy, who are seldom or never admitted to these polite assemblies. And it must be allowed, that oaths well chosen are not only very useful expletives to matter, but great ornaments of style.

What I shall offer here in my own defence upon this important article, will, I hope, be some extenuation of my fault.

First, I reasoned with myself, that a just collection of oaths, repeated as often as the fashion requires, must have enlarged this volume at least to double the bulk, whereby it would not only double the charge, but likewise make the volume less commodious for pocket carriage.

Secondly, I have been assured by some judicious friends, that themselves have known certain ladies to take offence (whether seriously or not) at too great a profusion of cursing and swearing, even when that kind of ornament was not improperly introduced, which, I confess, did startle me not a little, having never observed the like in the compass of my own several acquaintance, at least for twenty years past. However, I was forced to submit to wiser judgments than my own.

Thirdly, as this most useful treatise is calculated for all future times, I consider, in this maturity of my age, how great a variety of oaths I have heard since I began to study the world, and to know men and manners. And here I found it to be true, what I have read in an ancient poet:

> "For, now-a-days, men change their oaths
> As often as they change their clothes."

In short, oaths are the children of fashion; they are in some sense almost annuals, like what I observed before of cant words; and I myself can remember about forty different sets. The old stock oaths, I am confident, do not amount to above forty-five, or fifty at most; but the way of mingling and compounding them is almost as various as that of the alphabet.

(c) LESSER PROSE WRITERS

Among the lesser prose writers of the time is Dr. John Arbuthnot, the great-hearted friend of Swift, of whom Swift said: "If the world had but a dozen Arbuthnots in it, I would burn my travels."

Born in 1667, a student at Aberdeen and Oxford, Arbuthnot graduated M.D. at the Scotch University of St. Andrews. Called upon to attend Prince George during a sudden attack of illness while at Epsom, he speedily became a favourite with the royal family, and in 1705 was appointed physician to Queen Anne. At her death came reverses which he bore with equanimity, and after twelve years of ill-health, died in 1735. He was a noted physician, a ripe scholar, a wit who could hold his own with the best of his contemporaries, a collaborator with Pope and the friend of John Gay.

As a writer he lacked the originality of the great prose men; followed frankly the literary methods of Swift, avoiding the bitterness, and did much to popularise his master by drawing attention to his genius.

Arbuthnot's most characteristic work is his *History of John Bull* (1712). It gives an amusing picture of the social history of the age, somewhat in the vein of Swift. The political and religious trickery of the times, the disloyalty of the Whigs, and the methods of the various Church parties, are dealt with in a spirit of raillery, that held abundant good sense in solution. More easily followed to-day by the modern reader, is the amusing *jeu d'esprit, The Art of Political Lying.*

Of his medical writings, his *Essay concerning the Nature of Aliments* (1731), pioneers the literature of dietetics, so popular at the present time, and his *Essay concerning the Effect of Air on the Human Body* showed how advanced he was for his times in scientific research.

Literary criticism, stimulated by such French models as Boileau, had become a thing of vital influence in the hands of Dryden. Thomas Rymer, to whom Dryden refers, was a writer of vigour and ability, but with little of Dryden's insight and sane judgment. "Dryden's criticism," as Johnson said, has "the majesty of a queen; Rymer's has the ferocity of a tyrant."

Neither Rymer nor his successor, John Dennis, another critic of the truculent school, showed any real appreciation of the greatness of Shakespeare. He applied the moral standard to literature with a narrow rigour that sounds strange in modern ears.

"Every tragedy ought to be a very solemn lecture, inculcating a particular providence, and showing it plainly protecting the good, and chastising the bad, or at least the violent!" After this it is not surprising to find that he preferred the *Œdipus* to *Julius Cæsar*, since "the *Œdipus* is very religious and *Julius Cæsar* is irreligious."

More agreeable and informing than Dennis' lucubrations, is Colley Cibber's *Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian* (1740); for with all his excessive vanity and sentimentalism, Cibber was a lively writer and no mean critic of the drama.

II. PROSE: (d) Diarists and Letter Writers (Pepys and Evelyn, &c.).

(d) DIARISTS AND LETTER WRITERS

An important department of English prose in this period is furnished by the Diarists and Letter Writers. Their influence—especially that of the supreme diarist Pepys—was considerable, both upon the development of style and the broadening of subject matter. They gave colloquial ease and familiarity to the manner, actuality to the matter; and helped to prepare the way for the rich blossoming of fiction that took place during the later years of the era.

Of diarists there were many; we may note the political diary of Narcissus Luttrel (*Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs* 1678–1714); the *Lives* of Roger North—memoirs of himself and his brothers,

of little historical importance, but naïvely amusing in style; the more historical and less amusing *Diary* of John Evelyn; the *Mémoires de la Vie du Comte de Gramont*, a remarkable piece of French literature, praised by Voltaire for its admirable style, yet curiously enough written by an Englishman, Anthony Hamilton, with the Court of Charles II as its chief subject matter. Then there is the *Diary* of Henry Sidney, a diplomat at The Hague, dealing with some important negotiations of William III, and including some letters of considerable interest from Sir William Temple and others.

The *Diary* of the Countess of Warwick (1666–1677), the only part of which is now extant, exhibits a writer with a well-marked note of reflective piety in her work. Finally, we have the buoyant, lucid, and high-spirited *Memoirs of Lady Fanshawe*; the tranquil, high-toned *Letters* of Rachel, Lady Russell, the widow of the unfortunate Lord Russell; and the pathetic *Memoirs of Queen Mary II.*

Even among these, only two are of special literary importance, the Countess of Warwick and Lady Fanshawe. North's interest lies in his audacious use of slang; while Evelyn's importance is almost entirely historical.

But the master diarist is SAMUEL PEPYS.

To his contemporaries Samuel Pepys was little more than a Government official—connected with the Navy Office; to us he is the author of the most fascinating *Diary* in the language. Born in London, February 23, 1633, son of John Pepys, tailor, Samuel spent his early childhood in Kingsland and Hackney—"Thence to Kingsland, by my nurse's house, Goody Lawrence, where my brother Tom and I were kept when young." He went to school at Huntingdon, moving afterwards to St. Paul's. At this time he was Cromwellian in his sympathies, and he records in his *Diary* how alarmed he was (December 1660), lest an old school friend should recollect a saying of his on the day of Charles' execution:

> "Here dined with us . . . Mr. Christmas, my old schoolfellow, with whom I had much talk. He did remember that I was a Roundhead when I was a boy, and I was much afraid that he would have remembered the words that I said the day the King was beheaded (that, were I to preach upon him my text would be, 'The memory of the wicked shall rot')."

Perhaps this "deadly drinker" (as Pepys terms him) did not think the exuberance of a Huntingdon schoolboy of special moment.

From St. Paul's to Cambridge (1651), where he was oft "scandalously overserved with drink," among other matters of a more dignified and academic order. After that we know nothing of his doings until his marriage in 1655 to the pretty and penniless fifteen-year-old daughter of an exiled Huguenot. As he had no money of his own at this time, things would have gone ill had it not been for Sir Edward Montague (afterwards Lord Sandwich), who took the young couple into his own house and looked after them.

A small clerkship to one of the Exchequer Tellers seemed to Pepys quite a notable affair after this. The salary was £50, but the amount seemed princely to Pepys, who writes in exultant strain about his "private condition" being "very handsome," and revels in the sense of luxury afforded by the house in Axe Yard, Westminster, and a maid-servant of their own; after the small room in his kinsman's house, no doubt it seemed quite palatial. And from this time forward his financial fortunes, faithfully recorded, rise steadily. The *Diary* was started in 1660, and in the same year he obtains a position on the Navy Board worth to him about £250, exclusive of extras. He soon showed considerable ability in the discharge of his duties, which were certainly not light at that critical period. Axe Yard is exchanged for Seething Lane, and here lived man and wife for the whole time during which the *Diary* was written—that is to say, for nine years.

His ambition was to become the historian of the Navy, but although he held such a task "sorts mightily with my genius," he published nothing but some dry *Memoirs*, though he made a great array of material, as the Pepysian Collection shows.

During the time of the Plague, he and his clerks lodged at Greenwich, though he went up to town for the meetings at the Navy Office; his wife he had sent to Woolwich. His pluck in sticking to his work during the Plague, and his demeanour during the Great Fire, reflect great credit upon him.

The Navy Board had a bad time in 1667, for the famous insult of De Ruyter in the Medway had angered the Parliament, and when peace was concluded Pepys and his colleagues were called to account. It fell upon him to prepare the defence, which he did with many misgivings, but fortified by mulled sack and neat brandy, "whereby he did find himself in better order as to courage truly," he acquits himself well before a crowded House, and gleefully records with amusing vanity the pleasant things said to him. "All the world that was within hearing did congratulate me, and cry up my speech as the best thing they ever heard."

At any rate we feel that he is honestly entitled to the inevitable dinner party and theatre at the close of the day.

In the autumn of 1669 his wife died of a fever, shortly after returning from a tour in France and Holland. Before this sad event in his life his own bad health, chiefly failing eyesight, compelled him to close his unique *Diary*.

In 1673 he is appointed Secretary for the Affairs of the Navy, and in the same year his Parliamentary longings saw fruition. In 1676 he became Master of the Trinity House, and in the following year of the Clothworkers' Company, to whom he gave a silver cup, still preserved. He sat in the Short Parliament of 1679 as Member for Harwich, and the same year got involved in the Popish Plot. Though committed to the Tower, he was subsequently discharged (1680). Evelyn firmly believed in his innocence, and has recorded his opinion in his *Diary*.

After his retirement in 1690 he lived chiefly at Clapham with his clerk, William Hewer, where he kept up a friendly correspondence with most of the notable men of the day, including his old comrades Evelyn, Sir Isaac Newton, and Sir Christopher Wren. It is said that Dryden imitated Chaucer's "Good Parson" at his request.

He died on May 28, 1703, after months of failing health due to kidney disease, and was buried at St. Olave's, Hart Street, in the same vault as his wife and brother.

His *Diary* remained in the library of Magdalen College, Cambridge, until 1825, when it was printed in part by Lord Braybrooke. Various editions followed, more or less translated; the final and most complete being published in 1893 by Mr. Henry Wheatley, F.S.A.

It is not easy to read Pepys' character aright. On the one hand we have the panegyric of his worthy, serious-minded friend Evelyn, who speaks of his "great integrity," and refers to him as "universally beloved, hospitable, generous, learned in many things, skilled in music, a very great cherisher of learned men." Then there is the frank and ingenuous picture, presented by the Diarist himself, of a man, inquisitive, childish, clear-headed, vain, ambitious, quarrelsome; one who worked faithfully at his post, yet could abandon himself with zest to the pleasure of the moment. Brave in many respects; cowardly in others. In short, a strange mingling of good and indifferent qualities; sometimes contemptible, never entirely odious. But the zest for life, or rather for living, is his most remarkable characteristic. There is scarcely anything which does not interest him in the varied life of the time. It is not the main thoroughfares of life, but the side-issues and curious byways that enchain him. London is to him as a box of toys, and he is for ever examining her assorted treasures with the gleefulness of a child. Out-of-the-way taverns, new fashions in wearing apparel, the mechanism of a watch, the problems of physiology, cake feasts, shipbuilding, a new dish, an old book, a pretty face—one and all never fail to attract him, and one and all he treats with the same childish inquisitiveness and naïve delight.

He reminds the reader sometimes of Hazlitt, sometimes of George Borrow, in the gusto and exuberant garrulity with which he writes. Yet it is not as a work of art, but as a human document that his *Diary* must make its appeal.

One can see by a glance at the portrait of Pepys that we are dealing with a pleasure-loving, contented, good-hearted man of the world. What the portrait does not suggest is the mental versatility of the man; the complexity of his interests. He was no mere *bon vivant*. Fond of music always, he could play four instruments and compose songs. If a supper party awakens in him the anticipation of a "glut of pleasure," he records the "great pleasure" with which he listens to the nightingale. All his delights are violent ones: his emotional sensibility knows no repose: it is always tremulous with some pleasure, whether it be the "infinite delight" of Boyle's *Hydrostatics*, or the "warming" comfort of mulled wine. Even the naval stores are to him a great delight, and the sight of a pretty face provides matter for cheerful recollection during the remainder of the day. He is always respectable, as the average Londoner is respectable in his vices, and in his virtues. Late supper parties and other "alarums and excursions" are duly expiated for by rigid church attendances. One cannot imagine him listening with comfort to the eloquence of Bunyan at Southwark. Mr. Gifford is more to his taste, who shows, "like a wise man, that righteousness is a surer moral way of being rich than sin and villainy." Yet there is no trace of hypocrisy about Pepys, and he is genuinely touched by simple piety, as in his account of Aunt James—"a poor, religious, well-meaning, good soul, talking of nothing but God Almighty, and that with so much innocence that mightily pleased me."

Somewhat circumspect when he starts his *Diary*, and with a conscience sensitive even to wandering thoughts about other women than his wife, it is manifest that in the circle where he moved, and the tone of the time being what it was, he should soon adopt the loose living of the day, until suddenly he awakes to the bitter upbraidings of his wife, to find himself plunged into an acrimonious domestic scandal.

It is hard to sum up Pepys more compendiously and happily than in the phrase of Coleridge—"a pollard man without the top . . . but on this account more broadly branching out from the upper trunk."

Pepys as an Historian

If Pepys may be taken as a good specimen of the intelligent playgoer, Shakespeare was in no great favour at this time. Pepys has little to say, except by way of disparagement, for any of his plays. He admired greatly Betterton the actor, and notices the attempts made to improve the character of the scenery. Plays at Court took place at night, but afternoon performances were still in vogue for the general public. Some of the new theatres, *e.g.* the Drury Lane Theatre, had skylights, but these were of scant value, as witness this entry (1664, June 1):

"Before the play was done it fell such a storm of hail, that we in the middle of the pit were fain to rise, and all the house in a disorder."

Messenger boys were not yet invented to retain a place in a queue, but they had their equivalent:

"To the Duke of York's playhouse at a little past twelve, to get a good place in the pit, and there sending a poor man to keep my place, I out and spent an hour at Martin's my bookseller's, and so back again, when I found the house quite full. But I had my place."

The witty, salacious comedies of the day were nearly always, in Pepys' view, "mightily pleasant," but for the more romantic order of play he has little to say.

"1662.—To the King's Theatre, where we saw *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which I had never seen before, nor shall ever again, for it is the most insipid, ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life."

The following gives us an insight into the Pit manners of the day:

"1666-67.—To the King's House to *The Maid's Tragedy*, but vexed all the while with two talking ladies and Sir Charles Sedley;[1] yet pleased to hear the discourse, he being a stranger. And one of the ladies would and did sit with her mask on all through the play, and being exceedingly witty as ever I heard a woman, did talk most pleasantly with him; but was, I believe, a

[1] A famous wit and man about town.

virtuous woman and of quality. . . . He was mighty witty, and she also making sport with him mighty inoffensively, that more pleasant rencontre I never heard. By that means lost the pleasure of the play wholly, to which both now and then Sir Charles Sedley's exceptions against both words and pronouncing were very pretty."

JOHN EVELYN, the lifelong friend of Pepys, was a man of quite another temperament. He was learned, pedantically careful about his work; scrupulously methodical in his arrangements; an excellent type of the best sort of country gentleman; shrewd and capable in public affairs; large-hearted and loyal as a friend; ready, as Bishop Burnet says, "to contribute everything in his power to perfect other men's endeavours."

Yet despite his learning and his love of the arts, he is a somewhat colourless writer; when compared with Pepys, his prose, though simple and clear, is easily excelled by other notable prosemen of the time.

Born in 1620, at Wotton, of an old Surrey family, John Evelyn received his education at Lewes and Oxford; his antecedents had always been strong supporters of King and Constitution, so on leaving the university in 1642, he joined the King's party at Edgehill as a volunteer, and later in the year he crossed over to Holland, where he stayed for three months. He has been spoken of as "a patriot who kept his loyalty in the most dangerous times; and a Christian who preserved his integrity in the most immoral"—and "a philosopher who viewed every object with a desire to extract from it all the beauty and goodness it contained."

When the Civil War broke out in England, Evelyn took advantage of the opportunity to travel extensively on the Continent, and his famous *Diary*, which he kept from 1642 up to the year 1706, owes much to this period in the many rich and graphic descriptions of the public and private collections that he visited. In 1652 he settled down at Sayes Court, near Deptford, and took such an intense interest in his gardens that they were brought almost to the point of perfection; he wrote *Sylva*, a treatise on arboriculture, in 1664, and *Sculptura* two years earlier, on architecture and the prevention of smoke in London. When the Royal Society took definite form in 1660 he was one of its first members, and for some time acted as secretary.

From 1685–87 Evelyn was Commissioner of the Privy Seal, and Treasurer of Greenwich Hospital from 1695–1703.

Not so boisterous, perhaps, in his outlook upon life as his friend Pepys, he was none the less happy: "For my part," he wrote on one occasion, "I profess that I delight in a cheerful gaiety; affect and cultivate variety; the universe itself were not beautiful without it."

After spending forty-two years among the sylvan beauties of Sayes Court, he returned to his birthplace at Wotton, where he died in 1706.

Here is an example of his work:

"*June* 8, 1667.—To London, alarmed by the Dutch, who were fallen on our fleet at Chatham, by a most audacious enterprise, entering the very river with part of their fleet, doing us not only disgrace, but incredible mischief in burning several of our best men-of-war lying at anchor and moored there, and all this through our most unaccountable negligence in not setting out our fleet in due time. This alarm caused me, fearing the enemy might venture up the Thames even to London (which they might have done with ease, and fired all the vessels in the river, too), to send away my best goods, plate, &c., from my house to another place. The alarm was so great that it put both country and city into fear, a panic and consternation such as I hope I shall never see more; everybody was flying, none knew why or whither."

Although known to most as the Diarist, he was a voluminous and varied writer; gardening, architecture, engraving, painting, navigation; one and all he discoursed upon in his grave and erudite way. He was never a man of the town, as was Pepys.

He was as much interested in the making of cider as Pepys was in drinking it. The Arundel Marbles moved him to the same admiration as a pretty face in the street did his more susceptible friend, and he found the heresy of the Jesuits a more exciting topic than the behaviour of Lady Betty at the playhouse.

Yet we must not regard Evelyn and Pepys as Restoration editions of the young gentlemen in *Sandford and Merton*. Evelyn was by no means a prig, nor, what is equally repellent, a dull dog. Pepys bears testimony to that. Without Pepys' tribute, we might perhaps have had our fears about the social charms of Mr. Evelyn. But when Pepys records the mirthfulness of Evelyn at a party at Greenwich, and how much he contributed to the brightness of the company, we feel assured.

III. THE DRAMA (from Davenant to Sheridan).

THE DRAMA

In September 1642, Puritan sentiment, that had opposed the drama from the time of Roger Ascham and William Stubbes, persistently though without avail, at last triumphed. The triumph lay rather in the lowered vitality of the drama than in the strength of its opponents; for during early Caroline times, less and less had it come to voice the spirit of the nation, more and more had it become an entertainment to pander to the dissolute few. Puritanism, now in the political ascendant, put forth its power to crush the obnoxious theatre, and the Ordinance of September 2 commanded the closing of the theatres and the complete suppression of stage plays. Some attempt was made to defy this mandate, and met with the prompt reprisal of imprisonment for the actors concerned. Now and again indeed, during the Commonwealth, a blind eye was turned to private performances "in noblemen's houses," or amid the multifarious festivities of a fair; but the actor's business became too perilous a one to pursue, for all save a few intrepid, adventurous souls.

With the exception therefore of farcical entertainments of the most popular and boisterous

character, known as "droll humours;" and the performance of semi-dramatic pieces with a strong didactic motive to appease the sentiment of the hour, during the later days of the Commonwealth when the embargo was somewhat relaxed, there is nothing in the shape of drama until the Restoration.

Sir William Davenant and James Shirley, survivals from the palmy days of the theatre, saw to the wants of the Court in the early days of its Renascence. Even in their work, we can trace clearly the vicissitudes the theatre had suffered. Bound up as it had been with the vicissitudes of Royalty, and suffering, like Royalty, from puritan anathemas, it had become a Court function, and was violently anti-puritan in feeling.

The influence of France, dominant in the literary ideals of the new age, is clearly discernible in the drama. Comedy became the fashion, and although there are tragedies in this era, they are very different in calibre from the Elizabethan tragedy, and far inferior in literary and dramatic value. It is essentially the age of comedy, and a comedy that owed much to Gallic inspiration. Davenant, Dryden, Shadwell, Wycherley, Vanbrugh, were indebted to the French comedy of the day for both matter of plot and witty dialogue, and without the great names of Molière, Racine, and Corneille, little would be left of account in the Restoration drama. As in comedy, so in opera, that now became popular in England, French influence is also paramount—witness Dryden's work in this direction.

Passing from general consideration to the consideration of individual names, Davenant's is the first to note. His early attempts at playwriting were made in his thirtieth year; although he never achieved any first-rate work in this direction, his productivity was extraordinarily fertile, about thirty plays being placed to his credit. These plays were written, of course, at a time when the first object of the dramatist was to please the King, and to cater for those French tastes that had now become so prominent.

Starting in *The Wild Gallant* (1663) with a comedy of humour, Jonsonian in pattern, he essayed higher flights in *The Maiden Queen* (1667), *Mariage à la Mode* (1672), and *Amphitryon* (1691). His comedy scenes are better than his tragic efforts, but his wit was not deft enough, nor his humour sufficiently based on first-hand observation of character, to succeed in the theatre. A notable, even remarkable humorist along his own lines, his was not of the quality to tell on the stage.

More successful was his contemporary, "gentle" George Etherege, the companion of Buckhurst. Three plays of merit bear his signature; of these, the first, *The Comical Revenge, or Love in a Tub* (1664), is the least interesting, but it has the merit of being amusing without descending to those obscenities too rife in the drama of the time. The second, *She Would if She Could* (1667), is a bright and ingenious play of manners; and the third, *Sir Fopling Flutter* (1676)—decidedly the best—written on similar lines, has something of that dexterous wit carried to so superlative an excellence by Congreve.

Thomas Shadwell (1640), a man of good family and an out-and-out Whig, succeeded Dryden in the Laureateship and enjoyed a fine vogue as a witty talker as well as an amusing writer. He wrote nearly twenty plays, and unlike Etherege was the reverse of squeamish in his treatment. His merits as a dramatist lie less in his wit, which is never better than Etherege's, often inferior, than in his local colour. With small gift of characterisation, with clumsy technique, he is surprisingly alive in his *mise-en-scène*.

His *Squire of Alsatia* (1669), *Epsom Wells* (1676), and *Bury Fair* (1689), are vigorously vital pictures of well-known seventeenth-century localities. He is at once one of the worst and one of the best of contemporary writers for the stage.

William Wycherley, born in 1640, came of good Shropshire stock, and his residence in France, as a young man, stood him in good stead when he began to write.

His first play, *Love in a Wood* (1672) attracted the attention of the Duchess of Cleveland.

A man of agreeable parts, he impressed his personality upon his contemporaries, and his plays enjoyed considerable popularity. In his old age he made the acquaintance of Pope, and died in 1716.

Love in a Wood and *The Gentleman Dancing Master* (1673) are scarcely above the average reached by many undistinguished writers of the time; but *The Country Wife* (1675) and *The Plain Dealer* (1677), obviously inspired by Molière's *Le Misanthrope*, are, with all their coarseness and occasional prolixities, extremely witty, while the latter play, Wycherley's finest achievement, has the satirical power of Jonson at his best. With much of Shadwell's pictorial skill, he is infinitely superior to him, Etherege, or Dryden, in the bright and vivacious quality of his dialogue.

William Congreve, born 1670, came of a good Staffordshire family and was educated at Trinity College, Dublin. His first play, *The Old Bachelor*, written to amuse himself, had the good fortune to be highly praised by Dryden, and was acted in 1693. *Love for Love* followed in 1695; *The Mourning Bride* in 1697; and *The Way of the World* ushered in the new century. The last, perhaps the most highly esteemed of his plays to-day, was unsuccessful at the time, and smarting with disappointment Congreve abruptly gave up his dramatic writing, if we except an occasional masque produced during the last few months of his life. He died in 1729.

Of his plays, *The Double Dealer*, *Love for Love*, and *The Way of the World* are masterpieces within the limits of the brilliant artificial comedy of the time. Skilful and apt in intrigue, lively and arresting in characterisation, brilliant in verbal felicities, they reveal at once the weakness and strength of their school.

In *The Way of the World* there are touches, moreover, of emotional power; and *The Mourning Bride* reveals, amid much fustian, some measure of tragic force. But Congreve is, of course, above all things a master of comedy.

In construction and grasp of character, Congreve steadily improved with each succeeding play. But from the very first he exhibited himself as a master

of light and witty dialogue. Therein lay his great strength. He has the easy gaiety of Etherege and the satirical force of Wycherley, and speedily he showed how well he could excel these dramatists on their own lines.

The construction of *The Double Dealer* is greatly superior to *The Old Bachelor*, and the dialogue is rich in happy conceits, but the characterisation is of small account. It is merely a peg for the author's wit.

Love for Love is on a higher plane. Here, within well-defined limits, many of the characters have vitality and distinctiveness. The surly-tempered Sir Samson Legend, the fine-natured youthful Valentine, the pretentious impostor, astrologer, and palmist, Foresight, are acutely observed and admirably portrayed. There is a farcical strain in the story less happy in invention, but the play as a whole deserves much of the tremendous praise poured upon it by Dryden.

In *The Way of the World* we have Congreve at his happiest. Construction, characterisation, dialogue are alike brilliant. The story scarcely matters. There is never much resemblance to real life in the plots and machinations of the Restoration drama. This play is no exception in this respect. But such scenes as those where reputations are murdered by gossip, such characters as Mrs. Millamant and Mirabell, such flashes of wit in the talk between Mrs. Marwood and Mrs. Millamant—or for the matter of that any scene where Mrs. Millamant is to the fore—reveal the Restoration drama at its highest point.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

Scene: *A Chocolate House.*

MIRABELL *and* FAINALL *rising from cards,* BETTY *waiting.*

Mir. You are a fortunate man, Mr. Fainall!

Fain. Have we done?

Mir. What you please: I'll play on to entertain you.

Fain. No, I'll give you your revenge another time, when you are not so indifferent; you are thinking of something else now, and play too negligently; the coldness of a losing gamester lessens the pleasure of the winner. I'd no more play with a man that slighted his ill fortune than I'd make love to a woman who undervalued the loss of her reputation.

Mir. You have a taste extremely delicate, and are for refining on your pleasures.

Fain. Prithee why so reserved? Something has put you out of humour.

Mir. Not at all: I happen to be grave to-day, and you are gay; that's all.

Fain. Confess, Millamant and you quarrelled last night after I left you; my fair cousin has some humours that would tempt the patience of a Stoic. What, some coxcomb came in, and was well received by her, while you were by?

Mir. Witwood and Petulant; and what was worse, her aunt, your wife's mother, my evil genius; or to sum up all in her own name, my old Lady Wishfort came in.

Fain. O there it is then! She has a lasting passion for you, and with reason.—What, then my wife was there?

Mir. Yes, and Mrs. Marwood, and three or four more, whom I never saw before. Seeing me, they all put on their grave faces, whispered one another; then complained aloud of the vapours, and after fell into a profound silence.

Fain. They had a mind to be rid of you.

Mir. For which reason I resolved not to stir. At last the good old lady broke through her painful taciturnity with an invective against long visits. I would not have understood her, but Millamant joining in the argument, I rose, and, with a constrained smile, told her, I thought nothing was so easy as to know when a visit began to be troublesome. She reddened, and I withdrew, without expecting her reply.

Fain. You were to blame to resent what she spoke only in compliance with her aunt.

Mir. She is more mistress of herself than to be under the necessity of such a resignation.

Fain. What! though half her fortune depends upon her marrying with my lady's approbation?

Mir. I was then in such a humour, that I should have been better pleased if she had been less discreet.

Fain. Now, I remember, I wonder not they were weary of you; last night was one of their cabal nights; they have them three times a-week, and meet by turns at one another's apartments, where they come together like the coroner's inquest, to sit upon the murdered reputations of the week. You and I are excluded; and it was once proposed that all the male sex should be excepted; but somebody moved that, to avoid scandal, there might be one man of the community; upon which motion Witwood and Petulant were enrolled members.

Mir. And who may have been the foundress of this sect? My Lady Wishfort, I warrant, who publishes her detestation of mankind; and full of the vigour of fifty-five, declares for a friend and retafia; and let posterity shift for itself, she'll breed no more.

Fain. The discovery of your sham addresses to her, to conceal your love to her niece, has provoked this separation; had you dissembled better, things might have continued in the state of nature.

Mir. I did as much as man could, with any reasonable conscience; I proceeded to the very last act of flattery with her, and was guilty of a song in her commendation. Nay, I got a friend to put her into a lampoon, and compliment her with the imputation of an affair with a young fellow, which I carried so far, that I told her the malicious town took notice that she was grown fat of a sudden; and when she lay in of a dropsy, persuaded her she was reported to be in labour. The devil's in't, if an old woman is to be flattered further, unless a man should endeavour personally to debauch her; and that my virtue forbade me. But for the discovery of this amour I am indebted to your friend, or your wife's friend, Mrs. Marwood.

Fain. What should provoke her to be your enemy, unless she has made you advances which you have slighted? Women do not easily forgive omissions of that nature.

Mir. She was always civil to me till of late—I confess I am not one of those coxcombs who are apt to interpret a woman's good manners to her prejudice, and think that she who does not refuse 'em everything, can refuse 'em nothing.

Fain. You are a gallant man, Mirabell; and though you may have cruelty enough not to satisfy a lady's longing, you have too much generosity not to be tender of her honour. Yet you speak with an indifference which seems to be affected, and confesses you are conscious of a negligence.

Mir. You pursue an argument with a distrust that seems to be unaffected, and confesses you are conscious of a concern for which the lady is more indebted to you than is your wife.

Fain. Fy, fy, friend! if you grow censorious I must leave you. I'll look upon the gamesters in the next room.

Mir. Who are they?

Fain. Petulant and Witwood. (*To* BETTY.) Bring me some chocolate. [*Exit.*

Mir. Betty, what says your clock?

Betty. Turned of the last canonical hour, sir. [*Exit.*

Mir. How pertinently the jade answers me! (*Looking on his watch.*)—Ha! almost one o'clock!—O, y'are come!

Enter FOOTMAN.

Well, is the grand affair over? You have been something tedious.

Foot. Sir, there's such coupling at Pancras, that they stand behind one another, as 'twere in a country dance. Ours was the last couple to lead up; and no hopes appearing of despatch; besides the parson growing hoarse, we were afraid his lungs would have failed before it came to our turn; so we drove round to Duke's-place; and there they were rivetted in a trice.

Mir. So, so, you are sure they are married.

Foot. Married and bedded, sir, I am witness.

Mir. Have you the certificate?

Foot. Here it is, sir.

Mir. Has the tailor brought Waitwell's clothes home, and the new liveries?

Foot. Yes, sir.

Mir. That's well. Do you go home again, d'ye hear, and adjourn the consummation till further orders. Bid Waitwell shake his ears, and Dame Partlet rustle up her feathers, and meet me at one o'clock by Rosamond's Pond,[1] that I may see her before she returns to her lady; and as you tender your ears be secret. [*Exeunt.*[2]

Sir JOHN VANBRUGH was born about 1666, and had a varied career, being in turn soldier, herald, and architect. His first play, *The Relapse*, was performed in 1697. This was followed in the next year by *The Provoked Wife*, while *The Confederacy* was not produced until 1735. With the exception of these three plays, there are no writings of any note to his credit. In character he was forceful, energetic, and rugged; a contrast to the less solid if more brilliantly equipped Congreve. He was knighted in 1734, and died twelve years later.

In Vanbrugh's first two plays, we have all the familiar puppets of Restoration comedy, the fops and the fools being treated with more naturalness if less wit than by Congreve, and with far less coarseness. *The Relapse* is remarkable in being the sequel to another man's play (Colley Cibber's), with a slight reshuffling of the characters. In *The Confederacy*, the dramatist breaks fresh ground, and we have a hark back in subject matter to the middle-class plays of Shakespeare's age. There is no better all-round play in this period than *The Confederacy*; in construction, characterisation, and dialogue, it is admirable; never once does the action halt.

In sheer intellectual force, Vanbrugh's work is on a lower plane than Congreve's; but by way of compensation he has a more genial humour, and a genius for farcical development denied to Congreve, who excelled in satire. This gift is most agreeably displayed in *The Relapse*.

Most interesting point of all perhaps, to the modern reader, his plays show a fresher handling of the life of the day than we find usually in the Restoration drama, and the eighteenth-century novelists are certainly indebted to him in their characterisation.

THE CONFEDERACY

Enter BRASS, *solus.*

Brass. Well, surely thro' the world's wide extent, there never appear'd so impudent a fellow as my schoolfellow Dick, pass himself upon the town for a gentleman, drop into all the best company with an easy air, as if his natural element were in the sphere of quality; when the rogue had a kettle-drum to his father, who was hang'd for robbing a church, and has a pedlar to his mother, who carried her shop under her arm. But here he comes.

Enter DICK.

Dick. Well, Brass, what news? Hast thou given my letter to Flippanta?

Brass. I'm but just come; I haven't knock'd at the door yet. But I have a damn'd piece of news for you.

Dick. As how?

Brass. We must quit this country.

Dick. We'll be hang'd first.

Brass. So you will if you stay.

Dick. Why, what's the matter?

Brass. There's a storm coming.

Dick. From whence?

Brass. From the worst point in the compass, the law.

Dick. The law! Why, what have I to do with the law?

Brass. Nothing; and therefore it has something to do with you.

Dick. Explain.

Brass. You know you cheated a young fellow at picquet t'other day, of the money he had to raise his company.

Dick. Well, what then?

Brass. Why, he's sorry he lost it.

Dick. Who doubts that?

Brass. Ay, but that's not all; he's such a fool to think of complaining on't.

Dick. Then I must be so wise to stop his mouth.

Brass. How?

Dick. Give him a little back; if that won't do, strangle him.

Brass. You are very quick in your methods.

Dick. Men must be so that will dispatch business.

Brass. Hark you, colonel, your father dy'd in's bed?

Dick. He might have done, if he had not been a fool.

Brass. Why, he robb'd a church.

Dick. Ay, but he forgot to make sure of the sexton.

Brass. Are not you a great rogue?

Dick. Or I should wear worse clothes.

Brass. Hark you, I would advise you to change your life.

Dick. And turn ballad-singer.

Brass. Not so neither.

Dick. What then?

Brass. Why, if you can get this young wench, reform, and live honest.

Dick. That's the way to be starv'd.

Brass. No, she has money enough to buy you a good place, and pay me into the bargain for helping her to so good a match. You have but this throw left to save you, for you are not ignorant, youngster, that your morals begin to be pretty well known about town; have a care your noble birth and your honourable relations are not discover'd too: there needs but that to have you toss'd in a blanket, for the entertainment of the first company of ladies you intrude into; and then like a dutiful son, you may daggle about with your mother, and sell paint. She's old and weak, and wants somebody to carry her goods after her. How like a dog will you look, with a pair of plod shoes, your hair crop'd up to your ears, and a band-box under your arm!

Dick. Why faith, Brass, I think thou art in the right on't; I must fix my affairs quickly, or Madame Fortune will be playing some of her bitch-tricks with me: Therefore I'll tell thee what we'll do; we'll pursue this old rogue's daughter heartily; we'll thrust his family to purpose, and they shall atone for the rest of mankind.

Brass. Have at her then; I'll about your business presently.

Dick. One kiss—and success attend thee.

[*Exit* DICK.

Brass. A great rogue. Well, I say nothing. But when I have got the thing into a good posture, he shall sign and seal, or I'll have him tumbled out of the house, like a cheese. Now for Flippanta. [*He knocks.*

Enter FLIPPANTA.

Flip. Who's that? Brass!

Brass. Flippanta!

[1] Rosamond's Pond, St. James's Park, "long unmanured to disastrous love," was filled up in 1770.

[2] *The Way of the World*, Act i. sc. 1.

Flip. What want you, rogue's-face?

Brass. Is your mistress dress'd?

Flip. What, already? Is the fellow drunk?

Brass. Why, with respect to her looking-glass, it's almost two.

Flip. What then, fool?

Brass. Why then, it's time for the mistress of the house to come down, and look after her family.

Flip. Pr'ythee don't be an owl. Those that go to bed at night may rise in the morning; we that go to bed in the morning rise in the afternoon.

Brass. When does she make her visits, then?

Flip. By candle-light; it helps off a muddy complexion; we women hate inquisitive sunshine: But do you know that my lady is going to turn good housewife?

Brass. What, is she going to die?

Flip. Die!

Brass. Why, that's the only way to save money for her family.

Flip. No; but she has thought of a project to save chair-hire.

Brass. As how?

Flip. Why, all the company she us'd to keep abroad she now intends shall meet at her own house. Your master has advis'd her to set up a basset-table.

Brass. Nay, if he advis'd her to it, it's right; but has she acquainted her husband with it yet?

Flip. What to do? When the company meet, he'll see them.

Brass. Nay, that's true; as you say, he'll know it soon enough.

Flip. Well, I must be gone; have you any business with my lady?

Brass. Yes, as ambassador from Araminta, I have a letter from her.

Flip. Give it me.

Brass. Hold—and as first minister of state to the colonel, I have an affair to communicate to thee.

Flip. What is't? Quick.

Brass. Why—he's in love.

Flip. With what?

Brass. A woman—and her money together.

Flip. Who is she?

Brass. Corinna.

Flip. What would he be at?

Brass. At her—if she's at leisure.

Flip. Which way?

Brass. Honourably—he has ordered me to demand her of thee in marriage.

Flip. Of me?

Brass. Why, when a man of quality has a mind to a City-fortune, would'st have him apply to her father and mother?

Flip. No.

Brass. No, so I think. Men of our end of the town are better bred than to use ceremony. With a long periwig we strike the lady, with a you-know-what we soften the maid; and when the parson has done his job, we open the affair to the family. Will you slip this letter into her prayer-book, my little queen? It's a very passionate one—it's seal'd with a heart and a dagger; you may see by that what he intends to do with himself.

Flip. Are there any verses in it? If not, I won't touch it.

Brass. Not one word in prose, it's dated in rhyme.

Flip. Well, but have you brought nothing else?

[She takes it.

Brass. Gad forgive me; I'm the forgetfullest dog—I have a letter for you too—here—'tis in a purse, but it's in prose; you won't touch it.

Flip. Yes, hang it, it is not good to be too dainty.

Brass. How useful a virtue is humility! Well, child, we shall have an answer to-morrow, shan't we?

Flip. I can't promise you that; for our young gentlewoman is not so often in my way as she would be. Her father (who is a citizen from the foot to the forehead of him) lets her seldom converse with her mother-in-law and me, for fear she should learn the airs of a woman of quality. But I'll take the first occasion: See, there's my lady; go in, and deliver your letter to her.

[Exeunt.[1]

GEORGE FARQUHAR was born at Londonderry in 1678. Like Congreve he went to Trinity College, Dublin, and afterwards tried "the boards" himself, subsequently joining the army. In personality he is the most volatile and inconsequential of the three later dramatists, as is shown in amorous intrigue, or military adventure, loving the good things of life, yet meeting misfortune with an excellent front. He died in 1707.

His plays are *Love and a Bottle*, amusing but thin, *The Constant Couple*, and *Sir Harry Wildair*, two plays in sequence, in the fashion of Cibber and Vanbrugh, where Peg Woffington had a part that suited her admirably as cheeky Sir Harry. *The Inconstant* (1703), and *The Way to Win Him*, have admirably devised scenes; while in *The Recruiting Officer* (1706) and *The Beaux' Stratagem* (1707) he reached his highest point as a dramatist. The last play especially is unflagging in its humour, and there is an open-air atmosphere about his work (as well as an open-bottle one) that gives it a distinctive place in the Restoration drama.

Vanbrugh broke away to some extent from the pure comedy of manners, wrought to such perfection by Congreve, broadening its boundaries, and sweetening its humours. With Farquhar, the rupture is more thoroughgoing. The artificial note lingers in the earlier plays, but in the later ones he leaves the gallant to his ways, dealing with humbler folk and a more diversified life.

From 1700 a change began to be discernible in stage productions. It was felt perhaps that the appeal was too restricted, and with the spread of coffee-houses, the more general interest in political and social problems, and a change in the manners of the Court, it seemed necessary to strike a more human note.

The drama was soon to feel the rivalry of the Novel and the Newspaper.

To attract the general public, especially the steadily growing middle class, some modification was required in the nature of the drama. COLLEY CIBBER (1671), actor, playwright, Laureate, and Manager of Drury Lane, to some extent met this demand, though of his sixteen surviving plays there is little to be said from the point of view of wit and insight, lively and agreeable as they are in part, for instance *The Careless Husband* and *The Non-Juror*. More interesting work may be found in the budget of SUSANNAH CENTLIVRE (c. 1667–1723), more especially *The Busybody* (1709); and *A Bold Stroke for a Wife* (1717).

STEELE essayed to sentimentalise the drama, with no enduring success. LILLO, pursuing the didactic methods of Steele, achieved some popularity with the "lesson to apprentices"—*George Barnwell*, a melodramatic morality (recently reproduced by the picture palaces). HENRY FIELDING, before he found his *métier* in the novel, burlesqued tragedy amusingly in *Tom Thumb*.

GEORGE COLMAN (1732–1794), Manager of Covent Garden, wrote one play at least that has been acted

[1] *The Confederacy*, Act i. sc. 2.

in the present generation—*The Clandestine Marriage*. Farce and comic opera flourished, and some of the best illustrations of this kind of work survive in Mrs. COWLEY'S (1743–1809) *Belle's Stratagem*; MACKLIN'S *Man of the World* (1784); SAMUEL FOOTE'S *Minor* (1760); TOWNELEY'S *High Life below Stairs* (1759); GAY'S *Beggar's Opera* (1727); while the sentimental drama persisted in CUMBERLAND'S *West Indian* (1771); and HOLCROFT'S *Road to Ruin* (1792).

Then towards the end of the century two great names again stand out in relation to the drama, those of Oliver Goldsmith and Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

GOLDSMITH'S *Good Natured Man* (1768) is excellent in parts; *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) excellent throughout, with a bright, whimsical humour and fresh charm of dialogue not attained since the days of Congreve. Less witty than the great Restoration dramatists, Goldsmith is greatly superior in his humanity and taste.

SHERIDAN, born in Dublin 1751, was the grandson of a witty and brilliant cleric, Dr. Sheridan, the friend of Swift. In 1773 young Sheridan eloped from Bath with the beautiful, accomplished, and short-lived Elizabeth Linley; and his *Rivals*, produced when he was under four-and-twenty, scored an immediate success. Entering Parliament in 1780, he made a reputation on the Whig side as a brilliant speaker, and his speeches against Warren Hastings attracted special attention. He married a second time in 1795, dying in 1816, with bailiffs in the house.

In the first two of his three great plays—*The Rivals* and *The School for Scandal*—he combines the comedy of manners with a sentimental admixture only partially successful. Constructively, both plays are remarkably skilful pieces of work, and of their wit it need only be said that they may challenge equality with Congreve and Vanbrugh, with little of their coarseness.

The Critic is written on more broadly farcical lines, but within its limitations it is a rarely delightful piece of extravaganza, displaying a gift of burlesque of the highest order.

With Sheridan, the great age of artificial comedy closes.

THE CRITIC

Scene: *Tilbury Fort.*

Two SENTINELS *discovered asleep.*

Dang. Tilbury Fort!—very fine indeed!

Puff. Now, what do you think I open with?

Sneer. Faith, I can't guess. . . .

Puff. A clock.—Hark!—(*Clock strikes.*) I open with a clock striking, to beget an awful attention in the audience: it also marks the time, which is four o'clock in the morning, and saves a description of the rising sun, and a great deal about gilding the eastern hemisphere.

Dang. But pray, are the sentinels to be asleep?

Puff. Fast as watchmen.

Sneer. Isn't that odd though at such an alarming crisis?

Puff. To be sure it is,—but smaller things must give way to a striking scene at the opening; that's a rule. And the case is, that two great men are coming to this very spot to begin the piece: now, it is not to be supposed they would open their lips, if these fellows were watching them; so, egad, I must either have sent them off their posts, or set them asleep.

Sneer. Oh, that accounts for it.—But tell us, who are these coming?

Puff. These are they—Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Christopher Hatton. You'll know Sir Christopher by his turning out his toes—famous, you know, for his dancing. I like to preserve all the little traits of character.—Now attend.

Enter Sir WALTER RALEIGH *and* Sir CHRISTOPHER HATTON

"*Sir Christ. True, gallant Raleigh!*"

Dang. What, they have been talking before?

Puff. Oh yes; all the way as they came along.—(*To the* ACTORS.) I beg pardon, gentlemen, but these are particular friends of mine, whose remarks may be of great service to us.—(*To* SNEER *and* DANGLE.) Don't mind interrupting them whenever anything strikes you.

"*Sir Christ. True, gallant Raleigh!*
But oh, thou champion of thy country's fame,
There is a question which I yet must ask;
A question which I never asked before—
What mean these mighty armaments?
This general muster? and this throng of chiefs?"

Sneer. Pray, Mr. Puff, how came Sir Christopher Hatton never to ask that question before?

Puff. What, before the play began?—how the plague could he?

Dang. That's true, i' faith!

Puff. But you will hear what he thinks of the matter.

"*Sir Christ. Alas! my noble friend, when I behold*
Yon tented plains in martial symmetry
Arrayed; when I count o'er yon glittering lines
Of crested warriors, where the proud steed's neigh,
And valour-breathing trumpets' shrill appeal,
Responsive vibrate on my listening ear;
When virgin majesty herself I view,
Like her protecting Pallas, veiled in steel,
With graceful confidence exhort to arms!
When, briefly, all I hear or see bear stamp
Of martial vigilance and stern defence,
I cannot but surmise—forgive, my friend,
If the conjecture's rash—I cannot but
Surmise the state some danger apprehends!"

Sneer. A very cautious conjecture that.

Puff. Yes, that's his character; not to give an opinion but to secure grounds.—Now then.

"*Sir Walt. O most accomplished Christopher! . . .*"

Puff. He calls him by his Christian name, to show that they are on the most familiar terms.

"*Sir Walt. O most accomplished Christopher! I find*
Thy staunch sagacity still tracks the future
In the fresh print of the o'ertaken past."

Puff. Figurative!

"*Sir Walt. Thy fears are just.*
Sir Christ. But where? whence? when? and what
The danger is,—methinks I fain would learn.
Sir Walt. You know, my friend, scarce two revolving suns,
And three revolving moons, have closed their course,
Since haughty Philip, in despite of peace,
With hostile hand hath struck at England's trade.
Sir Christ. I know it well.
Sir Walt. Philip, you know, is proud Iberia's king!
Sir Christ. He is.
Sir Walt. His subjects in base bigotry
And Catholic oppression hold:—while we,
You know, the Protestant persuasion hold.
Sir Christ. We do.
Sir Walt. You know, beside, his boasted armament,
The famed Armada, by the Pope baptized,
With purpose to invade these realms . . .
Sir Christ. Is sailed,
Our last advices so report.
Sir Walt. While the Iberian admiral's chief hope,
His darling son . . .
Sir Christ. Fernolo Whiskerandos hight . . .
Sir Walt. The same—by chance a prisoner hath been ta'en,
And in this fort of Tilbury . . .
Sir Christ. 'Tis now

Confin'd—'tis true, and oft from yon tall turret's top
I've mark'd the youthful Spaniard's haughty mien—
Unconquer'd though in chains.
Sir Walt. You also know, . . ."

Dang. Mr. Puff, as he knows all this, why does Sir Walter go on telling him?

Puff. But the audience are not supposed to know anything of the matter, are they?

Sneer. True; but I think you manage ill: for there certainly appears no reason why Sir Walter should be so communicative.

Puff. 'Fore God, now, that is one of the most ungrateful observations I ever heard!—for the less inducement he has to tell all this, the more, I think, you ought to be obliged to him; for I am sure you'd know nothing of the matter without it.

Dang. That's very true, upon my word.

Puff. But you will find he was not going on.

"*Sir Christ. Enough, enough—'tis plain—and I no more*
Am in amazement lost!" . . .

Puff. Here, now, you see, Sir Christopher did not in fact ask any one question for his own information.

Sneer. No, indeed: his has been a most disinterested curiosity!

Dang. Really, I find, we are very much obliged to them both.

Puff. To be sure you are. Now then for the commander-in-chief, the Earl of Leicester, who, you know, was no favourite but of the Queen's.—We left off . . . *in amazement lost.*

In concluding this sketch of the drama during the era of Dryden and Pope, we may look at the tragic writings of the time. These, though far inferior both in literary and dramatic importance, are by no means negligible.

DRYDEN, for instance, proved more happily suited in his "heroic" moods than in his comedy exploits, and *The Maiden Queen* (1667), *Tyrannic Love* (1669), and *The Conquest of Granada* (1670) contain fine passages of rhetoric and impressive scenes. "Jolly JOHN CROWNE," as Rochester dubbed him, enjoyed a vogue for his tragic play—*Caligula* (1698)—less well founded than Dryden's. THOMAS OTWAY, a scholar of no mean repute, wrote several indifferent plays; and two plays—*The Orphan* (1680) and *Venice Preserved* (1682)—that, if not precisely great, are remarkably rich in effective declamation. "NAT" LEE, sometimes collaborator with Dryden, and a Cambridge man, was an actor first and playwright after, dying in 1692 in a drunken brawl. Most of his work was very unequal in execution, but among his contributions to the stage—*Mithridates, Cæsar Borgia, Œdipus*, and *The Duke of Guise* (jointly with Dryden), and *Constantine the Great*—are passages of pathos, and scenes of genuine if undisciplined power. Certainly he had good poetic feeling, as for instance in the lines:

> 'Oh pity that so fair a star should be
> The child of Night."

The chief tragic writer of Queen Anne's reign is THOMAS SOUTHERNE, an accomplished man with a good eye to the main chance. He was well liked by the literary men of his time, and died at an advanced age in 1746. But he is less remarkable for his dramatic power than either Otway or Lee, though superior to his contemporary Nicholas Rowe. He wrote *The Fatal Marriage* (1694) and *Oroonoko* (1696).

NICHOLAS ROWE, born 1674, a Devonshire man, was trained for a lawyer, but was drawn towards playwriting, and having independent means was able to indulge his hobby. He was an agreeable and polished writer, but none of his serious plays, from *The Ambitious Stepmother* down to *Jane Shore*, show any real tragic power. Probably owing to his facility for making smooth verses, he was made Poet Laureate, on the accession of George I, and later on did better still (financially) with Government appointments. He died in 1718.

There are no tragedies of any importance during the eighteenth century. Young's *Revenge* has its admirers, and Johnson's *Irene* is certainly not without literary value. But of the others who essayed the tragic muse, Thomson and Mason, for instance, the less said the better.

The reason for this marked decadence of the tragic drama is not hard to find. The whole spirit of the century, the entire trend of literary expression, was against the tragic muse. With its essentially artificial style of poetry, its love of smooth versification, and its hatred of emotionalism in verse (emotionalism in prose was another matter), it was impossible for tragedy to make any headway.

Sensibility and passion can never be wholly repressed, whatever be the literary conventions, and some outlet was found for these in the Novel. There, however, it ran to sentimentality rather than tragedy, a direction far more in accordance with English tastes.

PART IV

THE AGE OF JOHNSON AND FIELDING

(*c.* 1740–*c.* 1780)

Introduction—Grub Street—The Theatre—Recreations: serious and otherwise—The Status of Women—Public Executions.

INTRODUCTION

"The city's fine show . . .
Such jostling and bustling."
DAVID GARRICK.

"A populous and a smoky city
. . . . . .
Small justice shown and still less pity."
SHELLEY.

If certain aspects of social life in the eighteenth century are reflected in the writings of Addison, Steele, and Pope, we must consider men like Johnson, Fielding, and Hogarth if we would learn something of the sterner matter of the times. For there was another world outside the leisurely and urbane visitation of the *Spectator*; a dark underworld of want and misery, of fierce primal passions and desperate resolves. Fielding and Smollett had tarried there for a while; the tragic figure of Richard Savage never emerges from the gloom; one recalls the gaunt wretchedness of scribblers like Boyse and Derrick, whom Johnson befriended; the hack work to which Defoe's genius had perforce to stoop, in order that he might live; of those political journalists about whom *Pendennis* has much to say. Finally, for we might multiply instances galore, there is that quaint, delightful, impecunious Irishman, Oliver Goldsmith. But the great, uncouth, burly, lovable figure of Johnson will serve our purpose. He survived where many fell by the way: like the pilgrim in the Allegory, he struggled through the Valley into the sunlight beyond, with deep thankfulness. But no one knew the underworld better than Johnson, or sympathised more practically with its dwellers. "He has nothing in him of the bear but the skin," as Goldsmith gratefully and truly said—and his views of authorship were expressed in Dryden's translation of the Entrance to Hell described by Virgil:

"Just in the Gate and in the jaws of Hell
Revengeful cares and sullen sorrows dwell—
And pale diseases and repining age,
Want, fear and famine, unresisting rage:
Here toils Death and Death's half brother Sleep—
Forms terrible to view, their sentry keep."

"All these apply exactly to an author," was the Doctor's comment. Humour and Tragedy are inseparable bedfellows in the life of Grub Street, and the story is told of an impoverished author, Floyd by name, who in his weary night wanderings came across a brother unfortunate sleeping soundly by the wayside. When Floyd roused him, this gentleman, with a manner suggesting the immortal Dick Swiveller, exclaimed, "My dear Floyd, I am sorry to see you in this destitute state; will you go home with me to my lodgings?" Perhaps the tattered and impecunious scribbler alone could perambulate safely through the City at these times.

Johnson's neighbourhood of Covent Garden was especially rife in thieves and disreputables. He discovered that the best guard against a street robber was a stout cudgel. It may be doubted whether there were more or as many criminals in London as to-day; but the inefficient police system made detection and punishment a much more difficult matter.

Henry Fielding in his *Enquiry into the Causes of the late Increase of Robbers, &c., with some proposals for remedying the Growing Evil*, gives a clear picture of the plague of dangerous ne'er-do-wells. After a concise picture of evils arising from gambling and drink, especially from that "new kind of drunkenness . . . by that poison called gin," and matters which lead into crime in every age, he lights upon the peculiar weakness of his time—the corruption of justice. Bribery was everywhere; in politics it was, of course, the recognised thing; and when the watchmen and constables were bribed, and the magistrate was too often incapable, it was small wonder that roguery should be so great a curse; and as is always the case, the Government, being inefficient, made up for its weakness by grotesque cruelties when by chance anyone was found out.

The London of Johnson was a noisy, turbulent, high-spirited London. But the old gaiety, the picturesque festivals of the City before Puritanism had frowned over its pleasures, were no longer to be seen. Maypoles had disappeared, and with them the genuine music and poetry of the open-air life had also gone. Domesticity and the tavern, rivals in one way, yet conspired together to give a blow to the old social life of the streets. The festivals that survived—like Guy Fawkes Day—were less occasions of innocent merriment at first than expressions of the national hatred of Catholicism.

Violence indeed is the key-note of the social life.

It permeates every grade of society, and people become, as might be expected, rougher and grimmer as we descend in the social scale. With such an example as was set by the boisterous spirits of certain notorious clubs, and with the system of jurisdiction so grossly inefficient, it is no wonder that the eighteenth century is a century of mob rioting, culminating in the appalling Gordon Riots of 1780. In those riots—the last popular expression of religious fanaticism, for political feeling takes its place in the next century—the whole city was paralysed for two days by the behaviour of a huge clamorous mob. Prisons were broken open, churches and houses burned and looted, and there was no safety for the peaceful citizen until the military came upon the scene.

Grub Street had existed before Johnson's time; there was a Grub Street in the time of Robert Greene, sinner and moralist, and of happy-go-lucky Nash; ever since the age of Marlowe the literary vagabonds of the age had foregathered at the tavern, and the author of *The Jew of Malta* was not the only one to perish in a drunken brawl. During the Civil Wars, when the pamphleteer sprang into being, Grub Street numbered its devotees. Want and Necessity, those hungry wolves which have followed the poor artist in every age, claimed among their victims the sweet singer Edmund Spenser, and the brilliant Otway. Spenser, flying from a dismantled home in Ireland, had perished miserably in Westminster, forsaken and an outcast; Otway, it is said, "languished in adversity unpitied, and dy'd in an alehouse unlamented."

As a rule, the man who enters the monastery of letters, takes of necessity the Vow of Poverty. Popularity carried with it for many a generation no respite here. True, there were exceptions—Shakespeare, for example. But Shakespeare was a pauper beside men like Whittington and Crosby. And although patronage improved the lot of men such as Ben Jonson and Dryden, of Congreve, Addison, and Pope, these were few indeed to set beside the vast army to whom comfort was an alien, and prosperity an unknown god.

However, it must be admitted that the lot of the writer was improving during the century. When one remembers the few pounds that came from *Paradise Lost*, seven hundred pounds for *Tom Jones* seems quite an impressive sum.

The impecuniosity of men of letters was not due entirely to public indifference: extravagance and improvidence played their share in the tale of mean streets. Samuel Boyse, whose clothes had been got out of pawn owing to the generous exertions of Johnson, would spend his last few shillings to buy truffles and mushrooms for his bit of meat; then, when all his money was spent he would take to his bed, cover himself with a blanket, and through holes made in this covering, he would cheerfully continue to write.

Johnson never forgot those who helped him in his days of hardship. When as a young married man he was desperately striving to eke out a living on a meagre purse, there was one Henry Hervey, a considerable rogue, even on Johnson's showing; but he had helped Johnson, so the grateful Doctor said of him—"You call a dog, Hervey, I shall love him."

One of the most remarkable of Johnson's early companions was Richard Savage, poet and vagabond. Johnson describes him as "of middle stature, of a thin habit of body, of long visage, coarse features, and melancholy aspect." He made his acquaintance in 1737, and they would often roam the streets together; on one occasion they walked up and down St. James's Square for several hours, denouncing Sir Robert Walpole and making resolutions to "stand by their country."

Savage, far inferior to Johnson both in character and intellect, had acquired, through knocking about the world, a goodish knowledge of men and things, which naturally impressed the young, responsive Johnson.

It is typical of Johnson that he should try so desperately hard to paint an attractive picture of his old companion; the best thing to be recorded of Savage is his friendliness for Johnson. Many men had befriended Savage, including Steele, but he ill repaid his friends; and few could have lamented when he died at last in a debtor's prison.

Garrick did much to raise the tone of the drama, and a noticeable feature of the age was the increasing interest in the theatre by the middle classes. The Shakespearean revivals brought forward a number of notable actresses. Then, as now, the young exquisite and lady of fashion went as much to be seen as to see. Roderick Random declared that he "rose and sat down, covered and uncovered" his head "twenty times between the acts," affected to take snuff, wiped his nose with a perfumed handkerchief, dangled his cane, and adjusted his sword-knot "in order to attract attention."

The play started later than formerly—at five in the afternoon. Quite late enough for a dark and dangerous London, when home-going would be almost as risky as in Pepys' day.

If audiences were less noisy than they had been in Elizabethan and Stuart times, there was still much room for improvement. Between 1697 and 1737 the practice prevailed of giving footmen free access to the gallery. This originated in the desire to free the lobbies of these quarrelsome and noisy fellows, but it only signified a transference of the noise to a more objectionable quarter. The managers put an end to it at last, but not without much rioting and protest.

Garrick endeavoured to clear the stage of all except the actors. He also much improved the lighting effects by introducing footlights in place of the circular chandelier hitherto suspended over the stage.

The glorious pageant of the Lord Mayor's Show had become a paltry business, but was as popular as ever, though it was as different from that of Whittington's day as was Cinderella's gorgeous coach from the pumpkin.

A notable addition to the serious recreation of Londoners was the British Museum. The British Museum was once situate in a "noble suburb." Bloomsbury had at this time very fine houses and large gardens, flanked by country lanes and pretty

cottages. It was then Montague House and the repository of Sir Hans Sloane's famous collection. This was in 1753.

It is curious to recall the fact that we owe the British Museum, the centre of modern London's intellectual life, to a lottery. What is more, no less a triumvirate than the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor, and the Speaker of the House of Commons consented to act as managers and trustees of the lottery. It came about in this manner.

The library and collection which Sir Hans Sloane, the well-known doctor, had got together was offered to the country for a nominal £20,000. The Treasury at the time did not care to advance the money, and the House of Commons chose to order the issue of a State Lottery (26 Geo. II, c. 22). 100,000 tickets at £3 each were issued, £200,000 being spent in prizes, varying from £10,000 to £10. The remaining £100,000 was placed to the credit of the British Museum Purchase Fund. Not only was the Sloane Collection bought, but the Harleian and Cotton manuscripts were acquired. Moreover, Montague House was purchased, so that the Museum was thrown open to the public in 1759.

The purchase of the Harleian MSS., the gift by George IV of a library of nearly 30,000 volumes, and the acquisition (early in the late century) of the Elgin Marbles, increased the importance of the Museum in national estimation.

The new buildings were begun about the same time, and among the early rules was the following gem:

"The visitors must be *conducted in regular order*, and the whole inspection is not to last *more than three hours*."

For the less seriously inclined there was the sorry sport of cock-fighting, which was as popular in Johnson's day as in FitzStephen's. It occupied the same place in popular estimation as horse-racing does to-day. And it had the advantage of being in season all the year round. As a set-off to the excitement of the cockpit there was the Sunday concert, where Dr. Blow's anthems were given, and poems recited by the Poet Laureate "in praise of religion and virtue."

There was a decided change for the worse in the manners of the early eighteenth century; the polish of the Restoration period had worn off, and new manners and morals were fairly well balanced. The early Georges, with their boorish tastes, set no grand standard of courtesy and refinement; and Ministers like Walpole harmonised uncommonly well with the general atmosphere of the Court. Walpole, indeed, was like a foul-mouthed country squire, and he and George II vied with one another in coarse invective.

Then came a swing in the other direction with the advent of Chesterfield, his Turveydrop notions of deportment, and his amazing involution of speech. It is said that according to him, "One should say, in condoling with a friend, not 'I am sorry for your loss,' but 'I hope, sir, you will do me the justice to be persuaded that I am not insensible of your unhappiness, that I take part in your distress, and shall ever be affected when you are so.'"

What Chesterfield was in speech, Horace Walpole was in dress.

Masquerades, an extremely popular and reasonable relaxation, were first held at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket, and the "quality" assembled in Ranelagh Gardens, Chelsea, or in Vauxhall. Horace Walpole pronounced in favour of Vauxhall, for "the garden is pleasanter and one goes by water."

We have seen something of the estimate of womenkind by men like Addison and Pope. In the earlier years of the century woman is regarded, when not as a plaything, at any rate as little better than a housekeeper. But about the year 1760 a change took place in the status of women.

Mrs. Montague, a friend of the Duchess of Portland, attempted a reform of manners by inaugurating parties "where cards could not be thought of," but "where the fair sex might participate in conversation with literary and ingenious men."

Benjamin Stillingfleet appeared there in morning dress, wearing grey worsted stockings in place of the conventional black silk, and the term "blue stocking," flung by Admiral Boscawen at these gatherings, had a very literal significance.

The ladies regarded the term with complacency, averring that no gathering was complete without Stillingfleet's blue stockings. Other ladies had their special groups, and in this way the literary women of the day met and fraternised together—Hannah More, Mrs. Thrale, Hannah Cowley (author of *The Belle's Stratagem*), and Frances Burney. The latter had no relish for the bookishness of certain circles, and many of the women were far happier in circles where Johnson and Burke declaimed to their admirers.

Breakfast parties sprung into vogue during the eighteenth century, and were somewhat formidable affairs. In the earlier years of the nineteenth century many famous literary gatherings took place at these, as we may learn from Crabb Robinson's *Diary*.

It has been estimated that between 1196 and 1783 fifty thousand people were executed at Tyburn. It was only when the Tyburn district commenced to become a fashionable quarter that an agitation against the publicity of executions, and the equally public processions before execution, was started. An old Tory like Dr. Johnson thundered against the proposal—"The age is running after innovation; all the business of the world is to be done in a new way. Tyburn itself is not safe from the fury of innovation! No, sir! It is not an improvement; they object that the old method drew together a number of spectators. Sir, executions are intended to draw the spectators."

Strange that the kindly Doctor could not realise the degrading and brutalising effect of these shows upon the popular mind. Perhaps nothing marks the transition from eighteenth to nineteenth and twentieth century London more clearly than the realisation of this coarse brutality. The darker side of Hogarthian and Johnsonian London is painfully apparent; we must, however, beware of

exaggerating the blackness. The real difference may lie in the fact that our ancestors did not fear to display everything. To-day there are many things we prefer to hide.

There is less brutality in modern London. But there are worse things than physical violence. After all, is there less vice and hardship in the life of to-day? I wonder.

I. POETRY (from James Thomson to the coming of Burns).

FROM JAMES THOMSON TO THE COMING OF BURNS

The eighteenth century is an age of great prose, and until its close, of second-rate poetry. In the closing years, a change took place in the character of its verse, that gradually became more and more pronounced, and finally led to the splendid outburst of Romantic poetry in the dawn of the new century.

The change is manifest so far back as Thomson's *Winter* in 1726, and although many verse writers of the time elected to follow the school of Pope, and continued to eschew passion and naturalism in verse, from Thomson onwards there is a steady output of verse that reflects a more intimate relation with Nature.

James Thomson was born in 1700, at Ednam in Roxburghshire, and went at the age of fifteen to Edinburgh University, with the idea of becoming a minister like his father. The idea never took practical shape, and in 1725 he came to London and became tutor in Lord Binning's family. His poem cycle, *The Seasons*, begun in 1726, was finished in 1730, with *Autumn*. These poems met with considerable appraisement, and despite his indifferent success in other directions, he had made a sufficient number of influential friends to line his nest for the rest of his days. He was a kindly and agreeable man, with poor initiation, so it is fortunate for him that he was looked after in the way of appointments and pensions. He died in 1748.

As a writer he signalised the departure from the town to the country, chose the Spenserian stanza and blank verse as his medium, and eschewed the stopped couplet that was ubiquitous in the realm of poetry at the time. Although a copious producer, his best work lies in *Winter*, *Spring*, *Summer*, and *Autumn* (*The Seasons*), and in *The Castle of Indolence*. His long poem on *Liberty* is flat and uninspired, and his plays, though fairly successful, are insignificant from the literary point of view. In his masque *Alfred*, written in conjunction with Mallet, the lyric of *Rule Britannia* occurs, afterwards republished with Thomson's initials; its vigorous swashbuckling note scarcely suggests the fat and indolent poet.

He was undoubtedly a man of vivid imagination, and his early life, amid the romantic scenery of Roxburghshire, had proved a happy source of inspiration. Although the conventional phraseology of the age proved irresistible from time to time, and gives a stilted air to much of his work, yet there are many fine descriptive passages, where he is content to rely on his own feelings and observations, eschewing the set terms of the imitator.

There is greater ease, and a more plastic imagination, in *The Castle of Indolence* (1748), a fantastic poem that reproduces happily an atmosphere of dreamy melancholy, enlivened now and again by mirthful passages.

The Castle of Indolence

Joined in the prattle of the purling rills
Were heard the lowing herds along the vale,
And flocks loud bleating from the distant hills,
And vacant shepherds piping in the dale:
And, now and then, sweet Philomel would wail,
Or stock-doves plain amid the forest deep,
That drowsy rustled to the sighing gale;
And still a coil the grasshopper did keep;
Yet all these sounds yblent, inclined all to sleep.

Full in the passage of the vale, above,
A sable, silent, solemn forest stood;
Where nought but shadowy forms was seen to move,
As Idleness fancied in her dreaming mood:
And up the hills, on either side, a wood
Of Blackening pines, ay waving to and fro,
Sent forth a sleepy horror through the blood
And where this valley winded out, below,
The murmuring main was heard, and scarcely heard, to flow.

A pleasing land of drowsy-hed it was,
Of dreams that wane before the half-shut eye;
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
Forever flushing round a summer-sky:
There eke the soft delights, that witchingly
Instil a wanton sweetness through the breast,
And the calm pleasures always hovered nigh;
But whate'er smacked of noyance, or unrest,
Was far, far off expelled from this delicious nest.

One has but to compare, say, Pope's *Windsor Forest*, with a passage from *The Seasons*, to appreciate the fresh, open-air atmosphere that Thomson brought into his verse.

Here is Pope, with his stock phrases, trying hard to be impressive in a subject ill suited to his town muse:

"There, interspers'd in lawns and op'ning glades,
Thin trees arise that shun each other's shades,
Here in full light the russet plains extend:
There wrapt in clouds the bluish hills ascend.
Ev'n the wild heath displays her purple dyes,
And midst the desert fruitful hills arise,
That crowned with tufted trees and springing corn,
Like verdant isles the sable waste adorn."[1]

And here is Thomson:

"For now the day
O'er heaven and earth diffused, grows warm and high,
Infinite splendour! wide investing all.
How still the breeze! save what the filmy threads
Of dew evaporate brushes from the plain.
How clear the cloudless sky, how deeply tinged
With a peculiar blue! The ethereal arch
How swelled immense, amid whose azure throned
The radiant sun how gay—how calm below
The gilded earth!"[2]

Thomson, as I have said, is not guiltless of stock phrases, he does not spare us such terms as "the gilded earth," but how different the spirit that informs his lines. In his own line supreme and

[1] *Windsor Forest.* [2] *The Seasons.*

delightful, Pope is no choosy companion when he steps beyond his gate at Twickenham, or leaves Belinda's boudoir. The lover of polished formalities was scarcely likely to take kindly to the wild extravagances of Nature. Thomson loved Nature, and his verse gives expression to what he called the "recollected love." Pope was frankly bored by it. Compared with his successors, Thomson's love may seem chilly and perfunctory, but the chill is due to lack of power to express, rather than to any real indifference. Certainly, English Nature poetry owes a substantial debt to "our old-time, amiable, open, and truest-hearted Thomson."

Among Thomson's disciples may be mentioned JOHN ARMSTRONG (1709–1779), also a Roxburghshire man, and the political versifier, RICHARD GLOVER (1712–1785).

Armstrong was a physician, and made strenuous attempts to treat dietetics and hygiene from the poet's standpoint, in his *Art of Preserving Health* (1744). The prolixity and latinistic tendencies of Thomson are exaggerated in his follower, some of whose verses remind one of Oliver Wendell Holmes' amusing absurdity, *Lines by a Latin Tutor*. He was certainly never blessed with a sense of humour, or he would not have spoken of a cold bath as "a gelid cistern." In his favour it may be said that his blank verse is agreeable, and sometimes impressive, and even his medieval stanzas—like those added to *The Castle of Indolence*—have some felicities of diction.

If Armstrong is prolix, Glover's fatal fluency is overwhelming. It would be interesting to know how many modern readers have waded through the thirty books of *The Athenaid* (1787), or even the comparative trifle, *Leonidas* (1737), (in nine books).

His best claim to remembrance lies in his breezy and effective ballad, *Admiral Hosier's Ghost*.

JOHN DYER, painter and cleric (*c.* 1688–1750), is remembered for his *Grongar Hill* and *Country Walk*, poems faulty in technique but fresh and observant in character.

ROBERT BLAIR (1699–1746), with *The Grave*, is akin to Young in his portentous gravity; and MATTHEW GREEN (1698–1733), a custom-house clerk, follows in the wake of Swift, though *The Spleen* is certainly more genial in its satire than that of the sardonic creator of Gulliver.

WILLIAM SHENSTONE calls for more detailed notice. Born in Worcestershire (1714–1763), he spent most of his life in his native country, trying to improve his estate. A shy, delicate man tolerably well off, he mixed with many notabilities of his time. An agreeable prose writer with some critical faculty, and a dexterous and fluent maker of verse, he deserves notice here as a characteristic man of the transitional period, breaking away in certain directions from eighteenth-century poetic conventions; yet with insufficient force to strike out a really original line. But he is quite inoffensive, and sometimes reminds the reader of the sentimental side of Goldsmith.

Passing to WILLIAM COLLINS (1721–1759), we find another step in the transitional movement has been gained. The departure made by Thomson has been echoed rather than improved upon by his followers, and Shenstone carries us no further in the direction of naturalism.

It is otherwise with Collins. Born at Chichester, he was educated at Westminster and Oxford, then coming to London at the age of twenty-five, he published a few *Odes* (1746–1747) that failed to attract attention, despite their very rich merit. His friendship with the kindly Thomson was a pleasant interlude for his sensitive, ill-balanced temperament, and on Thomson's death, Collins wrote one of his best Odes in praise of his friend. An opportune legacy enabled him to retreat to Chichester, but his health gradually grew worse, and in 1754 the young poet's mind gave way altogether. His death, therefore, in 1759 came as a merciful release.

His slender output of verse contrasts oddly with the voluminousness of his contemporaries; but the quality is high, especially in the briefer Odes. Here, as in the case of Thomson, we have to note the combination of an often artificial and pedantic style with a delicate and intimate poetic vision. In such pieces as *How Sleep the Brave*, he exhibits a gift of rhythmic music refreshing to meet after so much merely clever verse; while in the *Ode to Evening* there is a power of portraying landscape in a simple, direct fashion, that shows a more delicate art if no greater imagination than we find in Thomson.

The real power portrayed in his work makes his mental collapse the more melancholy, and it is to be regretted that two of his latest Odes have not been preserved.

AN ODE

How sleep the brave who sink to rest,
By all their country's wishes blest!
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallowed mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung;
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
There honour comes, a pilgrim gray,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;
And freedom shall awhile repair,
To dwell, a weeping hermit, there![1]

POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS

Unbounded is thy range; with varied style
Thy muse may, like those feathery tribes which spring
From their rude rocks, extend her skirting wing
Round the moist margo of each cold Hebrid isle,
To that hoar pile, which still its ruin shows;
In whose small vaults a pigmy-folk is found,
Whose bones the delver with his spade upthrows,
And calls them, wondering, from the hallowed ground!
Or thither, where, beneath the showery west,
The mighty kings of three fair realms are laid;
Once foes, perhaps, together now they rest,
No slaves revere them and no wars invade;
Yet frequent now, at midnight's solemn hour,
The rifted mounds their yawning cells unfold,
And forth the monarch stalks with sovereign power,
In pageant robes, and wreathed with sceptred gold,
And on their twilight tombs aerial council hold.

In THOMAS GRAY (1716–1771) we have a poet who presents many superficial similarities with

[1] *Ode written in* 1746.

Collins. Like Collins, he was a scholar, and a careful literary artist; like Collins, moreover, his output is slender, and there is something of the same pensive charm and feeling for nature about his work. But in creative faculty, Collins is certainly his superior, though Gray's position, his longer life, his intellectual vigour, have given him a more prominent place in the history of our literature.

A Cockney by birth, he was sent to Eton and Cambridge, where he made friends with Horace Walpole. After some years of wide and careful reading he travelled abroad, and finally (1741) settled at Cambridge. Refusing the Laureateship in 1757, he obtained the Professorship of History (after one rebuff) in 1768; but died in 1771, without having given a lecture.

The majority of his poems were written early in life, both the Eton *Ode* and the famous *Elegy* being written in 1747, though the latter was not printed until 1750. Beside his verse, he wrote some thoughtful and scholarly essays, planned a *History of English Poetry*, and proved an accomplished and imaginative letter-writer. Gray is the most accomplished craftsman of the transition period, and there is a steady progress in his work from the sometimes colourless and often conventional Odes of his youth, e.g. *On Spring*, and *On Adversity*, to the striking felicities of the famous *Elegy*, and the brilliant manipulation of the later Pindaric poems. His last efforts, resulting from his study of Icelandic and Celtic verse, exhibit him as a true pioneer of Romanticism.

Gray's special contribution to poetry lies in the fastidious accuracy of his natural descriptions. Collins is as observant, Thomson as warm in his regard for nature, and both these poets are in their best moments less unstudied, more spontaneous than Gray. But for fastidiousness in detail that depends not merely on imaginative observation but on a nice and delicate feeling for the right word, Gray certainly surpasses them.

It is interesting to place side by side some descriptive passage in prose from his letters and one of his cameos in verse:

"The bosom of the mountains spreading here into a broad basin, discovers in the midst Grasmere-Water; its margin is hollowed into small bays with bold eminences, some of them rocks, some of them turf, that half conceal and vary the figure of the little lake they command. From the shore a low promontory pushes itself far into the water, and on it stands a white village with the parish church rising in the midst of it; hanging enclosures, corn-fields, and meadows green as an emerald, with their trees, hedges, and cattle, fill up the whole space from the edge of the water. Just opposite to you is a large farm-house at the bottom of a steep, smooth lawn, embosomed in old woods, which climb half-way up the mountain side, and discover above them a broken line of crags, that crown the scene."[1]

ODE ON THE PLEASURE ARISING FROM VICISSITUDE

Now the golden Morn aloft
  Waves her dew-bespangled wing,
With vermeil cheek and whisper soft
  She woos the tardy Spring:
Till April starts, and calls around
The sleeping Fragrance from the ground,
And lightly o'er the living scene
Scatters his freshest, tenderest green.

Newborn flocks, in rustic dance,
  Frisking ply their feeble feet;
Forgetful of their wintry trance
  The birds his presence greet:
But chief, the sky-lark warbles high
His trembling thrilling ecstasy;
And lessening from the dazzled sight,
Melts into air and liquid light.

. . . . . .

See the wretch that long has tost
  On the thorny bed of pain,
At length repair his vigour lost
  And breathe and walk again:
The meanest flowret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him are opening Paradise.

It is quite true that this sensitive groping after words gives a studied art to some of his work, robbing it of spontaneity and flexibility. But where so many contemporary versifiers were painfully prolix and wilfully vague and conventional in their poetic locality, it is grateful to turn to the admirable art and fine scholarly imagination of Thomas Gray.

DAVID MALLOCH (who later changed his name to Mallet), was a pleasant writer of light verse and a faithful disciple alternately of his friend Thomson and of Pope.

MARK AKENSIDE (1721–1770), like John Armstrong, was a physician. The son of a butcher, and originally intended for the ministry, he became interested in physic, and his *Pleasures of the Imagination* appeared about the same time as Armstrong's *Art of Preserving Health*. He was an ardent Whig, and the Whiggism coloured his writings. In many ways an oddity, he none the less took a high place among the physicians of the day, being accorded reluctant admiration from Johnson, who naturally disliked his principles. In 1770 he died, it is supposed, of typhoid fever.

As a writer, he is neither pronouncedly of the school of Thomson or of Pope, inclining perhaps to that of Dryden. His abilities are only mediocre, but he has been often underestimated as a writer, and if his verse lacks the polish of Pope and the easy force of Dryden, there are touches in his muse, in the *Odes* and *The Epistle to Curio* especially, of genuine feeling and sincerity.

WRITERS OF DEVOTIONAL VERSE

Something at this point may be said of a number of writers during the century, who found particular expression in devotional verse.

ISAAC WATTS (1674–1748) has come down to posterity as the author of "Let Dogs Delight" and "The Busy Bee," and these moral songs for children have survived even Watts' considerable contributions to hymnology, and his more considerable but often grotesquely poor contributions to secular poetry. As a maker of secular verse, dull and bombastic as some of it may be, it is to Watts' credit that he broke away from the monotony of the favourite couplet and proved himself at times an able if unequal metrist.

Too early to feel the reaction against the school

[1] *Letter to Dr. Wharton.*

of Pope, his work is properly looked upon as transitional, and had he been born later, it is far more probable he would by temperament and feeling have belonged to the new school of romantic naturalism.

Greater than Watts in imaginative power, and more advantageously placed in point of time, is CHARLES WESLEY (1708–1788). To find his equal as a writer of sacred song, one has to turn to the religious poetry of the seventeenth century, and not even in Vaughan and Herbert do we find such intensity of personal feeling and experience as meets us in the verse of Wesley. Moreover, there is more lyrical fire in "Jesus, Lover of my Soul" than in all of Watts' hymns; but from the purely poetical point of view Wesley's highest reach is made in the verses on "Wrestling Jacob":

WRESTLING JACOB

Come, O thou traveller unknown,
Whom still I hold, but cannot see;
My company before is gone,
And I am left alone with thee;
With thee all night I mean to stay,
And wrestle till the break of day.

I need not tell thee who I am,
My misery and sin declare;
Thyself hast called me by thy name,
Look on thy hands, and read it there!
But who, I ask thee, who art thou?
Tell me thy name, and tell me now.

. . . . . .

CHRISTOPHER SMART (1722–1771), the author of a few excellent pieces of light verse, is best remembered now for his *Song to David*, in which he escapes from the verse conventions of his age, and in a tumult of fervid imagery, pours forth a rhapsody that has no equal for intensity save in Wesley. Smart was only fitfully sane, and this poem, written in a serious, lucid interval (1763), owes something perhaps to the emotional luck of balance in its author. There are quaint touches of natural imagery in the song, for instance:

SONG TO DAVID

For adoration ripening canes
And cocoa's purest milk detains
The western pilgrim's staff;
Where rain in clasping boughs inclos'd
And vines with oranges dispos'd,
Embower the social laugh.

Now labour his reward receives,
For adoration counts his sheaves
To peace, her bounteous prince:
The nectarine his strong tint imbibes,
And apples of ten thousand tribes,
And quick pecaller quince.

. . . . . .

For adoration, beyond match,
The scholar bullfinch aims to catch
The soft lute's ivory touch;
And, careless on the hazel spray,
The daring redbreast keeps at bay
The damsel's greedy touch.

A deserved tribute to Smart's glowing fancy was paid by Browning in his *Parleyings with Certain People*, and has contributed to the recent revival of interest in this song, neglected in his own day.

Of the man himself, despite his erratic and violent youth that we can well understand in view of his neurosis, it is pleasant to recall the tribute of Johnson, after seeing the unfortunate man in an asylum: "I did not think that he ought to be shut up. His infirmities were not noxious to society. He insisted on people praying with him, and I'd as lief pray with Kit Smart as with anyone else. Another charge was that he did not love clean linen, and I have no passion for it."

Returning to secular poetry, nothing need be said of Gray's friend, WILLIAM MASON, who copied most of Gray's weaknesses, with scarcely a touch of his power, and of WILLIAM FALCONER, who wrote the *Shipwreck*, except that they broke away from the couplet form, and from the conventional subject-matter of their times. The brothers WARTON, THOMAS and JOSEPH, were more remarkable as critics than as verse writers, for they showed real appreciation of Elizabethan poetry. Thomas was Laureate from 1785 until his death, and his poetry belongs largely to the school of Pope, though not without suggestions of Gray.

His most memorable contributions to literature are his *Observations on Spenser* (1754), and his valuable *History of English Poetry* (1777–1781).

CHARLES CHURCHILL, born in 1731, at Westminster, took Orders in 1756, but soon realised his unsuitability for the clerical profession. Reckless in spirit, and dissolute in character, he proved himself a vigorous satirist in the *Rosciad*, on the actors of the day, and a vitriolic one as well, as his epistle to William Hogarth testifies:

AN EPISTLE TO WILLIAM HOGARTH

Virtue, with due contempt, saw Hogarth stand,
The murderous pencil in his palsied hand;
What was the cause of Liberty to him,
Or what was honour? Let them sink or swim,
So he may gratify, without control,
The mean resentments of his selfish soul.

. . . . . .

Thy body shrivell'd up, thy dim eyes sunk
Within their sockets deep, thy weak hands shrunk,
The body's weight unable to sustain,
The stream of life scarce trembling thro' the vein,
More than half-kill'd by honest truths, which fell,
Thro' thy own fault, from men who wish'd thee well,
Can'st thou, e'en thus, thy thoughts to vengeance give,
And, dead to all things else, to malice live?
Hence, Dotard, to thy closet! Shut thee in,
By deep repentance wash away thy sin;
From haunts of men in shame and sorrow fly,
And, on the verge of death, learn how to die.

Hogarth, who was, as a master of fact, dying at this time, took the lampoon acutely to heart.

In Churchill the fires of the school of Dryden and Butler once again leap up for the last time. His vigour and power are as obvious as his violence and savagery.

JAMES BEATTIE (1735–1803), born in Kincardineshire and educated at Aberdeen, is another illustration of the mediocre writer whose work, though possessing little intrinsic value, interests us as literary students for its genuine attempt to bring emotion back into poetry, to find inspiration in the romantic past, and to eschew the school of epigrammatic cleverness and artifice. Neither *The Minstrel* nor *The Progress of Genius* can afford us

much æsthetic pleasure. But his work is a step further towards romanticism away from classicism, and shows renewed interest in the Spenserean stanza.

On the same plane are JOHN LANGHORNE and WILLIAM MICKLE. Both men were fair scholars, the first a north countryman, the second a Scot. Langhorne's *Country Justice* deals with rural life in a way that reminds us of Crabbe rather than of any contemporary. He shows unmistakably the trend of the new movement. Mickle's *Songs and Ballads* stimulated the taste for the ballad, more strikingly effected in Percy's *Reliques*. Among these reclothed old songs and modern imitations is the well-known *There is nae Luck about the Hoose*. His poem *Cumnor Hall* is a pleasant, sentimental piece that inspired Scott to write *Kenilworth*.

Last relics of the school of Pope, who succeeded in bringing about its downfall, even more quickly than the pioneers of romanticism, are ERASMUS DARWIN (1731–1802) and WILLIAM HAYLEY (1745–1820). Darwin was a physician who lived at Lichfield. He was an able scientist, and in his *Zoonomia* (1794) wrote a thoughtful treatise on the laws of organic life, that played no small part probably in influencing his famous descendant. Unhappily he tried to popularise science by putting it into verse form, and in *The Botanic Garden* and *The Economy of Vegetation* (a lively title for a poem!) he gave the public a bombastic and absurd piece of work, that in place of making science attractive, made poetry ridiculous.

Hayley had no more imagination, nor as a poet had he Darwin's genuine value as a scientist. His dull artificiality is only equalled by his dismal fluency. These men are said to have brought about the final downfall of the older school of verse. The future was with the Romantics.

In contrast with them stands THOMAS CHATTERTON. Born at Bristol in 1752, the son of a schoolmaster and cathedral singer, he had a fitful education and was bound to an attorney in 1764. Brought up in the atmosphere of St. Mary Redcliffe, he haunted the building, and soon began to imitate certain mediæval documents he found therein. Thus started the series of forgeries known as the *Rowley Poems*. Hinting that he had discovered valuable old MSS., he soon found some to believe that the ballads, interludes, and the like that he gave out, belonged to a certain Rowley of Bristol. He attracted the notice of Horace Walpole and came to London, April 1770. For a time he eked out a pittance by his work, but the demand fell off, and, too proud to beg, he poisoned himself with arsenic in his Holborn lodgings in August 1770.

For a while a controversy existed as to the authorship of these poems, though Gray pronounced against them from the first. It is now established beyond question that they were forgeries, and the method of the forgery has been made clear by the labours of Professor Skeat.

He was a skilful metrist, with a clever gift of imitation and touches of real romantic feeling, sometimes expressed with delicate spontaneity, at others in purely conventional language. The inequality of his work, however, is a youthful quality that need not be dwelt upon; the imaginative power displayed in the *Rowley Poems* is sufficiently remarkable, and his influence upon the poets of the Romantic revival, though exaggerated by some critics, was no doubt considerable. But his youth, his tragic circumstances, have created around him an atmosphere of romance that makes us somewhat inclined to overestimate the precise actual value of his work. Its promise is certainly great, its actual accomplishment interesting and remarkable, but more from potentiality than performance. His untimely death was undoubtedly a serious loss to poetry.

Before the death of Johnson, two great poets had appeared, who very definitely ushered in the new era—Cowper and Crabbe. They are best studied as pioneers rather than as representatives of Romanticism, for in each of them the conventions of the eighteenth century lingered, and their work, to an extent, still participates of the character of the transitional period.

WILLIAM COWPER (1731–1800)

There is, perhaps, no more pathetic life-story in the history of our literature, than that of William Cowper.

In November 1731, at the Rectory of Great Berkhampstead, where his father was rector, he started his voyage in the world with every possible material advantage. Was he not the great-nephew of a Lord Chancellor, the grandson of a Judge, the son of a King's Chaplain, his mother akin to the poet Donne, tracing her family back to Henry III?

As a particularly shy and sensitive child, he was the constant companion of a tender and indulgent mother; and after her death in 1737, it was a heart-broken little boy of six years old who arrived at Dr. Pitman's boarding school in Market Street, Hertfordshire, to encounter the bullying of a brutal schoolfellow of fifteen, of whom, he says: "I was so afraid that I knew him better by his shoe-buckles than any other part of his dress"—presumably being too nervous to raise his eyes—adding the pious ejaculation: "May the Lord pardon him, and may we meet in glory."

Two years later, eye trouble appeared, so he was sent to live in the house of an oculist, and in 1741 to Westminster School, where he seems to have been happy in his surroundings.

> "Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise,
> We love the play place of our early days,"

he wrote later. "Excellent at cricket, at football" also "an adept in the infernal art of lying"—though the latter lament surely may be ranked with John Bunyan's introspective self-condemnation.

Among his contemporaries at Westminster were Warren Hastings, who became Governor of India; "Great Churchill" the poet, "for he well deserved the name," says Cowper; and Colman; among the masters was Vincent Bourne, the Latin poet who, said Cowper, "was such a sloven, as if he trusted to his genius as a cloak for everything that could disgust you in his person."

A good writer of Latin verse, Cowper gained many "silver pence" for this distinction, and took an all-round interest in literature and literary people.

On leaving Westminster the law was chosen as a profession—possibly by his father, with the Woolsack in view. He was placed with Mr. Chapman for three years, with Thurlow, afterwards Lord Chancellor, as fellow-pupil. Much time, however, that should have been spent in legal studies, was used by these young men "in giggling and making giggle" with his cousins, Theodora and Harriet Cowper. Theodora and Cowper fell in love, but their marriage was regarded with so much disfavour by her parents, that they were forced to part; neither of them married, nor did they ever meet again.

Called to the Bar in 1754, he does not seem to have made much headway in the profession, spending his time in literature and making one of a small circle of "Westminsters" who composed the "Nonsense Club."

His father's death in 1756 threw Cowper on his own resources, and the loss of the *home* at the parsonage was a real grief to him:

> "'Tis now become a history little known,
> That once we call'd the pastoral house our own."

In 1763 a nomination to the post of Clerk of the Journals of the House of Commons was secured, but his nominee's right to appoint being disputed, Cowper was summoned to an examination; but, magnifying this simple ordeal to such an extent—"mortal poison" he called it—so unhinged his brain that he attempted self-destruction. After this—suffering from religious melancholia that troubled him more or less throughout his life—he resided for eighteen months with Dr. Cotton at St. Albans.

On leaving St. Albans he made the acquaintance of the Rev. Morley Unwin, his wife and their son and daughter; and thus, induced to make one of their family party, he gained once more the advantages of home life. The following year, however, Mr. Unwin died, but his death made no difference to Cowper; he merely removed with Mrs. Unwin and her daughter to Olney on the banks of the Ouse, where his friend John Newton was curate, and here he wrote about seventy of the Olney Hymns.

In 1773 a second period of darkness clouded his life for three years, but again he recovered and began to make poetry the business of his life.

In 1782 he published a volume of poems, and the delightful ballad, *John Gilpin*, the latter the result of a story told him by the vivacious Lady Austen, also the instigator of his more ambitious work, *The Task*, published in 1785. From this time Cowper takes his place among our finest English poets.

His library was very small, under two hundred volumes at the time of his death, and most of these were gifts from friends; though he did not spend money on books, he did not think "half a guinea to a guinea too much for a genteelish toothpick-case"—and once wrote to a friend to procure him "a handsome stock buckle" which he thought "for twenty to twenty-five shillings—perhaps a second-hand affair—may be purchased that will make a figure at Olney."

In 1786 his cousin, Lady Hesketh, persuaded him and Mrs. Unwin to remove to Weston. They did so. Cowper was now in easy circumstances by the grant of a pension of £300, and began translating at the rate of "forty lines a day" the *Homer* he published in 1791. Notwithstanding the relief and distractions found in many directions—his taming three young hares is well known—and the kindness of his friends, another awful night time darkened his life, and from this time, 1794, up to the time of his death on April 25, 1800, very few glimpses of light were vouchsafed him, the poem *On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture* being written during a lucid interval.

In the technique of his work, Cowper belongs to the old rather than to the new. He shows neither the power nor the wish to break away from old metrical forms. Some of the good qualities of the old school are his: clarity, painstaking care of expression, and on the whole an easy tranquillity of atmosphere. We shall find in his work neither the passion nor the strangeness of the Romantic school. Much in his nature disposed to shape him as a poet of Classicism, and with occasional reserves he is far more of a classical poet than a romantic. Yet throughout Cowper's work we feel from time to time a note of something that is certainly not the note of Pope or Dryden, something deeper in feeling than meets us even in Thomson, Collins, or Gray.

There is a tenderness in poems like *My Mother's Picture*, that not even Goldsmith in his verse can quite equal; while his fresh and intimate nature pictures point to a stage in the development of poetic naturalism, more considerable than we find in Thomson and his immediate successors.

Matters such as these make it impossible to place Cowper as the adherent of any distinct school. He is a blend of the old and the new, with much of the form of the old and something of the spirit of the new.

Turning from comparative criticism, what are the positive qualities in Cowper's work? He excelled in the delineation of the quiet backwaters of life, in investing the commonplace with tenderness and grace, in rendering with fresh unpretentious beauty the familiar scenes of everyday existence. The restraint, the easy lucidity of his best work are undeniable.

> "No noise is here, or none that hinders thought,
> The redbreast warbles still, but is content
> With slender notes, and more than half suppress'd.
> Pleased with his solitude, and flitting light
> From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes
> From many a twig the pendent drops of ice,
> That tinkle in the wither'd leaves below.
> Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,
> Charms more than silence."

In its own way, the way of careful observation and sensitive poetic feeling, it would be hard to better such a passage. Certainly in his nature pictures there is a large measure of that healing

power, that John Stuart Mill found in Wordsworth. Lacking the vision of Wordsworth and the imaginative height, he is singularly like him in cool, peaceful, unforced magic.

Another side of the man discovers a vein of whimsical humour and pleasant fancy, best shown in the letters and the wholly delicious *John Gilpin*.

The melancholia that affected his life gave a tinge of sadness, sometimes of terror, to his beautiful hymns, but could not darken the brightness of his human sympathies, and when at times the cloud lifted, there was a joyousness and light-heartedness about the man that found happy expression in his work.

His best poetry in *The Task*, and *The Winter Walk* reflects the quiet, deliberate charm of "old haunted meadows" amid which he lived. He seemed to have absorbed into his being the homely charms of these rural parts, and his verse goes on its way with the leisurely rhythm of the slow-moving Ouse, neither grand nor varied, but gently persuasive and soothing.

On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture

Oh that those lips had language! Life has pass'd
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smiles I see,
The same that oft in childhood solaced me;
Voice only fails, else, how distinct they say,
"Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!"
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
(Blest be the art that can immortalize,
The art that baffles time's tyrannic claim
To quench it) here shines on me still the same.
Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
Oh welcome guest, though unexpected, here!
Who bidd'st me honour with an artless song,
Affectionate, a mother lost so long,
I will obey, not willingly alone,
But gladly, as the precept were her own;
And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief—
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
A momentary dream, that thou art she.

The Winter Walk at Noon

The night was winter in his roughest mood;
The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon
Upon the southern side of the slant hills,
And where the woods fence off the northern blast,
The season smiles, resigning all its rage,
And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue
Without a cloud, and white without a speck
The dazzling splendour of the scene below.
Again the harmony comes o'er the vale;
And through the trees I view th' embattled tow'r
Whence all the music. I again perceive
The soothing influence of the wafted strains,
And settle in sweet musings as I tread
The walk, still verdant, under oaks and elms,
Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.
The roof, though moveable through all its length
As the wind sways it, has yet well sufficed,
And, intercepting in their silent fall
The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me.

. . . . . .

. . . Meditation here
May think down hours to moments. Here the heart
May give a useful lesson to the head,
And learning wiser grow without his books.
Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
Have oft-times no connection. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men;
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which wisdom builds
Till smooth'd and squar'd and fitted to its place,
Does but encumber whom it seems t' enrich.

Report of an Adjudged Case

Between Nose and Eyes a strange contest arose,—
The spectacles set them unhappily wrong;
The point in dispute was, as all the world knows,
To which the said spectacles ought to belong.

So Tongue was the lawyer, and argued the cause
With a great deal of skill, and a wig full of learning;
While chief baron Ear sat to balance the laws,
So fam'd for his talent in nicely discerning.

In behalf of the Nose, it will quickly appear,
And your lordship, he said, will undoubtedly find,
That the Nose has had spectacles always in wear,
Which amounts to possession time out of mind.

Then holding the spectacles up in the court,—
Your lordship observes they are made with a straddle,
As wide as the ridge of the Nose is; in short,
Design'd to sit close to it, just like a saddle.

Again, would your lordship a moment suppose,
('Tis a case that has happen'd, and may do again)
That the visage or countenance had not a Nose!
Pray who would, or who could, wear spectacles then?

On the whole, it appears—and my argument shows,
With a reasoning the court will never condemn,
That the spectacles plainly were made for the Nose,
And the Nose was as plainly intended for them.

Then, shifting his side, (as a lawyer knows how)
He pleaded again in behalf of the Eyes:
But what were his arguments few people knew,
For the court did not think they were equally wise.

So his lordship decreed, with a grave solemn tone,
Decisive and clear, without one if or but—
That whenever the Nose put his spectacles on,
By day-light or candle-light—Eyes should be shut!

Extracts from Letters

"Your question, at what time your coming to us will be most agreeable, is a knotty one, and such as, had I the wisdom of Solomon, I should be puzzled to answer. I will therefore leave it still a question, and refer the time of your journey Westonward entirely to your own election: adding this one limitation, however, that I do not wish to see you exactly at present, on account of the unfinished state of my study, the wainscot of which still smells of paint, and which is not yet papered. But to return: as I have insinuated, thy pleasant company is the thing which I always wish, and as much at one time as at another. I believe, if I examine myself minutely since I despair of ever having it in the height of summer, which for your sake I should desire most, the depth of the winter is the season which would be most eligible to me. For then it is, that in general I have most need of a cordial, and particularly in the month of January. I am sorry, however, that I have departed so far from my first purpose, and am answering a question which I declared myself unable to answer. Choose thy own time, secure of this, that whatever time that be, it will always be to us a welcome one.

"I thank you for your pleasant extract of Miss Fanshaw's letter.

> "Her pen drops eloquence as sweet
> As any muse's tongue can speak;
> Nor need a scribe, like her, regret
> Her want of Latin or of Greek.

"And now, my dear, adieu! I have done more than I expected, and begin to feel myself exhausted with so

much scribbling at the end of four hours' close application to study."[1]

"*April* 5, 1784.

"MY DEAR WILLIAM,—The hat which I desired you to procure for me, I now write to desire that you will not procure. Do not hastily infer that I mean to go about bareheaded; the whole of the matter is, that a readier method of supply has presented itself since I wrote.

"I thanked you in my last for Johnson; I now thank you, with more emphasis, for Beattie, the most agreeable and amiable writer I ever met with; the only author I have seen whose critical and philosophical researches are diversified and embellished by a poetical imagination, that makes even the driest subject, and the barrest, a feast for an epicure in books. He is so much at his ease, too, that his own character appears in every page, and which is very rare, we see not only the writer but the man; and that man so gentle, so well-tempered, so happy in his religion, and so humane in his philosophy, that it is necessary to love him, if one has the least sense of what is lovely. If you have not his poem called *The Minstrel*, and cannot borrow it, I must beg you to buy it for me; for though I cannot afford to deal largely in so expensive a commodity as books, I must afford to purchase at least the poetical works of Beattie.

"I have read six of Blair's Lectures, and what do I say of Blair? That he is a sensible man, master of his subject, and excepting here and there a Scotticism, a good writer, so far at least as perspicuity of expression, and method, contribute to make one. But oh, the sterility of that man's fancy! if indeed he has any such faculty belonging to him. Perhaps philosophers, or men designed for such, are sometimes born without one; or perhaps it withers for want of exercise. However that may be, Doctor Blair has such a brain as Shakespeare somewhere describes as 'dry as the remainder biscuit after a voyage.'"[2]

GEORGE CRABBE—of whom Thomas Moore, the Irish poet, wrote

> "True bard! and simple as the race
> Of true-born poets ever are"—

was born in 1754, and brought up among the simple fisher-folk of the village of Aldborough in Suffolk, his father, a by no means gentle parent, being a collector of salt dues.

During his apprenticeship to a surgeon, he won a magazine prize for his poem *Hope*, which turned him towards literature as a profession. Coming to London, he was nearer starvation than fame, when Edmund Burke acted the part of good Samaritan, and succeeded in getting his poem *The Library* published by Dodsley in 1781, which was favourably noticed. Acting also on Burke's advice, he took Orders in 1783, his first curacy being in his native village; several livings were then offered to the man who was making a name for himself. Eventually he settled at Trowbridge, where he wrote *Tales of the Hall* (1818–1819) for which Murray the publisher gave him £3000, to include also the unexpired copyrights of his other poems. In 1822 he journeyed to Edinburgh to visit Sir Walter Scott, and shortly after his return he fell into ill-health and died in 1832.

Beloved by the poor wherever he went, it is said that he "would put off a meditated journey rather than leave a poor parishioner who required his services . . . *no sympathy was like his.*"

The Village was published in 1783, *The Parish Register* in 1807, and *The Borough* in 1810.

[1] Extract from letter to Lady Hesketh.
[2] From a letter to Rev. William Unwin.

Horace Smith's well-known epithet concerning Crabbe, "A Pope in worsted stockings," is no bad label; always presuming that dicta of that kind are never more than rough-and-ready criticisms. His frequent excursions with the couplet of Pope, his predilection for the epigrammatic line, in which he sums up neatly a place, character, or person, certainly savours of the Twickenham wit. But with far less polish and dexterity of phrase, he transcends him immeasurably in passion and sincerity.

His own early hardships never embittered him, but they give his pictures of rural life a stern realism, a grim unloveliness, that while they occasionally depress and sometimes fatigue, never lack in interest. Whether in painting English life or English scenery, his method is the same, neither sentimental nor picturesque, but always interesting from its sincerity and minute accuracy. There is no conventional Arcadia of Strephons and Chloes, with their unreal sentimental vagaries, not even the idealised Arcadia of his greater contemporary, Wordsworth; but a kind of Arcadian Underworld, full of sordid tragedies and ugly passions, yet lifted by the moral enthusiasm and humanity of the poet into a moving and arresting tale. There is, moreover, nothing of the pensive sweetness and soothing beauty of Cowper's natural descriptions, but a marked preference for the uncouth side of Nature; just as, when treating human nature, he is more concerned with briars than roses, with weeds than blossoms, with barren waste than fertile meadows, yet investing them with an original force of minute description that compels our admiration.

In an era when poets were hotly in love with Nature, he keeps a cool affection, yet none could describe the outer show of things more truthfully and intimately; and while shrinking from the French Revolution as emphatically as Burke, and as surely as Cowper, no poet has a wider sympathy with his kind than he, or more stuff of humanity in his writings.

Curaus

> On either side
> Is level fen, a prospect wild and wide,
> With dikes on either hand by ocean's self supplied;
> Far on the right the distant sea is seen,
> And salt the springs that feed the marsh between;
> Beneath an ancient bridge the straitened flood
> Rolls through its sloping banks of slimy mud;
> Near it a sunken boat resists the tide,
> That frets and hurries to th' opposing side;
> The rushes sharp, that on the borders grow,
> Bend their brown flow'rets to the stream below,
> Impure in all its course, in all its progress slow:
> Here a grave Plum scarcely deigns to bloom,
> Nor wears a rosy blush, nor sheds perfume:
> The few dull flowers that o'er the place are spread
> Partake the nature of their lenny bed;
> Here on its wiry stem, in rigid bloom,
> Grows the salt lavender that lacks perfume;
> Here the dwarf sallows creep, the scentless harsh,
> And the soft slimy mallow of the marsh;
> Low on the ear the distant billows sound,
> And just in view appears their stony bound;
> No hedge nor tree conceals the glowing sun;
> Birds, save a wat'ry tribe, the district shun,
> Nor chirp among the reeds where bitter waters run . . .
>
> Again, the country was enclosed, a wide
> And sandy road has banks on either side:

Where, lo! a hollow on the left appeared,
And there a gipsy tribe their tent had reared;
'Twas open spread, to catch the morning sun,
And they had now their early meal begun.
When two brown boys just left their grassy seat,
The early traveller with their prayers to greet;
While yet Orlando held his pence in hand,
He saw their sister on her duty stand:
Some twelve years old, demure, attested, shy,
Prepared the force of early powers to try;
Sudden a look of languor he descries,
And well-feigned apprehension in her eyes;
Trained but yet savage, in her speaking face
He marked the features of her vagrant race:
When a light laugh and roguish leer expressed
The vice implanted in her youthful breast:
Forth from the tent her elder brother came,
Who seemed offended, yet forbore to blame
The young designer, but could only trace
The looks of pity in the traveller's face:
Within, the father, who from fences nigh
Had brought the fuel for the fire's supply,
Watched now the feeble blaze, and stood dejected by.
On ragged rug, just borrowed from the bed,
And by the hand of coarse indulgence fed,
In dirty patchwork negligently dressed,
Reclined the wife, an infant at her breast;
In her wild face some touch of grace remained,
Of vigour palsied and of beauty stained;
Her bloodshot eyes on her unheeding mate
Were wrathful turned, and scorned her wants to state,
Cursing his tardy aid—but mother there
With gipsy state engrossed the only chair;
Solemn and dull her look; with such she stands,
And reads the milk-maid's fortune in her hands,
Tracing the lines of life; assumed through years,
Each feature now the steady falsehood wears:
With hard and savage eye she views the food,
And grudging pinches their intruding brood:
Last in the group, the worn-out grandsire sits
Neglected, lost, and living but by fits:
Useless, despised, his worthless labours done,
And half protected by the vicious son,
Who half supports him; he with heavy glance
Views the young ruffians who around him dance;
And, by the sadness in his face, appears
To trace the progress of their future years;
Through what strange course of misery, vice, deceit,
Must wildly wander each unpractised cheat!
What shame and grief, what punishment and pain,
Sport of fierce passions, must each child sustain—
Ere they like him approach their latter end,
Without a hope, a comfort, or a friend![1]

SKETCHES OF AUTUMN

It was a fair and mild Autumnal sky,
And earth's ripe treasures met th' admiring eye,
As a rich beauty, when her bloom is lost,
Appears with more magnificence and cost:
The wet and heavy grass, where feet had strayed,
Nah yet erred, the wanderer's way betrayed;
Showers of the night had swelled the deepening rill,
The morning breeze had urged the quickening mill;
Assembled rooks had winged their seaward flight,
By the same passage to return at night,
While proudly o'er them hung the steady kite,
Then turned him back, and left the noisy throng,
Nor deigned to know them as he sailed along.
Long yellow leaves, from osiers, strewed around,
Choked the small stream, and hushed the feeble sound;
While the dead foliage dropped from loftier trees;
Our squire beheld not with his wonted ease;
But to his own reflections made reply,
And said aloud, "Yes! doubtless we must die."
"We must," said Richard; "and we would not live
To feel what dotage and decay will give;
But we yet taste whatever we behold,
The morn is lovely, though the air is cold;
There is delicious quiet in this scene,
At once so rich, so varied, so serene;
Sounds to delight us—each discordant tone
Thus mingled please, that fail to please alone;
This hollow wind, this rustling of the brook,
The farm-yard noise, the woodman at yon oak—
See, the tree falls!—now listen to the stroke!
That gun itself, that murders all this peace,
Adds to the charm, because it soon must cease."[2]

"Cold grew the foggy morn, the day was brief,
Loose on the cherry hung the crimson leaf;
The dew dwelt ever on the herb; the woods
Roared with strong blasts, with mighty showers the floods;
All green was vanished, save of pine and yew,
That still displayed their melancholy hue;
Save the green holly with its berries red,
And the green moss that o'er the gravel spread."[3]

II. PROSE: (*a*) Dr. Johnson and Oliver Goldsmith.

(*a*) DR. JOHNSON AND OLIVER GOLDSMITH

SAMUEL JOHNSON (1709–1784)

For nearly fifty years after the death of Pope, Johnson was the dominant figure in the literary life of the day. In his person he summed up once an expression and a criticism of current social and ethical ideals. There is scarcely any phase of the life of his times, which he does not touch with his forceful personality.

The son of a poor bookseller in Lichfield, he came up to London with twopence halfpenny in his pocket and a fragment of a play—little to aid him in his literary ambition, but fortunately he brought also an indomitable will and great power of endurance.

The Johnson who lives for us to-day in the pages of Boswell is the successful Johnson, the literary dictator upon whose words everybody hung; the man who puts aside the author's craft with unmistakable satisfaction, now that poverty could no more dog his footsteps. But it is hard to read aright the greatness or the weakness of the man unless we recall his early agonies in Grub Street.

Suffering hardens some natures, drying up the fount of pity and compassion. It intensified, in Johnson's case, the man's amazing tenderness of heart and deep-grained humanity; here it is that Johnson so far excels men like Addison and Pope. Addison's nature was sweeter and sounder than his rival's—graciousness, kindliness, and urbanity are certainly to be found in him. What one misses is that "divine discontent," that riotous goodness of heart, that prodigal tenderness, which remain in our memories long after the roughnesses of Johnson are forgotten.

Dickens could never recall his youthful hardships save with fierce indignation; indelibly had his early sufferings seared his imagination; and Johnson would burst into tears when reminded of his dark days. One can well understand the meaning of his outburst: "No man but a blockhead ever

[1] *Tales—Lover's Journey.* [2] *The Tales of the Hall.*
[3] *Tales—The Patron.*

wrote except for money"; and the intense relief with which he relinquished his pen. Boswell once expressed his wonder that Johnson had not more pleasure in writing than in not writing. "Sir," replied the irascible idol, "You may *wonder*."

Johnson started by writing for the *Gentleman's Magazine*, essays and reviews and a kind of parliamentary letter, where he took care "that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it."

What first attracted attention to him was his poem of *London*, published in 1738, written in the vein of Juvenal. This brought him ten guineas and the commendation of men like Pope, but little change in his general financial condition.

In 1744 appeared the life of his friend Richard Savage, a fine piece of biographical writing, despite of its occasional unreliability. The success of this led to his being commissioned to prepare a *Dictionary of the English Language*, a work that occupied seven years. Johnson had little philological knowledge, but he had a rich endowment of humour and sententious wisdom, and some of his definitions it would be hard to better from this standpoint. Occasionally his per prejudices flaunt themselves rather freely, as in the unkind definition of oats as "a grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people."

While he was plodding through this formidable task, he sought distraction in other matters. In 1749 appeared the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, à la Juvenal, while Garrick brought out the tragedy of *Irene*, which was partly written before he had come up to London.

The play, though not successful, filled his impoverished exchequer by nearly £300.

Having essayed verse, dictionary making, and the drama, Johnson turned to the essay, which was so popular a literary vehicle in his time.

The Rambler started its wanderings in the spring of 1750, and ran for two years. With the exception of a few contributions from Richardson, everything came freshly minted from the Doctor's mind.

The uniformity of style would have mattered less had Johnson not assumed so heavy and pedantic a manner. His later venture, *The Idler*, certainly drags its wheels less cumbrously, but in neither of these periodicals is Johnson seen at his best.

Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia (1759) proved vastly more to the public taste. Although rarely read to-day, it is a curious and interesting book, tedious at times in Johnson's most elephantine style, but with flashes of happy description, and a good deal of sound moralising on a variety of subjects.

After 1762 Johnson's skies cleared. A pension of £300 relieved him from the constant fear of poverty that had haunted him all these years, and his mind ripened and brightened under this summer fortune. The famous "Literary Club" was established in 1764, to which Burke, Goldsmith, Garrick, Gibbon, and Reynolds belonged. Here Johnson reigned as dictator; but glad and relieved as he was to relinquish the pen for the tongue, yet the glamour of Fleet Street and Covent Garden held him, as it held Lamb and Leigh Hunt a generation later, and neither of the latter had the same reason to shrink from their mistress as he had. Yet the worse she ill-treated him the more he loved her. Boswell was soon as orthodox as his master; discipleship was no hard matter with him. "Is not this very fine?" inquired the sage as they promenaded in Greenwich Park. "Yes, sir," replied Boswell, "but not equal to Fleet Street"—then added unblushingly that a baronet from Rydal (assuredly no progenitor of Wordsworth) had declared the "fragrance of a May evening in the country to be all very well, but that he preferred the smell of a flambeau at the playhouse." On another occasion Boswell praised the cheerfulness of Fleet Street. "Why, sir," said Johnson, "Fleet Street has a very animated appearance, but I think that the full tide of human existence is at Charing Cross." An amusing story then followed of a tallow-chandler who had made a fortune in London, and was foolish enough to retire to the country. He grew so weary of his sylvan retreat that he begged to know the melting days of his successor, that he might be present at the operation.

Johnson's associations with Fleet Street were many; first living in Fetter Lane, then in Boswell Court, in Gough Square; after that, in the Inner Temple Lane, in Johnson Lane; finally in Bolt Court.

When first he came to town he lodged at the house of Mr. Morris, a staymaker in Exeter Street; dining at the "Pine Apple" in New Street, "for eightpence, with very good company." "I had," said Johnson, "a cut of meat for sixpence, and bread for a penny, and gave the waiter a penny." On clean shirt days, remarked his biographer significantly, he went abroad and paid visits.

At twelve o'clock, we are told (this would apply to the prosperous years of literary dictatorship), he received a levée of morning visitors in his bedroom—Goldsmith and others, chiefly men of letters, and to them he would declaim over a two o'clock dish of tea. He then went to dinner at a tavern, most frequently the Mitre Tavern, where he commonly stayed late, and afterwards drank his tea at a friend's house, over which he loitered a great deal, but seldom took supper. He frequently gave all the silver in his pocket to the poor, who watched him between his house and the tavern where he dined.

Johnson had not eschewed altogether the author's craft; indeed his best work was yet to come; but his literary output at no time ever gave a commensurate idea of the greatness of the man. His Shakespearean criticism reveals more of the author's limitations than the greatness of its subject. *The Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland* is certainly amusing, though largely as a piece of self-revelation. His most considerable production, *The Lives of the Poets* (1779–1781), despite its incompleteness and occasionally glaring insensibilities, as in his treatment of Gray and Milton, contains some admirable critical appreciations.

In 1775 he had received his doctor's degree from Oxford, and was at the height of his popularity and influence. But the indifferent health that had dogged him all his life now began to make more

encroachments. When, during the last year or so, he was without the society of his friend Mrs. Thrale, his spirits declined and his health grew rapidly worse.

But he had many faithful friends, including Burke and Reynolds, who tried to make his last days easy; and irascible and impatient as Johnson had been during his life, he showed singular endurance and resignation during his fatal illness. On December 13, 1784, he died, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

James Boswell (1740–1795), was born at Edinburgh, his father being an able advocate at the Scottish bar and an uncompromising Presbyterian Whig. James we hear was "a fine boy, wore a white cockade, and prayed for King James until his Uncle Cochrane gave him a shilling to pray for King George, which he accordingly did." This accommodating youth studied law for a while, somewhat reluctantly, philosophy and rhetoric perhaps less reluctantly, and the mild Bohemian life of Edinburgh, with no reluctance whatever. Coming up to London in 1760, he found even pleasanter distractions to legal studies than he had done in Scotland; and despite an excursion into verse, *The Cub at Newmarket*, showed no marked propensity for either the letters or law. Then, happily both for himself and posterity, "Tom Davies," in Goldsmith's words, "flung him at Johnson in sport," and he found his true vocation. "Who is this Scotch cur at Johnson's heels?" asked someone of Goldsmith. "He is not a cur; he is only a bur," was the happy response. Indeed, had it not been for the "bur," how little we might know of the man Johnson to-day!

The Doctor did not take kindly to his enthusiastic worshipper at first, but very soon they became great friends and remained so for life, despite the natural irascibility of the idol at times. "Sir, you appear to have only two subjects: yourself and me, and I am sick of both."

No man of letters was ever more naïve than Boswell; here he transcends even Pepys, yet his naïveté, his stupidities, drew out the gruff Doctor as no intellectual cunning could have done. And if Boswell stands revealed as a somewhat contemptible and certainly foolish personage in the pages of the biography, yet he cannot be written down as a fool. He had a wonderful memory, and a natural instinct for presenting his material dramatically and vividly. No mere fool could have written the *Life of Samuel Johnson*: he was a fool of genius, for the biography is one of the great biographies of literature.

Johnson's Work and Influence

Johnson never wrote better than when under the influence of some powerful human emotion. When his inspiration is wholly literary, he is apt to grow pompous and pedantic with alarming speed; when, however, some human concern projects itself into his work, then he shakes off his stiffness and writes with force and dignity.

Take, for instance, his notable letter to Lord Chesterfield, in 1755:

My Lord,—I have been lately informed by the proprietor of the *World*, that two papers, in which my *Dictionary* is recommended to the public, were written by your lordship. To be so distinguished is an honour, which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and unpractised scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

Seven years, my lord, have now passed since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favour of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation, my lord,—Your lordship's most humble, most obedient servant, Sam. Johnson.

In his *Life of Savage*, his criticism of Pope and Dryden, his picture of Life in the Happy Valley in *Rasselas*, Johnson touches on some chord of memory or peculiar mental affinity, that bares him for us at his best and finest.

Johnson, however, lives for most of us in the pages of Boswell, rather than in his own writings; and for this reason. Clearly as some of his characteristics reveal themselves to us in his work, he found the freest self-expression in *talk*. He had a craggy mind that kept in admirable condition when rubbed against other minds. And no mind was better calculated to educe its sharp and solid qualities of cogginess as well as Boswell's. Boswell's pages exhibit the splendid inconsistencies of the man, his elephantine prejudices and conventionalities, and the equally colossal breadth of his moral sympathies; his dense stupidity on some points, such as the value of public executions, and his amazing good sense on others; his mingled melancholy and cheerfulness, his intellectual timidity and unconquerable courage. Give him a pen and he tried to strike a compromise between them, to be judicial, which Nature had taken good care he should never be; hear him talk, and you found the tonic of his fundamental common-sense behind his most monstrous extravagances.

This, however, does not mean that his writings are negligible. It only means that they are of secondary account and are best studied after Boswell. By interpreting him first of all through Boswell's pages, we shall best value the sturdy humour and sagacity that lie embedded in the *Dictionary*, the flashes of insight that illuminate the prolix *Lives of the Poets*, and the touches of tenderness and poetry that light up the often dismal moralisings of *Rasselas*.

"Every man," said Imlac, "may, by examining his own mind, guess what passes in the minds of others: when you feel that your own gaiety is counterfeit, it may justly lead you to suspect that of your companions not to be sincere. Envy is commonly reciprocal. We are long before we are convinced that happiness is never to be found, and each believes it possessed by others, to keep alive the hope of obtaining it for himself. In the assembly, where you passed the last night, there appeared such sprightliness of air, and volatility of fancy, as might have suited beings of a higher order, formed to inhabit serener regions, inaccessible to care or sorrow: yet, believe me, prince, there was not one who did not dread the moment when solitude should deliver him to the tyranny of reflection."

"This," said the prince, "may be true of others since it is true of me; yet, whatever be the general infelicity of man, one condition is more happy than another, and wisdom surely directs us to take the least evil in the *choice of life*."

"The causes of good and evil," answered Imlac, "are so various and uncertain, so often entangled with each other, so diversified by various relations, and so much subject to accidents which cannot be foreseen, that he who would fix his condition upon incontestable reasons of preference must live and die inquiring and deliberating."

"But surely," said Rasselas, "the wise men, to whom we listen with reverence and wonder, chose that mode of life for themselves which they thought most likely to make them happy."

"Very few," said the poet, "live by choice." [1]

"That affluence and power, advantages extrinsic and adventitious, and therefore easily separable from those by whom they are possessed, should very often flatter the mind with expectations of felicity which they cannot give, raises no astonishment; but it seems rational to hope that intellectual greatness should produce better effects; that minds qualified for great attainments should first endeavour their own benefit; and that they who are most able to teach others the way to happiness, should with most certainty follow it themselves.

"But this expectation, however plausible, has been very frequently disappointed. The heroes of literary as well as civil history have been very often no less remarkable for what they have suffered, than for what they have achieved; and volumes have been written only to enumerate the miseries of the learned, and relate their unhappy lives and untimely deaths." [2]

Vanity of Human Wishes

Let Observation, with extensive view,
Survey mankind from China to Peru;
Remark each anxious toil, each eager strife,
And watch the busy scenes of crowded life;
Then say, how hope and fear, desire and hate,
O'erspread with snares the clouded maze of fate,
Where wavering man, betray'd by vent'rous pride
To tread the dreary paths without a guide,
As treacherous phantoms in the mist delude,
Shuns fancied ills, or chases airy good;
How rarely reason guides the stubborn choice,
Rules the bold hand, or prompts the suppliant voice;
How nations sink, by darling schemes oppress'd,
When Vengeance listens to the fool's request;
Fate wings with every wish th' afflictive dart,
Each gift of nature, and each grace of art;
With fatal heat impetuous courage glows,
With fatal sweetness elocution flows;
Impeachment stops the speaker's powerful breath,
And restless fire precipitates on death.

But, scarce observed, the knowing and the bold
Fall in the general massacre of gold;
Wide wasting pest! that rages unconfined,
And crowds with crimes the records of mankind:
For gold his sword the hireling ruffian draws,
For gold the hireling judge distorts the laws;
Wealth heap'd on wealth nor truth nor safety buys,
The dangers gather as the treasures rise.

Let history tell, where rival kings command,
And dubious title shakes the madded land,
When statutes glean the refuse of the sword,
How much more safe the vassal than the lord;
Low skulks the hind beneath the rage of power,
And leaves the wealthy traitor in the Tower,
Untouch'd his cottage, and his slumbers sound,
Though Confiscation's vultures hover round.

The needy traveller, serene and gay,
Walks the wild heath, and sings his toil away.
Does envy seize thee? crush th' upbraiding joy;
Increase his riches, and his peace destroy!
Now fears in dire vicissitude invade,
The rustling brake alarms, and quivering shade;
Nor light nor darkness brings his pain relief,
One shows the plunder, and one hides the thief.

Yet still one general cry the skies assails,
And gain the grandeur load the tainted gales;
Few know the toiling statesman's fear or care,
Th' insidious rival and the gaping heir.

Once more, Democritus, arise on earth,
With cheerful wisdom and instructive mirth,
See motley life in modern trappings dress'd,
And feed with varied fools th' eternal jest;
Thou who could'st laugh where want enchained caprice,
Toil crush'd conceit, and man was of a piece;
Where wealth, unloved, without a mourner died,
And scarce a sycophant was fed by pride;
Where ne'er was known the form of mock debate,
Or seen a new-made mayor's unwieldy state;
Where change of favourites made no change of laws,
And senates heard before they judged a cause;
How would'st thou shake at Britain's modish tribe,
Dart the quick taunt, and edge the piercing gibe!
Attentive truth and nature to descry,
And pierce each scene with philosophic eye,
To thee were solemn toys, or empty show,
The robes of pleasure and the veils of woe:
All aid the farce, and all thy mirth maintain,
Whose joys are causeless, and whose griefs are vain.

Such was the scorn that filled the sage's mind,
Renew'd at every glance on human kind;
How just that scorn ere yet thy voice declare,
Search every state, and canvass every prayer.

Unnumber'd suppliants crowd Preferment's gate,
Athirst for wealth, and burning to be great;
Delusive Fortune hears th' incessant call;
They mount, they shine, evaporate, and fall.
On every stage the foes of peace attend,
Hate dogs their flight, and insult mocks their end.
Love ends with hope, the sinking statesman's door
Pours in the morning worshipper no more;
For growing names the weekly scribbler lies,
To growing wealth the dedicator flies,
From every room descends the painted face,
That hung the bright palladium of the place;
And, smoked, in kitchens, or in auctions sold,
To better features yields the frame of gold;
For now no more we trace in every line
Heroic worth, benevolence divine;
The form distorted justifies the fall,
And detestation rids th' indignant wall.

But will not Britain hear the last appeal,
Sign her foes' doom, or guard her favourites' zeal?

[1] *Rasselas.*
[2] *The Life of Richard Savage.*

Through Freedom's sons no more remonstrance rings,
Degrading nobles and controlling kings;
Our supple tribes repress their patriot throats,
And ask no questions but the price of votes;
With weekly libels and septennial ale,
Their wish is full to riot and to rail.
In full-blown dignity, see Wolsey stand,
Law in his voice, and fortune in his hand:
To him the church, the realm, their powers consign,
Through him the rays of regal bounty shine,
Turn'd by his nod the stream of honour flows,
His smile alone security bestows:
Still to new heights his restless wishes tower,
Claim leads to claim, and power advances power
Till conquest unresisted ceased to please,
And rights, submitted, left him none to seize.
At length his sovereign frowns—the train of state
Mark the keen glance, and watch the sign to hate.

Lives of the Poets

In acquired knowledge, the superiority must be allowed to Dryden, whose education was more scholastic, and who, before he became an author, had been allowed more time for study, with better means of information. His mind has a larger range, and he collects his images and illustrations from a more extensive circumstance of science. Dryden knew more of man in his general nature, and Pope in his local manners. The notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation; and those of Pope by minute attention. There is more dignity in the knowledge of Dryden, and more certainty in that of Pope.

Poetry was not the sole praise of either; for both excelled likewise in prose; but Pope did not borrow his prose from his predecessor. The style of Dryden is capricious and varied; that of Pope is cautious and uniform. Dryden observes the motions of his own mind; Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform, and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe, and levelled by the roller.

Of genius, that power which constitutes a poet; that quality without which judgment is cold, and knowledge is inert; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates; the superiority must, with some hesitation, be allowed to Dryden. It is not to be inferred, that of this poetical vigour Pope had only a little, because Dryden had more; for every other writer since Milton must give place to Pope; and even of Dryden it must be said, that, if he has brighter paragraphs, he has not better poems. Dryden's performances were very hasty, either excited by some external occasion, or extorted by domestic necessity; he composed without consideration, and published without correction. What his mind could supply at call, or gather in one excursion, was all that he sought, and all that he gave. The dilatory caution of Pope enabled him to condense his sentiments, to multiply his images, and to accumulate all that study might produce, or chance might supply. If the flights of Dryden, therefore, are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight. . . .

Extracts from Mrs. Thrale's Collection of Letters

"Those who have loved longest love best. A sudden blaze of kindness may by a single blast of coldness be extinguished, but that fondness which length of time has connected with many circumstances and occasions, though it may for a while be suppressed by disgust or resentment, with or without a cause, is hourly revived by accidental recollection. To those that have lived long together, every thing heard and every thing seen recalls some pleasure communicated, or some benefit conferred, some petty quarrel, or some slight endearment. Esteem of great powers, or amiable qualities newly discovered, may embroider a day or a week, but a friendship of twenty years is interwoven with the texture of life. A friend may be often found and lost, but an *old friend* never can be found, and nature has provided that he cannot easily be lost."

"Life, to be worthy of a rational being, must be always in progression; we must always purpose to do more or better than in time past. The mind is enlarged and elevated by mere purposes, though they end as they began, by airy contemplation. We compare and judge though we do not practise."

"Of whatsoever we see we always wish to know; always congratulate ourselves when we know that of which we perceive another to be ignorant. Take therefore all opportunities of learning that offer themselves, however remote the matter may be from common life or common conversation. Look in Herschel's telescope, go into a chemist's laboratory; if you see a manufacturer at work, remark his operations. By this activity of attention you will find in every place diversion and improvement."

OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728–1774)

Oliver Goldsmith was born in County Longford, Ireland, in 1728, of Saxon stock, his father being a "Curate farmer," the Rev. Charles Goldsmith, and his mother the schoolmaster's daughter. The Rev. Charles received £40 a year, "a fortune which he brought five children into the world to share." A good picture of the father is given in *The Citizen of the World*:

"My father, the younger son of a good family, was possessed of a small living in the Church. His education was above his fortune, and his generosity greater than his education. Poor as he was, he had his flatterers poorer than himself; for every dinner he gave them they returned equivalent in praise, and this was all he wanted. The same ambition that actuates a monarch at the head of an army, influenced my father at the head of his table. He told the story of the ivy-tree, and that was laughed at; he repeated the jest of the two scholars and the one pair of breeches, and the company laughed at that; but the story of Taffy and the sedan chair was sure to set the table in a roar. Thus his pleasures increased in proportion to the pleasure he gave; he loved all the world, and he fancied all the world loved him. As his fortune was but small, he lived up to the very extent of it. He had no intention of leaving his children money, for that was dross; he resolved they should have learning, for learning, he used to observe, was better than silver and gold. For this purpose he undertook to instruct us himself, and took as much pains to form our morals as to improve our understanding. We were told that universal benevolence was what first cemented society; we were taught to consider all the wants of mankind as our own; to regard 'the human face divine' with affection and esteem. He wound us up to be mere machines of pity and rendered us incapable of withstanding the slightest impulse made either by real or fictitious distress. In a word, we were perfectly instructed in the arts of giving away thousands, before we were taught the more necessary qualifications of getting a farthing."

Oliver was the fifth child, a slow, ugly, and ungainly boy. At the village school he learned a good deal about ghosts and fairies—little else. Later on (1744), at Trinity College, Dublin, he was still unconcerned with learning, though he just managed to take his degree, and his earlier years may be epitomised in one word—failure.

With light-hearted exuberance he tried the

Church, the Bar, Medicine, in rapid succession, and showed brilliant incompetence in each. His only real success, perhaps, was his invention of street ballads at five shillings each, and his most poignant delight at this time, hearing them sung under an oil lamp.

His father had died in 1749, and Oliver was cast on his own resources, which were uncommonly tenuous. He started to emigrate to America with thirty pounds, but never sailed, as he was "at a pleasure party" at the time, where he lost all his money—as well as the boat. Then he essayed the Law, and his uncle encouraged him with £50, a sum that was promptly wasted in a Dublin gaming-house. Afterwards, at Edinburgh, he applied himself for a while to chemistry and natural history, then the vagrant spirit seizing him again, he went abroad with a smattering of medical knowledge, twenty pounds, and a flute.

Borrowing money for his journey, he characteristically spent it at the start on a preposterous gift of tulip bulbs for his kindly uncle, then footed it through Flanders, France, and Switzerland, relying on his flute to provide him with supper and bed. Yet he was never really down-hearted, and observed significantly "that he found people sprightly in proportion to their wants, and the poorer, often the sprightlier."

For to tell the truth, he was a genuine vagabond at heart, with that itch of restlessness in the blood that made him an alien to the comfortable jog-trot conventions of civilised life. He was really predestined for poverty, not merely because he found it so hard to make money, but because even having made it he was quite unable to keep it.

His kindliness of heart was as great as his improvidence, and one cold night he was found sleeping in the ticking of the bed because he had given his bedclothes to a destitute woman.

On his return from abroad in 1756, he became an usher, a printer's reader (proof reader to Richardson), a reviewer, and a bookseller's hack; and at the age of thirty was living in miserable rooms at Ludgate Lane, "near Break Neck Steps," writing social sketches, making translations, and trying his hand at a history of England. Unreliable and ignorant as he often was in his miscellaneous hack-writing, he was never dull, and very soon the fine originality of the man and his native grace of style showed itself.

But the grinding sordidness of his position is revealed in the grimly humorous lines he wrote of an old friend:

> "Here lies poor Ned Purdon from misery freed,
> Who long was a book-seller's hack;
> He had such a damnable life in this world
> I don't think he'll wish to come back."

He started *The Bee*, a short-lived paper, with a good deal of excellent essay work in it, and wrote *The Citizen of the World*. *The Traveller* appeared in 1764, and at this time he was on intimate terms with Johnson's circle.

When in one of his chronic financial crises, Johnson rescued him with a guinea, finding the sheriff's officer in possession. Naturally, Goldsmith spent the guinea on Madeira. Johnson "put the cork into the bottle, desiring he would be calm," Goldsmith then showed him a manuscript—*The Vicar of Wakefield*. Johnson was struck by its merits, and according to his own account, sold it to a bookseller for £60. "The Vicar" brought him fame—more important than money, for money was never his for long. Following *The Vicar of Wakefield* came *The Good Natured Man*, his first play; *The Deserted Village*, that showed him as a poet of no mean order; and his best comedy, *She Stoops to Conquer*. Then in 1774 he died, worn out, of a fever, in material squalor and mental misery, but mourned and beloved by many friends.

His Writings

Characteristics

(a) *Whimsicality.*—In Goldsmith's temperament, melancholy and mirth lay cheek by jowl, antagonistic comrades, one would think, but no unusual ones in the spiritual composition of imaginative men. Melancholy was for ever trying to drag him down, and did succeed in making him tongue-tied often and wistful, but careless, happy-go-lucky gaiety broke through all the barriers from time to time, unexpectedly, disconcertingly, the more wild and ebullient for the repression. Often we are reminded of Elia's extravagant jesting, and suspect the extravagance to be due to the same cause—the physical necessity for ridding himself of the gloomy vapours that threaten to darken the mind. Certainly this absurdity might well have been uttered by Lamb: "Every young fellow should love gravy—a glutton once disinherited his nephew because he disliked gravy."

Indeed, his quaint whimsicality, passing unexpectedly from delicate fancy to elfish merriment, anticipates in many ways the methods of Elia and Leigh Hunt. His prose writing, therefore, is of special interest to the modern student of the Essay. He was a poet of talent, a proseman of genius—a proseman, moreover, of distinctive and original genius. With no scholarly equipment, with little opportunity to indulge his fanciful imagination to the full, working always under heavy disabilities, he has none the less a native instinct for the sweet and gracious things of life, and a clear, limpid, delicate style for expressing this.

Take, for instance, this passage from one of his early Essays:

> "It was a fine saying of Nangfu, the emperor, who, being told that his enemies had raised an insurrection in one of his distant provinces, 'Come, then, my friends,' said he, 'follow me and I promise you that we shall quickly destroy them.' He marched forward and the rebels submitted upon his approach. All now thought that he would take the most signal revenge, but were surprised to see the captives treated with mildness and humanity. 'How,' cried his first minister, 'is this the manner in which you fulfil your promise? Your royal word was given that your enemies should be destroyed, and, behold! you have pardoned all and even caressed some.' 'I promised,' replied the emperor with a generous air, 'to destroy my enemies. I have fulfilled my word, for see, they are enemies no longer. I have made friends of them.'
>
> "This, could it always succeed, were the true method of destroying the enemies of the state. Well it were if

rewards and mercy alone could regulate the commonwealth; but since punishments are sometimes necessary, let them at least be rendered terrible by being executed but seldom; and let Justice lift her sword rather to terrify than revenge."

Consider, moreover, those inimitable touches that make of *The Vicar of Wakefield* a thin, unsatisfactory story, judged strictly as a piece of fiction—one of the classics. When we think of this book, memory lingers less upon the artless plot, or even the central figure of the genial, kind-hearted Vicar than upon the cousins "even to the fourteenth remove" who came to eat his dinners and borrow his books; of the wife who had made of pickles and preserving a fine art and discourses at dinner on the history of every dish; of Moses disposing of the pony for a gross of green spectacles. The moral qualities of Primrose attract us far less than do his foibles, his peculiar method of cheering his wife by writing her epitaph and putting it up over the mantelpiece.

How admirable are such descriptive passages as these:

"Our little habitation was situated at the foot of a sloping hill, sheltered with a beautiful underwood behind, and a prattling river before; on one side a meadow, on the other a green. . . . One storey covered with thatch, which gave it an air of great snugness; the walls on the inside were nicely whitewashed . . . though the same room served for parlour and kitchen . . . that only made it the warmer. Besides, as it was kept with the utmost neatness, the dishes, plates and copper, being well scoured, all disposed in bright rows on the shelves, the eye was agreeably relieved, and did not want richer furniture."

(b) *His Tenderness.*—Allied with the whimsicality is a tenderness of heart that found also fine expression in his work. His sentimentality is equal to the best in Richardson and Sterne, and is cleaner and saner. For his sense of humour never allows him to become mawkish.

"I remember," says George Colman, in his *Random Records*, "when I was a child of five, Goldsmith taking me on his knee to amuse me, when I rewarded him with a spiteful blow given with all my force in his face. My father for punishment locked me up in a dark room, where I howled and kicked the door—till it opened, and Goldsmith entered, smiling, with a candle, which showed the mark of the spiteful blow still in his face. Setting the candle down, he took me in his arms and kissed and soothed and fondled me while I sulked and sobbed. When at last the sobs ceased, Goldsmith seized the propitious moment; he went down on all fours, and placing three hats, which happened to be in the room, upon the carpet, and putting a shilling under each, he began to conjure all three under a single hat to my utter amazement. Henceforth, whenever Goldsmith called I rushed to him for a romp, and we became the merriest and most loving play-fellows."

It has been well said of him that Charity was his one luxury. Nor with all the buffetings he suffered from Fate was he ever spiteful—this, too, in an age when bitter things were flung about so readily by the humorist of the day. Did not Sam Rogers say: "I have a very weak voice, and if I did not say ill-natured things, no one would hear me."

Yet he was fully alive to the defects of his companions and friends, but when he touches on them, does so lightly, gracefully, tenderly, with no particle of malice. "Dr. Johnson, if you were to make little fishes talk they would talk like whales."

Here is his estimate of Edmund Burke, the famous politician:

"Here lies our good Edmund, whose genius was such,
We scarcely can praise it or blame it too much;
Who, born for the universe, narrowed his mind,
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind.
Though fraught with all learning, still straining his throat
To persuade Tommy Townsend to give him the vote,
Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,
And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining.
Though equal to all things, for all things unfit,
Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit;
For a patriot too cool; for a drudge disobedient;
And too fond of the right to pursue the expedient.
In short 'twas his fate, unemployed or in place, sir,
To eat mutton cold and cut blocks with a razor."

His tenderness invades his verse, which, if never great, rarely fails in charm and humanity:

"His ready smile a parent's warmth expressed,
Their welfare pleased him and their cares distressed.
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven;
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm;
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

Easy-going and good-hearted to a fault as he was, he could be inflexible as steel where principles were concerned.

Parson Scott offered to pay him handsomely if he would write up the Government of the day. Goldsmith refused; he was content to do without, and so, said Scott in a phrase that lit up the grit of the needy "Noll," "I left him in his garret." And this is the man who was the ready dupe of knaves, yet despite their meannesses remained unsoured, unspoiled, wilfully generous to the last.

What Goldsmith did for Literature, whether in prose, verse, or drama, was to sweeten and purify it from its violence, coarseness, and bitter wit. If he has not the great driving force of Swift and Defoe, the exquisite polish of Pope, the dominating personality of Johnson, or the grasp of character and ebullient diversity of some of his great contemporaries of fiction, he has qualities especially his own, a tranquil magic, a tender homeliness, a light iridescent humour that will ever endear him to posterity.

THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD

The temporal concerns of our family were chiefly committed to my wife's management: as to the spiritual, I took them entirely under my own direction. The profits of my living, which amounted to about thirty-five pounds a year, I made over to the orphans and widows of the clergy of our diocese; for, having a sufficient fortune of my own, I was careless of temporalities, and felt a secret pleasure in doing my duty without reward. I also set a resolution of keeping no curate, and of being acquainted with every man in the parish, exhorting the married men to temperance and the bachelors to matrimony; so that in a few years it was a common saying, that there were three strange wants in Wakefield—a person wanting pride, young men wanting wives, and alehouses wanting customers.

Matrimony was always one of my favourite topics, and I wrote several sermons to prove its happiness; but there was a peculiar tenet which I made a point of sup-

porting: for I maintained, with Whiston, that it was unlawful for a priest of the Church of England, after the death of his first wife, to take a second; or, to express it in one word, I valued myself upon being a strict monogamist.

I was early initiated into this important dispute, on which so many laborious volumes have been written. I published some tracts upon the subject myself, which, as they never sold, I have the consolation of thinking were read only by a happy few. Some of my friends called this my weak side; but, alas! they had not, like me, made it the subject of long contemplation. The more I reflected upon it, the more important it appeared. I even went a step beyond Whiston in displaying my principles: as he had engraven upon his wife's tomb that she was the *only* wife of William Whiston; so I wrote a similar epitaph for my wife, though still living, in which I extolled her prudence, economy, and obedience till death; and, having got it copied fair, with an elegant frame, it was placed over the chimney-piece, where it answered several very useful purposes. It admonished my wife of her duty to me, and my fidelity to her; it inspired her with a passion for fame, and constantly put her in mind of her end.

II. PROSE: (*b*) The Great Novelists—(i) Samuel Richardson.

SAMUEL RICHARDSON (1689–1761)

A FAT, tubby, mild-looking, smooth-cheeked, ruddy-faced, little man, guiltless of any external graces; this is the man who became the idol of his day, during the earlier years of the eighteenth century—one who moved in a little crowd of female worshippers, eager to render him the constant tribute of their tears.

Nor was it merely in the matter of an unexciting exterior; his qualities of disposition were assuredly not those that capture the fancy; a rigid moralist in a day when loose living was the rule rather than the exception; a loyal abstainer in an age when it was considered almost a point of etiquette to round off your dinner on the floor; a vegetarian when dietary reform was looked on as a dangerous form of mental affection. If we turn from this general view of his personality and recall his history, we shall see how entirely it harmonises with the man as we know him.

Born in 1689, in Derbyshire, the son of a London joiner, he was at first destined for Holy Orders, but not obtaining the necessary advantages of a good education, he was apprenticed at the age of seventeen to an Aldersgate printer, John Wilde. Earnest and plodding from his early years, he applied himself to his work like one of the good little boys in his own didactic fictions, and like Hogarth's "Industrious Apprentice" married his master's daughter, becoming a master printer himself in 1719.

The exciting diversion of making indices and writing dedications, varied his professional work. He wrote a few novels, made money, took to himself a "country house" at Fulham, became printer of the Journals of the House of Commons, Master of the Stationers' Company, and Law Printer to the King. Then, in the odour of respectability, he died July 4, 1761, being buried in St. Bride's Church, Fleet Street, close to his old shop (no longer existent), No. 11 Salisbury Court.

Such a tranquil, matter-of-fact career is singularly unlike what we should expect from the inaugurator of the sentimental novel, and is in striking contrast with that of his predecessor, Defoe, and from the roving spirits who sowed the seeds of the novel in the days of Elizabeth.

Yet a closer inspection of the man reveals the possession of just those qualities as made his work so amazingly compelling in its appeal.

When a boy at school he was dubbed "Serious and Gravity," and was renowned for his moral stories concerning serving men wildly loved by the young ladies of the house, and preferred by them to bold, bad aristocrats. "Let us be moral," said Mr. Pecksniff—"Let us contemplate existence." Mr. Pecksniff made not the faintest effort to live up to his principles; Richardson did. Otherwise moral tags were meat and drink to both these gentlemen.

Apparently his serious demeanour impressed three young girls, who asked him to write some love-letters for them. We may be sure that the youthful Richardson was most circumspect and thoroughly enjoyed himself over the transaction. It afforded him a good introduction into the ways of femininity.

His wife died in 1731, before he had achieved any literary fame; then came *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, in 1740, his first fiction and one that scored an instant and signal success. Encouraged by its reception, he issued a volume of *Familiar Letters* in 1741, the nature of which may be gauged by the following extracts.

This to a young lady on her riding-habit:

"I have been particularly offended at your new riding habit which is made so extravagantly that one cannot easily distinguish your sex by it. You look neither like a modest girl nor an agreeable boy."

Again, on music:

"Much music enervates the mind. What grace is it to sing with the grace of a hired musician?"

Brevity was not characteristic of Richardson, and the full title of *Pamela* ran thus:

"Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded. In a series of familiar letters from a beautiful young damsel to her parents: now first published in order to cultivate the principles of Virtue and Religion in the minds of the youth of both Sexes. A narrative which has its foundations in Truth and Nature and at the same time that it agreeably entertains by a variety of curious and affecting incidents is entirely divested of all those images, which in too many pieces calculated by Amusement only tend to inflame the minds they should Instruct."

The volume sold well from the start, and Pope said of it that it would do more good than many volumes of sermons. At Slough, the blacksmith read the story to the villagers by the forge fire, and so pleased were his audiences by the marriage of the heroine that they insisted on ringing the church bells. The book evoked a stream of correspondence. Richardson's letter bag was always overflowing, and of his letters there are nearly a

thousand extant. The interest excited by *Pamela* was fully sustained by *Clarissa Harlowe*. Both books had one element in common. Each deals with a matter that has never failed to attract readers of fiction or spectators of melodrama—the picture of a girl struggling against adverse fate. *Pamela* gives us a young girl in lowly life, pressed by the dishonourable attentions of her employer's son, *Clarissa* with a girl in better material circumstance, in love with a scapegrace. In neither case is there anything to be said in favour of the gentleman, but whereas Pamela's affection seems largely a matter of shrewd calculation and worldly wisdom, that of Clarissa, however misguided, is genuine enough.

In both cases we are faced by much the same problem—the struggle between environment and character. Circumstances say—"Do this!" Morality says—"Do that!" Which will prevail? Will the woman succumb to temptation, or prove mistress of her fate.

Pamela solves the problem by insisting on marriage with her good-for-nothing but well-to-do lover. He marries her: thus is Virtue Rewarded. Clarissa holds out against the worthless Lovelace, finally dying of grief, and shaming him by her death into some sense of his blackguardly conduct.

Clarissa is not merely a more attractive character than Pamela, she is more carefully and subtly drawn, and her appeal to the reader's sympathies more comprehensible. The end to Pamela is—bathos; there is real pathos in Clarissa's death. Pamela's lover is a dull lay figure. Lovelace, perhaps, is also a lay figure, but he is not a dull one. If not alive, the puppet, at any rate, is smartly dressed.

So firm an affection did Clarissa rouse in her readers that the veteran Colley Cibber swore "if she should die he would no longer believe in Providence."

But for fulsome compliment, there is nothing to cap the flattery of the "minister of the Gospel" who thought that if some of Clarissa's letters had been found in the Bible they would have been regarded as manifest proofs of divine inspiration.

Richardson's friend, Lady Bradshaw, besought him to reform Lovelace and marry him to Clarissa. The novelist was obdurate. Moralist as he is, he had, happily, some artistic conscience. So poor Lady Bradshaw sobbed piteously over the last harrowing chapters, to the discomfort and annoyance of her husband. What is the meaning, she had asked on one occasion, of the word—Sentiment? Certainly, she ought to have known.

Clarissa was followed by *Sir Charles Grandison*. Hitherto his chief characters had been women. Someone had persuaded him to try his hand at a model gentleman, and Grandison is the result.

Placed beside that admirable picture of the eighteenth-century courtly knight, Sir Roger de Coverley, his limitations are obvious enough. Coverley is lovable, with his ripe geniality and quaint tenderness. Grandison, eschewing human frailties, succeeds merely in shaping as a dreadful prig. Yet for all that he is no lay figure. He strikes one as the stiff eighteenth-century prototype of the redoubtable Sir Willoughby Patterne. Meredith drew his man in the spirit of mocking irony; Richardson in the spirit of admiring didacticism. The result is not wholly dissimilar. Each is profoundly self-centred, artificial, and prosy to the core, with many external graces and accomplishments. For this reason probably, he may interest the modern reader, despite his exasperating "uprightness," certainly not in the way intended by Richardson, but because he does, in his way, give us a certain type of man.

Richardson's house in the North End Road, Fulham, was crowded by worshippers at this time, and we have a picture of the plump little author wearing a velvet cap and dressing-gown, with one hand on his heart, the other holding a copy of *Grandison*, reading aloud to his admirers in the garden.

Characteristics

(1) *The Sentimental Note.*—Sentimentality is one of the big stage properties of romance, and because of its almost universal appeal, romance was so dearly loved for many centuries. With the advent of realism into fiction, sentimentality bulked far less prominently. Neither Greene nor Nash discarded it, but the effort to infuse actuality into fiction led necessarily to a method that considered other matters than a constant appeal to the emotions. In Defoe it is at a minimum. He was by temperament neither fanciful nor emotional, and the absence of sentiment in his writings is, from the point of view of the popular novelist, his most notable defect.

Richardson's enormous popularity is due to the fact that he recognised the part played in everyday life by sentiment, and he gave his readers sentiment enough to please the most emotional of them. His deliberate, minute, detailed method enabled him to give the utmost effect to this sentimental note. To-day we are not moved by discursive sentimentalising to a like extent, though even now the sentimental writer may always reckon on a large audience; but in those days when sentiment was tabooed in verse, a generous supply of it in fiction proved especially acceptable. It is a mistake to speak as we sometimes do of the formal, unemotional eighteenth century; it is an estimate based entirely on its leading school of poetry. People at large were fully as prone to sentiment, as fond of sentment, then as now. Literary fashions may change, but human nature remains pretty constant from century to century; and the absence of sentiment and passion in the verse of the day, merely served to exaggerate its expression in the fiction of the time.

Richardson's method is cumulative. For instance, in *Pamela*, each letter is rather more harrowing than the one preceding; in *Clarissa*, each scene more poignant until the climax is reached.

(2) *The Characterization.*—Some writers, like Defoe, paint their characters with an economy of touches (for Defoe's power of detail is exerted to elucidate his *incidents*, and the probabilities of his stories, not his *personages* and their fidelity

to life). Others, such as Richardson, build up their characters slowly—touch by touch and line by line, so that they gradually assume a stereoscopic substantiality. We learn about them from their own speeches and behaviour, and from what others say about them. Thus it is that despite the astounding prolixity of the author, he does achieve his purpose, in impressing upon the imagination a story with some real character in it. No doubt there is a good deal that might be spared, trivialities of gossip that do not further any valuable purpose, such as the names of the persons who went in the separate coaches on the occasion of Grandison's wedding, or the exact amount of money that Sir Charles gave to the village girls who decked the pathway with flowers, but he leaves out no detail of importance in filling up the full-length portraits.

This does not imply, of course, that Richardson is uniformly successful in his characterisation. On the contrary, he is remarkably circumscribed. But when he knows his character, he has the art of making us know the character also. Women, with their subtleties and inconsistencies, he can depict with extraordinary skill, and for the first time in the history of English fiction, we have the woman's point of view. This power of portraying women is often seen among the dramatists, especially the Elizabethan ones; but no Elizabethan novelist showed any special faculty in this direction, and Defoe was great enough to realise his limitations here.

Richardson, therefore, is not only our first novelist of character, but our first novelist of feminine character. Pamela may not be the sweet and virtuous maiden Richardson tried to make us think she is, but that is because the conventional moralist in him blinds the author to the significance of those masterly touches by which he himself places the character of this crafty little minx before us. Clarissa also, seen through the prismatic glory of her creator's tears, fails to convince us of her supreme claims to moral excellence, but she certainly does convince us of her reality as a certain type of woman, with her lifelike vacillations, her mingled obstinacy and weakness, and such delightful touches as the tearing of Lovelace's ruffles. In his third novel, Grandison takes the central place, and the women are more sketchily drawn, yet the two girls, Harriet Byron and Clementi, are cleverly differentiated, and are by no means puppets.

Of the men, one must speak with greater reserve. Lovelace has found vigorous defenders, and it may well be true, as Mr. Dobson maintains, that Richardson knew the male villain pretty intimately: but intimacy with a scoundrel gives no guarantee of artistic power to depict that scoundrel. My own view is that Richardson's temperament was largely feminine, his standpoint on life almost entirely feminine, and that where he did succeed with his male characters, it was in those feminine aspects that are to be found in men no less than in women.

Lovelace is really a woman's rake tempered by the moralist; Grandison is a woman's "gentleman." Virile humanity was quite beyond Richardson's reach, but the feminine element in man Richardson could always suggest.

(3) *Morality.*—"There is always something," remarked Dr. Johnson, "which Clarissa preferred to truth." Johnson was a great, though disconcerting, admirer of the novelist, and here he certainly strikes on the real weakness of Richardson's moral outlook. He valued himself upon the morality of his pieces; never relinquished the pulpit attitude, yet the morality when analysed is found to be often little better than discreet opportunism. Pamela, as we have seen, was a designing little madam, and Clarissa, certainly his finest creation, has no vital strength of character or nobility of soul. She is chaste, sensitive, and sympathetic; when we have said that we have said all. She does not belong to the highest type of womanhood.

Yet Richardson not only took himself seriously as a novelist and classed his fictions with such books as Taylor's *Holy Living* and *The Whole Duty of Man*, but was esteemed by most of his contemporaries as a profound teacher.

The morality of Richardson is the morality of his age; not salted by a tolerant humour as in Fielding's case, but sentimentalised often to an unhealthy extent. "If you were to read Richardson for the story," said Johnson in an oft-quoted passage, "your impatience would be so much fretted, you would hang yourself." It might well be said to-day that if you read him for his morality you deserved someone else to hang you.

Johnson counselled us to read him for his sentiment. The modern reader would prefer, no doubt, and with good reason, to read him for his power of delineation, and for a literary style that, despite its prolixity, and involutions, is yet singularly effective. Given leisure and determination, there is still much pleasure to be derived from Richardson's fictions, and we may comprehend, even if we do not absolutely endorse, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's tribute: "I heartily despise him, and eagerly read him, nay, sob over his work in a most scandalous measure."

His Historical Significance and Influence

Richardson introduced sentimentality into English fiction and popularised it for ever. Without his influence we might never have had *Tristram Shandy*; we certainly should have been without *Joseph Andrews*; and ill could we have afforded to lose both these novels. Then the feminine standpoint taken in his writings stirred many able women to continue and amplify the feminine tradition. Fanny Burney and Jane Austen are indebted to him, and a host of lesser names. In France, Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse* is frankly inspired by *Clarissa*, while Diderot grew hysterical in his praise, and in Germany, the sentimental vogue aroused by Richardson culminated in Goethe's *Sorrows of Werther*.

These things must be remembered when we shudder at his moralising, laugh at his absurdities, and yawn over his interminable length. He is the

first novelist to show a real and vital knowledge of the human heart, its perversities and contradictions—the first to analyse the woman's point of view; and the man who did that deserves some measure of praise from posterity.

LETTER FROM MISS HOWE TO CLARISSA

My cousin, Jenny Fynnet, is here; she is all praise, you know, and loves to set me a prating; yet comes upon a very grave occasion—to procure my mother to go to her grandmother Larkin, who is bed-ridden; and has taken it into her head that she is mortal and should make her will, but on condition that my mother who is her relation will go and advise as to the particulars of it, for she has a high opinion of my mother's judgment in all notable affairs.

Mrs. Larkin lives seventeen miles off, and as my mother cannot endure to lie out of her own house she proposes to set out in the morning, and get back at night. So to-morrow I shall be at your service; nor will I be at home to anybody.

As to the impertinent Hickman, I have put him upon escorting the two ladies, in order to attend my mother home at night. Such expeditions as these, and to give us women a little air at public places, is all I know these dangling fellows are good for.

Here I was interrupted on the honest man's account. He has been here these two hours, and was now going. His horses at the door. My mother sent for me down, pretending to want to say something to me.

Something she said when I came that signified nothing—evidently for no reason called me—but she wished to give me an opportunity to see what a fine bow her man could make. She knows I am not over-ready to oblige him with my company, if I happen to be otherwise engaged. I could not help showing a fretful air when I saw her intention.

She smiled off the visible fretfulness, that the man might go away in good humour with himself.

He bowed to the ground, and would have taken my hand, his whip in the other, but I would not have it, and withdrew my hand.

"A mad girl," said my mother.

He was quite put out, took his horse's bridle, bowing back till he ran against his servant. He mounted his horse—I mounted up-stairs, after a lemure.

Hickman is a sort of diddling, busy, yet, to borrow a word from you, *wobbisy* man, has a great deal to do, and seems to me to dispatch nothing. Irresolute and changeable in everything but in teasing me.

The man however is honest, has a good estate, and may one day be a baronet, an't so please you. He is humane, benevolent, and, people say, generous. I cannot but confess that now I like anybody better, whatever I did once.

He is no fox-hunter. He keeps a pack, indeed, but prefers not his hounds to his fellow-creatures. No bad sign for a wife, I own. He loves his home, but dislikes racing in a gaming way, as well as all sorts of gaming. Then he is sober, modest, they say virtuous—in short, has qualities that mothers would be fond of in a husband for their daughters, and for which perhaps their daughters would be the happier could they judge for themselves.

Strange that these sober fellows cannot have a decent sprightliness, a modest assurance with them. Something debonnaire, which need not be separated from their awe and reverence, when they address a woman. You and I have often retrospected the faces and minds of grown people, that is, have formed images, from their present appearances, as far as they would justify us, what sort of figures they made when boys and girls. And I'll tell you the lights in which Hickman, Solmes, and Lovelace, our three heroes, have appeared to me, supposing them boys at school.

Solmes I have imagined to be a little sordid rogue, who would purloin and beg every boy's bread and butter from him.

Hickman, an overgrown, lank-haired, chubby boy, who would be punched by everybody, and go home and tell his mother.

Lovelace, a curl-pated villain, full of fire, fancy, and mischief; an orchard robber, a wall climber, a horse rider without saddle or bridle—neck or nothing. A sturdy rogue, who would kick and cuff, and do no right, and take no wrong to anybody, would get his head broke, then a plaster for it, while he went on to do more mischief. And the same dispositions have grown up with them, and distinguished them as *men*.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER OF MISS BYRON TO MISS LUCY SELBY

"I thank you, *sir*, for your good opinion of me, but I cannot encourage your addresses."

"You *cannot*, madam, *encourage my addresses!* And express yourself so seriously. Good Heaven! I have been assured, madam," recovering from his surprise, "that your affections are not engaged. But surely it must be a mistake. Some happy man——"

"Is it," interrupted I, "a necessary consequence that the woman who cannot receive the addresses of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen must be engaged?"

"Why, madam, as to that—I know not what to say. But a man of my fortune, and I hope not *absolutely* disagreeable either in person or temper; of *some* rank in life——"

He paused; then resuming,—"What, madam, if you are as much in earnest as you seem, can be your objection? Be so good as to name it, that I may know whether I can be so happy as to get over it?"

"We do not, we *cannot*, all like the same person. Women, I have heard say, are very capricious. Perhaps I am so. But there is a *something* (we cannot always say what) that attracts or disgusts us."

"*Disgusts!* madam. *Disgusts!* Miss Byron."

"I spoke in general, sir. I daresay nineteen women out of twenty would think themselves favoured in the addresses of Sir Hargrave Pollexfen."

"But *you*, madam, are the twentieth that I must love; and be so good as to let me know——"

"Pray, sir, ask me not a reason for a *peculiarity*. Do you not yourself show a peculiarity in making me the twentieth?"

"Your merit, madam——"

"It would be vanity in me, *sir*," interrupted I, "to allow a force to that plea. You, sir, may have more merit than perhaps the man I may happen to approve of better. But—*shall* I say?—(pardon me, sir)—you do not—you do not," hesitated I, "hit my fancy. Pardon me, sir."

"If pardon depends upon *my* breath, let me die if I *do!* *Not hit your fancy*, madam!" (And then he looked mum himself all round.) "*Not hit your fancy*, madam!"

"I told you, sir, that you must not expect anything from me but the simplest truth. You do me an honour in your good opinion; and if my own heart were not in this case a very determined one, I would answer you with more politeness. But, sir, on such an occasion as this I think it would not be honourable, it would not be just, to keep a man in an hour's suspense when I am in none myself."

"Confound me!—and yet I am enough confounded!—but I will not take an answer so contrary to my hopes. Tell me, madam, by the sincerity which you boast, are you engaged in your affections?"

"I am a free person, Sir Hargrave. It is no impeachment of sincerity if a free person answers not every question that may be put to her by those to whom she is not accountable."

"Very true, madam. But as it is no impeachment of your freedom to answer this question either negatively or affirmatively, and as you glory in your frankness, let me beseech you to answer it. Are you, madam, or are you not, disengaged in your affections?"

"Excuse me, Sir Hargrave. I don't think you are entitled to an answer to this question. Nor, perhaps,

would you be determined by the answer I should make to it, whether negative or affirmative."

"Give me leave to say, madam, that I have some little knowledge of Mr. Fenwick and Mr. Greville, and of their addresses. They have both owned that no hopes have you given them, yet declare that they *will* hope. Have you, madam, been as explicit to them as you are to me?"

"I have, sir."

"Then *they* are not the men I have to fear—Mr. Orme, madam ——"

"Is a good man, sir."

"Ah, madam! But why then will you not say that you are engaged?"

"If I own I *am*, perhaps it will not avail me. It will still much less if I say I am *not*."

"*Avail* you! dear Miss Byron! I have pride, madam. If I had not I should not aspire to *your* favour. But give me leave to say" (and he reddened with anger) "that my fortune, my descent, and my ardent affection for you considered, it may not *dis*-avail you. Your relations will at least think so, if I may have the honour of your consent for applying to them."

"May your fortune, Sir Hargrave, be a blessing to you. It *will*, in proportion as you do good with it. But were it twice as much, that *alone* would have no charm for me. My duties would be increased with my power. *My* fortune is an humble one; but were it less it would satisfy my ambition while I am single; and if I marry I shall not desire to live beyond the estate of the man I choose."

"Upon my soul, madam, you *must* be mine. Every word you speak adds a rivet to my chains."

"*Then*, sir, let us say no more upon the subject."

"But you will allow of my visits to your cousin, madam?"

"Not on my account, sir."

"You will not withdraw if I come? You will not refuse seeing me?"

"As you will be no visitor of mine, I must be allowed to act accordingly. Had I the least thought of encouraging your addresses, I would deal with you as openly as is consistent with my notions of modesty and decorum."

"Perhaps, madam, from my gay behaviour at Lady Betty Williams's, you think me too airy a man. You have doubts of my sincerity. You question my honour."

"That, sir, would be to injure myself."

"Your *objections*, then, dear madam? Give me, I beseech you, some one material objection."

"Why, sir, should you urge me thus? When I have no *doubt*, it is unnecessary to look into my own mind for the particular reasons that move me to disapprove of the addresses of a gentleman whose professions of regard for me, notwithstanding, entitle him to civility and acknowledgment.

"By my soul, madam, this is very comical,—

> 'I do not like thee, Dr. Fell:
> The reason why, I cannot tell—
> But I don't like thee, Dr. Fell.'

Such, madam, seem to me to be your reasons."

"You are very pleasant, sir. But let me say, that if you are in earnest in your professions, you could not have quoted anything more against you than these humorous lines."

"I was not aware of that," replied he.

"Excuse me, cousin," said I, turning to Mrs. Reeves; "but I believe I have talked away the tea-time."

"The devil fly away with the tea-kettle," said Sir Hargrave.[1]

[1] *Sir Charles Grandison.*

II. PROSE: (*b*) The Great Novelists—(ii) Henry Fielding.

HENRY FIELDING (1707–1754)

In person, disposition, and pedigree, Henry Fielding presents a remarkable contrast with his famous contemporary. In the first place, he was an aristocrat, the "House of Fielding" claiming kinship with that of Hapsburg, and dating from the twelfth century. His great-grandfather was the first Earl of Desmond, his grandfather Canon of Salisbury, his father one of Marlborough's generals. On the mother's side, his grandfather was a Justice of the King's Bench, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was his cousin.

Fielding was good-looking, tall, and well made, with abundant animal spirits, a fine wit, and an open, genial disposition, one well calculated to attract a host of friends. One thing only, and that no unusual one, tempered the young man's sunny satisfaction with life—the poverty of his patrimony.

Born at Sharpham Park, near Glastonbury, in 1707, he was educated for Eton by a Mr. Oliver, who "could have acted the part of Falstaff without stuffing," and was noted for "a sauntering in his gait when he walked not unlike that of a goose, only he stalked the slower."

After leaving Eton, in reaction against book-study maybe, he planned an elopement with a Miss Sarah Andrew, but this, owing to her guardian's care, remained merely a pious aspiration. After journeying to Leyden to study law, he became embarrassed by his father's forgetfulness in the matter of an allowance, so he came back to London, resolved to see what his own wits could do for him.

The most obviously lucrative business in those days for a young man of parts was playwriting, and the young wit wasted little time in getting to work.

Love in Several Masques was produced in 1728, and a host of others quickly followed; the majority fairly successful, but none of them having much merit save the amusing *Tragedy of Tragedies; or The Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great* (1731), in which he parodied agreeably the mannerisms of Lee and Rowe. Another of them, *Don Quixote in England*, is worth recording since it contained that typical English song, "The Roast Beef of Old England."

The playwright then made drama on his own account; he fell in love with a Miss Charlotte Craddock, a beautiful, wealthy, and accomplished lady who lived at Salisbury. For her he waited four years, during which time the course of true love underwent many exciting vicissitudes. Then, in 1735, he tired of playwriting, not because of financial failure in that direction, for he had done well from a material point of view, but because he realised that the drama gave him no proper scope for his own literary gifts. Political satire interested him for a while, then he turned to the Bar, and while there was attracted by the sensational success of *Pamela*. In 1742 he planned and executed what was, in inception and form, a parody of Richardson's book, but was in essence a fresh stage in the

development of the novel. Fielding was then thirty-five.

Encouraged by its success he published, in 1743, three volumes of *Miscellanies*, including one of the finest pieces of ironical fiction in the language—*Jonathan Wild*. Then for a while he devoted himself to Whig journalism, writing the *True Patriot* and the *Jacobite Journal*; and in 1749 published his most popular novel, *Tom Jones*. Meanwhile his wife had died, and the author had become a Bow Street Magistrate. While performing his duties here, which he did with vigour and admirable sense, he found time to produce *Amelia* in 1751, and to conduct for some time the *Covent Garden Journal*. His health broke down and he travelled abroad, hoping to restore it. Fielding's vitality, however, had been sapped, and he died in October 1754, at Lisbon. After his death, his last book, *A Voyage to Lisbon*, was published.

His Work

When Fielding planned out *Joseph Andrews*, on the modest lines of a burlesque, he had not reckoned on his creative imagination and on Parson Adams. In chapter xi. the worthy parson appears and takes the story into his own hands. It ceases to become a satire on the novel of morals and becomes the pioneer of the novel of manners. Here we have the dividing line between Richardson and Fielding as novelists. Not that Fielding in his own way is not also a pronounced moralist. But he is a painter of manners first, and Richardson was first a moralist.

Jonathan Wild (1743) reveals Fielding in another light. There is nothing here of the robust satirical humour of the novels, nothing of the discursive moralising, little of the social historian. It is a grim and powerful piece of ironic portraiture, showing on an heroic scale the villainies of the highwayman, and wrought with an artistic skill and clarity of purpose that it would be hard to overpraise. The underlying thesis, indeed, is a kind of anticipation of De Quincey's brilliant *Murder as One of the Fine Arts*. The feature that unites *Jonathan Wild* with the novels is the vitality of the characterisation, great and small.

But the flavour of *Jonathan Wild* is too subtle, too bitter for some palates, and *Tom Jones* is certainly more to the taste of most people. Certainly, like Kipling's Tommy, Tom Jones "ain't no bloomin' 'ero," and in his anxiety to emphasize his humanity, Fielding seems—to the modern reader at any rate—to have drawn rather a too ordinary "young man about town." But if Tom himself is not a particularly attractive scapegrace, there are many characters who are attractive. Good-natured Allworthy is by no means insipid as he might easily have been; Black George is a vigorously vital rascal; Partridge is amusing company, and Squire Western an irresistible picture of the "three-bottle" country gentleman. The real villains and humbugs (hot-blooded villainy Fielding can always condone), are somewhat too villainous to convince us; but if we find Blifil too monstrous to stomach, there is the breezy exuberance and liveliness of the story-telling by way of compensation.

Amelia, his third novel, is the fruit of his later years, and reflects Fielding as the critic of legal administration and our social machinery. The buoyancy of his earlier method is replaced by a graver, maturer style, as befitted one who had learned much of contemporary life on its seamy side while a magistrate. There is less humour, less gaiety, less diversity than before, but in the more serious passages, Fielding is at his happiest. None of his women characters have the grace and sweetness of Amelia. She is drawn from life, and in her the novelist paints, with tender fidelity and with the delicate insight born of love and knowledge, the charms of a womanly woman, devoid of the sugary namby-pambyism that Richardson could never resist, and of the conventional touches that make Sophia Western never anything more than a pretty shadow.

Characteristics

(1) *His Satiric Humour.*—The society that Fielding painted was a coarse and noisy one, but Fielding draws attention to the fact that "its back is worse than its bite," that it is more frivolous and thoughtless than deliberately bad. His genial humour playing over its rough surface, easily and spaciously irradiates everyone who is not a hypocrite or a muff. The essential humanity of his characters is their most attractive asset, and this it is that gives such astonishing vitality to his work. His treatment of hypocrisy is the least satisfactory illustration of his art, for his hearty detestation of it prevents him even from making his hypocrites plausible. Minor affectations he can deal with tolerantly and pleasantly enough, and one recalls Parson Adams urging Joseph Andrews to resign his Fanny "peaceably, quietly, and contentedly," by philosophic considerations conveniently deduced from the Bible and from Seneca, then being suddenly faced with a calamity of his own, the supposed loss of his child, when straightway the affectation of philosophy slips from him. On the whole this humour of Fielding is nowhere more pleasantly expressed than in the picture of the lovable parson—good-hearted, absurd, and most impractical of men; like a full-blooded Don Quixote.

One can well understand how his rich humour delighted Dickens and stimulated him to create like portraits of his own, portraits often more ludicrous, but not more actual. Certainly, the character of Parson Adams alone justified John Forster's comment on Fielding's habit of "discerning what was good and beautiful in the homeliest aspects of humanity."

The precise value of Fielding's moral attitude towards life may be disregarded for the moment. Even apart from that, it is quite easy to understand the feud between him and Richardson. Richardson's immense solemnity precludes the faintest ray of humour. The modern reader may often smile in reading his pages, but it is *at* the author, not with him. Fielding, with a more diverse experi-

sense of human life, and with a gaiety of temperament that even in mellower years never quite lost its buoyancy, treats his story and his characters always from the point of view of the humorist; not in the least anxious to hide the weaknesses and idiosyncrasies, rejoicing in them rather, and feeling decidedly more comfortable when he can have a good laugh at his hero.

As a rule, Fielding's humour has the roots of geniality about it; unlike Swift's, it is sunny, kindly, and for all its keenness never barbed with poison.

Rarely has it that ironic quality which belongs rather to the philosophic and reflective humorist, a quality near akin to tragedy.

But there is a great and notable exception to the general run of Fielding's humour. That exception is found in *Jonathan Wild*. As an imaginative picture of ordinary human life, the book is inferior to its predecessor and successor, but as an intellectual presentment in the guise of fiction of a genus of the human species, it stands easily first, as a masterly essay in ironic humour, claiming kinship with the mordant genius of *A Tale of a Tub* and *Candide*. Perhaps it is Fielding's greatest achievement in literature; certainly it is one of the great books of the century.

If Parson Adams illustrated the sympathetic quality of Fielding's humour, and Jonathan Wild its intellectual power, Squire Western affords us one of the happiest examples of its moral sensibility. Western is a coarse, violent, domineering man, astonishingly actual, and for all his grossness, never wholly repulsive. Deep down in his sensual nature, and below his fierce intolerance, there is a strain of tenderness and good-heartedness. "I'll turn her out of doors," he screams when he hears of his daughter's affection for Tom. "She shall beg, starve, rot in the street. . . . Not one half-penny o' mine . . . I little thought what puss he was looking after. . . . She shall be no better than carrion." For all that he is quite easily led by Allworthy, to his own astonishment. "You make me do what you please, and yet I have as good an estate as you and am in the Commission of the Peace." A raging fury when he apostrophises the lover, vowing to "spoil his caterwauls"; yet almost an amiable grandfather at the close of the story when the baby's "yawling" delights him, and he declares the sound to be "better than the finest cry of dogs in England," a tribute to the baby's lungs no less than to his own good nature.

(2) *His Common-sense Morality.*—From the very first it is clear that Fielding is resolved to tilt against the cloying sentimentality brought into vogue by Richardson's *Pamela*. In *Joseph Andrews* he burlesqued this mawkish ideal, giving us in Abraham Adams a picture of the genuine sentiment for which he cared. This pursuit of current heroics he carries into *Jonathan Wild*, stripping the picturesque trappings off the "popular" rogue, and displaying him in all his ugliness and brutality. It is quite clear, therefore, that Fielding's attitude was not merely a negative one; his object was to replace a morbid by a healthy, common-sense morality.

The moral intent indeed is obvious in his plays, where he first began to satirise the follies of the day; and this is coupled with an equally vigorous intention of enjoying life to the full. He frowns on all attempts to wave away the "cakes and ale," merely postulating that the cakes should be well baked and the ale sound and wholesome.

If you sup too freely of them, then you must put up with the consequences, Fielding seems to say. If he regards intemperance of living with too indulgent an eye, we must recollect the general tone of his day. The "wild oats" theory was accepted as a necessary step in life. Fielding's coarseness, however, is all above-board. It may be rank, but it is quite honest and straightforward. He may tolerate it; but he makes no attempt to gloss it. This morality does not strike a high note, it is largely a prudential one. Richardson recognised the animalism and called it high-falutin names; Fielding frankly accepted it; man is an animal, according to him, and there is no use disguising the animalism; but he is something more.

This common-sense morality, combined with his satiric humour, gave him a shrewd insight into the weaknesses of his characters. Admirable, for instance, is the sketch of Mrs. James in *Amelia*. Here she is writing about the heroine:

"In the first place her eyes are too large and she hath a look with them that I don't know how to describe; but I know I don't like it. Then her eyebrows are too large, indeed she doth all in her power to remedy this with the pincers, for if it was not for those her eyebrows would be preposterous. Then her nose . . . soar on one side. Neck too protuberant for the genteel size, especially as she bows herself. . . . Lastly, both too short and too tall. Well, you may laugh, Mr. James, I know what I mean though I cannot well express it. I mean she is too tall for a pretty woman, and too short for a fine woman. . . ."

In sheer artistry, Richardson is the subtler, Fielding the fresher and more vigorous. Taken together, they give us a remarkable picture of the life and ideals of the time, and if Richardson excelled in portraying the complexities of femininity, Fielding just as surely excelled in drawing men. His range is far wider than Richardson's, his outlook more wholesome, and as a novelist of contemporary manners he is unequalled by any of his contemporaries.

JONATHAN WILD

The day now drew nigh when our great man was to exemplify the last and noblest act of greatness by which any hero can signalise himself. This was the day of execution, or consummation, or apotheosis (for it is called by different names), which was to give our hero an opportunity of facing death and damnation, without any fear in his heart, or, at least, without betraying any symptoms of it in his countenance. A completion of greatness which is heartily to be wished to every great man; nothing being more worthy of lamentation than when Fortune, like a lazy poet, winds up her catastrophe awkwardly, and, bestowing too little care on her fifth act, dismisses the hero with a sneaking and private exit, who had in the former part of the drama performed such notable exploits as must promise to every good judge amongst the spectators a noble, public, and exalted end.

But she was resolved to commit no such error in this instance. Our hero was too much and too deservedly her favourite to be neglected by her in his last moments; accordingly all efforts for a reprieve were vain, and the

name of Wild stood at the head of those who were ordered for execution.

From the time he gave over all hopes of life, his conduct was truly great and admirable. Instead of showing any marks of dejection or contrition, he rather infused more confidence and assurance into his looks. He spent most of his hours in drinking with his friends and with the good man above commemorated. In one of these compotations, being asked whether he was afraid to die, he answered, "D——n me, it is only a dance without music." Another time, when one expressed some sorrow for his misfortune, as he termed it, he said with great fierceness—"A man can die but once." Again, when one of his intimate acquaintance hinted his hopes, that he would die like a man, he cocked his hat in defiance, and cried out gravely—"Zounds! who's afraid?"

Happy would it have been for posterity, could we have retrieved any entire conversation which passed at this season, especially between our hero and his learned comforter; but we have searched many pasteboard records in vain.

On the eve of his apotheosis, Wild's lady desired to see him, to which he consented. This meeting was at first very tender on both sides; but it could not continue so, for unluckily, some hints of former miscarriages intervening, as particularly when she asked him how he could have used her so barbarously once as calling her b——, and whether such language became a man, much less a gentleman, Wild flew into a violent passion, and swore she was the vilest of b—s to upbraid him at such a season with an unguarded word spoke long ago. She replied, with many tears, she was well enough served for her folly in visiting such a brute; but she had one comfort, however, that it would be the last time he could ever treat her so; that indeed she had some obligation to him, for that his cruelty to her would reconcile her to the fate he was to-morrow to suffer; and, indeed, nothing but such brutality could have made the consideration of his shameful death (so this weak woman called hanging), which was now inevitable, to be borne even without madness. She then proceeded to a recapitulation of his faults in an exacter order, and with more perfect memory, than one would have imagined her capable of; and it is probable would have rehearsed a complete catalogue had not our hero's patience failed him, so that with the utmost fury and violence he caught her by the hair and kicked her, as heartily as his chains would suffer him, out of the room.

At length the morning came which Fortune at his birth had resolutely ordained for the consummation of our hero's Greatness; he had himself indeed modestly declined the public honour she intended him, and had taken a quantity of laudanum, in order to retire quietly off the stage; but we have already observed, in the course of our wonderful history, that to struggle against this lady's decrees is vain and impotent; and whether she had determined you shall be hanged or be a prime minister, it is in either case lost labour to resist. Laudanum, therefore, being unable to stop the breath of our hero, which the fruit of hemp-seed, and not the spirit of poppy-seed, was to overcome, he was at the usual hour attended by the proper gentleman appointed for that purpose, and acquainted that the cart was ready. On this occasion he exerted that greatness of courage which hath been so much celebrated in other heroes; and, knowing it was impossible to resist, he gravely declared he would attend them. He then descended to that room where the fetters of great men are knocked off in a most solemn and ceremonious manner. Then shaking hands with his friends (to wit, those who were conducting him to the tree), and drinking their healths in a bumper of brandy, he ascended the cart, where he was no sooner seated than he received the acclamations of the multitude, who were highly ravished with his Greatness.

The cart now moved slowly on, being preceded by a troop of horse-guards bearing javelins in their hands, through streets lined with crowds all admiring the great behaviour of our hero, who rode on, sometimes sighing, sometimes swearing, sometimes singing or whistling, as his humour varied.

When he came to the tree of glory, he was welcomed with an universal shout of the people, who were there assembled in prodigious numbers to behold a sight much more rare in populous cities than one would reasonably imagine it should be, viz., the proper catastrophe of a great man.

But though envy was, through fear, obliged to join the general voice in applause on this occasion, there were not wanting some who maligned this completion of glory, which was now about to be fulfilled to our hero, and endeavoured to prevent it by knocking him on the head as he stood under the tree, while the ordinary was performing his last office. They therefore began to batter the cart with stones, brick-bats, dirt, and all manner of mischievous weapons, some of which erroneously playing on the robes of the ecclesiastic, made him so expeditious in his repetition, that with wonderful alacrity he had ended almost in an instant, and conveyed himself into a place of safety in a hackney-coach, where he waited the conclusion with a temper of mind described in these verses:

> "Suave mari magno, turbantibus æquora ventis,
> E terra alterius magnum spectare laborem."

We must not, however, omit one circumstance, as it serves to shew the most admirable conservation of character in our hero to his last moment, which was, that, whilst the ordinary was busy in his ejaculations, Wild, in the midst of the shower of stones, &c., which played upon him, applied his hands to the parson's pocket, and emptied it of his bottle-screw, which he carried out of the world in his hand.

The ordinary being now descended from the cart, Wild had just opportunity to cast his eyes around the crowd, and to give them a hearty curse, when immediately the horses moved on, and with universal applause our hero swung out of this world.

Thus fell Jonathan Wild the Great, by a death as glorious as his life had been, and which was so truly agreeable to it, that the latter must have been deplorably maimed and imperfect without the former; a death which hath been alone wanting to complete the characters of several ancient and modern heroes, whose histories would then have been read with much greater pleasure by the wisest in all ages. Indeed we could almost wish that whenever Fortune seems wantonly to deviate from her purpose, and leaves her work imperfect in this particular, the historian would indulge himself in the licence of poetry and romance, and even do a violence to truth, to oblige his reader with a page which must be the most delightful in all his history, and which could never fail of producing an instructive moral.

Narrow minds may possibly have some reason to be ashamed of going this way out of the world, if their consciences can fly in their faces and assure them they have not merited such an honour; but he must be a fool who is ashamed of being hanged, who is not weak enough to be ashamed of having deserved it.

II. PROSE: (*b*) The Great Novelists—(iii) Tobias George Smollett.

TOBIAS GEORGE SMOLLETT (1721–1771)

His Life

Born in 1721, at Dalquhurn House in the West of Scotland, of good stock, young Smollett could boast no better patrimony than had his contemporary Fielding. Like him he received a good education, and was then apprenticed to a surgeon in Glasgow. But his heart lay in books, not in bottles, and 1739 sees him in London with a drama

on James I of Scotland in his pocket, and all sorts of wild dreams in his head. Fortune failed to smile on him, however, and so he found employment for five years as a surgeon's mate on board a king's ship, during the war with Spain.

His experiences there stood him in good stead, for during these five years he may be said to have served his apprenticeship to literature. On his return, with Scotch shrewdness he married a woman with money, but being (as Fielding was not) very extravagant, he speedily ran through it. Once again he tried fortune as a surgeon, but his volatile, impetuous temperament did not inspire patients with confidence. No one had seemed anxious to encourage him as a writer of tragedy, so he turned now to satire, *Advice* and *The Reproof* (1748). These faring little better, he bethought him of fiction, made use of his youthful experiences, and offered the public *The Adventures of Roderick Random*.

This novel, if frankly an imitation of the picaresque Spanish fiction *Gil Blas*, caught the public taste by its liveliness and freshness. *Peregrine Pickle* followed in 1751, *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753), a poor and ineffective satire on the lines of *Jonathan Wild*. His last novel, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, was finished in Leghorn and published a few days before his death in 1771.

His Work

As a writer Smollett could boast a lively and vivid style. His stories are rich in incident, there is abundant "go" in them, and, though very unequal in characterisation, this gift of telling a good yarn prevents him from being dull. Of his three novels, *Peregrine Pickle* is the freshest and most diversified, *Humphry Clinker* the mellowest.

But the greatest claim that Smollett has upon our consideration is his genius for depicting oddities. Generally speaking, he is on a lower level as a literary artist than either Richardson or Fielding. He has not a tithe of Richardson's psychological subtlety, nor has his vision the sanity and diversity of Fielding's. But in the creation of oddities he is certainly easily first.

His seamen are the real thing: Tom Bowling (in *Roderick Random*) and Hawser Trunnion (in *Peregrine Pickle*) have the salt savour of the sea about them, and are a real and valuable contribution to the portrait gallery of fiction. Here he draws upon his own experiences; he can paint the sea-rover, for he himself has been a sea-rover; and the reader can visualise easily every hole and cranny on board *H.M.S. Thunder*; while toast remarkable decoction "bumbo"—rum, sugar, water, and nutmeg—is not easily forgotten. Hatchway and Pipes are other humorous and vital figures, who impress the memory. That they lapse into caricature from time to time is equally true. But, as with many of Dickens' characters, they are described with such infinite zest, with such huge and obvious enjoyment, that the hilarious contagion spreads to the reader.

Personally Smollett was a man of fiery temper and strong prejudices, with a decided forcefulness of character and an aggressive goodness of heart that seemed to say at times, "If you won't let me do you a service I'll jolly well punch your head!" There is in his work much of that fresh exuberance that we find in Fielding, with greater coarseness and less urbanity. But to the reader with a relish for farce, there is certainly much enjoyment to be found in the rollicking extravagances so abundant in the novels.

In experience of life Fielding and Smollett are about equal. Both knew the vagabond pretty thoroughly, whether as swaggering adventurer or as a "lady without reputation"; while as against Fielding's superior knowledge of better-class society in town and country may be placed Smollett's knowledge of the sea-rover and his more extensive experience of other countries.

Very popular in his day, with both the women and the men—(did not Lady Mary Montagu call him "dear Smollett," and Johnson warmly commend him?)—his reputation has during the present century declined. If Scott's enthusiastic eulogy err on the side of over-praise, the verdict of the present generation seems to err on the other side.

He had serious limitations as a story-teller, but when all his defects are duly admitted, this much may be said for him: he invented a new type of character, made possible the creation of Captain Cuttle, inspired Marryat, and Thackeray probably in his Barry Lyndon; while his influence lingers yet in the drolleries of Mr. W. W. Jacobs. And this is no poor recommendation.

II. PROSE: (5) The Great Novelists—(iv) Laurence Sterne.

LAURENCE STERNE (1713–1768)

Born in 1713 at Clonmel, Ireland, Laurence was the son of a poor lieutenant, Roger Sterne. His early days were spent at York, Dublin, Liverpool, and Plymouth, and his vicissitudes then, especially the memory of his good-hearted, easy-going father, served him in good stead when he started to write.

After taking his degree at Cambridge he became a priest, and obtained by avuncular patronage a living at Stillington, near Sutton, Yorkshire.

His spiritual qualifications were slight, but these were not looked for at that time. Of his preaching powers there is a legend that, when occasionally he ascended the pulpit at York Minster, "half the congregation left the church, as delivery and voice proved so disagreeable."

However, if his clerical gifts were inconsiderable, he had other qualifications not amiss in a country gentleman. He was a good shot, read, fiddled and painted, to use his own phrase, "as the fly stung"; and as he had taken the precaution to marry "a homely woman with a fortune," one may judge that he passed his time pleasantly enough. How far he satisfied his flock is another matter.

A rector who would, when going to church, and-

dently return home for his gun on espying a covey of partridges must have proved somewhat trying.

The even tenor of his rural life was suddenly interrupted by the amazing success of the *Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, the first two volumes of which were published in 1760. Garrick liked it, Bishop Warburton also, while Horace Walpole declared it was "the talk of the town." So Sterne came up to London, and soon settled down as a fashionable gentleman with a penchant for sentimental gallantry. Naturally "the town" was by no means unanimous in its verdict. Richardson denounced it as execrable, Dr. Johnson took exception to its indecency, and both Goldsmith and Smollett ranged themselves among the hostile critics.

Meanwhile the book, despite denunciation and partly because of it, enjoyed a wide circulation, and when the ninth and final volume was published in 1767, Sterne was quite a public character, on visiting terms with all the notable men of the day, both literary and political.

But the excitement of this life proved too much for his delicate health, and he went to the south of France, after borrowing £20 from Garrick (which he never repaid). Needless to say the gay life of Paris attracted him, and ultimately he settled there for a time with his wife and daughter. The fruit of his sojourn abroad appeared in *A Sentimental Journey* (1768). If it did not increase his reputation, it added to his admirers. Horace Walpole, who had been bored by *Tristram*, approved of his new volume.

But the end was near. His health had never been robust, and his life abroad did not tend to restore it. Soon after his return to London he died of pleurisy in lodgings at Bond Street (1768), and was buried at St. George's in the Bayswater Road, his last words being, "Now it has come."

His Work

What is Sterne's contribution to the development of the English novel?

Richardson had given sentimentality, Fielding humour, Smollett liveliness. Sterne blends humour and sentiment in a way peculiarly his own, and although structurally he defies every convention of the novel, yet develops still further the art of characterisation.

Incident is non-existent in Sterne's fiction; there is neither chronology nor progression. His novels are one long parenthesis—a colossal aside to the reader. Yet despite the chaotic incoherence of his method of story-telling, his effects are made with consummate ease.

He is sentimental and humorous, but in a way quite alien to the way of his contemporaries. He makes no attempt, with Richardson, at elaborate analysis, does not vie with Fielding in rolling his jest about with genial mirth, or emulate the uproarious glee of Smollett. Everything is done by the art of insidious suggestion: he never cries, he merely flutters his eyelids; never laughs, merely sniggers. This is due to no consideration of delicacy for the indecency of Sterne is as flagrant as any of the time, but because he relished leering innuendo.

He arrests attention by what he leaves unsaid. Yet disagreeable as his indecency is, insufferable as some of his sentiment is, distractedly bewildering as his method may be, of his fine literary craftsmanship there can be no question.

A more careful consideration of his qualities as a writer will reveal this.

Characteristics

(1) *Subtlety of Humour.*—Sterne's involved, rambling style and inconsequential manner owes no little to Rabelais and Robert Burton. Stylists, however, have a way of pilfering pleasantly from one another. Elia himself has many echoes of Sir Thomas Browne; and in our own time Stevenson, one of the most delightful of modern prosemen, frankly owned to being the "sedulous ape" to such men as Hazlitt.

Too much, therefore, must not be made of Sterne's indebtedness to others, since after all the real question is not what he took from others, but what he added to his borrowings. Sterne certainly repaid his creditors. He had a fine artistic sense, and developed a style that he made his own, by virtue of the peculiar humour which has little in common with Rabelais' uproarious, full-blooded mirth, or Burton's dry, scholarly wit.

Here are two illustrations of Sterne's humorous method, the first bearing upon character, the other giving a whimsical turn to the narrative:

"It was a consuming vexation to my father that my mother never asked the meaning of a thing she did not understand. That she is not a woman of science, my father would say, is her misfortune; but she might ask a question.

"My mother never did. In short, she went out of the world at last without knowing whether it turned round or stood still—My father had obligingly told her above a thousand times which way it was, but she always forgot."

"All you need say of Fontainebleau (in case you are asked) is, that it stands about forty miles (south something) from Paris, in the middle of a large forest. That there is something great in it—That the King goes there once every two or three years, and that during that Carnival of Sporting, any English gentleman of fashion (you needn't forget yourself) may be accommodated with a nag or two to partake of the sport, taking care only not to out-gallop the king. Though there are two reasons why you need not talk loud of this to anyone. First, Because 'twill make the said nag the harder to be got. Secondly, 'Tis not a word of it true—Alas!"

These brief quotations cannot do justice to the subtlety of Sterne's humour, but they serve at any rate to refute the absurd suggestions made in some quarters that his humour lies in its prurience. Sterne's indecency is obvious enough, and on a first reading it will seem more insistent than it really is—it will distract our attention from the exquisite art by which Sterne will delicately construct his characterisation, or atmospherically suggest his scenes. It is here that his humour plays with the swift illumination of summer lightning over his subject, delighting the reader, who has learnt to ignore the indecencies of behaviour in favour of the scrupulous

decencies of art—which Sterne rarely fails to respect. To better appreciate the humour, we may turn more especially to the characterisation.

(2) *Subtlety of Characterisation.*—That sensitive, highly self-conscious temperament characteristic of both Richardson and Sterne undoubtedly helped them in niceties of characterisation. Its drawbacks are that it leads too easily into hysterical emotion, its advantages that it enables its possessor to distinguish shades of feeling and sensibility, overlooked by heartier, stronger-fibred natures.

To illustrate at once the merits and defects of Sterne's sentimentalism we have but to turn to the picture of his live Ass of Lyons in *Tristram Shandy*, then compare that with the scene of Le Fevre's death.

"'Twas but a poor ass, who had just turned in with a couple of large panniers upon his back, to collect elecmosynary turnip tops and cabbage leaves; and stood dubious, with his two forefeet on the inside of the threshold, and with his two hinder feet towards the street, as not knowing very well whether he was to go in or no.

"Now, 'tis an animal (be in what hurry I may) I cannot bear to strike—there is a patient endurance of sufferings, wrote so unaffectedly in his looks and carriage, which pleads so mightily for him, that always disarms me; and to that degree, that I do not like to speak unkindly to him; on the contrary, meet him where I will—whether in town or country—in cart or under panniers—whether in liberty or bondage—I have ever something civil to say to him on my part; and as one word begets another (if he has as little to do as I)—I generally fall into conversation with him; and surely never is my imagination so busy as in framing his responses from the stirrings of his countenance—and where those carry me not deep enough—in flying from my own heart into his, and seeing what is natural for an ass to think—as well as a man, upon the occasion. In truth, it is the only creature of all the classes of beings below me, with whom I can do this; for parrots, jackdaws, &c.,—I never exchange a word with them—nor with the apes, &c., for pretty near the same reason; they act by rote, as the others speak by it, and equally make me silent: nay my dog and my cat, though I value them both—(and for my dog he would smoke if he could)—yet somehow or other, they neither of them possess the talents for conversation—I can make nothing of a discourse with them, beyond the *proposition*, the *reply*, and the *rejoinder*, (which terminated my father's and my mother's conversations, in bed of justice—) and those utter'd—there's an end of the dialogue—But with an ass, I can commune for ever.

"Come, *Honesty!* said I,—seeing it was impracticable to pass betwixt him and the gate—art thou coming in, or going out?

"The ass twisted his head round to look up the street.

"Well—replied I—we'll wait a minute for thy driver: —He turned his head thoughtful about, and looked wistfully the opposite way—

"I understand thee perfectly, answered I—If thou takest a wrong step in this affair, he will cudgel thee to death—Well! a minute is but a minute, and if it saves a fellow creature a drubbing, it shall not be set down as ill spent.

"He was eating the stem of an artichoke as this discourse went on, and in the little peevish contentions of nature betwixt hunger and unsavouriness, had dropt it out of his mouth half a dozen times, and pick'd it up again—God help thee, Jack! said I, thou hast a bitter breakfast on't—and many a bitter day's labour,—and many a bitter blow, I fear, for its wages—'tis all—all bitterness to thee, whatever life is to others.—And now thy mouth, if one knew the truth of it, is as bitter, I daresay, as soot—(for he had cast aside the stem)—and thou hast not a friend perhaps in all this world, that will give thee a macaroon.—In saying this, I pull'd out a paper of 'em, which I had just purchased, and gave him one—and at this moment that I am telling it, my heart smites me, that there was more of pleasantry in the conceit, of seeing *him* an ass would eat a macaroon—than of benevolence in giving him one, which presided in the act.

"When the ass had eaten his macaroon, I press'd him to come in—the poor beast was heavy loaded—his legs seemed to tremble under him—he hung rather backwards, and as I pull'd at his halter, it broke short in my hand—he look'd up pensive in my face—'Don't thrash me with it—but if you will, you may'—If I do, said I, I'll be d——d."

That is frankly sentimental, but the sentimentality is not overdrawn, it is quaintly and subtly suggested.

Could anything be worse, however, than such a passage as this?

"The pulse flattered—stopped—went on—flutter'd —stopped again—moved—stopped. Shall I go on? No!"

The reader is certainly inclined to endorse the last exclamation.

Now apply this gift of sentimentality, with its strength and weakness, to characterisation. The visualising power exerts some repression on the prolixity of the writer, and this is all to its advantage; and the sensibility that is always vacillating between humour and pathos helps its possessor to vitalise his creations. Sterne's supreme invention is his invention of Uncle Toby. In some ways Uncle Toby is like Parson Adams: he is eccentric, and has beneath his grotesqueries simplicity, charm, soundness of heart. But if the framework is not dissimilar, the detailed effects by which the character is built up are far subtler. There is a curious intimacy about Sterne's buttonholing methods that impress the reader with a greater sense of actuality at times, than he ever feels in turning over the pages of Sterne's contemporaries.

The characterisation is less diverse than in Fielding, less uniformly interesting. But in a few cases it is of the finest quality. None but Sterne could have drawn that delightful kitchen scene at the inn, with the Reverend Mr. Yorick's curate smoking by the fire, and suggesting all manner of things by his flashes of silence.

In the province of characterisation Sterne has his own particular niche of fame. No one who is interested in this fascinating aspect of fiction can neglect him on that account.

A Sentimental Journey

It must have been observed by many a peripatetic philosopher, That nature has set up by her unquestionable authority certain boundaries and fences to circumscribe the discontent of man: she has effected her purpose in the quietest and easiest manner, by laying him under almost insuperable obligations to work out his ease, and to sustain his suffering at home. It is there only that she has provided him with the most suitable objects to partake of his happiness and bear a part of that burthen, which, in all countries and ages, has ever been too heavy for one pair of shoulders. 'Tis true, we are endued with an imperfect power of spreading our happiness sometimes beyond *her* limits, but 'tis so ordered, that, from the want of languages, connections, and dependencies, and from the difference in education, customs, and habits, we lie under so many impediments

in communicating our sensations out of our own sphere, as often amount to a total impossibility.

It will always follow from hence, that the balance of sentimental commerce is always against the expatriated adventurer: he must buy what he has little occasion for, at their own price—his conversation will seldom be taken in exchange for theirs without a large discount—and this, by the bye, eternally driving him into the hands of more equitable brokers, for such conversation as he can find, it requires no great spirit of divination to guess at his party—

This brings me to my point; and naturally leads me (if the see-saw of this *Desobligeant* will but let me get on) into the efficient as well as final causes of travelling—

Your idle people that leave their native country, and go abroad for some reason or reasons which may be derived from one of these general causes—

Infirmity of body,
Imbecility of the mind, or
Inevitable necessity.

The first two include all those who travel by land or by water, labouring with pride, curiosity, vanity, or spleen, subdivided and combined *in infinitum*.

The third includes the whole army of peregrine martyrs; more especially those travellers who set out upon their travels with the benefit of the clergy, either as delinquents travelling under the direction of governors recommended by the magistrate—or young gentlemen transported by the cruelty of parents and guardians, and travelling under the direction of governors recommended by Oxford, Aberdeen, and Glasgow.

There is a fourth class, but their number is so small, that they would not deserve a distinction, was it not necessary in a work of this nature to observe the greatest precision and nicety, to avoid a confusion of character. And those men I speak of, are such as cross the sea and sojourn in a land of strangers, with a view of saving money for various reasons and upon various pretences; but as they might also save themselves and others a great deal of unnecessary trouble by saving their money at home—and as their reasons for travelling are the least complex of any other species of emigrants, I shall distinguish these gentlemen by the name of Simple Travellers.

Thus the whole circle of travellers may be reduced to the following *heads*:

Idle Travellers,
Inquisitive Travellers,
Lying Travellers,
Proud Travellers,
Vain Travellers,
Splenetic Travellers,

Then follow

The Travellers of Necessity,
The delinquent and felonious Traveller,
The unfortunate and innocent Traveller,
The simple Traveller,

And last of all (if you please) The Sentimental Traveller (meaning thereby myself), who have travell'd, and of which I am now sitting down to give an account—as much out of *Necessity*, and the *bonnin de Voyager*, as any one in the class.

I am well aware, at the same time, as both my travels and observations will be altogether of a different cast from any of my fore-runners; that I might have insisted upon a whole niche entirely to myself—but I should break in upon the confines of the *Vain Traveller*, in wishing to draw attention towards me, till I have some better grounds for it, than the mere *Novelty of my Vehicle*. It is sufficient for my reader, if he has been a Traveller himself, and with study and reflection herewpon he may be able to determine his own place and rank in the catalogue—it will be one step towards knowing himself, as it is great odds but he retains some tincture and resemblance of what he imbibed or carried out, to the present hour.

The man who first transplanted the grape of Burgundy to the Cape of Good Hope (observe he was a Dutchman) never dreamt of drinking the same wine at the Cape that the same grape produced upon the French mountains—he was too phlegmatic for that—but undoubtedly he expected to drink some sort of vinous liquor; but whether good, bad, or indifferent, he knew enough of this world to know, that it did not depend upon his choice, but that what is generally called *chance* was to decide his success: however, he hoped for the best: and in these hopes, by an intemperate confidence in the fortitude of his head, and the depth of his discretion, *Mynheer* might possibly overset both in his new vineyard; and by discovering his nakedness, become a laughing-stock to his people.

Even so it fares with the poor Traveller, sailing and posting through the polite kingdoms of the globe, in pursuit of knowledge and improvements.

Knowledge and improvements are to be got by sailing and posting for that purpose; but whether useful knowledge and real improvements, is all a lottery—and even where the adventurer is successful, the acquired stock must be used with caution and sobriety, to turn to any profit—but as the chances run prodigiously the other way, both as to the acquisition and application, I am of opinion, That a man would act as wisely, if he could prevail upon himself to live contented without foreign knowledge or foreign improvements, especially if he lives in a country that has no absolute want of either—and indeed much grief of heart has it oft and many a time cost me, when I have observed how many a foul step the inquisitive Traveller has measured to see sights and look into discoveries; all which, as Sancho Pança said to Don Quixote, they might have seen dry-shod at home. It is an age so full of light, that there is scarce a country or corner of Europe, whose beams are not crossed and interchanged with others—Knowledge in most of its branches and in most affairs, is like music in an Italian street, whereof those may partake, who pay nothing—But there is no nation under heaven—and God is my record (before whose tribunal I must one day come and give an account of this work)—that I do not speak it vauntingly—But there is no nation under heaven abounding with more variety of learning—where the sciences may be more fitly woo'd, or more surely won, than here—where art is encouraged, and will soon rise high—where Nature (take her altogether) has so little to answer for—and, to close all, where there is more wit and variety of character to feed the mind with—Where then, my dear countrymen, are you going—

—We are only looking at this chaise, said they—Your most obedient servant, said I, skipping out of it and pulling off my hat—We were wondering, said one of them, who, I found, was an *inquisitive Traveller*,—what could occasion this motion.—'Twas the agitation, said I coolly, of writing a preface.—I never heard, said the other, who was a *simple Traveller*, of a preface wrote in a *desobligeant*.—It would have been better, said I, in a *Vis à Vis*.

As an Englishman does not travel to see Englishmen, I retire to my room.

II. PROSE—(c) The Rise of the Woman Novelist (from Aphra Behn to Jane Austen).

THE RISE OF THE WOMAN NOVELIST

Sex is not merely a simple matter of physical differentiation, as some imagine it. Indeed in its ultimate analysis it is a psychical problem; and it is this fact that lends so great an interest to the contributions made by women to literature.

"Woman is not undeveloped man but diverse." Her outlook is essentially different from that of a man, and her work, therefore, is complementary and supplementary to the man's.

Partly through the exigencies of their historical development, partly because of their psychological characteristics, women have, with certain reservations, proved literary artists of the secondary order only. As poets, philosophers, historians, they have proved on the whole inferior to men; but in the art of fiction they can certainly claim equality, and they can do so not because they rival men on their own special masculine ground, but because by virtue of their femininity they bring into prose certain qualities in which they excel, and in which men are as a rule deficient.

As a rule, I say, for we have to recognise that sexual differences are not bound by physical determinations. Every man has something of the woman in him, every woman something of the man; and this psychical element fluctuates so remarkably that some men are more feminine than masculine, some women more masculine than feminine.

What results from this? From the literary point of view we find that where the two elements are proportionately mingled we get the happiest results. Among the men our greatest writers have been those who have a good share of what we call feminine qualities; among the women, those who have achieved the highest triumphs have been those who with their own feminine gifts have combined a measure also of the masculine. Genius is bi-sexual.

The masculine qualities comprehend a broad grasp of general principles, a logical constructive power, and a faculty for dealing largely and surely with the big issues of life. The feminine qualities, on the other hand, lie in subtlety rather than vigour of perception, an intuitive insight into the delicate complexities of character, and an intensity and tenacity of passion.

As illustrations of the masculine and feminine methods of approaching the social life of the late eighteenth century we have Fielding and Jane Austen, each of them essentially a painter of manners, concerned in the differences between town and country, satirical in treatment, eschewing sentiment as far as possible. Between them we have a wonderful picture of the time, and the one complements the other, for the differences are rather sexual than purely literary—the one, bold, dashing, painting in strong, vivid colours; the other, delicate, subtle, avoiding violent contrasts, and dealing rather in nuances.

But the feminine note in fiction, the woman's psychical point of view, only gradually found artistic expression, as we shall see if we briefly review the earlier phases of novel-writers.

One of the earliest Englishwomen to write fiction was Mrs. APHRA BEHN, who had lived her early life in India, and later on at Antwerp, before she settled in England.

Writing at a time when the old-fashioned romance was in favour, and the romance at its worst, its most prolix and tawdriest days, she is noteworthy for the use she made of everyday facts and experience, thus anticipating the method of Defoe. But she had nothing of Defoe's genius for actualising her material, and could not escape the "high-falutin" style of the elder Romanticism.

But the fact that in *Oroonoko* she made use of her acquaintance with Eastern races, and that in *The Fair Jilt* she paints a modern adventuress, distinctly Continental in type, is certainly to her credit. Her technique is imperfect and imitative. She has little idea of putting the woman's point of view. Had she done this she would have stood on a far higher level, for she was a woman of intelligence. As it is, she follows in the wake of the male story-teller.

When we come to the early years of the eighteenth century, it is manifest that women are beginning to realise their aptitude for novel-writing.

Immediate successors to Mrs. BEHN, and contemporaries of Defoe, were Mrs. MANLEY with her *New Atlantis* (1709), and Mrs. HAYWOOD with her Utopian *Memoirs*. These two ladies were prolific writers, and Mrs. Haywood dealt largely with the short story.

Their early work is extremely artificial, and Mrs. Manley died before the great era of the novel inaugurated by Richardson and Fielding. But some idea of the influence of these writers can be gained by comparing the earlier work of Mrs. Haywood with her later novels, written about the mid-century. All of these show that the imitative faculty is largely in the ascendant still. Yet the woman writer of the day did exhibit from time to time traces of that aptitude for detailed effects, and little subtleties of observation, in which she was to score so remarkably later on.

The awakening was at hand, and Richardson was the dumpy Fairy Prince. His extraordinary knowledge of women and women's ways showed clearly in what direction the woman writer could hope to shine.

The little trivialities that go to make up life were actualised by women with a fineness which had escaped man's more blundering touch, and which man could not hope to equal. His knowledge might be more varied, his experience wider, but certain complexities of existence, light and shade effects of character, women on the whole were far more suited to portray.

Miss FIELDING—Henry Fielding's sister—owed more to Richardson than to the author of *Tom Jones*. Selecting an environment of adventure ill suited to her powers, she none the less showed in *David Simple* (1744) a gift of painting character greatly in excess of previous writers. The book was praised by Richardson, who seized this opportunity to disparage her brother.

Later on we have a certain imaginative power shown by FRANCES SHERIDAN—mother of the dramatist—in her *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Biddulph* (1761).

Then towards the close of the age come yet greater signs of promise. Of Mrs. Radcliffe mention is made elsewhere. Her influence on her generation and on her successors is indubitable, despite her crudeness and absurdities.

But most of the feminine pioneers in fiction had seriously handicapped themselves by choosing for their medium the romantic type of fiction, and despite Mrs. Radcliffe's success, this is not to her advantage. Romanticism to be effective demands a broad, massive treatment rather than a subtle,

detailed one. It was not in romance that woman was to gain her laurels, but in her own particular realm of experience—at the fireside.

The Robertsonian School of Drama has been dubbed the "Cup-and-Saucer School"; the term is equally applicable to the fiction of Miss Burney and Miss Austen.

What helped women like Fanny Burney and Maria Edgeworth, Susan Ferrier, and above all Jane Austen, to realise the real extent of their powers and to give us the fruit of their own experiences of life, rather than imitations of the man's point of view, was the change of manners that took place at the close of the eighteenth century. The coarse brutality of Fielding and Smollett's day, gives way to an era when a greater refinement and a quieter taste of life became fashionable. This was clearly advantageous to the woman writer; and four women in particular—three women of considerable talent, one woman of genius—occupy an important place in the development of the English novel.

Hannah More (1745–1833) was the daughter of a Gloucestershire schoolmaster, and the friend of Garrick, by whom she was introduced to the Johnson circle. Her single novel, *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* (1809), shows the satirical bent that was to find such lively expression in the feminine fiction of the near future. But Fanny Burney's *Evelina* is the first book of distinctive literary power in this direction.

Fanny Burney (1752–1840) came of a Norfolk family, being born at King's Lynn, where her father was an organist. Her girlhood was spent in London, and from an early age she showed a passion for writing, greatly to the dismay of her stepmother, who thought such pursuits were unladylike. Impressed, no doubt, by this unfavourable opinion, the sensitive story-teller solemnly burnt her first novel, *The History of Caroline Evelyn;* but stories have a strange vitality of their own that defies material destruction, and it was not long before the history of Caroline becomes incarnate again in *Evelina, or the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World*, published anonymously. The success of the book was instantaneous, and the author's name soon leaked out. Fanny Burney found herself famous, approved of by the great, gruff Doctor himself, and warmly praised by such men as Burke and Sir Joshua Reynolds. The book is an admirable picture of the manners of the time, from the woman's point of view. Of humour there is a pleasant spice, though it is subdued; of characterisation there is singularly little; and there is next to no sentiment. In fact, the book lives by its spirited and delicate externalisation of the life of her age. Evelina herself is not interesting; her conventionality and shy self-effacement make of her a colourless young woman; but some of the coarser feminine types are excellently handled, and the pictures of the eighteenth-century "blood," from the feminine standpoint, is undeniably effective.

The *motif* of the story, that of a young lady of good family and slender fortune, ignorant of the world, trying to make her way in the London life of the time, was perhaps suggested by a novel by Mrs. Frances Brooke, entitled *The Excursion* (1777). Certainly Fanny Burney knew of the novel and was acquainted with the writer, whom she describes as possessing an "agreeable ugliness." Mrs. Brooke's novel is devoid of merit; and in treatment and method Miss Burney owed nothing to her friend.

The success of *Evelina* encouraged her to write a successor, and in 1782 *Cecilia, or the Memoirs of an Heiress*, was published; a story of family pride, that lacked the freshness of its predecessor; while her two last tales, *Camilla* (1796) and *The Wanderer* (1814), were very feeble productions, largely due to the fact that she attempted to depict sides of life of which she had no experience, and partly also to her departing from the simplicity of her early manner in order to copy the Johnsonian period.

At her best in *Evelina*, her delightful *Diary*, and in parts of *Cecilia*, she showed a delicacy of satire and a faithful observation, above all a genuinely distinctive point of view, assuredly not without their influence on her similar though greater successor—Jane Austen.

Before dealing with Jane Austen, the most famous exponent of the novel of manners, something must be said of Maria Edgeworth and Susan Ferrier.

Maria Edgeworth, the daughter of a gentleman who owned some property in Co. Longford, Ireland, was born at Black Bourton, near Reading, in 1767, and until the age of fifteen resided in England, eventually migrating to the family estate of Edgeworthstown; her father, himself a keen educationist, taking considerable interest in her training. Literary power early showed itself, and her first work, when but fifteen, was a translation of Madame de Genlis' *Adèle et Théodore*, a collection of letters on education; later, she was called upon to assist her father in a book on *Practical Education*, his own large family of twenty-one children giving him ample scope for putting his theories to the test. Maria Edgeworth was also a prolific writer on educational matters, and published *The Parent's Assistant*, in six volumes, in 1800; but her real power lay in the domain of fiction, and particularly in her delineation of Irish peasant characters. Her first novel was written before she was twenty, though it did not appear till 1814, under the title of *Patronage*. In 1800 the famous *Castle Rackrent* was published, and *Belinda* a year later. She also wrote a large number of tales for the young, some comic dramas published in 1817, and in 1820 the *Memoirs* of her father. She died in 1849.

Maria Edgeworth shows greater vivacity, and a more genial breadth than Fanny Burney, but less delicacy of touch, though her education theories, largely inspired by Thomas Day and by her father, hindered her as a literary artist. "It has been my daughter's aim," said Richard Lovell Edgeworth, "to promote by all her writings, the progress of education from the cradle to the grave. . . ." Unhappily, this is too true, yet despite the strenuous didacticism and moral aim in her earlier tales for children, her shrewd sense of character and her liveliness often triumph over the moralist in her. Her Irishmen are real Irishmen, and her success as a writer of Irish life inspired Scott, so he assures

us, with his characteristic generosity and modesty: "Without being so presumptuous as to hope to emulate the rich humour, pathetic tenderness, and admirable tact, which pervade the works of my accomplished friend, I felt that something might be attempted for my own country, of the same kind with that which Miss Edgeworth so fortunately achieved for Ireland—something which might introduce her natives to those of the sister kingdom in a more favourable light than they had been placed hitherto, and tend to procure sympathy for their virtues and indulgence for their foibles."

SUSAN FERRIER (1782–1854) was the daughter of a clerk of the Court of Session, Edinburgh, a colleague of Sir Walter Scott, whose long friendship with her, and experience of her tactful sympathy helped to lighten the burden of his later years. Scott was also a great admirer of her work, and while her identity remained undiscovered, he was credited with its production.

An interesting and characteristic fact about Susan Ferrier is, that she wrote only three novels: *Marriage* (1818), *The Inheritance* (1824), *Destiny* (1831), and despite the urgent appeal of her publisher and the unequivocal success of her stories, she declined to add to their number. What Miss Edgeworth did for Irish life, Miss Ferrier did for Scottish. The two writers had no little in common: humour, observation, and a vein of earnest didacticism; but Miss Ferrier's work shows greater variety.

The idea of *Marriage*—the incursion of a fashionable young woman into the rough, dour atmosphere of a Highland home—is carried out with abundant force and humour. Her father, an impecunious peer, nourished ambitious notions for his daughter's future, and when she elopes with a good-looking but poor young Scotchman, he promptly disowns her. Accordingly, her husband takes her to his father's house, which Lady Juliana idealises in her own mind, as a romantic and delightful place. The reality proves a severe shock.

MARRIAGE

Just at that moment they had gained the summit of a very high hill, and the post-boy, stopping to give his horses breath, turned round to the carriage, pointing at the same time, with a significant gesture, to a tall thin grey house, something resembling a tower, that stood in the vale beneath. A small sullen-looking lake was in front, on whose banks grew neither tree nor shrub. Behind, rose a chain of rugged cloud-capped hills, on the declivities of which were some faint attempts at young plantations; and the only level ground consisted of a few dingy turnip fields, enclosed with stone walls, or dykes, as the post-boy called them. It was now November; the day was raw and cold; and a thick drizzling rain was beginning to fall. A dreary stillness reigned all around, broken only at intervals by the screams of the sea-fowl that hovered over the lake, on whose dark and troubled waters was dimly discerned a little boat, plied by one solitary being.

"What a scene!" at length Lady Juliana exclaimed, shuddering as she spoke. "Good God, what a scene! How I pity the unhappy wretches who are doomed to dwell in such a place! and yonder hideous grim house—it makes me sick to look at it. For heaven's sake, bid him drive on!" Another significant look from the driver made the colour mount to Douglas' cheek, as he stammered out, "Surely it can't be; yet somehow I don't know. Pray, my lad," letting down one of the glasses, and addressing the post-boy, "what is the name of that house?"

"Hoose!" repeated the driver; "ca' ye thon a hoose? Thon's gude Glenfern Castle."

In the second novel, *The Inheritance*, the characterisation of Scottish folk is even richer and racier. One of the characters, Miss Pratt, is not unworthy of Jane Austen's pen, and her loquacity and habit of quoting the opinion of an entirely suppositious nephew, may possibly have suggested to Dickens the invention of that more delightful myth, Mrs. Harris.

Destiny is written in the same key as its predecessor, and deals with much the same life. Perhaps it is more forced than its companions, but shows no marked falling off in power.

The description of Mrs. Fairbairn is among Miss Ferrier's happiest sketches, and well illustrates both her humour and observation.

"Mrs. Fairbairn was one of those ladies, who, from the time she became a mother, ceased to be anything else. All the duties, pleasures, charities, and decencies of life were henceforth concentrated in that one grand characteristic; every object in life was henceforth viewed through that single medium. Her own mother was no longer her mother; she was the grandmother of her dear infants, her brothers and sisters were mere uncles and aunts, and even her husband ceased to be thought of as her husband from the time he became a father. He was no longer the being who had claims on her time, her thoughts, her talents, her affections; he was simply Mr. Fairbairn, the noun masculine of Mrs. Fairbairn, and the father of her children. Happily for Mr. Fairbairn he was not a person of very nice feelings or refined taste; and although at first he did feel a little unpleasant when he saw how much his children were preferred to himself, yet in time he became accustomed to it, then came to look upon Mrs. Fairbairn as the most exemplary of mothers, and finally resolved himself into the father of a very fine family, of which Mrs. Fairbairn was the mother."

Another name that belongs to this period, although the writer lived on, like Miss Ferrier, to the mid-nineteenth century, is Miss MARY RUSSELL MITFORD (1787–1855). She was a gentle, kindly woman, burdened with a plausible, spendthrift father, of the Horace Skimpole genus, in whom she credulously trusted. Her work is of a miscellaneous character; she wrote verse, tried her hand at tragedies, and later in life wrote a disappointing autobiography.

Despite the fact that she had known many interesting people, she had small gift of making them live in the pages of her *Recollections* (1852), though their range is surprising, including on one hand references to the prodigality of Sheridan's entertainment, and pleasant references to James Payn and Ruskin on the other.

But the work by which she will be known is *Our Village* (1824–1832), a series of charming sketches of rural life, flavoured with delicate humour and unmistakably feminine throughout. Living through the revival of Romanticism, she belongs by temperament and method to the later eighteenth century, to the school of manners of which Fanny Burney was a pioneer, and Jane Austen the mistress craftswoman.

OUR VILLAGE

The avenue is quite alive to-day. Old women are picking up twigs and acorns, and pigs of all sizes doing

their utmost to spare them the latter part of the trouble; boys and girls groping for beech-nuts under yonder clump; and a group of younger elves collecting as many dead leaves as they can find to feed the bonfire which is smoking away so briskly amongst the trees,—a sort of rehearsal of the grand bonfire nine days hence, of the loyal conflagration of the arch-traitor Guy Vaux, which is annually solemnised in the avenue, accompanied with as much squibbery and crackery as our boys can beg or borrow—not to say steal. Ben Kirby is a great man on the 5th of November. All the savings of a month, the hoarded halfpence, the new farthings, the very luck-penny, go off in fume on that night. For my part, I like this daylight smokery better. There is no gunpowder—odious gunpowder! no noise but the merry shouts of the small fry, so shrill and happy, and the cawing of the rooks, who are wheeling in large circles overhead, and wondering what is going forward in their territory—seeming in their kind clamour to ask what that light smoke may mean that curls so prettily amongst their old oaks, towering as if to meet the clouds. There is something very intelligent in the ways of that black people the rooks, particularly in their wonder. I suppose it results from their numbers and their unity of purpose, a sort of collective and corporate wisdom. Yet geese congregate also; and geese never by any chance look wise. But then geese are a domestic fowl; we have spoiled them; and rooks are free commoners of nature, who use the habitations we provide for them, tenant our groves, and our avenues, but never dream of becoming our subjects.

JANE AUSTEN

Jane Austen was born on December 16, 1775, at Steventon, near Basingstoke, a tiny village amid the chalk hills of North Hants. Her father was rector of the place, her mother, Cassandra, the daughter of the Rev. Thomas Leigh, and niece of the famous wit, Theophilus Leigh, for many years Master of Balliol. Jane was the youngest of seven children, and her life was singularly tranquil and uneventful. Occasional private theatricals, and a rare visit to Bath and London, broke the gentle monotony of her home life. We gather that she was a great reader, knew something of modern languages, and was an excellent needlewoman, "especially in satin stitch." Little, however, is known of her, and none of the letters that survive tell us anything of her inner life.

In person she was "a tall, slender, clear brunette," with hazel eyes, good features, and curly brown hair. In temperament cool, detached, reserved, keenly humorous. Beyond the mild flirtations of the countryside that accompanied dancing and tea-making and theatricals, we have no evidence of any emotional crisis in her life. In fact, at every point almost she presents the exact antithesis to the other daughter of a country parson destined later on to make the Yorkshire moors articulate.

She died in 1817, of consumption, and was buried at Winchester, in the north aisle of the cathedral.

Her Work

Jane Austen was a born story-teller, and revelled in it from early years. She wrote from sheer love of writing, was not sensitive to criticism, her stories being published anonymously during her lifetime.

Someone has said that in politics she was a mild Tory. Mildness and equability certainly characterised her general attitude throughout life. There were no extremes in her nature. Singularly judicial, she formed no violent estimates of people, and is scrupulously fair in her pictures.

And about what are her pictures?

The tattle, the trivialities of life in a small country town, when tea-time was an exciting event, and a subscription ball a crisis in one's career; when romance expressed itself in country walks (usually with a chaperone), when tragedy hinged upon the non-appearance at the cross-roads of the agreeable young man who danced so well at the ball.

Faithful observation, personal detachment, and a fine sense of ironic comedy are among Jane Austen's chief characteristics as a writer. As a testimony to her excellent sense and good feeling, one may say that, subjected to all the snobberies that abound in provincial towns, she never showed any trace of being affected by them. Not greatly affected by social miseries, she was in a measure sympathetic and tolerant towards the poor; and without the faintest weakness for the aristocrat and well-to-do. She did not pretend to be a social reformer, and it is useless and foolish to gird at her because the underworld is always kept out of view. But this one may always find in her books—an entire absence of simulation of feelings. Folly she ridicules wherever she finds it. Sin she excuses wherever she can; judging a man and woman by their opportunities in life.

Five novels alone stand to her credit: *Pride and Prejudice*, 1796–7; *Northanger Abbey*, 1798; *Sense and Sensibility*, 1797; *Mansfield Park*, 1814; *Emma*, 1816. *Persuasion*, written in 1816, was not published till after her death; another novel, *Lady Susan*, was never published, and *The Watsons* she left unfinished.

Her first biographer claimed for her a modest place beside Fanny Burney and Maria Edgeworth, but since that time many a great critic has sung her praises in the loftiest strains.

No one has expressed the peculiar quality of her art more happily than Scott: "The big bow-wow strain I can do myself, like any now going; but the exquisite touch that renders commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiment is denied me."

The secret of her power lies in the complete mastery she has as an artist over her material. She was finely alive to her limitations, never touched a character or scene she did not thoroughly know, and never invented a story or personage which she did not subject to such minutely intimate treatment that the reader feels as if it were all a fragment of autobiography.

Characteristics

(1) *Her Faithful Observation.*—The art of observation is an art that every great novelist necessarily excels in, for the first essential in any story is the illusion of reality. No exuberance or fertility of imagination can take its place; nor is this illusion possible without the patient, observant fidelity of the painter with the phenomena of life as they present themselves to the painter's vision.

Defoe was a sound observer, he knew his middle-

class citizens and he knew his vagabonds, but the examples he gives us are types rather than individuals. Crusoe is a God-fearing London citizen ready to combine good sense and piety; Moll Flanders, a ne'er-do-well; Captain Singleton, a dashing adventurer. We appreciate the class to which they belong and their general fidelity to life. But they are not individualised. He is more concerned to make us accept his incidents as credible than his characters as real. Richardson, far more concerned with individualisation, gives greater solidarity to his characters—his feminine ones especially; but being devoid of humour, his power to visualise, though strong, is not varied. It has been said that we can see all round his characters; the present writer confesses his inability in this direction. Certain qualities he sees very clearly, but one and all are too drenched in sentiment for any complete appraisement. Fielding's great humour intensifies his vision, and in such characters as Parson Adams and Squire Western, we feel in the presence of individual characters, not types.

The special charm of Jane Austen's novels lies, not in any greater insight into character, but in the fine impartiality with which she individualises and differentiates them. Her compass is not great, but within it she never fails. It is certainly significant that her favourite poet should have been Crabbe, for Crabbe was a minute observer. He described Nature like an imaginative naturalist, and much as he loved the country poor, he never spares them, never idealises them. His pictures are finely dispassionate. Jane Austen, also loving her kind, loved them with the joy of the scientist. She found them crowding about her tea parties, her church gatherings, her balls, and she reproduced them for us with an unemotional fidelity, sometimes a little cruel, but never unfair.

She was perfectly acquainted with her *métier*, and never attempted what was out of her line. Once, on being asked to write an historical romance, she replied:

> "I am fully sensible that (such a romance) might be much more to the purpose of profit or popularity than such pictures of domestic life in country villages as I deal in. But I could no more write a romance than an epic poem. I could not sit seriously down to write a serious romance under any other motive than to save my life; and if it were indispensable for me to keep it up and never relax into laughing at myself or at any other people, I am sure I should be hung before I had finished the first chapter. No, I must keep to my own style and go on in my own way; and though I may never succeed again in that, I am convinced that I should totally fail in any other."

Nor did she concern herself with social problems, and we feel no more the curse of poverty in her books than we feel the power of passion that sweeps through the writings of Charlotte and Emily Brontë.

Yet curiously enough, for all her minute observation, she rarely describes personal appearance. Jane Eyre and Becky Sharp are familiar enough in their outward appearance; but Elizabeth Bennet and Miss Bates we could only recognise when we had heard them talk.

Take for instance this scene from *Emma*:

> "The whole party were assembled, excepting Frank Churchill, who was expected every moment from Richmond; and Mrs. Elton, in all her apparatus of happiness, her large bonnet and her basket, was very ready to lead the way in gathering, accepting, or talking. Strawberries, and only strawberries, could now be thought or spoken of. 'The best fruit in England—everybody's favourite—always wholesome. These, the finest beds and finest sorts. Delightful to gather for one's self—the only way of really enjoying them. Morning decidedly the best time—never tired—every sort good—*Hautboys* infinitely superior—no comparison—the others hardly eatable—*Hautboys* very scarce. *Chili* preferred—*White Wood* finest flavour of all—price of strawberries in London—abundance about Bristol—Maple Grove—cultivation—beds when to be renewed—gardeners thinking exactly different—no general rule—gardeners never to be put out of their way—delicious fruit—only too rich to be eaten much of—inferior to cherries—currants more refreshing—only objection to gathering strawberries the stooping—glaring sun—tired to death—could bear it no longer—must go and sit in the shade.'"

Mr. Collins, that delicious illustration of the servile cleric, might easily be passed in the street, but he is stamped for ever upon our memories by his speech.

> "'My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish; secondly, that I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness; and, thirdly, which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honour of calling patroness. Twice has she condescended to give me her opinion (unasked too!) on this subject; and it was but the very Saturday night before I left Hunsford,—between our pools at quadrille, while Mrs. Jenkinson was arranging Miss de Bourgh's footstool,—that she said, "Mr. Collins, you must marry. A clergyman like you must marry. Choose properly, choose a gentlewoman for *my* sake, and for your *own*; let her be an active, useful sort of person, not brought up high, but able to make a small income go a good way. This is my advice. Find such a woman as soon as you can, bring her to Hunsford, and I will visit her." Allow me by the way to observe, my fair cousin, that I do not reckon the notice and kindness of Lady Catherine de Bourgh as among the least of the advantages in my power to offer. You will find her manners beyond anything I can describe; and your wit and vivacity, I think, must be acceptable to her, especially when tempered with the silence and respect which her rank will inevitably excite. Thus much for my general intention in favour of matrimony; it remains to be told why my views were directed to Longbourn instead of my own neighbourhood, where I assure you there are many amiable young women. But the fact is, that being, as I am, to inherit this estate after the death of your honoured father (who, however, may live many years longer,) I could not satisfy myself without resolving to choose a wife from among his daughters, that the loss to them might be as little as possible when the melancholy event takes place which, however, as I have already said, may not be for several years. This has been my motive, my fair cousin, and I flatter myself it will not sink me in your esteem. And now nothing remains for me but to assure you in the most animated language of the violence of my affection. To fortune I am perfectly indifferent, and shall make no demand of that nature on your father, since I am well aware that it could not be complied with; and that one thousand pounds in the four per cents., which will not be yours till after your mother's decease, is all that you may ever be entitled to. On that head, therefore, I shall be uniformly silent; and you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married.'"[1]

[1] *Pride and Prejudice.*

Humour touches and illuminates all her best characters.

Mrs. Bennet laments that after her husband's death she may be turned out. "My dear," says her husband, "do not give way to such gloomy thoughts. Let us hope for better things. Let us flatter ourselves that I may be the survivor."

(2) *Her Power of Self-detachment.*—She was serene and equable, caring for many things but for nothing in an especial degree. Most things amused her; few things angered her. She greets these she dislikes with a slight contemptuous smile; she never rages at them, as Fielding would. And this power of self-detachment, of eliminating from her story those strong predilections that often sway an author's creations, enabled her to be an artist pure and simple. There is no didacticism, no philosophy, no propaganda in her fictions. We have a perfect picture of provincial life in the late eighteenth century; a delicate water-colour to put beside the more vigorous oil-painting of Fielding.

(3) *Her Sense of Comedy.*—Miss Austen's tales are not laughter provoking, but they leave a rippling sense of pleasure behind them. Her humour is quiet, delicate, ironical. She is not a satirist, for satire connotes moral purpose. Jane Austen never lashed our follies, she faintly arched her eyebrows and passed on. There is scarcely any scene she did not see and did not touch on the humorous side, whether the fear of ghosts (*Northanger Abbey*), private theatricals (*Mansfield Park*), a picnic (*Emma*), a proposal (*Persuasion*). But she never exaggerates the fun.

She is at her best perhaps in little strokes, and delicate touches: "Her father was a clergyman without being neglected or poor, and a very respectable man though his name was Richard and he had never been handsome."[1]

These touches may be appreciated best in such an apparently unpromising subject as Emma going to the front door, to watch the slow life of the place.

"Emma went to the door for amusement. Much could not be hoped from the traffic of even the busiest part of Highbury—Mr. Perry walking hastily by; Mr. William Cox letting himself in at the office door; Mr. Cole's carriage horses returning from exercise; or a stray little boy, or an obstinate mule, were the liveliest objects she could presume to expect; and when her eyes fell on the butcher with his tray; a tidy old woman travelling homewards from shop with her full basket, two curs quarrelling over a dirty bone, and a string of dawdling children round the baker's little bay window, eyeing the gingerbread, she knew she had no reason to complain, and was amused enough, quite enough, still to stand by the door."

At a time when sentimentalism was in the hey-day of its glory, when folk wept over Richardson and shuddered over Mrs. Radcliffe, or if indisposed for these things relished the stronger fare of Fielding and Smollett, the departure made by Jane Austen required no small courage and self-reliance. She is the disciple of no school, though well read and appreciative of the great writers of the day. She felt she could do certain things well and she did them, neither deterred by lack of appreciation, nor tempted to seek popularity by reason of material disadvantages.

Her circumstances helped her to give that finish and delicacy to her work, that had Fate been harsher might have proved impossible. There is a cool radiance about all her work; a happy sanity. It was part of her everyday life, to be placed aside should a visitor come, to be resumed when he left, to be pursued unostentatiously and tranquilly in the midst of the family circle. She knew precisely what she wanted to do, and she did it in the way that suited her best. Certainly she has had her reward.

(*d*) Letter and Memoir Writers of the Eighteenth Century.

Memoir literature enjoys a greater vogue in France than in England, but the zest for experimentalising in literature that began to be noticeable about the close of the seventeenth century and continued throughout the eighteenth, led to the creation of a class of books, written for amusement rather than for any ulterior purpose. Authorship became a pleasant game for many people of leisure, and those who in an earlier age would have indited sonnets, and penned amatory lyrics, now turned their attention to satiric verse, gossipy letters on things in general, or political squibs.

By means of this light, discursive literature, we have a steady flow of illuminating gossip on the life of the time, highly valuable to the social historian.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu came of an aristocratic Whig family, was connected by blood with the diarist Evelyn, and was a distant relation also of Pepys. This link with the great diarist, agreeably symbolises the literary affinity that binds together the diarist and memoir writers.

Born in 1689, she was very beautiful as a child, and her proud father is said to have toasted her at the famous Kit Cat Club. His ideas on the subject of marriage, however, did not coincide with hers, so she eloped with Edward Wortley Montagu in 1712, who was greatly attracted by her graces of mind and body. In 1716 Montagu went as ambassador to Constantinople, accompanied by his wife, and in this way material was collected for her *Turkish Letters*. Many of these had been prepared with a view to publication, but though known to a circle of friends, were not published until after Lady Mary's death. The writer had donned Turkish dress while abroad, and made a close study of Turkish customs. This enabled her to dispel a good deal of Saxon prejudice and ignorance about the Ottoman character. On her return she lived in England for some years, and then, unaccompanied by her husband, went abroad again for a considerable period, soon after her daughter, in true filial imitation, had eloped with Lord Bute. From Italy she wrote frequently to her daughter, and the letters are among her best. In them her keen humour and intellectual alertness

[1] *Northanger Abbey.*

are clearly shown; she is equally happy either in describing her life at home (not far from Brescia) or in commenting on the fiction of Richardson and Smollett, that had been imported for her special benefit. In 1761 she returned to England, only to die of cancer in the next year.

As a writer, her fame rests entirely upon her letters. She wrote satirical verse in imitation of Gay and Pope, the lighter verse tolerably good, the more serious indifferently so. Her *Diary*, which might have proved of the greatest interest, was left to her daughter and burnt by her just before her death.

Although there was no open rupture with her husband, her deliberate seclusion in Italy for so many years gave rise to many rumours and scandals, and among her enemies were Pope and Horace Walpole.

Undoubtedly she was the cleverest woman of her day, with a certain hardness in her nature and with no wealth of wit sufficient to compensate for this; but with much solid sense and keen insight into character. As a letter writer she has a clear, lively, and natural style.

As a Letter Writer

You may guess how this disguises them, so that there is no distinguishing the great lady from her slave. 'Tis impossible for the most jealous husband to know his wife when he meets her, and no man dare follow a woman in the street. This perpetual masquerade gives them entire liberty of following their inclinations without danger of discovery. The most usual method of intrigue is, to send an appointment to the lover to meet the lady at a Jew's shop, which are as notoriously convenient as our Indian houses. . . . The great ladies seldom let their gallants know who they are, and it is so difficult to find it out, that they can very seldom guess at her name they have corresponded with above half a year together. You may easily imagine the number of faithful wives very small in a country where they have nothing to fear from a lover's indiscretion, since we see so many that have the courage to expose themselves to that in this world, and all the threatened punishment of the next, which is never preached to Turkish damsels."

Her Criticism

Well-turned periods or smooth lines are not the perfection either of prose or verse; they may serve to adorn, but can never stand in the place of good sense. Quaintness of words, however ranged, is always false eloquence, though it will ever impose on some sorts of understandings. How many readers and admirers has Madame de Sévigné, who only gives us in a lively manner and fashionable phrase, mean sentiments, vulgar prejudices, and endless repetitions? Sometimes the title-tattle of a fine lady, sometimes that of an old nurse, always tittle-tattle; yet so well gilt over by airy expressions and a flowing style, she will always please the same people in whom Lord Bolingbroke will shine as a first-rate author. . . . His confederacy with Swift and Pope puts me in mind of that of Bessus and his swordsmen in the *King or no King?* who endeavour to support themselves by giving certificates of each other's merit. Pope has triumphantly declared that they may do and say whatever silly things they please, they will still be the greatest geniuses nature ever exhibited.

Her Outlook on Life

At length, by so much importunity pressed,
Take, Molly, at once the inside of my breast.
This stupid indifference so often you blame,
Is not owing to nature, to fear, or to shame:
I am not so cold as a virgin in lead,
Nor are Sunday's sermons so strong in my head:
I know but too well how time flies along,
That we live but few years, and yet fewer are young.

But I hate to be cheated, and never will buy
Long years of repentance for moments of joy.
Oh! was there a man (but where shall I find
Good sense and good nature so equally joined?)
Would value his pleasure, contribute to mine;
Not meanly would boast, nor loudly design;
Not over severe, yet not stupidly vain,
For I would have the power, yet not give the pain

No pedant, yet learned; no rake-helly gay,
Or laughing because he has nothing to say;
To all my own sex obliging and free,
But never be fond of any but me;
In public preserve the decorum that's just,
And show in his eyes he is true to his trust!
Then rarely approach, and respectfully bow,
But not fulsomely pert, nor yet foppishly low.

But when the long hours of public are past,
And we meet with champagne and a chicken at last,
May every fond pleasure that moment endear;
Be banished afar both discretion and fear!
Forgetting or scorning the airs of the crowd,
He may cease to be formal, and I to be proud,
Till lost in the joy, we confess that we live,
And he may be mine, and yet I may forgive.

And that my delight may be solidly fixed,
Let the friend and the lover be handsomely mixed;
In whose tender bosom my soul may confide,
Whose kindness can soothe me, whose counsel can guide.
From such a dear lover as here I describe,
No danger should fright me, no millions should bribe
But till this astonishing treatment I know,
As I long have lived chaste, I will keep myself so.

I never will abuse with the wanton coquette,
Or be caught by a vain affection of wit.
The toasters and songsters may try all their art,
But never shall untune the pass of my heart.
I loathe the lewd rake, the dressed fopling despise:
Before such pursuers the rice virgin flies;
And as Ovid has sweetly in parable told,
We harden like trees, and like rivers grow cold.

Another letter writer and diarist is Mary Chavelerau, who married Lord Cowper. She entered the household of Queen Caroline in 1714, and kept a diary which, though much of it was destroyed by fire, gives amusing side-lights on the doings of the Hanoverian Court. What survived was edited by Spencer Compton in 1864. It has no special literary charm, but is certainly interesting in its way. Lady Cowper knew most of the literary men of the time—Swift, Young, Gay, Arbuthnot, Horace Walpole, Lord Chesterfield; and was on excellent terms with Pope, as the following compliment shows:

("Envy, be silent and attend!)
I know a reasonable woman,
Handsome and witty, yet a friend."

Another contemporary is John, Lord Hervey, of whom Lady Mary Montagu said "the human race was divided into men, women, and Herveys." He was an excellent wit and a rhymester of fair capacity, and between his family and Lady Mary there was a strong bond of friendship.

Naturally, therefore, Pope disliked him and pilloried him in the *Dunciad*. Nor was Pope his only mordant critic. However, he could take care of himself, and retaliated with equal spirit and bitterness in his *Memoirs*.

Sir Robert Walpole made use of Hervey's acid pen while he was in power, and he took service under the Government as Lord Privy Seal, distinguishing himself as a vigorous pamphleteer. His *Memoirs*, published after his death, give a highly satirical picture of Court life during the reign of George II, and with the exception of the Queen and the Princess Caroline, none escaped his gift of cynical portraiture.

Of a very different stamp is PHILIP DORMER STANHOPE, fourth Earl of Chesterfield, born in 1694. After a brief but fairly important political career (at one time he was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland), he retired upon literature in 1748, whether from deafness or ennui, or a combination of these, it is hard to determine. His literary fame rests upon his letters to his illegitimate son. As a letter writer he is certainly remarkable, though in no way like to any of the other letter writers with whom we have been dealing. Mannered and circumspect to an irritating degree, he was a good writer of the precise school, a versatile scholar, and a man of shrewd judgment.

As for his general outlook on life, perhaps no saying of his is more self-illuminating than his well-known dictum: "If there were no God it would be necessary to create one."

Among the many letter writers of the time, however, there is no one whose personality and work is more original and provocative than Walpole's.

HORACE WALPOLE, the third son of the famous Sir Robert, was born in 1717, went to Eton and Cambridge, and spent his earlier years in travel. Although at a later time he became an active politician, he did not distinguish himself in this capacity, and his fame rests on his varied contributions to literature.

Among his more notable writings are *Historic Doubts*, *Anecdotes of Paintings*, *The Castle of Otranto*, and above all, his letters.

Of his *Castle of Otranto* some detailed mention is made elsewhere. Here he may be regarded merely as a letter writer. With the exception of Pope, it is questionable whether any writer of the age caught more exquisitely the affectations and artificialities of the time than did this fop of genius.

He is the very prince of gossips, and the acrid effeminacy of the man, little as it redounds to his credit as a personality, proved invaluable to him in this capacity. Had he been less fond of tea parties, less prone to tattle, his letters would have lost half their savour. Beside him, Lady Mary and Lord Chesterfield seem astoundingly heavy-handed in their satire. Horace Walpole had a delicacy of touch, a neat and airy deftness, more Gallic than English.

That this cynical trifler should be one of the precursors of the Romantic revival, one of the pioneers of the mediæval enthusiasts, is one of the pleasant paradoxes of literary history.

Perhaps the cynical and flippant side of the man has been over-emphasized. We have to remember the tone and character of the society in which he moved, and when we come across glimpses in his letters of genuine friendliness, and kindness of heart, and recall his fine enthusiasm for our old cathedrals, and his undoubted artistic feeling and predilection for the mystery and romance of a bygone age, we may not unreasonably conjecture, that a good deal of his trifling was a pose, and that there was more substance in him than is commonly allowed.

However that may be, and taking him at his own estimate in his letters, he is certainly a consummate maker of trifles, and an admirable painter of the foibles of his time.

EXTRACT FROM LETTER TO THE COUNTESS OF ALBEMARLE

June 13, 1761. I never ate such good stuff, nor smelt such delightful bonbons, as your ladyship has sent me. Every time you rob the duke's dessert, does it cost you a pretty snuff-box? Do the pastors at the Hague enjoin such expensive retributions? If a man steals a kiss there, I suppose he does penance in a sheet of Brussels lace. The comical part is that you own the theft, and send it me, but say nothing of the vehicle of your repentance. In short, madam, the box is the prettiest thing I ever saw, and I give you a thousand thanks for it.

When you comfort yourself about the operas, you don't know what you have lost; nay, nor I neither; for I was here, concluding that a serenata for a birthday would be as dull and as vulgar as those festivities generally are: but I hear of nothing but the enchantment of it. There was a second orchestra in the footman's gallery, disguised by clouds and filled with the music of the king's chapel. The choristers behaved like angels, and the harmony between the two bands was in the most exact time. Ellis piqued himself, and beat both heaven and earth. The joys of the year do not end there. The under-actors open at Drury-lane to-night with a new comedy by Murphy, called *All in the Wrong*. At Ranelagh all is fire-works and sky-rockets. The birthday exceeded the splendour of Haroun Alraschid and the Arabian Nights, when people had nothing to do but to scour a lantern, and send a genii for a hamper of diamonds and rubies. Do you remember one of those stories, where a prince has eight statues of diamonds, which he overlooks because he fancies he wants a ninth; and to his great surprise the ninth proves to be pure flesh and blood, which he never thought of? Somehow or other, Lady —— is the ninth statue; and, you will allow, has better red and white than if she was made of pearls and rubies.

. . . . . .

I enclose the list your ladyship desired: you will see that the *Plurality of Worlds* are Moore's, and of some I do not know the authors. There is a late edition with these names to them.

My duchess was to set out this morning. I saw her for the last time the day before yesterday at Lady Kildare's: never was a journey less a party of pleasure. She was so melancholy, that all Miss ——'s oddness and my spirits could scarce make her smile. Towards the end of the night, and that was three in the morning, I did divert her a little. I slipped Pam into her lap, and then taxed her with having it there. She was quite confounded; but, taking it up, saw he had a telescope in his hand, which I had drawn, and that the card, which was split, and just waxed together, contained these lines:

Ye simple astronomers, lay by your glasses;
The transit of Venus has proved you all asses:
Your telescopes signify nothing to scan it;
'Tis not meant in the clouds; 'tis not meant of a planet:
The seer who foretold it mistook or deceives us;
For Venus's transit is when Grafton leaves us.

I don't send your ladyship these verses as good, but to show you that all gallantry does not centre at the Hague.

Historians from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century.

The art of the historian and the art of the novelist are closely related. In both cases a faculty for story-telling and a sense of characterisation are of high importance. There is a scientific side to history, with which fiction is not concerned, demanding such gifts as balance of judgment, veracity of outlook, and power of reasoning. History is not a science, and by the variability of its data cannot be regarded as such, but a scientific study of its phenomena is certainly helpful in giving it weight and value. With the scientific side it is clear we are not concerned here as students of literature. What does concern us is the artistic side, the power of painting human life and human institutions with vitality and actuality. That the picture may be one-sided, perchance based on documents of doubtful value, will prejudice its scientific value, but need not divest it of fidelity to human nature and arresting power over the imagination. So while veracity and balance of judgment are rightly considered as essential to the great historian, he must first of all be a literary artist in some measure, or his other qualities will count as nothing.

The first important departure from the crowd of chroniclers and annalists that meet us in the Middle Ages and Earlier Renascence, is signalised by Bacon in his *History of the Reign of Henry VII.* Here, at any rate, there is something of the art and insight without which the historian becomes little better than a compiler. There is a measure of the same seriousness of purpose in Lord Herbert of Cherbury's *Life of Henry VIII.* and Lord Herbert was better circumstanced than Bacon when he wrote his history, in being able to avail himself of many original documents.

There is sanity and sobriety in Archbishop Spottiswood's *History of the Church of Scotland*, while in Irish history, Spenser's *View of the Present State of Ireland*, dominated as it is by matters of personal interest, is none the less a remarkable picture of Elizabethan politics.

At this point, something may be said of some of the materials of history with which the Stuart period is rich. Strictly speaking, State papers and letters do not belong to historical literature, except where here and there a letter or a document may possess some artistic value apart from the bald statement of fact contained in it. But the stuff of history bears so intimate a connection with historical literature, and merges often so insensibly into it, that it is scarcely out of place to devote some attention to the matter.

John Rushworth's collection of *Private Passages of State*, and *Remarkable Proceedings in Five Parliaments*, is the first really important collection of English State Papers. Rushworth was Clerk's Assistant to the House of Commons, and secretary to the Council of War in 1645. These volumes contain valuable first-hand evidence of the political and ecclesiastical embroilments of the time. The last volume ends with the trial of Strafford.

Thurloe's well-known name comes next—John Thurloe, the secretary of Oliver Cromwell—and in his collection of State Papers we deal with much that throws light on the policy of Cromwell, both at home and abroad. These may be supplemented by the letters and speeches of Cromwell himself, made familiar to us by Carlyle. He was a born letter writer, and his rugged forcefulness, his religious conviction, and shrewd insight, are well exhibited in them.

Equally admirable in a different way, is the correspondence of Sir Henry Wotton, the friend of Donne, the author of a fine poem, "Ye meaner Beauties of the night," the subject of an elegy by Cowley and a biography by Izaak Walton.

Born in 1568 in Kent, he was educated at Winchester and Oxford, afterwards spending several years in travel. Under James he was thrice Ambassador at Venice, and finally became Provost of Eton, dying in 1639. He was a voluminous letter writer, and in his official letters to James he salted his political reports with attractive humour. Outside of his correspondence, his literary projects were fragmentary but suggestive, especially the *Characters* of Essex and Buckingham. A pleasant style and a fresh and vigorous outlook, distinguish his work. Equally vigorous are the letters of the ill-fated Strafford (1611–1640).

Turning to the time of the Civil War, we have in addition to the material furnished by Thurloe and Cromwell, the Fairfax *Correspondence* and the *Letters* and *Papers* of the Verney Family down to 1639, merging later into the *Memoirs of the Verney Family*.

A good picture is given in the Verney *Memoirs* of the discomforts and miseries suffered by the families of Royalists during the Civil War. The discomforts, one might say, were general—London was in a perpetual ferment and unrest from the day when Charles attempted the arrest of the five members. The extraordinary sums voted by the citizens on behalf of the Parliament, the general atmosphere of bitter party dissension, made it a very miserable time for quiet folk of whatever party. Sir Ralph Verney had neither sided with the King in his prosperity, nor would fight against him in his adversity. Naturally he had enemies on either side, and his wife was hard put to it, during his absence abroad, to look after his interests.

She thus writes in 1646:

> "We are at this very instant safely arrived here in Southwark, but extremely weary that I can scarce hold my pen. All provisions are most extremely dear, beef fourpence, veal and mutton eightpence per pound, corn above eight shillings the bushel. Famine is very much feared. There was never see much disorder as is nowe in the Towne, for severie one is as much discontented as too possible. The Butchers have begun the way to all the rest, for within this too days they all did rise upon the exise man and burnt downe the exise house and flung the exise money forth into the middle of the street, and they say beat some of the exise men. The Houses were in much disorder upon this but dare not hang any of them; they say they will leave this to the law, which cannot hang them for the law only makes itt a riott."

Again, here is a comment on the Puritan preachers:

"One heares a very strange sort of sarvis, and in such a tone that most people doe nothing but laughe at it. And everybody that receeves must be examined before the Elders, whoe thay all sweare asketh them such questions that would make me blush to relate."

Finally, we come to the *Familiar Letters* of JAMES HOWELL, Historiographer Royal to Charles II. These are more in the nature of political table-talk, and brief essays. He was a strong anti-puritan, and was not unduly particular to accuracy of statement, but he was often clear, pithy, and humorous; even when discursive and gossipy, he rarely fails to be interesting.

CLARENDON, in his *History of the Great Rebellion* (published 1702–4), carries us a stage further in the development of historical literature. If as stylist he is inferior in clarity and grace to some who preceded him, he has a greater gift of narrative and a remarkable faculty for visualising his characters. In his sketches of Falkland, of Godolphin and Chillingworth, he has given us live and memorable portraits.

Contemporary with these writers is GILBERT BURNET (1643–1715), whose *History of the Reformation* (1679, 1682, and the third volume in 1714) had many of the qualities that distinguish Clarendon's work. It is of course frankly polemical and Protestant. There is an arresting quality in Burnet's ecclesiastical history, that marks also his later *History of My Own Times* (1723). More agreeable and varied as a writer than Clarendon, he is inferior to him in his faculty for telling a story. But there is life in his narrative, and actuality. Partisanship marks all the writers of this time, but both in Clarendon and Burnet, with all their limitations, there is an undeniable sense of reality which is a valuable acquisition to the art of history making.

HISTORY OF OUR OWN TIMES

He (Charles II) was affable and easy, and loved to be made so by all about him. The great art of keeping him long was the being easy and the making everything easy to him. He had made such observations on the French government, that he thought a king who might be checked or have his ministers called to an account by a parliament was but a king in name. He had a great compass of knowledge, though he was never capable of much application or study. He understood the mechanics and physic, and was a good chemist, and much set on several preparations of mercury, chiefly the fixing it. He understood navigation well, but above all he knew the architecture of ships so perfectly that in that respect he was exact rather more than became a prince. His apprehension was quick and his memory good. He was an everlasting talker. He told his stories with a good grace; but they came in his way too often. He had a very ill opinion both of men and women; and did not think that there was either sincerity or chastity in the world out of principle, but that some had either the one or the other out of humour or vanity. He thought that nobody did serve him out of love; and so he was quits with all the world, and loved others as little as he thought they loved him. He hated business, and could not be easily brought to mind any; but when it was necessary, and he was set to it, he would stay as long as his ministers had work for him. The ruin of his reign, and all his affairs, was occasioned chiefly by his delivering himself up at his first coming to a mad range of pleasure.

STRYPE (1643–1737), equally well known for his *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (1721) has little of the literary power of Burnet or Clarendon, but he was a painstaking and sincere writer who took his work with a high seriousness, that showed the increasing interest in scholarly historical research.

Following these writers come JEREMY COLLIER, with his thoughtful, erudite, and somewhat pedestrian *Ecclesiastical History* (1708–14), and DANIEL NEAL, whose vigorous *History of the Puritans* (1732) is a valuable contribution to the history of Nonconformity.

Scotland has reason to be proud of ANDREW FLETCHER of Saltoun, a scholar and traveller, who had been trained early in life by Burnet himself, and whose writings on contemporary political subjects are marked by political insight and a charm and liveliness of style, uncommon at this time among Scottish prose writers. In one of his shorter pieces on Government, there is to be found the well-known saying referred to "a very wise man," that "if a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of the nation."

HENRY ST. JOHN, 1st Viscount BOLINGBROKE, was born of ancient lineage, at Battersea, in 1678, and educated at Eton. Profligate and dissipated in youth, he afterwards became one of the most brilliant and versatile men of his day—and the "guide, philosopher, and friend" of Pope.

In 1701 he entered Parliament, held several public offices, and negotiated the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. His intrigue to compass the downfall of Harley being successful, he ambitiously plots to restore the Stuart dynasty. The subsequent impeachment and fall of Bolingbroke in the prime of his manhood, is one of the well-known incidents in English political history.

Handsome and dignified in appearance, with extraordinary charm of voice and manner, and wonderful eloquence, it was said by a contemporary, however, that "few people believed in him without being deceived, or trusted him without being betrayed." His chief works are *Reflections upon Exile*, written during his first period in France, *Letters on the Study of History*, and a *Letter on the True Use of Retirement*, during his second visit; *Letters on the Spirit of Patriotism*, and *Idea of a Patriot King*. His death took place in 1751.

Bolingbroke's literary style is strongly impressed by his powers as an orator. The insincerity of the man, and the superficiality of his methods, must not blind us to the clarity, the neatness, the easy wit of his style. As a master of political invective he has few superiors; he was a good letter writer, and it has been said that he was "the first English writer to recognise and illustrate the cardinal principle of the continuity of history."

ROGER NORTH'S (1653–1734) *Lives of the North* (1742–4) illustrates the growing interest in characterisation begetting an age of Fiction, and is rich in literary grace and in that lucidity of method and shrewdness of outlook characteristic of the best writers of the time.

About the middle of the eighteenth century the art of history-making shows still further development in the hands of Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon.

The clear, ironical method of HUME lends especial value to his fragmentary *History of England*, over

which he took eight years. If less remarkable as an historian than as a philosopher, there is no doubt that his intellectual power and philosophical acuteness proved valuable assets in his historical writings.

William Robertson (1721–1793), with less intellectual force but no less literary ability, discloses in his *History of Scotland* and his *History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V* (1769), careful research and philosophical breadth. Perhaps the point of superiority in these writers over earlier ones is the growth of the judicial and critical spirit and the broader philosophic outlook.

Goldsmith, by virtue of his delightful style, and Smollett with his vigorous gift of narrative, are names worth remembering in historical work, but they did nothing for the development of this subject, and can scarcely be called historians. What they did was to popularise history, and cause it to bulk more prominently in the public view.

We now come to Edward Gibbon, born at Putney in 1737; a delicate, precocious boy, educated at Westminster School and Magdalen College, Oxford, whither he went in 1752 "with a stock of erudition that might have puzzled a doctor, and a degree of ignorance of which a schoolboy would have been ashamed." He led a somewhat free and easy life at the university, and a study of certain controversial writings led him to join the Roman Church at the age of sixteen. Leaving Oxford, he was sent to Switzerland to pursue his education under different surroundings, and he eventually returned to Protestantism.

During the five years he was abroad, he travelled considerably, and while in Rome conceived the idea of writing his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and for six years was at work on the first volume, published in 1776. Meanwhile, interested in politics, in 1774 he became member for Liskeard, and afterwards Lymington, supporting the American policy of Lord North's ministry; he was appointed a commissioner on colonial trade, but no permanent Government post forthcoming, he threw up politics in 1783 and retired to Lausanne, where he led a simple, studious life, working hard on his *magnum opus* until June 27, 1787, when, "between the hours of eleven and twelve," he says, "I wrote the last lines of the last page in a summer house in my garden . . . the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent."

With closing years came sorrow, bereavements, and indifferent health, and death came suddenly on January 16, 1794, while in London.

Gibbon was by far the greatest historian of his age, and one of the greatest of any age. As a literary stylist he is sufficiently remarkable, with his clear, imposing, rhythmic prose, but he is even more remarkable for that intuitive faculty that endows some men so richly with the historic sense quite apart from their scholarship. This faculty it is that enables Gibbon to present his work as an organic whole, with the details properly subordinate to the main structure.

Perhaps his only serious defect as an historian was his inability to understand enthusiasm, and the forces to which enthusiasm could give rise. This was a defect in many writers of his age, and if it qualifies our admiration for him as a thinker, it does not gravely affect his skill as an historian.

The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire

The generality of princes, if they were stripped of their purple and cast naked into the world, would immediately sink to the lowest rank of society, without a hope of emerging from their obscurity. But the personal merit of Julian was, in some measure, independent of his fortune. Whatever had been his choice of life, by the force of intrepid courage, lively wit, and intense application, he would have obtained, or at least he would have deserved, the highest honours of his profession, and Julian might have raised himself to the rank of minister or general of the state in which he was born a private citizen. If the jealous caprice of power had disappointed his expectations; if he had prudently declined the paths of greatness, the employment of the same talents in studious solitude would have placed beyond the reach of kings his present happiness and his immortal fame. When we inspect with minute, or perhaps malevolent, attention, the portrait of Julian, something seems wanting to the grace and perfection of the whole figure. His genius was less powerful and sublime than that of Cæsar, nor did he possess the consummate prudence of Augustus. The virtues of Trajan appear more steady and natural, and the philosophy of Marcus is more simple and consistent. Yet Julian sustained adversity with firmness, and prosperity with moderation. After an interval of one hundred and twenty years from the death of Alexander Severus, the Romans beheld an emperor who made no distinction between his duties and his pleasures, who laboured to relieve the distress and to revive the spirit of his subjects, and who endeavoured always to connect authority with merit, and happiness with virtue. Even faction, and religious faction, was constrained to acknowledge the superiority of his genius in peace as well as in war, and to confess, with a sigh, that the apostate Julian was a lover of his country, and that he deserved the empire of the world.

Edmund Burke, like Gibbon, was one of the great prosemen of the age. Beyond that, the two men have nothing in common except being contemporaries and in the same literary set.

May we not imagine that many a young student entering Trinity College, Dublin, has been fired with enthusiasm to emulate one of those two famous Irishmen whose monuments stand like sentinels, on either side, guarding its main entrance—the one, Oliver Goldsmith, the other, that great orator, statesman, and political writer, Edmund Burke.

Born in Dublin, in 1729, Burke was the son of an Irish lawyer and educated with two brothers at a Quaker school at Ballitore, co. Kildare, which he left two years later for Dublin University, taking his degree in 1748. His father wished him to become a lawyer, but not so the son. Though he came to London and was entered at the Middle Temple, he soon finds more congenial company within that famous circle over which Samuel Johnson presided, and concentrates his mind upon the study of history and philosophy; the outcome of which was the anonymous publication of *A Vindication of Natural Society* in 1756, and an *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*, which attracted so much attention that it was translated into French and German. The following year appeared *A Sketch of American History*, in two volumes; and for several years he wrote the whole of the *Annual Register*, published by Dodsley.

It is not, however, in the domain of literature where Edmund Burke is best known. In 1761 politics claimed him. Acting as private secretary to "Single-Speech" Hamilton, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and four years later to the Marquis of Rockingham, the Prime Minister, paved the way for his entry into Parliament. As member for Wendover he was chosen in 1765, and for twenty-eight years there was scarcely a more prominent figure in the life of St. Stephen's. Certain disturbances arising out of the expulsion of John Wilkes by the House of Commons in 1768, had previous to this inspired his well-known *Thoughts on the Present Discontents* (1770).

Burke reached the pinnacle of fame in 1788, when he led the impeachment of Warren Hastings in a speech that lasted four days; during which he brought before his hearers the most vivid pictures of the beauties of the East as well as the horrors and desolation of the tortured Hindoos. Catholic emancipation, the abolition of the slave trade, and the great French Revolution likewise claimed his attention.

The year 1791 saw the break with his friend Charles James Fox, over the bill for the division of Canada. Burke's violent denunciation urged Fox to whisper, "There is no loss of friendship, I hope?" "Yes," said Burke, "there is loss of friendship. I know the price of my conduct: our friendship is at an end."

In 1794, retiring from public life to his beautiful home at Beaconsfield, Bucks, he met with a terrible blow in the death of his only son by rapid consumption. Burke's health gradually failed, and he died on July 7, 1797, and was buried in Beaconsfield Church.

Burke is first and foremost an orator. That must be remembered in estimating his manner and matter. He is therefore a great rhetorician, rich in passionate declamation, and excelling where splendour and force are required, though with little power of variety or delicacy of emphasis.

His gifts as a writer are nowhere better displayed than in his magnificent though one-sided *Reflections on the Revolution in France*—"Mother of all evil!"—in Burke's opinion.

In comparing Burke's prose at the close of the century, with the prose of Dryden in its early years, we cannot help noticing the gradual swing back of the pendulum to Renascence models. Flinging off in Dryden all the glitter and colour of the Elizabethan prosemen, striving above all after plainness of speech, homeliness of phrase, and flexibility of method, the prosemen having tidied up the gorgeous confusion that beset so much of the prose at their start, grew tired of the plain veracity of speech, and gradually recaptured some of the golden qualities of the Elizabethan and Caroline writers.

But we are concerned here especially with the literary man as historian. What of Burke in this connection?

Burke deals with the history of his own time rather than with the past, and his claim upon us as an historian is that he brings to his work a lofty imagination, an impassioned manner, and a philosophical insight—qualities assuredly needed in the making of history. However, they may need balancing by the more pedestrian faculties of precision and judgment.

It is a fine tribute to Burke's power that his work, concerned as it is with the politics of his own age, should possess so much permanent value for the student of literature and history. The subjects with which he is concerned are big and important ones, for the transitional age in which he lived abounded in problems of striking and memorable importance; but his greatness is due less to the greatness of his subjects than to the greatness of his way of approaching them. To-day, we may realise clearly enough the inevitable character of that "red, fool fury of the Seine," which Tennyson epitomised in a neat but shallow phrase. But the price paid for the great upheaval, necessary as it may have been, was terrible and lamentable enough; and no one saw this side of it better than Burke, as his glowing tribute to Marie Antoinette testifies.

Sometimes he touches what seems to be a passing phase of political disturbance, as when he deals with the troubles in connection with John Wilkes, but he wrung from them a wise and coolly reasoned discussion of the dangers to English liberty that may lurk even in Parliamentary government. The breadth and largeness of his outlook is nowhere better illustrated than in the speech on *Conciliation with America* (1775), where he makes light of the legal argument in favour of taxing the Colonies, taking up his position on the more durable ground of sense and expediency.

"The question with me is, not whether you have a right to render your people miserable, but whether it is not to your interest to make them happy."

There is always with Burke the immediate particular problem, that leads him to some wise and weighty generalisation, that has enriched our store of political maxims long after the occasion that evolved it has been forgotten.

THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSES OF PRESENT DISCONTENTS

To complain of the age we live in, to murmur at the present possessors of power, to lament the past, to conceive extravagant hopes of the future, are the common dispositions of the greatest part of mankind; indeed the necessary effects of the ignorance and levity of the vulgar. Such complaints and humours have existed in all times; yet as all times have not been alike, true political sagacity manifests itself in distinguishing that complaint which only characterises the general infirmity of human nature, from those which are symptoms of the particular distemperature of our own air and season.

ON CONCILIATION WITH AMERICA

If we mean to conciliate and concede; let us see of what nature the concession ought to be: to ascertain the nature of our concession, we must look at their complaint. The colonies complain, that they have not the characteristic mark and seal of British freedom. They complain that they are taxed in a parliament in which they are not represented. If you mean to satisfy them at all, you must satisfy them with regard to this complaint. If you mean to please any people, you must give them the boon which they ask; not what you think better for them, but of a kind totally different. Such an act may be a wise regulation, but it is no concession: whereas our present theme is the mode of giving satisfaction.

Sir, I think you must perceive, that I am resolved this day to have nothing at all to do with the question of the right of taxation. Some gentlemen startle—but

it is true; I put it totally out of the question. It is less than nothing in my consideration. I do not indeed wonder, nor will you, sir, that gentlemen of profound learning are fond of displaying it on this profound subject. But my consideration is narrow, confined, and wholly limited to the policy of the question. I do not examine, whether the giving away a man's money be a power expected and reserved out of the general trust of government; and how far all mankind, in all forms of polity, are entitled to an exercise of that right by the charter of nature. Or whether, on the contrary, a right of taxation is necessarily involved in the general principle of legislation, and inseparable from the ordinary supreme power. These are deep questions, where great names militate against each other; where reason is perplexed; and an appeal to authorities only thickens the confusion. For high and reverend authorities lift up their heads on both sides; and there is no sure footing in the middle. This point is the *great Serbonian, between Damietta and Mount Casius Old, where armies whole have sunk*. I do not intend to be overwhelmed in that bog, though in such respectable company. The question with me is, not whether you have a right to render your people miserable; but whether it is not your interest to make them happy. It is not, what a lawyer tells me I may do; but what humanity, reason, and justice tells me I ought to do. Is a politic act the worse for being a generous one? Is no concession proper, but that which is made from your want of right to keep what you grant? Or does it lessen the grace or dignity of relaxing in the exercise of an odious claim, because you have your evidences-room full of titles, and your magazines stuffed with arms to enforce them? What signify all those titles, and all those arms? . . . Of what avail are they, when the reason of the thing tells me, that the assertion of my title is the loss of my suit; and that I could do nothing but wound myself by the use of my own weapons?

Such is steadfastly my opinion of the absolute necessity of keeping up the concord of this empire by a unity of spirit, though in a diversity of operations, that, if I were sure the colonists had, at their leaving this country, sealed a regular compact of servitude; that they had solemnly abjured all the rights of citizens; that they had made a vow to renounce all ideas of liberty for them and their posterity to all generations; yet I should hold myself obliged to conform to the temper I found universally prevalent in my own day, and to govern two millions of men, impatient of servitude, on the principles of freedom. I am not determining a point of law; I am restoring tranquillity; and the general character and situation of a people must determine what sort of a government is fitted for them. That point nothing else can or ought to determine.

REFLECTIONS ON THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE

At once to preserve and to reform is quite another thing. When the useful parts of an old establishment are kept, and what is superadded is to be fitted to what is retained, a vigorous mind, steady persevering attention, various powers of comparison and combination, and the resources of an understanding fruitful in expedients are to be exercised; they are to be exercised in a continued conflict with the combined force of opposite vices; with the obstinacy that rejects all improvement, and the levity that is fatigued and disgusted with everything of which it is in possession. But you may object—"A process of this kind is slow. It is not fit for an assembly which glories in performing in a few months the work of ages. Such a mode of reforming possibly might take up many years." Without question it might; and it ought. It is one of the excellencies of a method in which time is amongst the assistants that its operation is slow, and in some cases almost imperceptible. If circumspection and caution are a part of wisdom, when we work only upon inanimate matter, surely they become a part of duty too, when the subject of our demolition and construction is not brick and timber, but sentient beings, by the sudden alteration of whose state, condition, and habits, multitudes may be rendered miserable. But it seems as if it were the prevalent opinion in Paris, that an unfeeling heart, and an undoubting confidence, are the sole qualifications for a perfect legislator. Far different are my ideas of that high office. The true lawgiver ought to have a heart full of sensibility. He ought to love and respect his kind, and to fear himself. It may be allowed to his temperament to catch his ultimate object with an intuitive glance; but his movements towards it ought to be deliberate. Political arrangement, as it is a work for social ends, is to be only wrought by social means. There mind must conspire with mind. Time is required to produce that union of minds which alone can produce all the good we aim at. Our patience will achieve more than our force. If I might venture to appeal to what is so much out of fashion in Paris, I mean to experience, I should tell you, that in my course I have known, and, according to my measure, have co-operated with great men; and I have never yet seen any plan which has not been mended by the observations of those who were much inferior in understanding to the person who took the lead in the business. By a slow but well-sustained progress, the effect of each step is watched; the good or ill success of the first, gives light to us in the second; and so, from light to light, we are conducted with safety through the whole series.

SCHOLARLY RESEARCH AND THE PROGRESS OF EDUCATION DURING THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

SCHOLARLY RESEARCH

THE seventeenth century reaped the advantages of the enthusiastic study of the Classics, made in the hey-day of the Renascence. The writers of the sixteenth century had saturated themselves with the master writers of Greece and Rome; it remained for the succeeding age to apply the knowledge thus gained both in the pursuit of science and in literary productiveness. The gain to science we are dealing with elsewhere. The effect upon literature has already concerned us in dealing with the poetry, prose, and drama of the time. Here the more purely academic side will be noted.

Latin was the language favoured in the seventeenth century, as in earlier times, by scholars; though many books were published both in Latin and English. Bacon's *Novum Organum*, and the later disputations of the learned Casaubon with James I, may be instanced as illustrations of this tendency, while it must be remembered that the scientific discoveries of such men as Harvey and Newton were given to the world in Latin. Latin indeed was the international medium of communication between men of learning.

The increasing interest in Biblical research, resulting from the Reformation, gave an added stimulus to the study of Greek and Hebrew.

The difference between the scholarly spirit of the sixteenth and that of the seventeenth century, lay in the sharpened sense of practicality. These languages were used now not merely to indulge the

literary temperament, but to further the practical needs of the time. For instance, the earlier study of Classical Antiquities and Ancient Institutions pointed a way for the treatment of English Institutions, and at the universities the investigation of past literatures was guided very largely by the theological bias of the day. To such an extent was this carried that one college authority counselled the study of "*Protestant* mathematical books." The enormous concentration of interest on the Bible, necessarily weakened scholastic interest in the Greek writers, whose paganism was looked upon as a serious qualification of their authority.

While most of the important scholars devoted themselves to theological matters, rather than to classical studies, while Pearson was expounding the Creed, and William Lloyd, Bishop of St. Asaph, discoursing on Church History, a great scholar arose, RICHARD BENTLEY, whose interests were far wider than those writers.

Born in 1662, he was educated at Wakefield and Cambridge, becoming later a tutor in the house of Benjamin Stillingfleet. Afterwards he became Master of Trinity, gained fame in sedulous controversy as to the rival merits of Ancient and Modern, and died in 1742, leaving behind him a reputation as a gruff north-countryman of vast learning and immense dialectical power.

The great controversy that brought fame to Bentley arose in this wise. In 1690 Sir William Temple, a whole-hearted admirer of the Classics, praised certain letters belonging to ancient literature, claiming for them superiority over anything in more modern times. The letters praised were the so-called letters of Phalaris, a cruel tyrant of Agrigentum. Charles Boyle published in 1695 a fresh edition of the letters, complaining of Bentley's conduct in debarring his access to a MS. of Phalaris in the Royal Library. Bentley replied in a conciliatory way, but Boyle seemed determined on making himself offensive. Bentley's nature was not constructed on bland and gentle lines, and he lost little time in asserting the letters to be spurious, blaming Boyle's teachers rather than the young writer—the last scornful touch showing the temper of the man.

Bentley's enemies were roused by this. Inferior to him in learning, they were his superiors in art and in the art of letters, and led by Francis Atterbury, they published an indictment intended to crush Bentley for ever, as a dismal dry-as-dust, and as a man who did not scruple to plagiarise other men's views to suit himself. The public, quite incompetent to judge the merits of the case, were led by sentimental consideration to acclaim Boyle and his following. Bentley bided his time, accepting his chastisement with apparent indifference. Then in 1699, having gone into the matter more fully, he published his reply. He then showed on linguistic grounds how impossible it was to accept the letters as genuine, and his reply proved convincing to most contemporary scholars. A practical expression of this was shown in the appointment made soon after to the Mastership of Trinity College. Unhappily, his great and deserved reputation as a scholar was not sufficient for him. Infirmities of temper and a growing arrogance disclosed themselves aggressively in later life, and he showed grievous lack of judgment in essaying the editing of Milton's writings, a task that shows only too clearly his limitations as a man of letters. Before his death Pope had pilloried him in the *Dunciad*, as a terrible dullard. Dull he may have been, and often was in matters of literary taste, but to picture him as his enemies did as merely a high and dry pedant, is as absurd as it is unfair.

During the late seventeenth century, a vigorous movement was made in the direction of local antiquities, and a number of writers of great industry made a notable departure from the old haphazard way of using existing compilations without discrimination, and with method and precision endeavoured to get at their subject by a study of local documents and records and careful topographical investigation. Oxford was the centre of this antiquarian movement, and among the memorable names are, Sir WILLIAM DUGDALE, with his *Antiquities of Warwickshire*; ANTHONY WOOD, a diarist and author of *Survey of the Antiquities of Oxford*; THOMAS HEARN, Assistant Keeper in the Bodleian Library, whose series of *Mediæval English Church Chronicles* carried the History of England down to the reign of Richard I; and THOMAS TANNER, with his account of monastic records, in which he defended the monasteries against the more audacious of the charges brought against them by Protestant historians.

Less solid in learning than these writers, though more attractive as a writer, was JOHN AUBREY, whose *Brief Lives* of famous people were written to help Wood. Aubrey belonged to the pleasant gossiping order of writer; he was a man of literary fragments, with insufficient perseverance to any solid work on his own account. But he had an excellent eye for foibles of character, as these lives testify. He was a born portrait-painter and, unlike many of his age, could be intimate and vivid without being spiteful.

THE PROGRESS OF EDUCATION

During the Middle Ages, the work of education was practically confined to the monasteries. These were the only universities, for the clergy had a monopoly of learning, as the etymology of the word "clerio" shows. Attached to these monasteries, in some cases, were chorister-schools—the germ of the later Grammar Schools—and on the dissolution of the monasteries many schools of this description were built and endowed by means of the money taken from the monastic houses. Education in the days of the Renascence signified a thorough grounding in Greek and Latin, and all that was asked of the master in addition to his classical knowledge, was his "pious" qualification. Between 1509 and 1553, more than a hundred schools were opened in England. The method of teaching in these times, however, was exceedingly crude and arbitrary. Implicit confidence was placed in the birch, kindness was an unknown quantity among the teachers, the opinion prevailing that he who could beat the hardest could teach the best.

Nicholas Udal, the famous Etonian, enjoyed an unenviable reputation in this respect. Small wonder that Ascham complained that "Learning is robbed of her best wits by the great beating," and his comments on the methods employed were in no ways exaggerated. "They went to the Grammar School little children; they come from thence great lubbers, always learning and little profiting . . . their whole knowledge of learning without a book was told only to their tongue and lips and never ascended up to the brain and head." The schools themselves were like prisons; cold and cheerless. Schooling started at 6 A.M., holidays were scanty (barely a fortnight throughout the year), and if a boy played truant he ran the risk of being treated as Sir Peter Carew was—beaten unmercifully and coupled to a dog with a leash.

At the University matters were little better, the students being still treated like children, and half starved. Many who survived this drastic treatment developed into uncomfortable prigs, and one cannot read about Lady Jane Grey's studies without the feeling that here we have a cultured and gentle nature largely spoiled. Happily for her, she had the rare advantage of an amiable and considerate teacher to compensate her for harsh parents.

"When I am in presence either of father or mother, whether I speak, keep silence, sit, stand, or go, eat, drink, be merry or sad, be sewing, playing, dancing, or doing anything else; I must do it as it were in such weight, measure and number, even so perfectly as God made the world; or else I am so sharply threatened—yea, presently sometimes with pinches, nips, and bobs and other ways (which I will not name for the honour I bear them), that I think myself in hell, till time come that I must go to Mr. Elmer; who teacheth me so gently, so pleasantly, with such fair allurements to learning that I think all the time nothing whiles I am with him. And when I am called from him I fall on weeping, because whatsoever I do else but learning is full of grief, trouble, and fear."

During the Civil War, educational enterprise fell into abeyance, and at the Restoration period new ideals, fresh methods of education began to make themselves felt. Meanwhile echoes of the older method may be found in the letters of Lucy Hutchinson, where she speaks of no less than eight tutors who tend her youthful mind at the mature age of seven; of these methods, one cannot speak save in terms of condemnation. In the creation of Charity Schools in the place of the older Grammar Schools, the note of the new attitude is struck, and in one of Bishop Butler's *Sermons* the design is made clear.

It was "not in any sort to remove poor children out of the rank in which they were born, but keeping them in it, to give them the assistance which their circumstances plainly called for, by educating them in the principles of religion as well as of civil life; and likewise making some sort of provision for their maintenance, under which last I include clothing them, giving them such learning—if it be called by that name—as may qualify them for some common employment, and placing them out to it as they grow up."

Meanwhile the education of the well-to-do was and continued to be one-sided. Little attempt was made to use scientific knowledge, modern languages, history, geography, for purposes of instruction, while the only use made of mathematics was to teach them in a restricted degree for purposes of material welfare. Small surprise, then, that men like Milton in his tractate on *Education*, and Hobbes in his *Leviathan* and *Behemoth*, denounced University methods. No doubt Milton's ignorance of youthful psychology militates against the utility of some of his ideas, but his contention that more attention should be paid to a concrete knowledge of men and affairs, was undeniably sound.

Throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries reformers sprang up, inspired by the newly kindled interest in science and modern languages, and at length the controversy became merely part of the long-lived struggle between the advantages of Ancient and Modern Literature. An important stage was reached in the progress of education by Locke's treatise, *Some Thoughts on Education*. To Locke the primary concern of education was a moral one. Matters intellectual should be subordinate in youth to matters moral. Learning therefore is of less account than soundness of character or that practical wisdom which makes a man a master of affairs, with good judgment. Locke's views are further amplified and expressed more maturely in his famous *Essay on the Human Understanding*—a book that inspired Rousseau and, to come to modern times, Herbert Spencer.

Compared with such educational ideals as found expression in Matthew Arnold and Huxley, Locke's notions seem one-sided and restricted. He shared the distrust of his age in imagination and feeling, has little to say of the humane influence of the arts or the practical advantages to be derived from the study of the physical sciences. In short, he writes as an Utilitarian. None the less, he was greatly in advance of his time, and his schemes, as compared with those of his age, were generous and comprehensive, and we are grateful to him for his insistence on the study of mathematics and of the handicrafts.

If the education of boys was unsatisfactory, that of girls was deplorable. To read and write was, in the view of many, quite sufficient. The "complete gentlewoman" of the time was an expert in dancing and in playing the spinet and guitar; in artistic dabbling and in culinary exercises. Here her accomplishments ceased. Pope's picture of the fashionable woman in *The Rape of the Lock* described truly only too many, and Addison's exhortations were certainly needed.

But a change of front was at hand; and about the year 1760 a change for the better in the status of women took place. Swift had made suggestions for reform in the instruction of girls, though he had little belief in their capacity. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, though convinced that scholarly qualifications were for the professional man, yet counselled a generous course of instruction, including arithmetic, philosophy, and poetry; with a touch of bitterness she advised learned women to conceal their attainments as they would a physical defect.

The idea of a liberal education for girls was, however, not part of the scheme of eighteenth-century

education, and grammar school education was provided exclusively for boys; girls presumably not being intended to "serve God in Church and State."

Toward the close of the century a movement started in the direction of elementary education, but this begins a new chapter in the history of our subject.

SCOTS VERSE AND PROSE FROM THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY TO THE COMING OF BURNS

The vigorous early growth of Scots verse, that followed the death of Chaucer, and gave a greater vitality to Scottish literature than to English, in the intermediate period preceding the English Renascence, was not maintained. While English poetry was reviving under Wyatt and Surrey and Gascoigne, Scotland did little except produce a crop of satirical verse nourished more or less by the Reformation, with a rough, not wholly unattractive tang to it, but little artistic beauty. Following this there are two names of some note, contemporary with Sidney and Spenser—ALEXANDER SCOTT and ALEXANDER MONTGOMERIE.

Of Scott we know little as a man. He seems to have been unhappy both in his domestic relations, and in his endeavours to make a competency. His work is heterogeneous. Pious and satirical verse jostle with amorous ditties, in a manner characteristic of his time. Probably his love ditties show him in his most attractive manner: these are pleasantly written, showing sincerity and feeling.

Scott's contemporary, Alexander Montgomerie, strikes a stronger and more personal note. He was known as Captain Montgomerie, and served the Regent Morton at one time. His most considerable work is *The Cherrie and the Slae* (Sloe), an allegory presumably, dealing with the merits of the sweet fruit that grows on high out of reach, and the sloe, small and insignificant beneath it. Familiar abstractions appear: Hope, Reason, Experience, &c., with a running commentary of their own. There are some agreeable passages of description and a few flashes of humour, and the whole poem is written in a curious metre that became popular and evoked many imitations.

Besides this poem, Montgomerie wrote nearly a hundred sonnets, respectable in quality, but not equal to the best work of the Elizabethan sonneteers; some devotional pieces, and some ribald matter; a burlesque, *Navigation*, and a few love ditties. His work, on the whole, is more varied and more distinctive than Scott's.

Born about 1550, he died in the early years of the seventeenth century.

Sir ROBERT AYTON (1570–1638), born in Fife, was knighted by James I, and played a prominent part in the Court politics of the time. He was a scholar, and wrote in many languages, and it is noteworthy that there is no trace of Scots dialect in his English verse; which shows a sharp cleavage with the older Scots school of verse.

This cleavage is even more marked in the EARL OF STIRLING (*c.* 1580–1640), whose lyric work, the *Aurora* collection, is strictly in line with the Elizabethan song writers, so far as treatment is concerned, though inferior to the best of these. He wrote also tragedies: *Croesus*, *Darius*, *Alexander*, *Julius Cæsar*, dignified and meritorious in many ways, and the *Exhortation to Prince Henry*, somewhat in the vein of Drayton, and held by some to be his best work.

In quality, however, he is easily surpassed by his friend, DRUMMOND OF HAWTHORNDEN (1585–1649). He was cultured and accomplished; and his sonnets, lyrics, elegies, characteristically Jacobean in the school of Donne, display many beauties and felicities.

> "Doth then the world go thus, doth all thus move?
> Is this the justice which on Earth we find?
> Is this that firm decree which all doth bind?
> Are these your influences, Powers above?
> Those souls which vice's moody mists most blind,
> Blind Fortune, blindly, most their friend doth prove;
> And they who thee, poor idol Virtue! love,
> Fly like a feather toss'd by storm and wind.
> Ah! if a Providence doth sway this all,
> Why should best minds groan under most distress?
> Or why should pride humility make thrall,
> And injuries the innocent oppress?
>
> Heavens! hinder, stop this fate; or grant a time
> When good may have, as well as bad, their prime!"

Turning to the prose of this period, we recognise in it singularly little of first-class importance. Previous to Knox and Buchanan, there is only the anonymous *Complaint of Scotland* (1549), stiff and archaic in form, with little to commend beyond its isolated position, and its virulent attack on England.

JOHN KNOX, of course, was a great personality in his way, but as a man of letters he is not considerable. A vigorous, truculent writer, his aim is religious and moral, and his *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment (government) of Women* (1558) is more remarkable for its quaint title and uncompromising point of view, than for any literary interest.

His contemporary, GEORGE BUCHANAN, has more claim upon the student of letters. For part of his life he lived in France, concerned in schoolmastering, among his pupils being Montaigne. Most of his work was written in Latin, and his English prose, at times suggesting an analogy with Ascham though less clear and straightforward, is vigorous and polemical in trend.

JAMES I has some claim as a writer of clear, forcible prose, with his *Counterblast to Tobacco*, and the *Basilicon Doron*; but the most distinguished name is that of Sir THOMAS URQUHART, Knight of Cromarty (1611–1660), a notable Royalist whose style has many of the interesting characteristics of Elizabethan prose, salted with national idiosyncrasies. He gave us a translation of Rabelais, and

some extraordinary works on scientific and literary subjects.

In approaching ALLAN RAMSAY, we meet the pioneer in Scotland of that movement towards naturalism and passion in poetry that culminated in the Romantic Revival, finding in Burns its greatest exponent across the Border, and some half dozen great names in English literature further south.

Apprenticed to a wigmaker in Edinburgh, Ramsay came across Watson's choice selection of Scottish lyrical verse, and they affected him much as the old ballad had affected Sir Philip Sidney.

Stirred up to write himself, he starts in a vein that is mostly satirical, and even when pathetic is more whimsical than sentimental. Dealing almost entirely with low life, he gives us a vigorous, realistic picture of Edinburgh types in the eighteenth century.

In addition to his lighter pieces, there is his pastoral drama *The Gentle Shepherd*, where he presents a picture of rustic life, somewhat conventionalised, it is true to suit the requirements of the day, yet with a certain freshness and naturalness, and a pleasant humour, that give it distinction. He did a good deal of work in the matter of resetting old songs, but he was far happier in the lighter moods than in the sentimental. Yet his English lyrics enjoyed a fair popularity, and despite the commonplace character of much of his writing, his undoubted interest in Scots vernacular literature, and his zeal in popularising it, did a good deal to prepare the way for Burns.

A SONG

My Peggy is a young thing,
Just entered in her teens,
Fair as the day, and sweet as May,
Fair as the day, and always gay.
My Peggy is a young thing,
And I'm not very auld,
Yet well I like to meet her at
The wauking of the fauld.

My Peggy speaks sae sweetly,
Whene'er we meet alane,
I wish nae mair to lay my care,—
I wish nae mair of a' that's rare
My Peggy speaks sae sweetly,
To a' the lave I'm cauld;
But she gars a' my spirits glow
At the wauking of the fauld.

My Peggy smiles sae kindly,
Whene'er I whisper love,
That I look down on a' the town
That I look down upon a crown.
My Peggy smiles sae kindly,
It makes me blithe and bauld;
And nacthing gie's me sic delight
As wauking of the fauld.

My Peggy sings sae saftly,
When on my pipe I play,
By a' the rest it is confest,—
By a' the rest, that she sings best.
My Peggy sings sae saftly,
And in her songs are tauld,
With innocence, the wale o' sense,
At wauking of the fauld.[1]

Among other predecessors of Burns are WILLIAM HAMILTON of Bangour, with his happily rhythmic *Braes of Yarrow* ("Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny bride"), 1724; GEORGE HALKET, an Aberdeen schoolmaster and a Jacobite ballad writer; the effective song writers ALEXANDER ROSS and JOHN SKINNER of "Tullochgorum" fame. Of this gay effusion indeed, Burns has said it was "the best Scots song Scotland ever saw." Another Jacobite singer is ALEXANDER GEDDES, a man of considerable accomplishment, who showed his scholarship in his translation of Theocritus and Virgil and his humorous insight into rustic life, in his *Wee Wifukie*.

Many eighteenth-century Scottish songs familiar to the modern reader, are either anonymous or of doubtful authorship.

There is nae Luck about the Hoose, for instance, appeared about 1771. Its authorship is uncertain, though James Beattie added two verses to the original; but *I had a Hoose and I had nae man, Ettrick Banks, Here awa' there awa', O'er the Moor among the Heather*, are songs whose paternity has never been determined. Lady ANNE BARNARD (1750–1825) wrote *Auld Robin Gray*, while the ill-fated figure of ROBERT FERGUSSON (1750–74) is perhaps the most interesting personality, after Ramsay, in the period before Burns. His gift as a writer of vernacular verse was shown in his fifteenth year, while a student at St. Andrews; and during his brief life he distinguished himself as a poet of urban life, especially the rough urban life and primitive jollities of Edinburgh towards the end of the eighteenth century.

These things are exhibited with humour and whimsical charm in *Auld Reekie, Wale of ilka Town, Leith Races, Hallow Fair*. His few experiments in rural subjects are equally happy, such as *To the Bee*, and the sketch of a winter's night in a farm kitchen, entitled *The Farmer's Ingle*. At the age of twenty-four he died in a madhouse, but in his slender output, he had already shown more imaginative promise and artistic excellence than any of his predecessors, though his work was necessarily less varied and extensive than Ramsay's.

DEVELOPMENT OF PHILOSOPHIC THOUGHT IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Thomas Hobbes; John Locke; George Berkeley; David Hume; Thomas Reid; Joseph Butler.

THOMAS HOBBES (1588–1679)

HIS LIFE

"TERROR and I," says Hobbes, "were born twins." This is a witty allusion not merely to his own timidity but also to the circumstances under which he entered the world. On April 5, 1588, Mrs. Hobbes, the wife of a Malmesbury clergyman, alarmed by the rumours of the Spanish Armada,

[1] *The Gentle Shepherd*.

gave premature birth to a boy who received the somewhat appropriate name of Thomas. Shortly after this event, his father, a passionate man, struck a fellow-parson at the church door, and sought safety in flight. Brought up by an uncle, Hobbes entered Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1603, but apparently gained little from the university, where mediæval traditions still lingered, and where geometry —according to his own account—was neglected as a black art. He became, however, skilled in snaring jackdaws and "tooke great delight to goe to the book-binders' shops and lie guping on mappes." In 1608 he was appointed tutor to the son of the Earl of Cavendish, and for the next twenty years remained with the young lord as friend and companion; for Hobbes was both facetious and obliging—even to the extent of borrowing money for his aristocratic pupil. During this period of his life he devoted his leisure mainly to the classics, but in 1628 his interests were revolutionised. His patron dying in the June of that year, Hobbes obtained another scholastic post and left for the Continent with his new charge. It was whilst they were in Paris that the following memorable incident occurred. "Being in a Gentleman's library," says Aubrey, "Euclid's elements lay open and 'twas the 47th El libri I. He (Hobbes) read the proposition. 'By God,' sayd he, 'this is impossible.'" Further study correcting this conclusion, he became "in love with geometry."

Returning to England in 1631, he began to apply his newly acquired mathematics to philosophy, and by 1640 some of his theories were published in manuscript form. Apprehensive, however, as to how the Long Parliament would view the political opinions expressed, he retired to Paris, where he remained seven years. Here he wrote the *Leviathan*. In this famous book, which appeared in 1651, his hostility to the Catholic Church was sufficiently explicit to make England a more desirable home. Crossing the Channel for the last time, he made his peace with the political authorities and completed his system of philosophy with a work containing his first principles; it was published in 1656 under the title of *De Corpore*.

Hobbes' closing years were filled with controversies—mathematical and theological. He was charged with atheism; and at one time Parliament threatened to take the matter up. The philosopher, alarmed for his safety, protested that the law did not allow his being burnt for heresy. The Bill of inquiry, however, was dropped—probably owing to Court influence. For the King was well disposed towards the old man whose pupil he had been for a short time, when as Prince of Wales he was living an exile in Paris. Moreover, Charles was highly diverted by the contests of wit between his courtiers and the philosopher, whose appearance at Court he hailed with the remark, "Here comes the bear to be baited."

Mentally active to the last, Hobbes rounded off his long life with an autobiography in Latin verse. He died in the August of 1679, relieved at last "to find a hole to creep out of the world at."

His Philosophy

All philosophers have of necessity systematic minds, but Hobbes possessed the sense of order in a marked degree. He was therefore not content with any general explanation of the universe, he wished to go further and show how everything conformed to his theory. From his first principle he believed it was possible for him to deduce both the physical world and the behaviour of men with all the certainty of a demonstration in Euclid. So firmly was he imbued with the method of geometry. What was the starting point of this great undertaking? It was the materialistic doctrine that the universe is composed of atoms—or to use Hobbes' word, bodies —possessing the property of motion. The corporeal dance has produced the world in which we live, and the results could not possibly be other than what they are, because all the movements are regulated by certain unchanging laws, the whole course of events linked by a chain of cause and effect from which chance and Divine interference are alike excluded. In other words, the universe is a huge and ever-developing mechanism, and we are only hindered by our mental capacity from forecasting its future. If this account is correct, it will be obviously necessary to reduce mind, somehow or other, to terms of matter. This is precisely what Hobbes does. All mental operations, he says, are only "motion and agitation of the brain." The objection that consciousness appears to be something entirely different from motion does not weigh with him. Because, in the first place, if the difference *was* real it would contradict one of his most fundamental beliefs, namely, that everything which exists is material, and secondly, he is convinced that the testimony of consciousness is, in itself, unreliable. It is constantly deceiving us, he says, in our dreams, for example, or when external agencies such as mirrors or physical injuries produce hallucinations. Moreover, he points out that smell or taste of a particular object varies with different persons. In short, our ideas are nothing more than phantasms.

Consequently, in Hobbes' psychology, there is some attempt to translate mental phenomena into the language of physics. Desire and aversion, for instance, are regarded as physical attraction and repulsion respectively. But he speedily abandons this naïve undertaking, though still believing in the soundness of the theory which prompted it. When considering the ethical and political conduct of men he wisely refrains from endeavouring to explain it as the results of bodily movements, and adopts instead the more fruitful method of psychological analysis. This part of his system he calls civil, as distinguished from natural, philosophy. The root idea of Hobbes' political and ethical theories is that man is a purely selfish animal, invariably pursuing his own personal good, irrespective of the interests of others. When we act benevolently it is either in the hope of receiving some benefit in return, or because it gratifies our sense of self-importance. Again, the feeling of pity is equally egoistical; it is simply fear for our own well-being. The misfortunes of other people conjure up similar calamities likely to befall our-

selves in the future. But in a society where the members are bent on their own aggrandisement, there will be an inevitable conflict of interests. Now it is to prevent this system of cut-throat competition that government exists. In a "state of nature," says Hobbes, there is universal war. Force and fraud are the only two methods which an individual adopts to realise his aims. Consequently, "the life of man is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short." But as men become more rational it is seen that this violence defeats its own ends and that a more effectual way to secure one's own good is to respect the good of others. Reason itself, however, is not of sufficient strength to effect this change of policy. It is, therefore, necessary for men "to confer all their power and strength upon one man or upon an assembly of men . . ." This "Mortal God" or Leviathan preserves peace by issuing commands or laws and inflicting penalties upon those who disobey them. It is not perfectly clear whether or no Hobbes intended this mutual agreement—or social contract as it is called—to be regarded as historically true; he certainly admits that government can arise in other ways, namely, by conquest or by extension of the family principle. In any case his main point seems to be that the central authority, however it originated, is obeyed from motives of self-interest, that is to say, either from fear of punishment or from dread of anarchy. Another feature of Hobbes' political philosophy is his contention that if government is to justify its existence by maintaining the peace, it must possess undivided authority—a point not fully realised by his contemporaries. The sovereignty of England, for example, must not be shared by King and Parliament, it must be vested in one or the other. Personally he favoured a despotism, though he appears to have recognised that a democracy was logically compatible with his theory of sovereignty.

Hobbes' great work, the *Leviathan*, is informed with a vigorous imagination that imparts to it agreeable literary qualifications; moreover, it exhibits a striking logical power. We must dispute his premises as to the selfish and undisciplined character of human nature, unbridled, if we wish to join issue with him. For granting these, there is little to find fault with in his deductions. Moreover, his method is admirable. Keeping his central idea always in view, he illustrates his point with a clarity, force, and economy of words that compel our admiration for the writer, however we may feel towards the philosopher; and his influence on the fine prose writers of the succeeding era must have been considerable.

Originality of thought is by no means synonymous with clarity of expression; nor greatness of intellect with distinction of style.

The remarkable contribution to thought and speculation, therefore, made by the great philosophers of the eighteenth century, Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, are the more memorable inasmuch as they were contributions to literature no less than to philosophy.

The distinctive character of Hobbes' literary style is its lucidity, terseness, and pungency. Comparing it with that of his great predecessor, Bacon, we feel how entirely suitable each man's literary method was for the work it had to do. Bacon was essentially a pioneer: he had to stimulate the imagination, to compel the attention, to extol a way of research. His rich allusiveness, his striking imagery, his aphoristic resonance, is peculiarly adapted for his purpose. The barer, sharper style of Hobbes is quite as efficient in its own way. His work was more provocative, more challenging than that of Bacon; and it was to his advantage that he was less of a scholar.

"He had read much," Aubrey tells us, "if one considers his long life, but his contemplation was much more than his reading. He was wont to say, that if he had read as much as other men, he should have continued still as ignorant as other men. The manner of writing (*Leviathan*) was thus. He walked much and contemplated, and he had in the head of his cane a pen and inkhorn, carried always a note-book in his pocket, and as soon as the thought darted, he presently entered it into his book, or otherwise might have lost it."

In conclusion, Hobbes has a twofold claim on our gratitude. He rendered a real service to ethical thought, though not precisely in the way he anticipated, by indirectly *disproving* the doctrine of the absolute selfishness of mankind. For a fallacy can never be refuted until it is succinctly formulated. But there is another and more positive distinction attaching to his name. He aimed a blow at ignorance and superstition by insisting that all physical phenomena must be explained by natural causes. In other words, he maintained with clearness and vigour a principle which is the foundation of all modern science.

LEVIATHAN

A Commonwealth is said to be instituted when a multitude of men do agree and covenant, every one with every one, that to whatsoever man or assembly of men shall be given by the major part, the right to present the person of them all (that is to say, be their representative); every one, as well he that voted for it as he that voted against it, shall authorise all the actions and judgments of that man or assembly of men in the same manner as if they were his own, to the end to live peaceably amongst themselves and be protected against other men. From this institution of a Commonwealth are derived all the rights and faculties of him or them on whom the sovereign power is conferred by the consent of the people assembled.

First, because they covenant it is to be understood they are not obliged by former covenant to anything repugnant hereunto. And consequently they that have already instituted a commonwealth, being thereby bound by covenant to own the actions and judgments of one, cannot lawfully make a new covenant amongst themselves, to be obedient to any other, in anything whatsoever, without his permission. And, therefore, they that are subjects to a monarch, cannot without his leave cast off monarchy and return to the confusion of a disunited multitude, nor transfer their person from him that beareth it to another man or other assembly of men: for they are bound, every man to every man, to own and be reputed author of all that he that already is their sovereign shall do and judge fit to be done; so that any man dissenting all the rest should break their covenant made to that man; and they have also every man given the sovereignty to him that beareth their person, and therefore if they dispose him they take from him that which is his own, and so again it is injustice.

JOHN LOCKE (1632–1704)

There is no figure more typical of the general drift of thought in the eighteenth century than John

Locke. Hobbes' philosophy has a bolder breadth, but its sweeping comprehensiveness makes it to some extent alien to the tentative, practical, and compromising spirit of the age of Dryden and Johnson.

Berkeley's speculative brilliance anticipates to some extent the idealising tendency of the Romantic movement. Hume amplified and carried still further Locke's system of thought; but his very subtlety and remorseless logic, though characteristic of certain sides of eighteenth-century thought, were less typical than Locke's of this thought as a whole. A spirit of free inquiry, tempered by a love of compromise, toleration in religious matters save when matters of State suggested otherwise, practical common-sense as a guide in life;—in all these things there is no abler spokesman than Locke.

His Life

In the summer of 1632, John Locke's mother was visiting relatives at Wrington, a village in Somersetshire, and it was here, on August 29, that the philosopher was born; but his boyhood was spent at his home in Pensford, a few miles distant, where he was brought up by his father, an attorney and "man of parts," on somewhat puritanical lines. In 1646 he entered Westminster School, then controlled by Dr. Busby, of birching notoriety; and six years later gained a studentship at Christ Church, Oxford. Here, as elsewhere, the Puritan authorities were in the ascendant, and they not only required an account of the Sunday's discourse from the undergraduates but also provided them with one or two more sermons during the week. It is therefore hardly surprising that the young man "spent a good part of his first year . . . in reading romances," more especially as, like Hobbes, he greatly disliked the educational methods of the University. With characteristic independence he refused to take lecture notes "deferentially," for which act of revolt he was described by a horrified contemporary as "a man of turbulent spirit, clamorous and discontented." Nevertheless, Locke seems to have been an industrious, if somewhat unorthodox worker; and in 1659 he was elected to a life studentship at his college. The next eight years were filled with great intellectual activity. His philosophical interests were aroused by reading Descartes, but they by no means monopolised his attention; he lectured on Greek and Rhetoric and studied medicine. This branch of scientific knowledge appealed to his concrete mind, and its acquisition proved of service both to his friends and himself, for he was constitutionally delicate, always suffering from asthma and in later years from a chronic form of consumption. But Locke was not to remain in scholarly seclusion. In 1666 Lord Ashley, afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury, coming to drink the waters at Oxford, made his acquaintance through a chance meeting, and was so favourably impressed that the following year saw Locke an inmate of the Earl's household in the Strand. His versatility speedily justified the compliment paid him. He saved his patron's life by a difficult operation, and became his confidential adviser. Moreover, he found a wife for his lordship's son, which was possibly not the least difficult undertaking, seeing that the prospective bridegroom was "a shapeless lump." But there were greater anxieties to come: for the political intrigues in which Shaftesbury subsequently engaged rendered the philosopher—though unjustly—an object of suspicion. However, he disappointed his enemies by leading "a very cunning, unintelligible life," and by way of rendering his safety more secure crossed over to Holland in 1683, where he remained until the accession of William III. Here, save for one attempt at capture, the English Government left him unmolested, and contented itself with depriving him of his studentship. Locke was thus left free to complete his famous *Essay on the Human Understanding*, which was begun, so he tells us, in the belief that one sheet of paper would contain all his thoughts on the subject. Apparently the anticipation was ill-founded, as the work extends over one thousand pages. The *Essay* was published together with his *Treatise of Governments* in 1690, following the first *Letter on Toleration*, which had appeared for the first time in English during the previous year. Perhaps the happiest period of Locke's life was spent with his friends Sir Francis and Lady Masham, in their rural home at Oates in Essex, where he installed himself in 1691. Henceforward he only braved the "pestilent smoke" of London when his duties as Commissioner of Appeals made it necessary for him to do so. In this peaceful retreat the old man not only answered various criticisms on the *Essay* but wrote in addition his celebrated *Treatise on Education*, and the *Reasonableness of Christianity*. In 1704 he surmised that "the dissolution of the cottage was not far off"; it came on October 28. His practical and kindly nature is well illustrated in his will, which directed an inexpensive funeral in order that the money saved might benefit the poor of the parish.

His Philosophy

By his friends we are told Locke was termed "Doctor" on account of his medical attainments. But the title possessed a greater significance than was intended, for he was a physician not only of the body but also of the mind. Locke was profoundly convinced that the mediæval intellect had wasted much of its substance in fruitless speculations concerning the universe. Locke struck out a new pathway in philosophy. Bacon had pointed out the natural defects of human intelligence in the study of phenomena, and sought to amend these by bettering the method. Locke improved on this by a searching study of man's intellect in order to determine the truth and certainty of knowledge, and this theorising about knowledge and the grounds of belief upon which we hold our opinions, came to be known as epistemology. Before we make so many guesses about things, said Locke in effect, let us take stock of our thinking apparatus and appraise its value. The *Essay concerning Human Understanding* is therefore an attempt to save man from this disease of verbiage by showing that the capacity of the human mind is limited.

But before Locke can determine the precise *extent* of our real knowledge there is a preliminary consideration to be faced. It is necessary to discover the *source* or sources from which it is derived. Now he argues that the basis of our knowledge lies in experience; without it the mind is like a blank sheet of paper. Further, this experience may be divided according to the two channels through which it comes. Our senses provide one medium, therefore Locke proposes calling their various contents Ideas of Sensation. Upon the material thus presented the mind operates by perceiving, remembering, comparing, and so on. These mental processes may be termed Ideas of Reflection, since they are obtained by the mind reflecting on its own activities.

But what is the nature of the experience derived in this twofold manner? Does it give us ideas which represent, either directly or indirectly, things that actually exist? Locke replies in the affirmative. In the first place we are certain of our own existence, because even the very act of doubting this fact implies, as Descartes had pointed out, someone who doubts. Again, the reality of God is also an assured fact, since conscious selves necessitate the existence of a First Cause that is capable of bringing them into being. Nor does Locke question the reality of material objects, for he notices that there is an element of compulsion in our sense experiences; they are forced upon us whether we will or no. He concludes, therefore, that their cause must be referred to external substances. These material bodies possess in themselves certain essential qualities—extension, motion, solidity, figure, number—which produce in us ideas that exactly represent them; and they have in addition the power of giving rise to various ideas like those of colour, taste, smell, which however exist only in the mind, and have no corresponding qualities in the objects from which they are derived.

Having attempted by these arguments to show that the knowledge gained from experience deals with concrete realities, Locke has now to determine the extent of our knowledge concerning them. With regard to spiritual beings the limitations he apparently thinks are fairly obvious, since we are ignorant of all spirits save of those that dwell in our own bodies and of God their supreme Cause. About the physical world there is also a wide field for conjecture. Here, according to Locke, our knowledge is confined to individual objects because it is beyond our powers to discover a necessary connection between their primary, or inherent, and secondary, or derived, qualities. "We are so far from knowing *what* particular figure, size, or motion of parts produces a yellow colour, or sweet taste or sharp sound, that we can by no means conceive how *any* size, figure, or motion of any particles can possibly produce in us the idea of any colour, taste, or sound whatsoever." Seeing therefore that we cannot discover the precise nature of sense objects, such knowledge as we possess must be restricted to our present experiences and memories of them. Consequently our predictions of their future existence and behaviour are concerned only with probabilities, not with certainties. In other words, we can never attain knowledge of the material world which is universally true.

The result of Locke's inquiry, then, is to show that "our minds are not made as large as truth, nor suited to the whole extent of things." Nevertheless these limitations, considerable though they are, in no wise prevent our attaining happiness both here and hereafter. It is possible to gain sufficient knowledge of nature by experimental means to ensure our comfort in this life, and we are assured also of a God who will reward us with immortality for the goodness of conduct on earth. The knowledge of this future existence and its dependence on right-doing Locke derives from Christianity; and we are to believe these revelations on account of their moral reasonableness, which is heightened by the miraculous and well-attested manifestations with which they are accompanied.

Now it is important that the individual should be given freedom to pursue these mundane and celestial forms of happiness. His spiritual life ought not to be embarrassed by his being compelled to accept theological subtleties, for they do not contain the essentials of Christianity, which, as already suggested, are very simple and possess unmistakable rationality. Accordingly Locke would have the English Government abstain from interfering in matters of religion and extend toleration to all forms of opinion, save Roman Catholicism and Atheism, both of which are inimical to civil society. Nor must the material welfare of the members of the community be hindered by the State, since Government only exists for the good of the governed. Consequently, if any particular form of political authority misuses its functions, the people, through the majority of their representatives, have a right to exchange it for one more suitable. Locke attempts to vindicate this view, which provides a justification for the Revolution of 1688, by appealing, like Hobbes, to a social contract. But his conception of the nature of the contract differs from that of his predecessor in an important manner—the powers of the individual are surrendered not to a ruling body consisting of a person or persons, as in Hobbes' account, but to the community. Therefore such power as the Government possesses is partial only and may be revoked.

With Hobbes, Locke agrees that every man gives up his actual power to the state; yet he does not surrender it unconditionally, argues Locke, but for certain specific purposes. He gives up his liberty to an extent for the sake of a few privileges. Examining Hobbes' absolute monarchy, Locke sees here no civil society at all, no common judge with authority. Such an one has no right to impose his will on all, for the ultimate source of power must as a practical necessity be in the will of a majority. The community, in short, is like a joint stock company, established for the mutual preservation of their lives, liberties, and estates.

Locke's influence on the course of thought, both English and Continental, has been far-reaching. But his advocacy of religious toleration and of civil liberty, valuable as it was, is not his most distinctive contribution. What we peculiarly associate

with his name is his empirical teaching—though he was not altogether consistent in this respect. It is this feature of his writings which has provoked perhaps the most important of all philosophical controversies, in raising the question as to whether or no we can penetrate the secrets of the universe by a method other than experience, and one which transcends it.

On the Human Understanding

Since therefore it is unavoidable to the greatest part of men, if not all, to have several opinions, without certain and indubitable proofs of their truths; and it carries too great an imputation of ignorance, lightness, or folly, for men to quit and renounce their former tenets presently upon the offer of an argument which they cannot immediately answer and show the insufficiency of; it would, methinks, become all men to maintain peace and the common offices of humanity and friendship in the diversity of opinions, since we cannot reasonably expect that any one should readily and obsequiously quit his own opinion, and embrace ours with a blind resignation to an authority which the understanding of man acknowledges not. For, however it may often mistake, it can own no other guide but reason, nor blindly submit to the will and dictates of another. If he you would bring over to your sentiments be one that examines before he assents, you must give him leave at his leisure to go over the account again, and recalling what is out of his mind examine the particulars, to see on which side the advantage lies; and if he will not think our arguments of weight enough to engage him anew in so much pains, it is but what we do often ourselves in the like case; and we should take it amiss if others should prescribe to us what points we should study; and if he be one who takes his opinion upon trust, how can we imagine that he should renounce those tenets which time and custom have so settled in his own mind that he thinks them self-evident, and of an unquestionable certainty; or which he takes to be impressions he has received from God himself, or from men sent by Him? How can we expect, I say, that opinions thus settled should be given up to the arguments or authority of a stranger or adversary? especially if there be any suspicion of interest or design, as there never fails to be where men find themselves ill-treated. We should do well to commiserate our mutual ignorance, and endeavour to remove it in all the gentle and fair ways of information, and not instantly treat others ill as obstinate and perverse because they will not renounce their own and receive our opinions, or at least those we would force upon them, when it is more than probable that we are no less obstinate in not embracing some of theirs. For where is the man that has incontestable evidence of the truth of all that he holds, or of the falsehood of all he condemns; or can say, that he has examined to the bottom all his own or other men's opinions? The necessity of believing without knowledge, nay, often upon very slight grounds, in this fleeting state of action and blindness we are in, should make us more busy and careful to inform ourselves than to constrain others. At least, those who have not thoroughly examined to the bottom of all their own tenets, must confess they are unfit to prescribe to others, and are unreasonable in imposing that as truth on other men's belief which they themselves have not searched into, nor weighed the arguments of probability on which they should receive or reject it. Those who have fairly and truly examined and are thereby got past doubt in all the doctrines they profess and govern themselves by, would have a juster pretence to require others to follow them: but these are so few in number, and find so little reason to be magisterial in their opinions, that nothing insolent and imperious is to be expected from them; and there is reason to think, that if men were better instructed themselves, they would be less imposing on others.

GEORGE BERKELEY (1685–1753)

His Life

Little is known of George Berkeley's parentage save that his father came of an English stock and that his mother was "probably" Irish. He himself was born on March 12, 1685, in the neighbourhood of Kilkenny, and after four years' schooling in that city passed on to Trinity College, Dublin, at the age of fifteen. A story told of him during his undergraduate days aptly illustrates his courage and enthusiasm.

In company with Contarine—Oliver Goldsmith's benevolent uncle—and a college companion, he had been to witness an execution; on their return Berkeley insisted upon his friends suspending him from the ceiling in order that he might experience the sensations of hanging. They gratified his curiosity with unpleasant thoroughness, for he was cut down only to collapse on the floor. On regaining consciousness the youthful experimenter unexpectedly exclaimed: "Bless my heart, Contarine, you have rumpled my band!"

Saved to the world, Berkeley prosecuted his studies on less adventurous lines and became tutor of his college at the early age of twenty-two. But though revelling in "delightful" mathematics and lecturing on Greek, his lifelong interest was already asserting itself; quickened, no doubt, by Locke's *Essay*, which had obtained immediate recognition in Dublin University.

In 1709 his precocious intellect began to unburden itself in an *Essay towards a New Theory of Vision*, and in the year following appeared the *Principles of Human Knowledge*, which contains his famous denial of the existence of matter. Needless to say, this doctrine did not escape the ridicule that Berkeley anticipated for it; and a certain doctor went so far as to declare that the author required medical treatment.

In the *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*, Berkeley endeavoured to meet various philosophic objections to his theory, and it was partly in connection with the publication of this work that he came to London in 1713. Here his personality and ability speedily gained him an introduction to that brilliant literary circle which distinguished the close of Queen Anne's reign. We find him breakfasting with Swift and dining with Steele; Addison entertained him at the first night of *Cato*, while Pope presented him with a copy of his poem on *Windsor Forest*, declaring that there had been given "to Berkeley every virtue under heaven." A still wider experience awaited Berkeley in the two Italian tours which occupied the greater part of the next few years.

Returning to Ireland in 1721, he, three years later, obtained the Deanery of Derry, which brought with it £1100 a year. But the philosopher was not content to enjoy his good fortune. He now conceived the project of founding a college in Bermuda which was to spread Christianity and learning amongst the Indians of North America; and urged his cause with such persuasiveness and energy that he obtained the promise of a parliamentary grant. In the autumn of 1728 Berkeley sailed for Rhode

Island with his newly married wife. His expectations, however, were not realised; the Government proved faithless, and after nearly three years of waiting, the disappointed Social Idealist came back to England. But his American visit was not altogether unprofitable. In the seclusion of his beautiful home at Newport he prepared the most immediately successful of all his works—*Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher*—a polemic against the increasing scepticism of the day. Not long after his return in 1734 he was made Bishop of Cloyne, where he remained for the next eighteen years, pursuing his meditations and bringing up his family.

Berkeley had always possessed a great appreciation for certain forms of art. His *Journal*, written in Italy, and his correspondence, point to an innate appreciation of beauty both in Art and Nature; and this interest seems to have been shared by his children, for whom a certain Signor Pasquilino was engaged to teach them music. Evidently the philosopher had lost none of his fascinating qualities, for on one occasion we learn that the Italian, whose feelings outran his English, expressed the wish that God would "pickle" his employer.

The last enthusiasm of Berkeley's life was for nothing else than tar water. Its medicinal properties had been brought to his notice whilst abroad; and subsequent experiments induced the belief that he had discovered a veritable panacea. He accordingly set up works for its manufacture, with a view to dosing the whole neighbourhood. Moreover, his philosophic imagination became excited. "What," he asked, "is the ultimate source of those benefits, for which tar water is immediately responsible?" The result of his inquiries were embodied in *Siris, or the Chain*, a curious compound of medicine and metaphysics. It is here that we come across a phrase which Cowper often has the credit of originating, as when Berkeley refers to tar water as a beverage that "cheers but not inebriates."

Desiring to end his days in Oxford, he removed there in 1752, but did not long survive the change, dying suddenly in the January of the following year.

Quite apart from Berkeley's intellectual genius, his personality was a singularly charming and persuasive one, and few men with powers so brilliant as his, have been so modest and unaffected. Handsome in appearance, gracious and attractive in manner, fine-hearted in feeling, he was indeed an "Admirable Crichton" among *littérateurs*.

His Philosophy

What distinguishes Berkeley from his immediate predecessors in British Philosophy is the fact that his system of thought is more *exclusively* concerned with the fundamental problems of life. This is particularly noticeable when we compare Berkeley with Hobbes. The interests of the latter were geocentric; to put men on the path towards controlling nature for their own advantage and to give them a justification for a peaceable existence—these were the objects of his philosophy. Locke's standpoint, as we have seen, was less mundane, though even he devoted a considerable share of his philosophic powers to the "here" and "now." But in all his most important writings Berkeley confines his attention to problems which bear, either directly or indirectly, on the ultimate nature of the universe; he leaves out of account questions of politics and sociology. Not that he held aloof from the life of the day; his social projects and activities should disprove that charge, but he did not philosophise about it, save in a few instances. This characteristic of his work was due partly to the native subtlety of his intellect, which peculiarly fitted him for metaphysics, partly also to religious motives. For if his philosophy can be said to have had any aim other than truth for truth's sake, it was to confute sceptics and materialists.

Berkeley's system has a twofold aspect; it is at once destructive and constructive. The former claims priority on grounds both of temporal and logical sequence, for it not only chiefly engaged Berkeley's attention during the earlier years of his philosophic career, but it also provided him with a basis upon which his theory of ultimate reality is built. The critical side of his work is a refutation of the doctrine that such a thing as matter exists, and by "matter" he means a substance which is quite apart from mind—that is to say, capable of existing just the same even if there were no beings who perceived it. In positive language, Berkeley believes that it is mind which gives reality to so-called material objects; consequently, these things are only forms of consciousness—in a word, ideas. This position he has now to justify. Supposing we adopt the opposite theory and affirm that matter *does* exist, then our assertion must be based either on actual experience or on inference. To take the former alternative, is there any direct knowledge of its existence? On first thoughts it seems quite plausible to answer "yes." "There is the world of physical objects around us," it will be said, "which we perceive with our various senses, and surely all these things are not ideas?"

But it is just this conclusion which Berkeley denies, and he gives two reasons for his denial. In the first place, he argues that the tastes, colours, sounds, &c., which we have, exist only in the mind, for they vary not only with different people but even with the same individual. For instance, he points out that if you put both your hands, one of which is hot and the other cold, into water of an intermediary temperature, then the water will feel warm in the one case and cool in the other. But this would be an impossibility if heat and coldness were properties which belonged to the liquid itself. In this argument Berkeley is, of course, in agreement with Locke, but the last-named philosopher, it will be remembered, drew a distinction between what he called primary and secondary sense qualities. The former, which includes motion, form, and solidity, he thought were really possessed by the external world by reason of their stability. Berkeley, however, refuses to make this division, for he maintains that the primary qualities also fluctuate. Had he lived to-day he might have called attention to the fact that the landscape which appears stationary to people seated in their gardens seems to be in

rapid motion when viewed from the carriage window of an express train. And the same reasoning applies to form and solidity; it depends on the percipient, he would say, whether a thing is big or small, hard or soft. On the ground then of their variability, Berkeley deprives physical objects of the few remaining properties left them by Locke. But he seeks to strengthen the conclusion that the material things which we perceive exist in our minds by a further consideration. To apprehend the external world necessitates experience. But of what does this experience consist? It consists, answers Berkeley, of various kinds of ideas. A flower, for instance, is nothing more than a bundle of sensations of form, colour, smell, and so on, and any other object one likes to take will be found on reflection to be only a combination of different modes of consciousness. We now come to the second alternative.

Although, according to Berkeley, we cannot gain any direct knowledge of matter, is it not possible to infer its existence? He has argued, it is true, that our immediate sense experiences are mental in their character, but this does not exclude the cause of them being material; in other words, even if we allow the "physical" world to be ideal, the source which underlies it may have an existence independent of consciousness. To this supposition, Berkeley objects that "matter" possesses no powers of activity, and that therefore it is quite incapable of producing ideas or sensations in us. In the light of modern physics, it must be admitted that this line of reasoning is not very satisfactory, though it by no means follows that he could not have used an argument which would have been more conclusive.

There now remains for consideration the purely constructive aspects of Berkeley's philosophy, which must be outlined very briefly. Matter has been resolved into ideas, but in addition to these ideas, there is, says Berkeley, something quite distinct from them, a soul or spirit which perceives the objects of knowledge. Introspection, he believes, assures him of his own Being or Self; and the existence of other human spirits can be inferred. For I am directly responsible for certain sensations such as signify bodily movement, for example, and since I also possess similar ideas which are not dependent on my own agency, it is legitimate to argue that other spirits exist who are concerned in their production. But what or who is the cause of the perceptions that constitute the world of nature? Their existence is certainly not caused by my own Being, or by Beings like myself. But ideas cannot produce themselves, and the possibility of material causation has been excluded; they must, therefore, concludes Berkeley, have been created by an eternal spirit who impresses them on our minds. Now this spirit, he affirms, is possessed not only of infinite power but also of infinite goodness and wisdom, by reason of the beneficent character of sense-phenomena. The admission that "natural productions . . . are not all equally perfect" in no wise disturbs Berkeley's deduction, because apparently he believes that evil can be justified on the ground that it is a means to our future moral perfection.

In striking contrast with Locke, Berkeley founded no School of Philosophy. Only in comparatively recent years has his system in its entirety begun to attract attention, though some of his negative conclusions, as we shall see, were carried into the stream of philosophic thought through his immediate successor, Hume. Nevertheless, it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that Berkeley is one of the most subtle dialecticians our country has ever produced. Nor can any exponent of Materialism to-day afford to ignore some of his formidable arguments against that point of view.

Moreover, arresting and challenging as his philosophy is, it owes no little of its effectiveness to the fine literary style in which it is couched.

Clear and straightforward in his manner, he is never bald, and when need be can emphasize a subtle argument with literary grace and delicate irony. He has all the clarity of Hobbes, with the distinction and urbanity of Addison, and had his interests been in the direction of letters rather than of abstract thought, he would still have been one of the prominent figures of the time. As it is, he remains a model for all philosophic writers.

"This safe and cheap medicine (tar water), suits all circumstances and all constitutions, operating easily, curing without disturbing, raising the spirits without depressing them, a circumstance that deserves repeated attention, especially in these climates, where strong liquors so fatally and so frequently produce those very distresses they are designed to remedy; and, if I am not misinformed, even among the ladies themselves, who are truly much to be pitied. Their condition of life makes them a prey to imaginary woes, which never fail to grow up in minds unexercised and unemployed. To get rid of these, it is said, there are some who betake themselves to distilled spirits. And it is not improbable they are led gradually to the use of these poisons by a certain complaisant pharmacy, too much used in the modern practice, palsy drops, poppy cordial, plague water, and such like, which being in truth nothing but drams disguised, yet, coming from the apothecaries, are considered only as medicines.

"The soul of man was supposed by many ancient sages to be thrust into the human body as into a prison for punishment of past offences. But the worst prison is the body of an indolent epicure, whose blood is inflamed by fermented liquors and high sauces, or rendered putrid, sharp and corrosive, by a stagnation of the animal juices through sloth and indolence; whose membranes are irritated by pungent salts; whose mind is agitated by painful oscillations of the nervous system, and whose nerves are mutually affected by the irregular passions of his mind. This ferment in the animal economy darkens and confounds the intellect. It produceth vain terrors and vain conceits, and stimulates the soul with mad desires, which, not being natural, nothing in nature can satisfy. No wonder therefore there are so many fine persons of both sexes, shining themselves, and shone on by fortune, who are inwardly miserable and sick of life.

"The hardness of stubbed vulgar constitutions renders them insensible of a thousand things that fret and gall those delicate people, who, as if their skin was peeled off, feel to the quick everything that touches them. The remedy for this exquisite and painful sensibility is commonly sought from fermented, perhaps from distilled liquors, which render many lives wretched that would otherwise have been only ridiculous. The tender nerves and low spirits of such poor creatures would be much relieved by the use of tar water, which might prolong and cheer their lives. I do therefore

recommend to them the use of a cordial, not only safe and innocent, but giving health and spirits as surely as other cordials destroy them."[1]

Of the Principles of Human Knowledge

If we inquire into what the most accurate philosophers declare themselves to mean by *material substance*, we shall find them acknowledge they have no other meaning annexed to those sounds but the idea of Being in general, together with the relative notion of its supporting accidents. The general idea of Being appeareth to me the most abstract and incomprehensible of all other; and as for its supporting accidents, this, as we have just now observed, cannot be understood in the common sense of these words; it must therefore be taken in some other sense, but what that is they do not explain. So that when I consider the two parts or branches which make the signification of the words material substance, I am convinced there is no distinct meaning annexed to them. But why should we trouble ourselves any farther, in discussing this material *substratum* or support of figure and motion, and other sensible qualities? Does it not suppose they have an existence without the mind? and is not this a direct repugnancy, and altogether inconceivable?

But though it were possible that stalid, figured, moveable substances may exist without the mind, corresponding to the ideas we have of bodies, yet how is it possible for us to know this? Either we must know it by sense or by reason. As for our senses, by them we have the knowledge only of our sensations, ideas, or those things that are immediately perceived by senses, call them what you will: but they do not inform us that things exist without the mind, or unperceived, like to those which are perceived. This the materialists themselves acknowledge. It remains therefore that if we have any knowledge at all of external things, it must be by reason, inferring their existence from what is immediately perceived by sense. But what reason can induce us to believe the existence of bodies without the mind, from what we perceive, since the very patrons of Matter themselves do not pretend there is any necessary connection betwixt them and our ideas? I say it is granted on all hands, and what happens in dreams, frenzies, and the like, puts it beyond dispute, that it is possible we might be affected with all the ideas we have now, though there were no bodies existing without resembling them. Hence, it is evident the supposition of external bodies is not necessary for the producing of our ideas; since it is granted they are produced sometimes, and might possibly be produced always in the same order we see them in at present, without their concurrence. But, though we might possibly have all our sensations without them, yet perhaps it may be thought easier to conceive and explain the manner of their production, by supposing external bodies in their likeness rather than otherwise; and so it might be at least probable there are such things as bodies that excite their ideas in our minds. But neither can this be said; for, though we give the materialists their external bodies, they by their own confession are never the nearer knowing how our ideas are produced; since they own themselves unable to comprehend in what manner body can act upon spirit, or how it is possible it should imprint any idea in the mind. Hence it is evident the production of ideas or sensations in our minds, can be no reason why we should suppose Matter or corporeal substances, since that is acknowledged to remain equally inexplicable with or without this supposition. If therefore it were possible for bodies to exist without the mind, yet to hold they do so, must needs be a very precarious opinion; since it is to suppose, without any reason at all, that God has created innumerable beings that are entirely useless, and serve to no manner of purpose.

In short, if there were external bodies, it is impossible we should ever come to know it; and if there were not, we might have the very same reasons to think there were that we have now. Suppose—what no one can deny possible—an intelligence without the help of external bodies, to be affected with the same train of sensations or ideas that you are, imprinted in the same order and with like vividness in his mind. I ask whether that intelligence hath not all the reason to believe the existence of corporeal substances, represented by his ideas, and exciting them in his mind, that you can possibly have for believing the same thing? Of this there can be no question—which one consideration were enough to make any reasonable person suspect the strength of whatever arguments he may think himself to have, for the existence of bodies without the mind.

[1] *Siris, a Chain of Philosophical Reflections and Inquiries concerning the Virtue of Tar water, &c.*

DAVID HUME (1711–1776)

His Life

"Our Davie's a fine, good-natured crater, but uncommon wake-minded"; in these not over-complimentary terms Mrs. Hume is said to have described her younger son. The maternal estimate, however, has been accepted with reservation. Good-natured Hume certainly was, but his "wake-mindedness" the world has yet to discover.

Coming of a good stock, he was born in Edinburgh on the 26th of April 1711, though the modest family estate of Ninewells lay in Berwickshire, close to the Border. His father died in Hume's infancy, but his mother, with whom he had no little in common, survived to 1748. Our knowledge concerning his education is meagre, but he seems to have been a remarkable lad, judging from a letter written to a friend when but sixteen years of age. He gravely informs his correspondent that his "peace of mind is not sufficiently confirmed by philosophy to withstand the blows of fortune. This greatness and elevation of soul is to be found only in study and contemplation—this alone can teach us to look down on human accidents." An attempt to apply himself to law was unsuccessful, for he was already cherishing literary ambitions. The next few years were occupied in study, but his spirits becoming oppressed he determined on a change of life, and in 1734 entered a merchant's office at Bristol. The experiment, however, was a short one, and abandoning commerce Hume proceeded to France; in the quietude of La Flèche, where Descartes had received his education, he composed the celebrated *Treatise on Human Nature*—an amazing achievement for so youthful a writer, presenting as it does a revolutionary system of philosophy. The first two volumes—the third following a year later—were published in 1739, but their reception severely disappointed the author eager for fame, and he describes the *Treatise* as falling "dead born from the press." But it must be admitted that Hume was not easily satisfied, for a review which said the book bore "incontestable marks of a great capacity, of a soaring genius but young and not yet thoroughly practised," is referred to as "somewhat abusive." Nevertheless he may have found some recompense in the success that attended his *Essays: Moral and Political*, which appeared shortly afterwards. "Something" in this work having taken the fancy of the Marquis of Annandale, a nobleman of feeble intellect, he invited the philosopher to live with him, and Hume

passed through a trying experience which terminated at the end of a year.

In 1746 he accepted, at the shortest notice, the post of secretary to General St. Clair, and accompanied the latter on an expedition which, instead of proceeding to Canada as originally intended, made a descent upon the French coast and finally returned home. Apparently Hume created a good impression, for after a short interval his services were again enlisted by the same commander, who was conducting a mission to the Courts at Vienna and Turin. Whilst he was abroad in 1748, the *Philosophical Essays concerning Human Understanding* made an anonymous appearance. This work in his opinion superseded the *Treatise*, which he now regarded as a premature production, regretting his "haste a hundred and a hundred times." Returning to Ninewells in 1749, Hume's pen seems to have been busily engaged, for in 1751 came *The Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, and by this date the *Dialogues on Natural Religion* were already written, though not published until after his death. The *Political Discourses* quickly followed, which achieved an immediate success, and made Hume famous. Crossing the Channel they affected Economic thought in France, and their influence must have been considerable upon his close friend and admirer—Adam Smith. The philosopher had now removed to Edinburgh, and was happily established in a little household consisting, beside himself, of a sister "and two inferior members, a maid and a cat." For a wife, he frankly declared, was not among life's necessities; books on the other hand were indispensable, and of these he had more than he could use. This last statement possessed undoubted truth, as Hume had recently obtained a library appointment which gave him access to over thirty thousand volumes! The salary of the new post he passed on with characteristic kindliness to a blind poet named Blacklock. Under these favourable conditions the *History of England* was commenced. He rapidly produced a volume covering the early Stuart period, and after having brought the account down to the Revolution, worked his way backwards, as it has been said, in "crab-like" fashion. Before the completion of this big work, a *Natural History of Religion* was added to his list of achievements.

In 1763 Hume was invited by Lord Hertford, the English Ambassador to France, to undertake the secretarial duties of the Embassy; the office was accepted, though with no great alacrity, for he was not anxious to leave his native country again. At Paris an overwhelming reception was accorded him, and the feted philosopher, in his own words, trod on "nothing but flowers." Certainly Hume found French society infinitely more agreeable than the company of "the barbarians who inhabit the banks of the Thames." For Rousseau, indeed, he professed great affection and admiration, comparing him favourably with Socrates; though further experience of that eccentric genius produced analogies of a less flattering description. Despite, however, his antipathy towards Englishmen, Hume spent a short time in London as Under-Secretary of State for Scotland and returned in 1769, "very opulent," to Edinburgh, where his remaining days were passed. He wrote an Autobiography in the year previous to his death, which occurred on August 25, 1776, and was anticipated with courageous equanimity. "Upon the whole," said Adam Smith, "I have always considered him . . . as approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man as perhaps the nature of human frailty will permit."

His Philosophy

Hume's philosophy is of peculiar interest, because we find in it that sceptical spirit which is such a marked characteristic of modern times. It is therefore not surprising that his intellectual position had commended itself strongly to philosophically minded scientists.

Convinced, like Locke, of the limitation of our faculties, he believed that we should avoid "all distant and high inquiries" and confine ourselves "to such subjects as fall under daily practice and experience." In his hands, however, empirical investigation produced some startling results.

Hume agrees with Berkeley in challenging the existence of matter. He contends, in much the same manner as his predecessor, that it cannot be directly perceived to exist. A recapitulation of these arguments would therefore be somewhat superfluous, and it is sufficient to state his conclusion.

All that "can ever be present to the mind," he says, "are perceptions." Nor can the reality of matter be inferred. For "by what argument"—to mention his most obvious objection—"can it be proved that the perceptions of the mind must be caused by external objects . . . and could not arise either from the energy of the mind itself or from the suggestions of some invisible and unknown spirit, or from some other cause still more unknown to us? It is acknowledged that, in fact, many of these perceptions are not from anything external as in dreams, madness, and other diseases." In passing it may be well to note Hume's analysis of the mind. The perceptions of which it is composed are divided into two classes—impressions and ideas.

The former are more lively than the latter and include "all our sensations, passions, and emotions, as they make their first appearance in the soul," whereas "the faint images of these (impressions) in thinking and reasoning" are ideas. But Hume of course carries the work of destruction much further than Berkeley does. The Bishop, indeed, had argued a material substance out of existence, but he never attacked the idea of a spiritual substance; on the contrary, as we have seen, it forms an essential part of his teaching. The Scottish philosopher, however, takes a very different view. One of the distinctive features of his system is the denial of mind in the above sense of the word. According to him, what we term the mind is "nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions which succeed one another with an inconceivable rapidity and are in a perpetual flux and movement." He professes ignorance of an *ego* or self which is permanent amidst this unceasing change, and in which our perceptions—as he

calls them—inhere. His objections to this theory seem to be twofold. In the first place he maintains that it is unnecessary; ideas do not require a spiritual substance for their support, each of them may be regarded as self-subsisting. Secondly, he finds no evidence in favour of the hypothesis. "For my part," says Hume in an oft-quoted passage, "when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception." It is evident, then, that this idealism is of a peculiar kind; the universe, as he sees it, is composed only of mental phenomena, of impressions and ideas which are continually changing.

Another highly important characteristic of Hume's thought is his criticism of the popular notion of causality. To call A the cause and B the effect means, according to this view, that A produces B by "some power" residing in it. Now Hume maintains that there is no proof of such a connecting power as is here supposed; we observe merely a sequence of events. To begin with, it is impossible to discover this causal force in external objects. We only perceive, for instance, that light attends the striking of a match—one event succeeds the other, that is all. Nor does our inner experience show that it exists. It is indeed asserted that we are conscious of exerting "internal power"—that volition, for example, causes bodily movement. But this is a fallacy. Careful introspection simply shows that "the motion of our body follows upon the command of our will." But if we observe nothing more than succession of events, from whence, it will be asked, is our notion of the causal relation derived? From custom, and custom alone, replies Hume. After constantly finding two objects in conjunction, he says "the mind is carried by habit, upon the appearance of one event, to expect its usual attendant and to believe that it will exist. This connection, therefore, which we feel in the mind, this customary transition of the imagination from one object to its usual attendant, is the sentiment or impression from which we form the idea of power or necessary connection. Nothing farther is in the case."

Probably no part of Hume's writings has attracted more general attention than his *Essay on Miracles*, for he was here attacking a belief which to many people was the very basis of Christianity. The publication of the *Essay* synchronised with the appearance of another inquiry into supernatural occurrences which came from the pen of the Rev. Conyers Middleton, and according to Hume, "eclipsed" his own production. Middleton, however, merely challenged the credibility of the Patristic Miracles; Hume's criticism, on the other hand, was comprehensive in its scope. A miracle, as he defined it, is "a violation of the laws of nature." Now "no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle unless the testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavours to establish, and even in that case there is a mutual destruction of arguments, and the superior only gives us an assurance suitable to that degree of force which remains after deducting the inferior." But this essential requirement is not forthcoming. For there is good reason to believe that the fallaciousness of human testimony in this matter is *less* miraculous than a transgression of the laws of nature. And since miracles, according to Hume, form an integral part of Christianity, "mere reason," he concludes, cannot establish the truth of this religion. Nor does "mere reason" render Hume unqualified assistance in establishing the principles of natural religion. True, he affirms the existence of a Superhuman Being, finding in the argument from design a rational basis for this belief: the adjustment of all the different parts of nature manifest an "Intelligent Author." But beyond this obviously imperfect sort of Theism Hume does not appear to venture. He maintains that we can only ascertain the nature of such a Being as a Deity from the character of his productions, and that we cannot infer qualities other than those which are displayed in his workmanship. We may endow him with wisdom and goodness in so far as the Universe exhibits these traits, but it is not legitimate to infer "further attributes or further degrees of attributes." On the whole, it is not altogether unlikely that the sceptical Philo of the *Dialogues* expressed Hume's own intellectual position in resolving all natural theology "into one simple . . . proposition, that the cause or causes of order in the Universe, probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence."

Of all his writings, Hume considered his *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* to be "incomparably the best," and, as it may be surmised, he approached the subject from an empirical standpoint. In order "to reach the foundation of ethics and find those universal principles from which all censure and approbation is ultimately derived," we must "observe that particular in which the estimable qualities agree on the one hand, and the blamable on the other." Now an examination of meritorious qualities show that they are all alike in this respect—they are "useful or agreeable." This beneficent characteristic produces a feeling of pleasure in the spectator which is approbation. We applaud the useful actions. But to whom are they useful? Not merely to ourselves, for we praise conduct that is unconnected with, and even actually opposed to, self-interest. For instance, we often commend actions which have occurred in past ages, or in distant lands, and cannot have any possible relation to our own well-being. Such being the case, it is obvious that qualities or acts that contribute to the happiness of others merit our approval. In this sympathetic regard for human welfare lies "one great source of moral distinctions." Amongst the virtues he distinguishes those which are (*a*) useful to others, (*b*) useful to the person himself, (*c*) immediately agreeable to others, (*d*) immediately agreeable to the person himself. Humanity, for example, benefits our fellow-men, prudence especially serves the interests of the individual; wit again gives

direct social pleasure, whilst philosophic serenity is a satisfaction to its possessor.

Hume's influence was profound. Not only has he been called the "Father of Modern Agnosticism," but his work, by arousing opposition, gave rise to fresh systems of thought. However we may view his opinions, there can be no doubt that he is a most arresting thinker, and philosophy owes much to his exceedingly acute intellect.

In Scotland, Hume's thought had a stimulating effect upon THOMAS REID (1710–1796), whose name is associated with the "Common-sense" school of philosophy. This sober critic of scepticism was a native of Kincardineshire, and as a boy "of good and well-wearing parts" was sent to complete his education at Aberdeen, where he subsequently became a Regent of Philosophy in King's College. In 1763 he succeeded Adam Smith in the Professorial Chair at Glasgow, and retired only to busy himself in vigorous old age with the production of his *Essays on the Intellectual and Active Powers of Man*. His earlier work on *Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* had appeared in 1764, and evoked the friendly if not wholly unambiguous appreciation of Hume, to whom Reid had sent it in manuscript; he politely informed the author that "it is certainly very rare that a piece so deeply philosophical is wrote with so much spirit, and affords so much entertainment to the reader." By the principles of Common Sense, Reid means "original and natural judgments," which are "the inspiration of the Almighty," and cannot be rejected without "metaphysical lunacy." We have, for example, an immediate assurance that external objects exist. The basis of scepticism, in his opinion, was the belief common to ancient and modern philosophers alike—that what we directly perceive "must be some image present to the mind." Reid maintained, on the contrary, that material things, besides our own sensations or ideas, are self-evident. This he regarded as his main achievement.

ETHICAL THINKERS

To thoroughly appreciate the work of any thinker an understanding of his mental environment is necessary. In the case of Butler such consideration is particularly useful, because his religious philosophy is, to a large extent, a criticism of prevalent opinions. Even his ethical position, which comes first in order, will be elucidated by briefly noticing the achievements of some of his immediate predecessors and contemporaries.

In the region of ethical theory the early part of the eighteenth century witnessed an attack upon the views promulgated by Hobbes. This provocative philosopher, it will be remembered, had reduced all morality to enlightened self-interest which was the outcome of experience and reflection. Now practically all the important moralists in the period with which we are dealing are at one in denying this doctrine. In direct opposition they maintained that right conduct is recognised as such intuitively. The precise nature of the intuitive faculty, however, is somewhat variously conceived. With some, it is purely rational, with others it is more a matter of feeling; whilst Butler differs in a measure from both these schools in identifying it with the conscience.

JOSEPH BUTLER (1692–1752)

With BUTLER our ethical guide becomes the conscience. A cultivated taste may make us appreciate what is good and dislike what is bad, but conscience informs us what ought to be done. "There is," says Butler, "a principle of reflection in men, by which they distinguish between, approve and disapprove their own actions." It is, in short, "the voice of God within us."

Virtue, then, is acting according to the dictates of conscience. But what is the nature of the conduct that conscience would have us pursue? Briefly stated, it is exercising various fundamental feelings in human nature so that they accomplish the ends for which they were designed, and thus form a harmonious combination. Of these feelings benevolence is one; self-love is another; whilst there is a third class, that comprise instincts having for their immediate objects neither the happiness of self nor the happiness of others, but which nevertheless are capable indirectly of promoting both these ends—as for example the desire for social companionship. But does the virtuous man's obedience to duty conform to his own personal happiness? Butler answers in the affirmative. "Duty and interest," he says, "are perfectly coincident for the most part in this world, but entirely and in every instance, if we take in the future and the whole; for this is implied in the notion of a good and perfect administration of things." This reply is noteworthy for bringing out another difference between his ethics and those of Shaftesbury. The latter moralist dispenses with Butler's qualification. With unflinching optimism he seems to find a complete harmony existing between virtue and the happiness of the individual even in this life. In his view apparently one can safely affirm that "to be wicked and vicious is to be miserable and unhappy," without taking into consideration any future state of existence.

As regards the intellectual difficulties of Christianity, Butler thinks that these may form part of the trial which we are undergoing here. Besides, our general experience should warn us to anticipate their existence, for much which occurs in the natural world appears mysterious to our limited faculties. "How capricious and irregular, by way of information, would it be said, is that of invention, by means of which nature instructs us in the matter of science, and in many things upon which the affairs of the world greatly depend, that a man should by this faculty be made acquainted with a thing in an instant, when perhaps he is thinking of somewhat else, which he has been in vain searching after it may be for years." Perhaps, if Butler had been conversant with the theory of the subconscious mind, this mental process might possibly have seemed less "capricious" and "irregular."

We are also reminded that with regard to Christianity men expect absolute certainty, which they

do not require before deciding other questions of great importance. Indeed, such complete assurance is not forthcoming; "to us Probability is the very Guide of Life."

Moreover, Butler insists in his writings on the practical advantages of belief, an argument which was reiterated by another celebrated divine—Bishop Blougram, the hero of Browning's poem—and is a decided favourite with many pragmatic Christians at the present day. Even if the truth of Christianity were a matter of doubt, "would it not," asks Butler, "be madness for a man to forsake a safe road, and prefer to it one in which he acknowledges there is an even chance he should lose his life, though there was an even chance likewise of his getting safe through it?" "A mistake on the one side is much more dangerous than a mistake on the other."

The *Analogy* enjoyed a great popularity despite its logical shortcomings, not only with its own but also with later generations. Indeed, for over one hundred years, so one of his biographers tells us, it was considered to be one "of the best manuals upon the evidence of revelation." To-day it is read probably more from curiosity than with expectations of theological profit. If its past success seems somewhat surprising, it must be remembered that the endeavour to justify religion by an empirical logic always makes a strong appeal to the English intellect, especially when the argument assumes a utilitarian aspect.

But in justice to Butler one must add that, however inadequate the *Analogy* may be regarded as a religious Apologia, it certainly exposed a grave weakness in the Deistic position. For in this book the author repeatedly calls attention to the deficiencies in nature of which his opponents apparently took but little account. Consequently, even when criticism has had its say, we must pay a tribute to Butler's candour. It can never be said that he is one of those theologians who dwell lightly upon life's evils in the hope of minimising the magnitude of this eternal problem in philosophy.

"Persons who speak of the evidence of religion as doubtful, and of this supposed doubtfulness as a positive argument against it, should be put upon considering what that evidence indeed is which they act upon with regard to their temporal interests; for it is not only extremely difficult, but in many cases absolutely impossible, to balance pleasure and pain, satisfaction and uneasiness, so as to be able to say on which side the overplus is. There are the like difficulties and impossibilities in making the due allowance for a change of temper and taste, for satiety, disgust, ill health, any of which render men incapable of enjoying, after they have obtained, what they most eagerly desired. Numberless, too, are the accidents, besides that one of untimely death, which may even probably disappoint the best-concerted schemes, and strong objections are often seen to lie against them, not to be removed or answered, but which seem overbalanced by reasons on the other side, so that the certain difficulties and dangers of the pursuit are by everyone thought justly disregarded, upon account of the appearing greater advantages in case of success, though there be but little probability of it. Lastly, every one observes our liableness, if we be not upon our guard, to be deceived by the falsehood of men, and the false appearance of things; and this danger must be greatly increased if there be a strong bias within, supposed from indulged passion, to favour the deceit. Hence arises that great uncertainty and doubtfulness of proof, wherein our temporal interests really consist." [1]

THE PROGRESS OF SCIENCE FROM THE SIXTEENTH TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Roger Bacon—Grosseteste—Bartholomew Vincent—Copernicus—Bruno—Galileo—Francis Bacon—John Evelyn—Lord Herbert of Cherbury—John Napier—The Royal Society—Isaac Newton—William Harvey—Priestley—James Hutton—William Smith—Lyell—Herschell—Mrs. Somerville—Sir Charles Bell—Berkeley—Sir Humphry Davy.

PROGRESS OF SCIENTIFIC THOUGHT

The early history of scientific knowledge is associated with much that to us, in these days of enlightenment, savours of sheer madness. Men spent long years of their lives in the vain hope of discovering the elixir of life, or in endeavouring to transmute base metals into gold. It is difficult for us to realise that these men were frequently gifted with mathematical skill and scientific imagination. They desired to penetrate the mysteries of nature, to gain a knowledge of hidden things—hence in the eyes of the common people, their researches gained for them a reputation as magicians, and they were looked upon as being in league with the powers of evil. Their extravagant dreams, untempered by sober research and experiment, resulted in the crude medley of astrology, alchemy, and necromancy, out of which the sciences gradually emerged.

Roger Bacon heralds the dawn of the true scientific spirit in England. Bacon as a young man had come under the influence of Grosseteste, a scholar at Oxford, who occupied a position equivalent to that of Chancellor. Bacon in his *Opus Majus* has many passages in which he speaks with gratitude of his master, and he especially emphasizes two points: Grosseteste's knowledge of science, and the importance attached by him to a study of Greek and Hebrew writings, since they formed two chief avenues to a knowledge of the scientific works of Aristotle and of the mathematicians and naturalists who succeeded him.

Bacon tells us that in 1266 he had been a student for forty years. They were years spent in patient experiment and investigation, in observing the stars, the correction of the Calendar, in astronomical studies, learning Hebrew from Jews and

[1] Butler's *Analogy*.

Greek from foreigners visiting this country. It is probable that Bacon was in Paris about 1240, and that he joined the Franciscan Order shortly afterwards. In 1273 a new Superior of the Order was appointed, Bacon's orthodoxy was suspected, and he was removed from Oxford to Paris for the next ten years. In 1266 a letter was sent to him from Pope Clement IV, requiring him to make a copy of his writings, and it is to this command that we owe the *Opus Majus*. Bacon having no money, could only write when supplied with parchment.

The *Opus Majus* reveals Bacon as an ardent Catholic who desires to see the Pope become the spiritual ruler of the world; and unites with his dreams for the Church, an intensely practical spirit. The Pope should have a complete survey of his domains, hence part of the *Opus Majus* is devoted to this; this, however, cannot be accurately done until astronomical surveys have been made of the world.

Bacon insisted that the habitable portion of the globe extended farther to the east and to the south than was commonly supposed. This is the passage quoted by Columbus in a letter written in 1498 to Ferdinand and Isabella.

In 1274, Jerome of Ascoli became General of the Order; Bacon was tried and condemned for his doctrines that "contained certain suspicions," suffered imprisonment for fourteen years, and died in 1292, two years after his release.

Bacon desired to see established, under papal authority, a school of Greek and Oriental philology, in order that the culture of the East might be accessible to the Western nations. He realised the importance of mathematics and the experimental sciences, and dreamed of the papal power becoming supreme through the possession of both earthly and spiritual knowledge. His dreams were doomed to meet with disappointment; the downfall of the Papacy and the Hundred Years' War caused the progress of scientific thought to be arrested for two hundred years, and the man who was generations ahead of his own day lived on in the popular imagination as a magician.

Two hundred years later there was born in Prussia a German named COPERNICUS, who was destined to revolutionise the history of thought, by giving to the world a new conception of "Man's place in the Universe." The author of *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestum* was a quiet, studious, orthodox monk who compiled tables of the motions of the planets, and by application of these calculations to each of the bodies in the solar system he proved the earth to be a planet that revolved round the sun.

This great work, dedicated to the Pope and published at the expense of a cardinal, was issued in 1543, as its author lay dying. The full significance of the discovery was not appreciated by the Church until some years later, when BRUNO and GALILEO began to publicly expound the Copernican theory.

Bruno, refusing to recant, was burnt to death in 1600. Galileo was born in 1564. He very early became acquainted with the writings of Bruno and the Copernican system.

Galileo publicly demonstrated to the Aristotelians their error concerning falling bodies. He invented a thermometer, a calculating compass, and in 1609, after hearing an account of a Dutch optician's telescope, he set to work and made one for himself, improved it, and began to make observations.

For the first time (January 8, 1610) the satellites of Jupiter were seen; the mountains of the moon; innumerable new stars, the phases of Venus and spots on the sun! Withal, his main glory lies in that he "first laid the foundation of mechanics on a firm basis. He first discovered the true Laws of Motion."[1]

The iron hand of dogmatic belief was stretched out to crush the exponents of teaching that threatened to undermine the authority of the Church. Galileo was summoned to Rome to defend his scientific beliefs. He was forced to recant, and finally forbidden to teach, or to publish anything more, or receive friends.

In 1637 he became blind. The regulations were then not so strictly enforced, and during this time he was visited by John Milton. He died in 1642.

The effect of the Reformation in England was to set men's minds free from the "dead hand" of authority. Scientific inquiry began in the reign of Elizabeth. FRANCIS BACON—like his namesake Roger—once more proclaimed the necessity for experiment and investigation in order to discover truth, and the *Novum Organum* heralds a new era.

Under the Stuarts, who were great patrons of learning, rapid advance was made in many directions. A spirit of eager inquiry was abroad that is reflected in much of the literature of the seventeenth century. The new interest taken in medicine, anatomy, and agriculture is indicated in many ways in the diaries of Pepys and John Evelyn, in the writings of Sir Thomas Browne, and in the poetry of Cowley. Various minor inventions paved the way for later discoveries. The introduction of the decimal system, the invention of a slide rule, the publication of tables of logarithms, were indications of the new interests.

JOHN EVELYN studied medicine in Padua in 1645, and a few years later attended a course of chemistry lectures in Paris given by Le Telure. Evelyn afterwards presented his rare tables of veins and nerves to the Royal Society.

Evelyn devoted himself to horticulture. He wrote a book on Forest Trees, *Sylva*, that remained for many years the standard work on the subject. Evelyn in his travels abroad made a point of visiting the "cabinets" of collectors (the equivalent of the modern museum), and recording the curiosities he saw.

LORD HERBERT of Cherbury prided himself on his knowledge of medicine, studied Paracelsus and considered it part of a gentleman's education to know how to make medicines. Milton advocated the teaching of medicine and horticulture.

Yet something of the old distrust of science lingered during the earlier years of the century. Sir Walter Raleigh's encouragement of chemistry was deemed "atheistical"; and while Hobbes was at Oxford "geometry made no part of any student's

[1] Sir Oliver Lodge.

training." Indeed, those who taught mathematics were regarded as "limbs of the devil"; while even at the mid-century Hobbes tells us that the universities had only just given over thinking geometry to be "art diabolical."

So much suspicion of science having emanated from theological quarters, it is interesting to note that JOHN NAPIER (1550–1617), the discoverer of logarithms, made his early reputation through a theological treatise that achieved the distinction of being translated into several languages.

The Royal Society, founded about 1660 in order to promote scientific research, is a significant sign of the times. It showed that the all-absorbing interest in theological matters was giving place to fresh aims and interests; it portended, too, a change of attitude that would make for toleration. For bigotry and science do not harmonise. Further, the ideals of its members favoured a clear, concise, literary style, and thus literary methods, already affected by French influences, were greatly helped by this stimulus to scientific research.

The Royal Society originated in London in 1645, when a few philosophers met together each week to discuss scientific questions. Afterwards their meeting place was at Oxford, then Gresham College, until political excitements put an end to academic discussion, and the house of learning became a Puritan barrack. But after the Restoration, the King, partly because he was interested in these subjects, partly because he wished to distract attention from current controversy, gave the Society the name of the Royal Society.

In 1710 the Society moved to a house in Fleet Street (that had formerly belonged to "Praise-God Barebones" but had been rebuilt by Wren in 1670 after its destruction in the fire), and here the Society stayed for over seventy years. Pepys and Wren, former presidents, now gave way to the energetic and dominating personality of Newton. After its long sojourn in Fleet Street, the Society was moved to rooms in Somerset House (1780), and from thence to Burlington House. Several interesting relics of Newton are still in the possession of the Society, the sundial which he cut when a lad on the wall of his father's house, the first reflecting telescope made by him in 1671, and the original mask of his face.

That this Society at the outset of its long and distinguished career was not pedantic in its scientific investigations may be judged from the first catalogue of its museum. Here are a few items:

"A stag beetle, whose horns worn in a ring are good against the cramp."

"A bone—said to be taken out of a mermaid's head."

"The quills of a porcupine, which on certain occasions the creature can shoot at the pursuing enemy. . . ."

But barring a few little weaknesses like the foregoing, the legacy of years of superstitions, the Royal Society from its very inception achieved a fine work in cutting down the rank weeds of ignorance.

In 1642, the year Galileo died, ISAAC NEWTON was born at Woolsthorpe, some six miles south of Grantham. Destined for a farmer and grazier, Newton very early displayed tendencies that were hardly likely to produce a good agriculturist. He would often be found sitting under the hedges working out mathematical problems, or busily engaged in constructing a model when he should have been buying or selling at the market. Complaints were made to his uncle, the rector of Burton Coggles, concerning his behaviour; who advised that he should be sent to school and then to Cambridge.

At Trinity College, Newton devoted himself to the study of mathematics, discovered the "binomial theorem," and a little later, at the age of twenty-two, the "differential calculus." In 1665–6, during his enforced retirement into the country owing to the plague, sitting in his garden meditating on the problem as to why the planets go round the sun, he saw "the apple" fall. In a moment it occurred to Newton that the force of gravity might be the cause of the movement of the planets. He at once endeavoured to prove his theory, but his calculations were thrown out by an error then made in estimating the size of the earth. Sixteen years later, with correct data, Newton was able to vindicate his theory.

Newton next turned his attention to the study of Optics. He bought prisms and lenses and tried to improve telescopes. Whilst occupied thus he discovered the nature of white light, the doctrine of colour, and invented the first reflecting telescope, now in the library of the Royal Society, London. But Newton's greatest work was yet to come, *The Principia*, in which he gave to the world the discovery made many years earlier, and which had been laid aside until he became acquainted with the measurements of the degree made by Picard, when the length of a degree was found to be nearly seventy miles instead of sixty.

For two years Newton was absorbed body and soul in working out his theory once more in the light of this new knowledge.

"Mathematicians regard the achievement now as men might stare at the work of some demigod of a bygone age, wondering what manner of man this was, able to wield such ponderous implements with such apparent ease." [1]

Having written the first part of *The Principia*, Newton, not wishing to be involved in controversy, locked it up in his desk, and it was only through the instrumentality of Halley that Newton was induced to complete and publish this transcendent work.

Newton died at the age of eighty-five, honoured and respected; the greatest scientific philosopher England has ever had.

An interesting illustration of the bearing of science upon literature is seen in Newton's *Observations upon the Prophecies of Holy Writ*. This work does not, as may be imagined, signify an incursion by a scientist into the domain of literature, but a key to a literary problem from a scientific standpoint. For he showed that the interpretation of figures of prophecy is essentially mathematical, and the symbols of such books as *Daniel* and *The Apocalypse* can only be properly understood by one learned in the character of astronomical symbols.

[1] *Pioneers of Science*, by Sir Oliver Lodge.

Newton's genius was such that men for the next century felt that the "Universe had been explored," and that nothing more was left to be done:

"Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in Night;
God said, 'Let Newton be,' and all was light."

WILLIAM HARVEY, the discoverer of the "circulation of the blood," was born at Folkestone in 1578. He was educated at King's School, Canterbury, and entered Caius College, Cambridge, in 1593. The choice of Caius College seems to indicate that Harvey already intended to be a doctor, for the study of practical anatomy had been introduced by Dr. Caius, who obtained from Queen Elizabeth a charter allowing the college the bodies of two criminals annually, for the purpose of dissection.

Harvey then travelled through France and Germany to Italy, and became a student at the University of Padua—then specially renowned for its anatomical school, owing to the labours of Vesalius and his successor Fabricius.

Padua, being the university town of Venice, offered greater safety to Protestant students than most foreign universities at this time. Here Harvey, under the direction of Fabricius, his master and friend, engaged in a study of the valves of the veins. He became a Doctor of Medicine in 1602 and returned to England, obtained a degree from Cambridge, and soon after settled in London, where he became physician to St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

In 1615 he was appointed Lumleian Lecturer, and lectured upon Surgery.

"At this time Harvey was thirty-seven years of age. A man of the lowest stature, round faced, with a complexion like the wainscot; his eyes small, and full of spirit; his hair as black as a raven and curling; rapid in his utterance, choleric, given to gesture, and used when in discourse with any one, to play unconsciously with the handle of the small dagger he wore by his side."[1]

The notes of these lectures show that Harvey had already discovered the circulation, although his treatise was not published until 1621, and after he had spent much time in verifying and illustrating his theory.

Harvey was for many years physician to Charles I. He became a personal friend of the King's, and accompanied him on many journeys. The King's interest in Art and Science is testified by the numerous occasions on which Harvey directed the attention of his royal master to things curious and unusual.

Harvey's *Treatise on Development* affords testimony to the slow emergence of the most original thinkers from the bondage of the Schoolmen. Harvey died in 1657; three years later the Royal Society was founded; among the earlier members were Sir Christopher Wren, and the Hon. Robert Boyle. A notable exclusion from the list of members was the learned Sir Thomas Browne, probably owing to his literary style, since the Society insisted on its members adhering to a plain, matter-of-fact language that could be understood by the ordinary artisan. Newton was made a member in 1671, and became President in 1703, holding the office for twenty-four years.

During the eighteenth century, science does little more than mark time, the great periods of progress being the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Progress was made, however, in chemistry and electricity, and the name of Priestley is one of the links between the literature and science of the time. As a philosophic writer he belongs to the Deistic school, was a determinist and tried to square a materialistic philosophy with a belief in the Christian Revelation. But his "doctrine of philosophical necessity" is of far less moment than his discovery of oxygen; in other words, he will be remembered rather as a scientist than as a philosopher.

Scientific geology became an actuality towards the close of the century, and is associated with the names of James Hutton and William Smith; and wider biological speculation began to be put forth, thus preparing the way for Darwin and Spencer.

Such is the record of the progress of Science in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for a parallel in rapid development it is necessary to turn to the nineteenth.

The Victorian era has been remarkable for the manner in which the scientific spirit has entered into the life, and consequently the literature, of the period. Not only has it been distinguished for its multifarious mechanical inventions, but it has seen the reign of scientific law bringing order out of chaos. The idea of "chance" as entering largely into men's lives has been eliminated by the new conceptions of causation.

This change in thought was in great measure brought about by the publication of Lyell's *Principles of Geology* in 1830–33. The *Principles* ran into eleven editions, and did more to stimulate the study of geology than any other work. Lyell demonstrated "the immense superiority" of the uniformitarian theory of the earth's formation, as opposed to the "catastrophic." The latter explained the changes in the earth's surface to be the result of earthquakes, volcanoes, and floods, whilst the former accounted for these changes by the slow and long-continued action of glaciers, rivers, and land subsidence. Lyell made use of the important discoveries that had been made by Werner, Hutton, and William Smith, and used them to prove that earth-changes were subject to uniform laws, and thus geology became a science in the strict sense of the word.

The influence of modern scientific thought upon our literature is clear as noonday; the influence of earlier scientific investigation upon letters is less clear at first sight, but none the less indisputable. This may be regarded from a twofold standpoint. We may consider such of our men of science as had power of literary expression, and we may observe the indirect influence of scientific thought upon our poets and prosemen. The first is the least important, but must not be overlooked.

Sir JOHN HERSCHEL (1792–1871) and Mrs. SOMERVILLE (1780–1872) had considerable literary power and exhibited it in *Familiar Studies on Scientific Subjects*, and the *Mechanism of the Heavens*; while WILLIAM SMITH (1769–1835), by his geological writings, inspired Sir CHARLES LYELL (1797–1875) a clear and capable writer, with his far-reaching explanation of the geological past by uniformity of

[1] *William Harvey*, by D'Arcy Power.

law. Nor can the literary faculty be denied to Sir CHARLES BELL (1774–1842), whose *Anatomy of Expression* and remarkable investigations into nervous phenomena, went far towards that correlation of mind and body, so emphasized to-day.

Sometimes the man of science learns from the man of letters, and we must not forget Berkeley's brilliant attack on the theory of inert matter, that preceded by many years the discoveries of the dynamic possibilities hidden in electricity.

Romanticism suggests no fraternity with the physical sciences. Yet Shelley's youthful enthusiasm for chemistry is of significance. There was much of the scientist in Shelley's making; some of his most elaborate fantasies, e.g. *The Cloud*, are as scientifically impeccable as they are artistically flawless.

Sir HUMPHRY DAVY'S (1778–1829) connection with the Romantic movement is an interesting one. He had a taste for story-telling, metaphysical speculation, and verse-writing, as well as for experimental science; and while apprenticed to a surgeon in Penzance, indulged in all these predilections. At the age of nineteen he turned his attention especially to chemistry, and about this time made the acquaintance of Coleridge and Southey. Soon afterwards he became lecturer to the Royal Institution of London, and his eloquence and literary charm greatly facilitated the spreading impression he made with his fresh and striking chemical experiments. His lecture *On Some Chemical Agencies of Electricity* gained the prize of the French Institute. With the variety and scientific importance of his work we are not here concerned; but the literary power of the man is especially noteworthy, for it enormously increased his immediate influence and profoundly impressed Coleridge. Indeed he was one of the idols of the youthful Coleridge, and the scientific exactitude of that poet's wonderful nature pictures in *The Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel*, is only less remarkable than their beauty, while those who have read his *Aids to Reflection* will recall his eulogy of the chemist.

Mental Science, as might be expected, is even more intimately connected with literature. The poets were in advance of the scientists of their age here, and there is a profounder grasp of psychological law in Coleridge and Wordsworth than we find in either Bentham or Reid. Indeed the connection between Romanticism and Science is an intimate and precious one; it is one that will deserve careful and conscientious study.

ART AND SCIENCE

The characters of the poet and painter have been often compared; and the analogy between their objects and their methods is so striking, as to have been generally felt and acknowledged. Visible images constitute the great charm of poetry, and they are the elements of painting; and the end of both arts is to represent the admirable in nature, and to awaken pleasurable, useful, or noble feelings. Painting, however, appeals to the eye by immediate characters; it possesses a stronger chain of association with passion; it is a more distinct and energetic language, and acts first by awakening sensation and then ideas. Poetry is less forcible, for it operates only by imagination and memory, and not by immediate impression; unless indeed in the performance of the drama, or in impassioned recitation. A representation by words is inferior in strength to representation by images; but it has the advantage in being more varied, and capable of a more extensive application. It speaks of sentiments and thoughts and affections, which can never be delineated by the pencil; and it has within its power, not only the world of sensation, but likewise the world of intellect.

In music, the powers of art are infinitely more limited than in poetry or painting. The pleasure results from mere combinations of sounds; and is as transient as the motions of the air, by which they are produced. To communicate feeling is the highest attribute of the art. Its means are wholly inadequate to convey ideas, and the attempts at imitation have generally produced only a ludicrous effect. It has this advantage, however, over poetry and painting, that its influence is more immediate and instantaneous, and perceived without study or reflection; that it acts as if by enchantment, and appealing merely to sensation, yet subdues both imagination and memory; makes the soul obedient to its impulses, and creates for the time a world of its own.

The mechanical arts and the fine arts can hardly be compared; the objects of the first being utility, of the last, pleasure. The mechanical arts delight us only indirectly, and by indistinct associations; the fine arts either directly or by immediate associations. The steam-engine may be an object of wonder, as connected with the power by which it was produced, and the power which it exerts; but to understand its beneficial effects requires extensive knowledge, or a long detail of facts. Mechanism in general is too complicated to produce any general effect of pleasure. Inventions are admired by the multitude, more on account of their novelty or strangeness, than on account of their use or ingenuity. The watch which is the guide of our time, is employed and considered with indifference; but we pay half-a-crown to see a self-moving spider of steel.

In the truths of the natural sciences there is, perhaps, a nearer analogy to the productions of the refined arts. The contemplation of the laws of the universe is connected with an immediate tranquil exaltation of mind, and pure mental enjoyment.

The perception of truth is almost as simple a feeling as the perception of beauty; and the genius of Newton, of Shakespeare, of Michael Angelo, and of Handel, are not very remote in character from each other. Imagination, as well as reason, is necessary to perfection in the philosophical mind. A rapidity of combination, a power of perceiving analogies, and of comparing them by facts, is the creative source of discovery. Discrimination and delicacy of sensation, so important in physical research, are other words for taste; and the love of nature is the same passion, as the love of the magnificent, the sublime, and the beautiful.

PART V

THE ROMANTIC REVIVAL

(*c.* 1780–*c.* 1830)

INTRODUCTION

No label can accurately describe a period so rich and varied in achievement as the fifty years following the death of Johnson. Yet, while allowing for those distinctive qualities that a genius gives to, rather than takes from an age, there will be found certain underlying characteristics linking the writers of the period together in a masonic brotherhood.

The term that best fits these varying yet fundamentally intimate features, is the term Romance, for trite and well-worn though it be, it expresses, as does no other word, the peculiar appeal to the imagination made by the great writers of this time.

What is Romanticism? What is this emotional tide which ebbs and flows throughout literary history; reaching high-water mark in the age of Shakespeare and of Wordsworth, yet taking on so varying a complexion in the work, say, of a Marlowe or a Scott?

Romanticism, generally speaking, is the expression in terms of art of sharpened sensibilities, heightened imaginative feeling; and although we are concerned only with its expression in literature, Romanticism is an imaginative point of view that has influenced many art forms, and has left its mark also on philosophy and history. The loose popular meaning attached to the word indicates roughly its defects rather than its merits, for it is often used as synonymous for extravagances and sentimentality.

The word classical has been mentioned with reference to eighteenth-century literary modes, and in opposing to it the word romantic, we cannot do better than examine the suggestive remarks of Walter Pater on the subject:

> "What is classical comes to us out of the cool and quiet of other times, as a measure of what a long experience has shown us will, at least, never displease us. And in the classical literature of Greece and Rome, as in the classics of the last century, the essentially classical element is that quality of order in beauty which they possess, indeed, in a pre-eminent degree."

Order, clarity, tranquillity are obviously classical qualities, and these are the qualities that have engaged our attention in dealing with the literature of the Dryden and Johnson age. Pater goes on to define the romantic character in art as consisting in "the addition of strangeness to beauty." "The desire of beauty," continues Pater, "being a fixed element in every artistic organisation, it is the addition of curiosity to this desire of beauty that constitutes the romantic temper." Further he adds:

> "The essential elements of the romantic spirit are curiosity and the love of beauty; and it is as the accidental effect of these qualities only, that it seeks the Middle Ages; because in the overcharged atmosphere of the Middle Ages there are unworked sources of romantic effect, of a strange beauty to be won by strong imagination out of things unlikely or remote."

Curiosity and the love of beauty. These are certainly integral factors in Romanticism, the one intellectual, the other emotional. Are they, however, the only essential elements? Romanticism seems to me more broadly based than this; more complex also.

May we not say that the features most insistent in Romanticism are a subtle sense of mystery, an exuberant intellectual curiosity, and an instinct for the elemental simplicities of life.

The supreme Romantic movement in English letters was the Renascence. It had transformed not only English but European life; but like every great impulse in Art and Life, it had been followed by a period of reaction. The great Romanticists were, as I have said, also realists, but among the lesser spirits Romanticism always generates a certain tendency to exaggeration and aloofness from the conditions of ordinary life. It was the business of the common-sense, unimpassioned school that followed to correct these defects. This it accomplished, and it bequeathed to English literature a greater clarity, a closer correspondence with the actualities of life; then in its turn becoming artificial and one-sided, another tidal movement was needed for purposes of spiritual adjustment.

The Romantic Revival was the result of no one cause. Broadly speaking, it was the inevitable corollary of the Renascence and Reformation. The dignity and importance of man as man, the glories of the world of nature,—these ideas, of which we hear so much at the close of the eighteenth century, were born centuries before, and had been gradually working in men's minds through all the political unrest of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The first flowering of Romanticism in England, the bloody horrors of the French Revolution, the kindling of a new idealistic philosophy in Germany under Kant and Hegel, the political upheaval in America, all these things were but varying

symptoms of a general ferment that had lasted on from the fifteenth century.

It is well to remember this, for although the social theories of Rousseau, roughly embodied in the familiar phrase, the "return to nature," did materially affect doctrinaires like William Godwin, and through Godwin, Shelley; and although the battle-cry of the Revolutionaries, "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," impressed itself on the youthful imagination of Wordsworth and Coleridge, the general characteristics of the Revival suggested above were collateral with the Revolution, not derived from it. They arose, as we may see, in verse and fiction during the lifetime of Pope, and impressed many an imagination long before the overthrow of the Bastille had given these ideas a more urgent vitality.

Let us consider these characteristics of Romance at greater length.

The *subtle sense of mystery* is found on analysis to be a complex emotion compounded of awe in the presence of the unknown, wonder in presence of the known, and an exquisite response to manifestations of beauty wherever they may be found—that we may call for want of a better word—Rapture.[1]

Now if we search for an expression of this in the life of the age under discussion we shall meet it in Philosophy, in History, in its attitude towards nature and towards social life. Romanticism, when it touches philosophy, favours mysticism and idealism, and we have but to place Kant and Hegel beside Hume and Locke, to appreciate the influence of Romanticism here. For the more subtle our sense of mystery the less satisfied we are with the materialistic explanation of the universe, and the more we demand an ideal rather than an empirical solution of phenomena; or if we regard the theological implications, this sense of mystery drives us away from the dualism of the old Deists to the pantheism of the Hegelians.

In History, the awakened sensibility led to the study of the past, to the fond dallyings with Mediævalism. It was because many thought they saw in mediævalism a richer inspiration for the mysterious forces they felt about them that they turned from modern conditions of life towards the folk-lore and legendary wealth of the Middle Ages. So emphatic a part did mediævalism play in the Revival of Romance that Heine saw in it merely the reproduction of the life of the Middle Ages. Yet mediævalism, as Pater shrewdly observed, is an accidental not an essential characteristic of Romance.

At its onset, Romance drives those who feel its spell into strange by-paths of thought and feeling, away from the broad highway of ordinary human experience. It was thus with Marlowe in his world-moving visions; thus with Scott in his fervent mediævalism.

But ultimately it brings us back to the highway—only at a greater elevation. We seek it first in the thunder and the earthquake of the fantastic and bizarre, and find it after all in the still small voice of everyday life. In other words, Romanticism is not opposed to Reality. It is Reality transfigured by new powers of vision and feeling. In the deep sense of the word, Marlowe and Scott are realistic *because* of their Romanticism. Marlowe hinted at it in his *Edward II*, though he died too young to realise its full implication. Scott realised it perfectly in his faithful pictures of Scottish life and character.

It was the element of mysticism in mediæval life that appealed, heightened by the passage of time and the unlikeness of life then to life under modern conditions. History embraced by Romanticism gave birth to the historic novel and inspired a Chateaubriand and Scott; while in that borderland where History and Philosophy meet, we find arising an idealistic conception of laws by Montesquieu, and of political opinion by Burke. The result of this was to make philosophy more historical, and history more philosophical. As regards the effect of the sense of mysticism on natural phenomena, an effect quite patent not only in the poetry but the prose also of the time, this much may be said; it is not that men like Wordsworth and Shelley cared for Nature *more* than did Shakespeare, or in our own time Tennyson, but they cared in a *different* way. Wordsworth found brooding and tranquillising thought at the heart of Nature; Shelley an ardent and persuasive love. In other words, they spiritualised Nature. To Shakespeare the primrose was a pretty yellow flower, and "nothing more." To Tennyson, the landscape was an exquisite stage property, in which human emotions might be pictorially framed. Shakespeare, with the hearty objectivity of his age, loved Nature without questioning how and wherefore. Tennyson, with the introspective tendency of his age, put his sentiment under the microscope, and found that modern science had stripped Nature of her pontifical robe of metaphysics.

The gradual reawakening of this sense of mystery, may be seen by tracing the nature poetry of the age from Thomson's *Seasons* to the songs of Blake; and noting the change from a friendly appraising of Nature's charm to a passionate abandonment to her magic. Finally, if we look at the social problems of the time we shall realise that human life has been invested with a tenderer sanctity, and that the spiritual importance of man, irrespective of class, has received a deeper significance.

The social implications of Romanticism are found especially in the writings of Rousseau.

We now turn to our second characteristic: an *exuberant intellectual curiosity*.

Given an increased sense of awe, wonder, and beauty, in short, an illumination of the imagining faculty, the reaction of this on the more purely intellectual or rationalising side of man is natural and inevitable.

The enthusiasm for the Middle Ages, sometimes called the Gothic Revival, was two-sided. On the one, it satisfied the emotional sense of wonder; on the other, the intellectual sense of curiosity. Men like Addison saw only the extravagant side of the movement. "Gothic" for them was a term of

[1] Such are the elements which lie implicit in Theodore Watts-Dunton's famous phrase "The Renascence of Wonder."

reproach connoting what was grotesque and lawless in art and literature, and they failed completely to realise that this was merely a symptom of the intense vitality of mediæval methods and ideals; and was in no way an integral part of it. Even in Horace Walpole and Mrs. Radcliffe, where the extravagances of mediævalism are patent enough, the strength of mediævalism as an artistic and intellectual inspiration is not hard to discover. Walpole's imitation castle at Strawberry Hill may have been little more than an amusing toy, but the genuine interest in the great architecture of the Middle Ages involved in it, pioneered not merely the richer antiquarian interest of Scott, but the ecclesiastical splendour of the Tractarian Movement, and the "fundamental brain-work" of the Pre-Raphaelite school. Ridiculous and dull his *Castle of Otranto* may appear to-day, but it prepared the way for *Ivanhoe*, reminded men once more of feudal times, and stirred an interest in the past that was to find a more intelligent expression in the revival of old ballad poetry, the study of such mediæval arts as glass staining, wood carving, tapestry embroidery, and a livelier acknowledgment of the greatness of an age that gave us our finest cathedrals and churches.

Nowhere is the intellectual curiosity of Romanticism better shown than in the regeneration of English poetic style. The earlier dissatisfaction with eighteenth century conventions led to a mere imitation of Spenser. That is always the case in the history of literary movements. First of all there is a reversion to an elder convention, a mere slavish return to other fashions. It is only gradually realised that, not by imitation but by a fresh creative outburst, an expression of the present in terms not of ancient externals but ancient ideals and tendencies, that Art is revivified and glorified.

The first sign of the change, then, is in the imitation of Spenser shown in such poems as Thomson's *Castle of Indolence* and Shenstone's *Schoolmistress*. The more important stage is reached when Bishop Percy, with his ballad collection, reminded men of the metrical inspiration to be found elsewhere than in Dryden and Pope.

Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, consisting of old heroic ballads, songs, and other pieces of our earlier poetry, was published in three volumes in 1765. To the learned few it had been known that there existed a body of popular verse that had lived on from the Middle Ages, coming down to us chiefly by word of mouth, deeply rooted in the ancient folk-lore of the Aryan race. In an earlier chapter of this work we have seen something of the rich store of ballad verse, and realised how closely incorporated it was with the lives of the common people. The value of this store to modern literature was made clear in the Revival of Romance. The metrical peculiarities of the old ballad gave fresh inspiration to great poets like Coleridge and Keats. Without these ballads rescued by Percy, it were a hard matter to imagine how our great Romantic poets would have shaped. Wordsworth's own indebtedness is slight, but Scott's obligations are obvious. Both *The Ancient Mariner* and *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* are directly inspired by their fresh naïveté, and in much of the work of Rossetti, and the earlier work of William Morris, the indebtedness is unquestionable.

Scott's tribute to Percy's *Reliques* is worth recalling:

> "I remember well the spot where I read these volumes for the first time. It was beneath a huge plantain tree in the ruins of what had been intended for an old-fashioned arbor in the garden I have mentioned. The summer day sped onward so fast that, notwithstanding the sharp appetite of thirteen, I forgot the hour of dinner, was sought for with anxiety, and was still found entranced in my intellectual banquet. To read and to remember was, in this instance, the same thing; and henceforth I overwhelmed my school-fellows, and all who would hearken to me, with tragical recitations from the ballads of Bishop Percy. The first time, too, I could scrape a few shillings together, I bought unto myself a copy of these beloved volumes; nor do I believe I ever read a book so frequently, or with half the enthusiasm."

The intellectual curiosity of Romanticism is further illustrated in the publication of Macpherson's *Ossian*. Into the controversy to which it gave rise there is no need to enter here. Genuine or not, the "stuff" of verse, turgid and high-flown as it frequently is, and unlike the Gaelic inspiration it professes to be, yet exerted an influence second only to Percy's *Reliques*, stimulating fresh interest in our literary origins, as well as influencing emotionally a generation starved by the Popian couplet, and ready to welcome the pleasurable melancholy that underlay *Ossian*, as a blessed relief from eighteenth century optimism.

Romanticism, putting aside its purely æsthetic and emotional elements, induces a speculative and inquisitive turn of mind. Perhaps this is most apparent in such thinkers as Hegel, who appeals to the intellect even more perhaps than to the religious emotions. Mention has been made of the effect of the heightened sense of mystery in philosophy and history; but in these departments of thought, the intellectual aspects of Romanticism are more significant than even the æsthetic. Hegel's dialectic is an intellectual attempt to satisfy the idealising passion that lies behind Romanticism, and Rousseau's "Return to Nature" may be regarded as an intellectual generalisation apart from its æsthetic suggestiveness. So also in Poetry, we have not only to reckon with the æsthetic inspiration, with the heightened sensibility of the imagination, but with the speculative, intellectual power that underlies the best work of such writers as Wordsworth, Shelley, and Coleridge.

Incoherent and contradictory as this may prove at times, it is impossible to ignore the suggestiveness of Wordsworth's poetic theory, of Shelley's transcendentalism, and Coleridge's critical insight. As an illustration take Shelley's transcendental reading of Nature, that some readers find so vague and misty. Acceptable it may not be to some minds, vague it assuredly is not, since Shelley's philosophy of Nature is perfectly clear and consistent, and in his finest lyrics, such as *The Cloud* and *The West Wind*, there is a logical power of development and, when the poet is so disposed, a scientific accuracy, that is too often overlooked by the slovenly reader. Take

this fragment from another poem, depicting the history of a globe of dew—

> As the dissolving warmth of dawn may fold,
> A half unfrozen dew globe, green and gold,
> And crystalline, till it becomes a winged mist
> And wanders up the vault of the blue day,
> Outlives the noon, and on the Sun's last ray
> Hangs o'er the sea, a flame of fire and amethyst."

Beautiful lines certainly, and none the less beautiful because scientifically impeccable. In the literature of the age, however, we shall necessarily find a fuller expression of the intellectual stimulus of Romanticism in the prose than in the verse.

The revolution wrought in literary criticism by the Romantic writers is a matter of common knowledge. Roughly speaking, what it did was to transform Criticism from the cult of finding faults to the art of revealing beauties. It brought into the interpretation of great writers the creative imagination of the poet. The historical method of criticism inaugurated by Coleridge, substituted order for chaos; viewing the subject relatively in terms of its time and place; it put an end to the old absolute standard of criticism, in which current prejudices and standards served as the one criterion. That some of the Romantic critics, for all their brilliance and sensibility, failed to transcend at times the time spirit of their own day or peculiar idiosyncrasies of temperament, is merely an indication of human infirmity. The important point is, that the view they upheld has been responsible for the richest and most suggestive criticism that our literature can boast, for in its romantic inspiration it is both intellectual and imaginative—intellectual in its form, imaginative in its comprehending vision of the inner soul of literature.

The third characteristic noted in Romanticism was *an instinct for the elemental simplicities of life.* This may be traced both in the poetry and prose of the time. Rousseau is the pioneer here. He it was who eloquently emphasized the dignity of man as man, and dwelt upon the transcendent power of human love. The reaction against the 'complexities of civilisation, especially insistent in the growing life of our teeming cities, that is so marked to-day in the writings of socialistic idealists like Edward Carpenter and William Morris, started with Rousseau.

The new attitude towards Nature was indeed only part of a larger naturalism that sought to bring us back to the bosom of Nature, and reclaim us from the superfluous conventions with which we had choked the elemental verities of life. As a result of this we got the idealising of childhood by Blake and Wordsworth, and of simple unsophisticated natures by Burns, Wordsworth, and Coleridge; and the sense of mystery which we have seen sending seekers to a remote past, was gradually realised to be capable of satisfaction closer at hand. The great Romantic poets found it not only in the inspiration of the Middle Ages and in Greek art, but in the simplicities of everyday life; an ordinary sunset, a walk over the hills, a cluster of spring flowers, the rain-bearing west wind, the song of the nightingale, a cottage girl, a simple old dalesman—such are a few of the subjects that inspired to supreme achievement: a Wordsworth, a Coleridge, a Shelley, a Keats.

The Humanistic teaching that lay implicit here can be traced clearly in the more didactic if less imaginative literature of America. Emerson's spiritual asceticism, Thoreau's "reduction of life to its lowest terms," and his sylvan solitudes; the open air, democratic fervour of Whitman, are offshoots of Romanticism; while the absorption by Byron and Shelley of certain aspects of the French Revolution, the glorification of Liberty, the vindication of the natural instincts, these matters that merged into the great stream of Humanitarian sentiment which swept through our life and literature in the early years of the nineteenth century, had their source and inspiration in the Revival of Romance.

Romanticism as expressed in the literature of the age had, of course, in common with every great movement, definite limitations of its own. It was essentially a school of ideas, of splendid generalisations. Little attempt was made by its exponents to apply their ideas to the concrete problems of the day; it harped on Man rather than Men, sought the way of escape from modern conditions of life rather than a reconstruction of that life in its reaction against the town and boudoir literature of the previous age, too readily accepted what was primitive, wild, strange, and picturesque, as the essential glories of life. Among its lesser souls, moreover, we see the tendency to exalt the merely bizarre and to replace the old conventions of "correctness" at all costs for extravagances at all costs.

But all this was inevitable. No great movement ever took place that did not sweep out of proper perspective certain aspects of life and thought. In the zeal for fresh air, some windows are bound to get smashed, as Lowell puts it in one of his essays. The chief thing to remember is that the fresh air was badly wanted; our literature needed a vivifying and expanding influence. This the writers of the time achieved. Our Victorian literature had been far less rich in concrete beauties, in intellectual constructiveness, in sanity and strength, without even the untrained and riotous splendour that gave dynamic power to the men and women of the Romantic Revival.

THE LADY ISABELLA'S TRAGEDY; OR, THE STEP-MOTHER'S CRUELTY

> There was a lord of worthy fame,
> And a hunting he would ride,
> Attended by a noble traine
> Of gentrye by his side.
>
> And while he did in chase remaine,
> To see both sport and playe;
> His ladye went, as she did feigne,
> Unto the church to praye.
>
> This lord he had a daughter deare,
> Whose beauty shone so bright,
> She was belov'd, both far and neare,
> Of many a lord and knight.
>
> Fair Isabella was she call'd,
> A creature faire was she;
> She was her father's only joye,
> As you shall after see.

Therefore her cruel step-mother
Did envye her so much,
That daye by daye she sought her life,
Her malice it was such.

She bargain'd with the master-cook,
To take her life awaye:
And taking of her daughter's book,
She thus to her did saye:

Go home, sweet daughter, I thee prayo,
Go hasten presentlie;
And tell unto the master-cook
These words that I tell thee:

And bid him dresse to dinner streight
That faire and milk-white doe,
That in the parke doth shine so bright,
There's none so faire to showe.

This ladye fearing of no harme,
Obey'd her mother's will:
And presentlye she hasted home,
Her pleasure to fulfil.

She streight into the kitchen went,
Her message for to tell;
And there she spied the master-cook
Who did with malice swell.

Now master-cook, it must be soe,
Doe that which I thee tell:
You needes must dresse the milk-white doe,
Which you do knowe full well.

Then streight his cruell bloodye hands,
He on the ladye layd;
Who quivering and shaking stands,
While thus to her he sayd.

Thou art the doe that I must dresse,
See here, behold my knife;
For it is pointed presently
To ridd thee of thy life.

O then, cries out the scullion-boye,
As loud as loud might bee:
O save her life, good master-cook,
And make your pyes of mee!

For pityes sake do not destroye
My ladye with your knife;
You know shee is her father's joye,
For Christes sake save her life!

I will not save her life, he sayd,
Nor make my pyes of thee;
Yet if thou dost this deed bewraye,
Thy butcher I will bee.

Now when this lord he did come home
For to sit downe and eat;
He called for his daughter deare,
To come and carve his meat.

Now sit you down, his ladye sayd,
O sit you downe to meat:
Into some nunnery she is gone,
Your daughter deare forget.

Then solemnlye he made a vowe,
Before the companie,
That he would neither eat nor drinke
Until he did her see.

O then bespake the scullion-boye,
With a loud voice so hye:
If now you will your daughter see,
My lord, cut up that pye;

Wherein her fleshe is minced small,
And parched with the fire;
All caused by her step-mother,
Who did her death desire.

And cursed bee the master-cook,
O cursed may he bee!
I proffered him my own heart's blood,
From death to set her free.

Then all in blacke this lord did mourne,
And for his daughter's sake,
He judged her cruell step-mother
To be burnt at a stake.

Likewise he judg'd the master-cook
In boiling lead to stand;
And made the simple scullion-boye
The heire of all his land.[1]

A Hue and Cry after Cupid

Beauties, have you seen a toy,
Called Love, a little boy,
Almost naked, wanton, blinde:
Cruel now, and then as kinde?
If he be amongst yee, say;
He is Venus' run-away.

Shee, that will but now discover
Where the winged wag doth hover,
Shall to-night receive a kisse,
How and where herselfe would wish:
But who brings him to his mother
Shall have that kisse, and another.

Markes he hath about him plentie,
You may know him among twentie;
All his body is a fire,
And his breath a flame entire:
Which, being shot, like lightning, in,
Wounds the heart, but not the skin.

Wings he hath, which though yee clip,
He will leape from lip to lip,
Over liver, lights, and heart,
Yet not stay in any part,
And, if chance his arrow misses,
He will shoot himselfe in kisses.

He doth beare a golden bow,
And a quiver hanging low,
Full of arrows, which outbrave
Dian's shafts; where, if he have
Any head more sharpe than other,
With that first he strikes his mother.

Still the fairest are his fuell,
When his daies are to be cruell;
Lovers' hearts are all his food,
And his baths their warmest blood;
Nought but wounds his hands doth season,
And he hates none like to Reason.

Trust him not: his words, though sweet,
Seldome with his heart doe meet:
All his practice is deceit,
Every gift is but a bait:
Not a kisse but poyson beares,
And most treason's in his teares.

Idle minutes are his raigne;
Then the straggler makes his gaine,
By presenting maids with toyes,
And would have yee think them joyes.
'Tis the ambition of the elfe
To have all childish as himselfe.

If by these yee please to know him,
Beauties, be not nice, but show him.
Though yee had a will to hide him,
Now, we hope, yee'le not abide him,
Since yee heare this falser's play,
And that he is Venus' run-away.[2]

Old Tom of Bedlam

Forth from my sad and darksome cell,
Or from the deepe abysse of hell,
Mad Tom is come into the world againe
To see if he can cure his distempered braine.

Feares and cares oppresse my soule;
Harke, howe the angrye Furyes houle!

[1] *Percy's Reliques.* [2] *Ibid.*

Pluto laughes, and Proserpine is gladd
To see poore naked Tom of Bedlam madd.

Through the world I wander night and day
To seeke my straggling senses,
In an angrye moode I mett old Time,
With his pentarchye of senses:

When me he spyed,
Away he hyed,
For time will stay for no man:
In vaine with cryes
I rent the skyes,
For pity is not common.

Cold and comfortless I lye:
Helpe, oh helpe! or else I dye!
Harke! I heare Apollo's teame,
The carman 'gins to whistle;
Chast Diana bends her bowe,
The boare begins to bristle.

Come, Vulcan, with tools and with tackles,
To knocke off my troublesome shackles;
Bid Charles make ready his waine
To feteh me my senses againe.

Last night I heard the dog-star bark;
Mars met Venus in the darke;
Limping Vulcan her an iron barr,
And furiouslye made at the god of war;

Mars with his weapon laid about,
But Vulcan's temples had the gout,
For his broad horns did so hang in his light,
He could not see to aim his blowes aright:

Mercurye, the nimble post of heaven,
Stood still to see the quarrell;
Gorrel-bellyed Bacchus, gyant-like,
Bestryd a strong-boore barrel.

To mee he dranke,
I did him thanke,
But I could get no eyder;
He dranke whole butts
Till he burst his gutts,
But mine were ne'er the wyder.

Poore naked Tom is very drye:
A little drinke for charitye!
Harke, I hear Acteon's horne!
The huntsmen whoop and hallowe:
Ringwood, Royster, Bowman, Jowler,
All the chase do followe.

The man in the moon drinkes claret,
Eates powder'd beef, turnip, and carrot,
But a cup of the old Malaga sack
Will fire the bushe at his backe.[1]

CONTINENTAL INFLUENCES ON THE REVIVAL OF ROMANCE IN ENGLAND: (*a*) The Influence of Germany; (*b*) The Influence of the French Revolution.

CONTINENTAL INFLUENCES ON THE REVIVAL OF ROMANCE IN ENGLAND

(*a*) The Influence of Germany

During the last few years of the eighteenth century, an extraneous influence from Germany came to swell the insular stream of change that had already modified considerably the literary ideas of an Addisonian, Popian, and Johnsonian age. In Germany the literary climate had been much the same as in England. French Classicism, that from the time of the Restoration had so profoundly affected English literature, had taken root even more firmly in Germany. Johann Jacob Bodmer and his follower Heinrich Myller, sounded a vigorous protest against the literary domination of France, and by the publication of the *Nibelungenlied*, stirred the imagination of their countrymen to refashion a national literature, and turned their thoughts in the direction of greater freedom, greater spontaneity, a richer play of fancy. We need not concern ourselves with the band of writers who followed in their lead, for this is a matter of German literary history. It is sufficient to note the increasing interest in things mediæval, that showed unmistakably the flow of the Romantic tide; most significant sign of all, the sudden absorbing interest in the Shakespearean drama. Wieland's work as translator, was followed by the more famous Tieck-Schlegel translations (1797–1813), but it was Wieland who first interested Goethe in Shakespeare, and Herder who brought the magic of mediæval folk-song into his life. Meanwhile Lessing, about 1767, had tried to show the greater affinity between Sophocles and Shakespeare than between Sophocles and the French classical dramatists.

In short, just as in England, the new movement was a protest and a challenge to the decorous, common-sense, unimaginative ideals that had hitherto ruled poetry and prose. The protest was more violent, the reaction more excessive than in England, and the mediævalism of the new school laid greater stress on supernaturalism and mythology. Pure fantasy overran the literature to a degree of extravagance that found no counterpart in our country. But the classical models it superseded were less formidable than ours in England. Our Romantic Revival, as we have seen, proceeded more slowly, and for a long while its pioneers compromised with the classicists, whose impressive contribution to letters there was no denying, and even our greatest Romantic writers showed the lingering influence of the school of Dryden and Pope.

In Germany there were no great writers of the Classical school, so the movement went on more impetuously, and with little attempt at compromise; it synchronised with the awakening of German national self-consciousness. It was natural, therefore, that it should assume an importance that reacted on English literature. It had the good fortune to sweep into the stream some minds of the first magnitude; the youthful Goethe, the scholarly Schlegel brothers, Novalis the mystic, Fouqué the author of *Undine*, Brentano the romancer, and Uhland, one of the founders of romance philology.

Then in April 1788 a paper was read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh by that thoroughgoing sentimentalist Henry Mackenzie, in which attention was drawn to German romantic literature, and the "literary persons of Edinburgh" learned that "the taste which dictated the German compositions

[1] *Percy's Reliques.*

was of a kind as nearly allied to the English as their language; those who were from their youth accustomed to admire Shakespeare and Milton became acquainted for the first time with a race of poets who had the same lofty ambition to spurn the flaming boundaries of the universe and investigate the realms of chaos and old Night; and of dramatists who, disclaiming the pedantry of the unities, sought, at the expense of occasional improbabilities and extravagance, to present life on the stage in its scenes of wildest contrast, and in all its boundless variety of character. . . . Their fictitious narratives, their ballad poetry, and other branches of their literature which are particularly apt to bear the stamp of the extravagant and the supernatural, began also to occupy the attention of the British literati."

Some years later (1794), Scott became acquainted with a translation of Bürger's poems by William Taylor of Woolwich, having heard about his harrowing ballad *Lenore*, and in the following year published a translation of this poem which had greatly impressed him. Others beside Scott and Taylor had anglicised the poem, that had certainly left a strong impression on the imagination of the time. The ballad tells of a German soldier who had died in the Seven Years' War, and who came riding along on a spectral steed one night to carry off his sweetheart. Through the night they ride together, and come to a churchyard at cockcrow. Then in a flash the horse dissolves into mist, and the lover's armour falls to pieces, disclosing the skeleton within; and the girl realises that the charnel vault is her bridal chamber and her bridegroom none other than death.

Taylor is an important connecting link between German and English Romanticism. By his translations and literary criticism he did much to make German literature known in England. He had become acquainted with Goethe while in Germany and had published translations of Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris* (1793). His powers of criticism may have been small and his tastes were eclectic, but of his skill as a translator there can be no question: "You have made me hunger and thirst after German Poetry," wrote Southey, in 1798. Certainly he prepared the way for a greater mediator between the two countries—Thomas Carlyle.

One distinctive feature of German romantic literature lay in its multitude of fictions in verse and prose, dealing with ancient magic and sorceries. They found a more congenial soil amid the legend-haunted scenery of the Rhine and the Black Forest than in our island; and it must be allowed that German concocters of melodramatic romances managed their "horrors" better than Horace Walpole did in his *Castle of Otranto*. But the cult of the blood-curdler was not confined to Germany; and if Walpole owed nothing to their imaginings, Mrs. Radcliffe and Monk Lewis, Beckford and Mrs. Shelley, assuredly did; while Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *Marmion* were not free of debt to Goethe's play, *Goetz* (1773).

Just as Goethe's *Goetz* gave an impulse to Scott, so did his *Sorrows of Werther* colour the work of Byron. The *diablerie* freely made use of in Schiller's plays, left its impress on Coleridge.

More powerfully still did Kant influence the English Romantic movement on its intellectual side. Passing through the prismatic imagination of Coleridge, it served as a transcendental beacon to fire English religious thought, and to its inspiration both the High and Broad Church movements owe philosophic obligations.

Finally, so far as German Romanticism in English literature is concerned, came that vigorous interpreter—Thomas Carlyle.

Thus in reviewing the main current of the German influence in Britain, we have seen that England, through her Shakespeare, first carried the sacred fire of Romanticism to Germany. It is quite clear that the earlier phases of our Romanticism were quite independent. Percy's *Reliques*, Macpherson's *Ossian*, Walpole's *Romances*, owed nothing to our Continental neighbours. Only in the later years of the century did Germany repay her debt to England, and she did so on two distinct occasions. William Taylor, Scott, and Monk Lewis are the earlier borrowers from Germany. The second stage opens with Coleridge, and is rounded off by Carlyle.

With the differences between English and German Romanticism we are scarcely concerned in this necessarily brief sketch, but this much may be said: German Romanticism was more philosophic and critical, more coherent in its body of writing; it was not merely an exuberant outpouring of the artistic imagination, as with Scott, Coleridge, and Shelley, but a creed, and a religion. Madame de Staël's words significantly indicate its main trend: "Tragedies and Romances," she wrote, "have more importance in Germany than in any other country. They take them seriously there; and to read such and such a book, or see such and such a play, has an influence on the destiny and the life. What they admire as art, they wish to introduce into real life; and poetry, philosophy, the ideal, in short, have often an even greater empire over the Germans than nature and the passions." Wertherism involved the suicide of a number of young German students, and Schiller's *Robbers* started a fashion in highway robbery. English Byronics were satisfied by a disarrangement of collar, Scott's romances had no other effect save that of keeping our forefathers up reading when they ought to have been in bed. In short, while English Romantic literature was merely a light-hearted escape from, German literature was a serious expression of, its life.

(*b*) The Influence of the French Revolution

The Romantic movement in France followed the political Revolution, and was considerably later, therefore, than either the English or the German.

While it owed something to both Scott and Byron and Goethe, its own reaction upon other countries was slight, and its influence upon English literature is confined to a few Victorian writers like Swinburne. But the social and political upheaval in France did play a considerable share in influencing the course of English Romance.

Our indebtedness to Rousseau has already been touched upon, and it is possible to distinguish three phases of the French Revolution, each of which affected English Romanticism. (1) The Doctrinaire phase—the age of Rousseau; (2) the Political phase—the age of Robespierre and Danton; (3) the Military phase—the age of Napoleon.

Rousseau's sentimental influence touched Blake, Wordsworth, and Coleridge; his intellectual influence Godwin, and through Godwin, Shelley. A lover of external nature, and of simple ways of living, these things found expression in the earlier poets. The compelling value of love shown in the *New Heloise*, is what Shelley reiterated with so much ecstatic eloquence.

Rousseau's intellectual position was briefly this. Original impulses are good, because they are natural. Men have become evil, because they left unconterminate nature, growing luxurious and artificial. To escape from this state of sickness, we must return to the mountains and meadows. In other words, we are to destroy the social structure raised by man during centuries of human history, and start afresh. Why do political institutions exist? Merely to enable the rich man to rob the poor, the tyrant to oppress the weak. Force is mischievous. There is no compulsion with anything but love. There is no way of creating a new social order save by the light of pure reason. The perfectibility of human reason was taught by Godwin in his *Political Justice*, and from this book Shelley declared he had learnt "all that was valuable in knowledge and virtue." Godwin, of course, as we shall see later on, owed his views to others beside Rousseau. But Rousseau was a very potent influence.

Byron is scarcely touched by the intellectual side of the Revolution, and from the historical side he certainly stood aloof, at once fascinated and repelled. What does emerge in Byron's poetry is the last phase of the movement, with Napoleon as the great figure. Byron's own intensely egotistic nature seized upon that aspect of the Revolution which sees in it the conflict of personalities. The tremendous force of the greater personalities, especially Napoleon, intoxicates him, and runs through his poetry. Living at a time of disillusionment, it is rather as a negative power that he shaped in English Letters, but towards the close of his life he realised the moral emptiness of a restless, self-centred nature, and ended in a fine blaze of disinterested social enthusiasm.

The doctrinaire side of the French Revolution, the Revolution as an intellectual theory, gave substance not merely to Godwin's philosophy, but to Blake's spiritual creed. For Godwin it was a reasonable hypothesis; to Blake, a vivifying joy. Freedom to him was a kind of mystical rapture, antinomian certainly, but so exalted and impassioned, so free from dross, that it sounds the same high note of beauty as did Shelley's lyrical paeans.

In 1789 the second phase of the Revolutionary movement opens, and in the first flush of the struggle, it stirred to the depths the imagination of the English Romantic writers, and Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey caught the contagious enthusiasm. Truly as Wordsworth exclaimed:

> "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very heaven."

The spiritual asceticism and stoical vigour of Wordsworth's genius soon horrified him with the blood and fire across the water. But Wordsworth's recantation, and the lapse of Coleridge, must not blind us to the fact that the best work of both poets had been done in the days of their Revolutionary enthusiasm.

Yet the most whole-hearted singer of the Revolution was Shelley, and this was not because he looked more leniently on the horrors of the guillotine, or looked beyond the immediate disaster to a future reconstruction, but because his imagination was far less concrete than those of his great contemporaries. Ideas inspired him, not episodes; so he drank in the doctrines of Godwin, and ignored the tragic perplexities of the actual situation. Widely divergent in temperament and genius as Shelley and his mentor were, they had this in common—a passion for abstract speculation. Only where Godwin expressed them in pedestrian prose, Shelley gave to them music and colour.

And so it was that the catch phrase of the Revolution, "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," found no more impassioned champion, or more eloquent singer, than Shelley. But it was the Revolution as an *idea*, not as a concrete historical event.

Looking back upon these diverse streams of Romanticism, it will be seen that both the revival in England and in Germany are revulsions from French Classicism, and like the earlier Romantic movement in the fifteenth century, carry with them potentialities of intellectual unrest and speculation, that tend to break down other banks of thought than those of literary convention.

In Germany, Romanticism has a special political significance. It denoted not merely the breakdown of the long-lived Classicism, but the starting into self-conscious life of *National* feeling. In addition to this it fell in with a conservative and reactionary spirit, such as certainly marked no other romantic movement. Many German romantic writers joined the Roman Catholic Church, carrying their mediæval enthusiasm to a logical conclusion.

It was otherwise in Britain. On certain sides it took the radical impress of the French Revolution, and where it was unaffected by the Revolution, political views and literary ideals were wholly disconnected. No attempt was made to harmonise them. Scott, the most successful mediævalist, remained a Protestant, and despite his keen democratic sympathies as a novelist, maintained to the last a stiff and unyielding Toryism; while Byron, the most radical and revolutionary in some ways of our poets, was a warm admirer of the eighteenth century school of verse.

In literature as in politics we are a people of compromise, and compromise marks our Romanticism as it does everything else in English life. A more consistent and homogeneous development of the romantic spirit may be studied in conservative Germany, and in revolutionary France.

I. POETRY: (a) Burns and Blake.

ROBERT BURNS (1759–1796)

His Life

"I was bred to the plough," said Robert Burns; but "the *rank* of Burns is the very first of his art," was the dictum of Byron.

In December 1757, to a homely, clay-built cottage erected by his own hands in Alloway, near Ayr, William Burnes brought his bride, Agnes Brown, and here on the 25th of January 1759 (the year which also saw the birth of the German poet Schiller), Robert, the eldest of their seven children, was born; a few days later the frail homestead was damaged by a storm, and mother and child forced to seek shelter with a neighbour.

At the age of six Robert was sent to the village school, and the following year, with his brother Gilbert, placed under the tuition of John Murdoch, who has left us an interesting account of the brothers. "I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory," Burns tells us, and "though it cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent English scholar"; he also acquired a slight acquaintance with Latin and French. As a boy, few books came in his way; *The Life of Hannibal*—the first he read—made him wish he were "tall enough to be a soldier"; from the local blacksmith he borrowed *The History of Sir William Wallace*, that "poured a Scottish prejudice into my veins," said the poet, "which will boil along there till the floodgates of life shut in eternal rest." Later, he read considerably.

At thirteen, when most boys are poring over school books, making merry with school companions and getting into mischief, the young Robert was thrashing the farm crops for market, when fifteen he was his father's chief labourer and sharing the anxiety of his parents regarding ways and means—small wonder that the long working days ended with "a dull headache," which later gave rise to the nervous depression that affected him more or less throughout his life.

The country custom of working in couples in the fields, first caused him to "commit the sin of rhyme." The youthful poet's partner, Nelly Kirkpatrick, was "a bewitching creature" who inspired his first song, *Once I loved a Bonnie Lass*, before he was sixteen; after which he gradually added to his songs.

Burns' parents were a simple, devout, and affectionate couple, at times hard put to it to make both ends meet; his father had leased Mount Oliphant farm in 1766, in the hope of keeping his family together, but bad seasons and unproductive land, with the knowledge of borrowed money to be repaid, hung over him like a cloud. At last the "stern factor whose threatening letters set us all in tears" forced him to relinquish the lease in 1777, and the family migrated to Lochlea, Tarbolton, some ten miles distant.

At Tarbolton he took part in the local debating club, and in the endeavour to "give his manners a brush," joined a dancing class much against the wishes of his father, who from that time seemed to show a dislike for his son, which the poet wrote afterwards, "was one cause of the dissipation which marked my succeeding years."

The summer months of 1778 were spent on the smuggling coast of Kirkoswald, for instruction in land surveying; but here, while making fair progress in his studies, he "learned to fill his glass" and "mix without fear in a drunken squabble"; however, he gained considerable experience of men and women, and returned home in time for the harvest with certain rough edges rubbed off his rustic manners.

The next four years of his life were uneventful, if we except his friendship with Alison Begbie, the Mary Morison of his later poems, who refused his offer of marriage.

Despairing of making a livelihood at farming, in 1782 he left Tarbolton for Irvine to learn flax-dressing with a relative; here he made acquaintances "of a freer manner of thinking and living than he had been used to." This venture ended disastrously, their shop took fire, was burnt out, and "I was left," says Burns, "like a true poet, not worth a sixpence," so he was forced to return to the farm. The following year his father's health broke down, a life of constant worry and anxiety ended in consumption, and he died on February 13, 1784, a broken-hearted man. His mother lived to an advanced age.

On the death of his father, "the hell-hounds that prowl in the kennel of justice" took their due, and the family were left in that poverty which Burns termed "the half-sister of death, and the cousin-german of hell." They managed, however, to scrape a little money together to prevent separation, and with Robert's "hair-brained imagination" and his brother Gilbert's "good sense" they joined forces and started farming on their own account at Mossgiel, near Mauchline. Here it was he first met with Jean Armour.

Farming was no more prosperous in the hands of the brothers than it had been with their father, so in 1786 Robert decides to emigrate to Jamaica. He had taken his passage, when it occurred to him that by publishing some of his poems he might add to his resources and also leave a memento of himself in his native land. John Wilson of Kilmarnock agreed to print six hundred copies, and the collection included *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, *To a Mouse*, and several other well-known poems. The volume came under the notice of Dr. Blacklock, the blind poet and critic, who predicted such fame for the author that the Jamaica venture was abandoned and a trip to Edinburgh taken instead, where he arrived with a few shillings in his pocket and without a single letter of introduction; but his fame had preceded him, the peasant-poet became the rage, and all classes combined to do him honour. The following year (1787) a second edition was published by William Creech, of Edinburgh. On

the strength of a large sale he made a tour of the North before his return to Mossgiel; in 1788, having received some four or five hundred pounds from his publisher, he took Ellisland Farm, near Dumfries, married Jean Armour, and settled down. This farm was no more successful than the others, so when a friend succeeded in procuring him the office of exciseman for the district, in 1790, Burns added to his income by becoming "a poor rascally gauger, condemned to gallop two hundred miles every week to inspect dirty ponds and yeasty barrels." In 1791 farming was given up in disgust, and the following year, owing to certain sympathetic opinions expressed with the French Revolutionaries and British Reformers, an order was made by the Board of Excise to inquire into the matter. Burns repudiated their "damn'd dark insinuations of hellish, groundless envy," and also said, with regard to his Reform principles, "I look upon the British Constitution, as settled at the Revolution, to be the most glorious on earth . . . at the same time I think, not alone, that we have a good deal deviated from the original principles of that Constitution." When the French threatened invasion, Burns was one of the first to join the Dumfries Volunteers, and wrote several patriotic songs.

A third edition of the poems with the addition of *Tam o' Shanter* appeared in 1793, and in the same year he wrote *Scots wha hae*.

Grim poverty had tracked him relentlessly throughout his life and was about to beat a retreat; an excise collectorship was within view, and he was looking forward to "a life of literary leisure with a decent competence," when he contracted rheumatic fever, and at the early age of thirty-seven died, on July 21, 1796.

It has been said that "none but the most narrow-minded bigots think of Burns' errors and frailties but with sympathy and indulgence; and none but the blindest enthusiasts can deny their existence."

His Work

The bulk of Burns' work was done between 1789 and 1796. From the time of his sojourn in Mossgiel in 1784, his art found full and satisfying expression, with but little change in power of execution, and merely an increasing fondness for the lyric form in which he excelled.

Like his great contemporary, Scott, he loved the past and lived upon its glories; showing the intimate, spiritual connection between the life of a bygone age, and the life of his own day. The forms he used were forms hallowed by years of tradition, and he gave them fresh and glorious vitality. And never does he soar higher than when he kept to the old ballad verse and the "native wood notes wild." When he is under the passing influence of some other writer, as in certain of his English poems, he is far less effective. The great eighteenth century writers exercised no doubt a useful restraining influence at times, on his passion and headstrong genius; but their influence is best when unconscious, and when all is said, his richest obligations are to the minstrels of his own land.

In his pictures of men and women he is vividly concrete; and there we live in the open with the smell of the earth in our nostrils, and the sound of careless laughter and primal agonies in our ears. His figures have the same rude life, though not the same richness as Shakespeare's, and though he takes us mostly among the peasant class that he knew so intimately, he will introduce us also to the howling dervishes of piety, to Moodie who "clears the points of faith with rattlin' and wi' thumpin'"; to the factor and the retailer and the broad-minded lawyer, Gavin Hamilton, prosecuted for "causing his servants to dig new potatoes in the garden on the last Lord's Day." But to whomever he brings us, or wherever he takes us, he does so with a jolly, exuberant energy that gives us continual glimpses into the nature of the singer. It is always clear as noonday in his singing; there are no half lights, no subtle suggestions; it is sharply visualised, and clear cut. He is a genuine democrat, but in the sense that Scott was one, not in the sense that Shelley was one, or that the youthful Wordsworth was one. Unlike the great Romantic poets, the fever of the Revolution never burned in his veins. His radicalism was poetic, not political; though it was made of the substance that created revolutionaries. For if ever there was a poet who loved freedom as the breath of life, even when it ran into licence, that poet was Burns; and this passion for freedom, for the free expression of individuality, is a rough, elemental spirit, the spirit indeed of the great god Pan, who comes into our literature from time to time to freshen and revive it.

There is a royal ease about Burns at his best, he sings as naturally as he breathes:

> "Some rhyme to court the country clash,
> An' raise a din;
> For me, an aim I never fash;
> I rhyme for fun."

It was "fun" that rarely deserted him, and even during those last miserable years, when both health and spirit failed, and physical excesses wore him down, the "fun" of the singer defied the failing health of the man. He sang magnificently up to the very last.

Pace, passion, precision; these things mark his great achievements, whether in satire or song. *Tam o' Shanter* rushes along like a whirlwind; *The Jolly Beggars* is a foaming torrent; *The Cotter's Saturday Night* starts in a slow and pensive vein, but soon breaks away. He rattles happily through the narrative of the *Two Dogs*, and the songs are breathless melodies, with the warmth of the sunshine in them, and the freshness of the mountain air.

The special genius of Burns lay in the unerring instinct with which he seized upon the scattered folk-poetry of Scotland, transmuting its ore through the alembic of his own ardent imagination into the most precious gold, its alloy purged away, its treasure refined and beautified. Many of the familiar features in Scots poetry which we have noticed in dealing with the writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, reappear in Burns; love and intimate knowledge of Nature, a quaint and racy dialect, a passionate concreteness of imagery, a rich allusiveness—these were focussed with especial brilliance in his genius. He seemed to sum up in

himself all that was finest in Scots song. With the homeliness of Cowper and the veracity of Crabbe, he combined a breadth of humour and a poignant intensity transcending his English contemporaries. A man of the people, in the most literal sense of the word, his songs were often direct transcripts from personal experience, and though the women who inspired his song were rough toilers of the field, primitive and uncultured, they sufficed to inspire him with the finest love poetry in our literature.

Such a stanza as the familiar

> "Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
> Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
> Never met—or never parted,
> We had ne'er been broken-hearted."

concentrates in its simple intensity of feeling and expression the inmost heart of sex-romance. It is not, as many fine love poems are, the expression of a single mood and temperament, but the expression in inevitable language of the moods of thousands. Happy and sympathetic as his nature poetry is, it is as the poet of humanity that we remember him. The human note is paramount. Especially is he the poet of the rustic toiler; he knew their virtues and their frailties, and has sung of both with unequalled sympathy and insight. His own frailties as a man are their frailties; they bring him nearer to us, bound by ties of tenderness and pity.

When he strays away from his own class, when—whether as a letter writer or a poet—he tries to deal with social matters that are alien to his nature, or with forms of verse inimical to his art, then we merely see in him the rough uncultured man assuming an unnatural and incongenial pose. For he was not the poet of civilisation and culture, his wit was not subtle enough, his knowledge not full enough, for such matters; and when the tide of popularity floated him for a while into these strange harbours, we can only regret it—natural though it was—and wait until the momentary lapse is passed, and he is his own primal, simple, unaffected self again. And if his work reflects the tragedy it also reflects the humour; for humour is elemental no less than pathos, and the two lie closely together, cheek by jowl in the bosom of Nature. Is it surprising that he could draw laughter as well as tears: and that the man who could charm us with *My Love is like a Red Red Rose*, or thrill us with *My Fond Kiss and then we Sever*, could also move the genial springs of our nature with the gay and rollicking *Tam o' Shanter*, or the keenly satirical *Holy Willie's Prayer*.

Beyond the passion, the homeliness, the humour of Burns, there lies another reason for his compelling appeal in the potency of his personality. Widely as he differed from Byron in many ways, there are not a few personal points that account for the magnetism exerted by both men. Quite apart from his stage tricks, Byron expressed himself fully and unreservedly in his work: his vigorous vitality, his contempt for timid conventions, his delight in the strong and elemental, and his undernote of melancholy, all these are matters fully as dear to Burns. Even in their weaknesses they have a bond of union; and both men were frankly alive to their frailties and follies, whatever air of bravado they might assume in the face of the world.

The charm of Burns' best verse lies in his perfect mingling of man and nature. He carries into his scenic pictures the same tenderness he shows in dealing with the cottagers. This to a daisy:

> "Wee, modest, crimson-tippèd flow'r,
> Thou's met me in an evil hour;
> For I maun crush amang the stoure
> Thy slender stem:
> To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
> Thou bonnie gem."

And he loves a bird or a mouse with the caressing affection many of us scarcely give to children:

> "Ilk happing bird, wee helpless thing
> That in the merry months of spring
> Delighted me to hear thee sing,
> What comes o' thee:
> Where wilt thou cower thy chittering wing
> And close thy ee?"

The humanitarian note that is so notable a feature of the new era, that meets us in the pensive verse of Cowper, in the crusades of Blake, the theorising of Godwin and the philosophy of Bentham, strikes a clear, unequivocal note in Burns. Coleridge epitomised the feeling in his lines:

> "He prayeth well who loveth well
> Both man and bird and beast."

Poetry, as Wordsworth said, comes from the heart and goes to the heart. The truth of this saying is never more apparent than when we are reading Burns; whether he is telling of the love of a man for a maid, of family kinship round the cottage hearthstone, of a wounded hare, of a scarred and sorrowful human life; this vibrant heart appeal lifts the simple material of his songs into that thrill of life, which always gives literature its humanising power.

The Cotter's Saturday Night

My lov'd, my honour'd, much respected friend,
No mercenary bard his homage pays;
With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end;
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise:
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
What Aiken in a cottage would have been;
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween.

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh;
The shortening winter day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the plough;
The blackening trains o' craws to their repose:
The toil-worn cotter frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does homeward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
Th' expectant wee things, toddlin' stacher through
To meet their Dad, wi' flichterin noise an' glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinkin bonilie,
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
An' makes him quite forget his labour and his toil.

Belyve, the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun';
Some ca' the plough, some herd, some tentie rin
A cannie errand to a neebor town:
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps, to shew a braw new gown,
Or deposit her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

Wi' joy unfeign'd brothers and sisters meet,
An' each for other's welfare kindly spiers:
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet;
Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears.
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view.
The mother, wi' her needle an' her shears,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the new;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's an' their mistress's command,
The youngkers a' are warned to obey;
An' mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,
An' ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play:
"An' O! be sure to fear the Lord alway,
An' mind your duty, duly, morn an' night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright!"

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neebor lad came o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek;
Wi' heart-struck anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleas'd the mother hears, it's nae wild, worthless rake.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;
A strappin youth; he takes the mother's eye;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill ta'en;
The father cracks his horses, plough, and rye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate and lathfu', scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' an' sae grave;
Weel pleas'd to think her bairn's respected like the lave.

O happy love! where love like this is found!
O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I've paced much this weary, mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare—
"If Heav'n a draught of heav'nly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev'ning gale."

Jean

Of a' the airts the wind can blaw,
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonnie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best:
There wild woods grow, and rivers row,
And monie a hill between;
But day and night my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet and fair:
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
I hear her charm the air:
There's not a bonnie flower that springs
By fountain, shaw, or green;
There's not a bonnie bird that sings,
But minds me o' my Jean.

The Banks o' Doon

Ye flowery banks o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye blume sae fair!
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care!

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird
That sings upon the bough;
Thou minds me o' the happy days:
When my fause luve was true.

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
That sings beside thy mate;
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wistna o' my fate.

Aft hae I roved by bonnie Doon,
To see the woodbine twine:
And ilka bird sang o' its luve,
And sae did I o' mine.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Upon a morn in June;
And sae I flourish'd on the morn,
And sae was pu'd o' noon.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Upon its thorny tree;
But my fause luver stole my rose,
And left the thorn wi' me.

A Red, Red Rose

O my Luve's like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June:
O my Luve's like the melodie
That's sweetly play'd in tune!

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I:
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry:

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only Luve,
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my Luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757–1827)

James Blake was a hosier in Broad Street, Golden Square, with little money to spare for a son's education: but he did what lay in his power to assist William (b. 1757), whose artistic gifts showed themselves at quite an early age. James had wished to bring the boy up in his own trade, but Destiny had other views for the lad, and the father was sensible enough not to oppose them. At the age of ten the son went to a drawing school in the Strand, where he learned to draw from the antique. He remained here for four years, and during this time his eager, sensitive face was to be seen at most of the important art sales, where he was dubbed "the little connoisseur." During this time, moreover, he amused himself by writing verses, afterwards collected and published under the title of *Poetical Sketches*.

The merit of the verse is not considerable, but it has an interest for the student of literary history as showing Blake's early interest in the Elizabethans: a profoundly formative influence in shaping his genius.

He was apprenticed in 1777 to James Basire, an engraver, and remained with him for seven years, after which he went to the School of the Royal

Academy, where he learned to draw from the model. It is not known whether he ever studied painting systematically as he studied drawing and engraving, but we know that he experimented on his own account in water colours.

In 1782 he made a happy marriage with Catherine Boucher, the daughter of a market gardener, and the young couple lived for a while in Green Street, Leicester Square. Blake, who had always exhibited a picture in the Royal Academy, had made the acquaintance of many artists of note, among them Flaxman and Fuseli, and was getting into touch with literary society. The publication of his early verse marked him as a poet of promise, and though the two aspects of his artistic genius were for a while disconnected, the draughtsman and poet drew closer together as the years went on, until after a period of intermingling, the pictorial artist triumphed over the literary artist, in self-expression.

In 1784 he set up as a print seller and engraver, in company with another artist, but in 1787 the partnership came to an end, and he continued in business independently, becoming his own printer and publisher. The first fruits of his work were the *Songs of Innocence*, a volume remarkable both for the beauty of the verse, and the accompanying decorative designs. His mystical bent of mind shadowed in the volume, found fuller expression in *The Book of Thel* (1787), and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790), *The Gates of Paradise* and *The Vision of the Daughters of Albion* (1793). In 1794 came the *Songs of Experience*. In his earlier Songs he had given us his vision of the beauty in life, here he deals with the ugliness in life, that experience has taught him. With this volume Blake's finest work as a poet closes. His mystical faculty henceforth found a more satisfying expression in decorative design; his love of symbolism gave an obscurity to his later verse, that weakens their appeal; on the other hand it gave a richer complexity to his work as a decorative artist. From 1798 he is actively concerned in the art of illustration, and the books he enriched in this way are Young's *Night Thoughts*, Blair's *Grave*, and remarkable designs for the *Canterbury Pilgrims*, also his own prophetic books, the *Jerusalem*, *Emanation of the Giant Albion* and *Milton*. In later life he became, with John Linnell and other water-colour painters, attracted to astrology, and made his magnificent designs for the *Book of Job*. He died in 1827, at Fountain Court in the Strand.

Except the *Poetical Sketches* and *The French Revolution*, all Blake's works were produced on a method that he alleged was communicated to him in a vision by the spirit of his brother. Along with the text were illustrative designs and marginal ornamentations, these being worked on copper plates in relief, and afterwards printed in colour on paper, and finally coloured with exquisite delicacy by the artist himself. The illustrations to the *Book of Job*, made when he was seventy, give us the engraver at his best, both as a technician and imaginative artist. Despite an influential circle of intimate friends, the genius of Blake, whether as poet or artist, was unrecognised by the public at large, during his lifetime. But neglect never troubled him, for his hold upon the spiritual world comforted and sustained him through the vicissitudes of his life.

His Work

The early work of Blake was chiefly lyrical. The *Poetical Sketches* were published in 1783, the *Songs of Innocence* in 1789; then, in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, the symbolic note appears; it subserves more and more the symbolism of the poet and his mystical doctrines.

As a visionary he touched both Art and Letters; he is ever looking behind the visible frame of things, for the glories and terrors of the world of spirit; not with the earnest, ethical intent of Wordsworth, but with the eye of one who cannot help dreaming dreams and seeing visions. The visionary in him may and often will overpower the artist, and a wild confusion of imagery often blurs his work, whether as draughtsman or singer: but if at times it drowns his clarity and simplicity, it gives a phantom touch of extraordinary subtlety, and to much of his work an exquisite beauty, that lifts his lyric faculty into an atmosphere like that of no other poet. His first efforts precede the work of Cowper and Burns, and the better part of his work was accomplished before Wordsworth had found himself in the *Lyrical Ballads*. The liberty that Burns emphasized as an integral part of life, Blake cherished as the source of his spiritual intuition. He drew, as the peasant poet did, plenary inspiration from Nature, but with a mystic rapture alien to the Scots singer. Burns lingered on the concrete show of life; it is enough for him. Blake cares for the splendour of human love, or the rapture of the sun and sky, only so far as it carries him to some inner fire whence these have their being. Compare any love song of Burns with one of Blake's, and we realise this at once:

> "Like an angel glittering in the sky
> In times of innocence and holy joy;
> The joyful shepherd stops his grateful song
> To hear the music of an angel's tongue.
>
> So when she speaks, the voice of Heaven I hear;
> So when we walk, nothing impure comes near;
> Each field seems Eden, and each calm retreat;
> Each village seems the haunt of holy feet.
>
> But that sweet village where my black-ey'd maid
> Closes her eyes in sleep beneath night's shade,
> Where'er I enter, more than mortal fire
> Burns in my soul, and doth my song inspire."

He loved the Elizabethans for their naturalness and rhythmic music, but save at the very outset, he never imitated them, for his own lyric faculty was peculiarly original; less intense than theirs, but no less ecstatic and lovely, in its more ethereal way. It is like the singing of a happy child, expressed with the art of a man. He shook off the heavy preoccupations of a world in the first throes of the Industrial Revolution; he ignored the material cares that clog and chafe the spirit. He saw in the simple joys and raptures of ordinary life a Paradise regained. And in the *Songs of Innocence*, he entered an Eden to which man had long been alien. No poet, not even Wordsworth, drew from simpler sources than he; and none revelled with such gay

and exquisite abandonment of spirit in their life. If he had the naturalness and spontaneity of a child, he had also his wild luxurious fancy; and a quaint, delicious fantasy binds by threads of shimmering gossamer all living things; uniting them in a spirit of joyous abandon and tender sympathy.

"Farewell, green fields and happy groves,
Where flocks have took delight,
Where lambs have nibbled, silent moves
The feet of angels bright;
Unseen, they pour blessing,
And joy without ceasing,
On each bud and blossom,
And each sleeping bosom.

They look in every thoughtless nest,
Where birds are cover'd warm;
They visit caves of every beast,
To keep them from all harm.
If they see any weeping
That should have been sleeping,
They pour sleep on their head,
And sit down by their bed."

And the woods and streams add their benison also:

". . . the green woods laugh with the voice of joy,
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by;
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it."

But the rapture of Blake is not unthinking; while he loves his Eden, he is not deaf to the ugly clamour of the world outside. If he wrote the *Songs of Innocence*, he wrote also the *Songs of Experience*. The singer that gave us

"'I have no name—
I am but two days old.'
What shall I call thee?
'I happy am,
Joy is my name.'
Sweet joy befall thee!"

gave us also:

"My mother groan'd, my father wept,
Into the dangerous world I leapt;
Helpless, naked, piping loud,
Like a fiend hid in a cloud.

Struggling in my father's hands,
Striving against my swaddling-bands,
Bound and weary, I thought best
To suck upon my mother's breast."

His pastoral note is not the affectation of a mere sentimentalist. This is his ideal:

"For Mercy has a human heart,
Pity, a human face;
And Love the human form divine,
And Peace the human dress."

But he knew the bitterness of hate, and what misery it wreaked on human-kind.

"I was angry with my friend;
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe:
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I watered it in fears,
Night and morning, with my tears;
And I sunned it with smiles,
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night,
Till it bore an apple bright;
And my foe beheld it shine,
And he knew that it was mine,

And into my garden stole
When the night had veiled the pole;
In the morning glad I see
My foe outstretch'd beneath the tree."

Both the naturalism and mysticism of the Romantic Revival found expression in Blake; and on this point he differs from pioneers like Burns, who is simply naturalistic, or Cowper, who is only slightly touched by mysticism. On the naturalistic side he deals with the simplest phases of life; with the instinctive life of the child; with the love of flowers, hills and streams, the blue sky, the brooding clouds; and yet the mystical vision of the poet is always transforming these familiar things, touching obscure aspects, and spiritualising the veriest commonplace, into something strange and wonderful. The human note in Burns is untouched by supernaturalism. To Blake every spot is holy ground; angels shelter the birds from harm, the good shepherd looks after his sheep, the divine spark burns even in the breasts of savage animals. Cruelty to animals incensed Blake, he would give them the same freedom he wishes for humankind.

"A Robin Redbreast in a Cage
Puts all Heaven in a Rage!
A Dog starved at his Master's Gate
Predicts the ruin of the State.
A Horse misused upon the Road
Calls to Heaven for Human Blood.
Each outcry of the hunted Hare
A fibre from the Brain does tear.
A Skylark wounded on the wing
A Cherubim does cease to sing.

He who shall hurt the little Wren
Shall never be belov'd by men.
The wanton Boy that kills the Fly
Shall feel the Spider's enmity.
He who torments the Chafer's sprite
Weaves a Bower in endless Night.
The Catterpillar on the leaf
Repeats to thee thy Mother's grief.
Kill not the Moth nor Butterfly,
For the Last Judgment draweth nigh."

Mysticism in poetry is blended usually with a wistful melancholy. "The desire of the moth for the star; of the night for the morrow," animates the poet's soul; and in his hungering after eternity, he feels more and more dissatisfied with the show of life. But Blake is an exception. He is a joyful mystic; for him the morning stars sing together, and the splendour of life outweighs its shadows. There are no mournful regrets in his verse, no sighing for a day that is dead. Evil rouses his anger, not his tears. Sorrow he accepts cheerfully as a necessary twin to joy:

"Joy and woe are woven fine,
A clothing for the soul divine;
Under every grief and pine
Runs a joy with silken twine.
It is right it should be so;
Man was made for joy and woe;
And, when this we rightly know,
Safely through the world we go."

Unlike some mystics he did not seek after the spirit world because he despised the world of sense, but because he loved it so well he felt there was more in it than man could fathom here. His mysticism was not an aspiration for the future; it was a realisation of the present. "The Kingdom of

Heaven is within you": we have only to free ourselves from what is base and paltry, and we live in this realm of spiritual beauty now. The only unreality for Blake was the external world; the great reality the world of his visions. Whatever validity we may attach to these visions, we cannot write them off as the delusions of an unbalanced mind, for he never confused them with the phenomena of ordinary life; they were differentiated by his mind as something wholly distinct.

Blake's mind was abnormal certainly, and his faculty for visions extraordinary, but the fact that we cannot share them does not necessarily discredit them. We do not even solve the problem by calling him mad; for even the madman's world is not necessarily an untrue world; mingled though it may be with false estimates as to the precise nature of what he sees and hears. "The Lunatic, the Lover, and the Poet are of imagination all compact"; and to the madman may be vouchsafed glimpses of awful realities, that are denied to ordinary perception and feelings. That Blake cannot correlate all he sees, or clarify his cloud of imagery, is another matter altogether. Yet whatever view we hold as to the objective value of Blake's visions, they profoundly controlled his Art; and if the source of much obscurity, and no little violent over-emphasis, is also the source of much that is beautiful and inspiring. No poet has externalised ideas with greater vividness than he; and had he only taken as much care to focus his visions, as he did to beautify and elaborate his technique, his power as a poet would have been more compelling.

But there is a side of his mysticism that is deep-rooted in the practical side of his nature, and touches the problems of life. His view of Love resembles Shelley's. We do what is right not from some categorical imperative, but because love bids us act so. The intellectual analysis of spiritual truths revolted him. Logic and argument offend him. I know, he says, and there is an end of the matter. For theology he had no love, and priestcraft he abominated. It was the theologian and the priest who had added to the misery of the world by their distorted picture of God.

Love, thought Blake, was so often confused with self-love:

> "'Love seeketh not Itself to please,
> Nor for itself hath any care,
> But for another gives its ease,
> And builds a Heaven in Hell's despair.'
>
> So sung a little Clod of Clay,
> Trodden with the cattle's feet,
> But a pebble of the brook
> Warbled out these metres meet.
>
> 'Love seeketh only Self to please,
> To bind another to Its delight,
> Joys in another's loss of ease,
> And builds a Hell in Heaven's despite.'"

Another bond of union with Shelley is his passion for Liberty. He thunders at kings and priests and oppressive rulers in his prophetic writings, nor will he spare his own country when he thinks she has been false to freedom.

> "But vain the Sword and vain the Bow,
> They never can work War's overthrow.
> The Hermit's Prayer, the Widow's Tear
> Alone can free the World from fear.
>
> For a Tear is an Intellectual Thing,
> And a Sigh is the Sword of an Angel King,
> And the bitter groan of the Martyr's woe
> Is an Arrow from the Almightie's Bow."

There is an elfin note in Shelley, there is an elfin orchestra in Blake. At times it sounds in our ears like something grotesque and incomprehensible. The singer loses himself in the "illimitable universe," leaving upon our minds a mere confusion of signs and symbols; or under the glow of some great idea rushes into the wildest extravagances of speech.

But at his best, his daring simplicity, his *naïveté*, his spiritual beauty, claims our sympathies and thrills our imagination, as only a great poet has power to do.

Songs of Innocence

> Piping down the valleys wild,
> Piping songs of pleasant glee,
> On a cloud I saw a child,
> And he laughing said to me:
>
> "Pipe a song about a Lamb!"
> So I piped with merry cheer,
> "Piper, pipe that song again;"
> So I piped: he wept to hear.
>
> "Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;
> Sing thy songs of happy cheer!"
> So I sung the same again,
> While he wept with joy to hear.
>
> "Piper, sit thee down and write
> In a book that all may read."
> So he vanish'd from my sight;
> And I pluck'd a hollow reed,
>
> And I made a rural pen,
> And I stain'd the water clear,
> And I wrote my happy songs
> Every child may joy to hear.

Song

> My silks and fine array,
> My smiles and languish'd air,
> By Love are driven away;
> And mournful lean Despair
> Brings me yew to deck my grave:
> Such end true lovers have.
>
> His face is fair as Heaven
> When springing buds unfold:
> O why to him was't given,
> Whose heart is wintry cold?
> His breast is Love's all-worshipp'd tomb,
> Where all Love's pilgrims come.
>
> Bring me an axe and spade,
> Bring me a winding-sheet;
> When I my grave have made,
> Let winds and tempests beat:
> Then down I'll lie, as cold as clay:
> True love doth pass away!

I. POETRY: (*b*) WORDSWORTH AND HIS GROUP—Wordsworth—S. T. Coleridge—Robert Southey—Samuel Rogers—Mrs. Hemans—James Montgomery—Robert Montgomery.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770–1850)

His Life

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH was born at Cockermouth in Cumberland, April 7, 1770, being the second son of John Wordsworth, "attorney-at-law." Both of his parents died while he was a boy, and William recalled an intimate friend telling him that his mother once said to her, that "the only one of her five children about whose future she was anxious was William; and he, she said, would be remarkable, either for good or for evil."

"The cause of this was owing to my stiff, moody, and violent temper; so much so that I remember going once into the attic of my grandfather's house at Penrith upon some indignity having been put upon me, with an intention of destroying myself with one of the foils, which I knew was kept there. I took the foil in hand, but my heart failed. Upon another occasion, while I was at my grandfather's house at Penrith, along with my eldest brother, Richard, we were whipping tops together in the large drawing-room, on which the carpet was only laid down upon particular occasions. The walls were hung round with family pictures, and I said to my brother, 'Dare you strike your whip through that old lady's petticoat?' He replied, 'No, I won't.' 'Then,' said I, 'here goes!' and I struck my lash through her hooped petticoat; for which, no doubt, though I have forgotten it, I was properly punished."

If only Wordsworth had proved as self-critical of his work as he was of his conduct, posterity might have been spared so voluminous a body of indifferent verse. But our poet was not built that way. He seems to have been an eager reader while a boy, and was well acquainted with the great critics of the eighteenth century. However, it was not from books, but from his early associations with Nature that he was to find his real inspiration.

In October 1787 he went up to St. John's College, Cambridge. Despite the qualms he afterwards expressed in his long autobiographical poem, *The Prelude*, that he had in the thoughtlessness of youth paid too little heed to the impressive surroundings, yet many of the cloistral charms of the University are recorded by him with affectionate fidelity. "Scarcely Spenser's self," he protests,

> "Could have more tranquil visions in his youth,
> Or could more bright appearances create
> Of human forms with superhuman powers,
> Than I beheld loitering on calm clear nights
> Alone, beneath this fairy work of earth."

While the poet had gazed, as Milton had done before him, on the "storied windows richly dight" of King's College Chapel, and

> "That branching roof
> Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells
> Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
> Lingering, and wandering on as loth to die—
> Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
> That they were born for immortality."

Even in these years he was meditative and susceptible to scenic beauties; for the rest he was somewhat a boorish youth, self-confident, not overfond of study, his deepest sympathies being with the simple life of the country. Gradually his mind expanded, his sympathies broadened, and a holiday tour in Switzerland and France brought him into the ardent Revolutionary atmosphere of the Continent. Perhaps if a suitable opportunity had presented itself he would have flung himself into the life of soldiering at this time. He had been a keen student of military history; while his passionate, headstrong nature was captivated by the idea of commanding troops, and fighting for the Revolutionary cause.

But he had no means of realising this dream, and on leaving Cambridge he went to London, uncertain as to his future, certain only that he was not "good enough for the Church." London did not take his youthful imagination by storm: he was not a "crowd-worshipper" like Browning, and though interested in Man, cared little for Tom, Dick, and Harry. In fact he always preferred to study the "still, sad music of humanity" from meditative heights.

None the less his life in London was not unproductive, as two or three noble sonnets and such tender pieces as *The Reverie of Poor Susan* testify. But Paris rather than London obsessed his youthful imagination, until the bloody horrors of the Revolution sickened him, his enthusiasm grew cold and faltered, and was ultimately turned in other directions.

During the period of disillusionment his greatest comforter proved his sister Dorothy:

> "She gave me eyes, she gave me ears,
> And humble cares, and delicate fears;
> A heart the fountain of sweet tears;
> And love, and thought, and joy."

After the production of the *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth and his sister set sail for Germany. The four months' stay there did little to broaden his mind or intensify his powers; for, unlike Coleridge, he was not sensitive to the thought of his age, and not responsive to new influences. But it proved an agreeable holiday, and perhaps the detachment from English surroundings served to throw the poet more exclusively upon his imaginative memories. Certainly the English poems he wrote during this time, such as *Lucy Gray* and *Ruth*, are especially happy in their simplicity and charm.

On his return he and his sister went to live in the Lake district, where his earliest impressions had been gathered; and round Grasmere and Rydal the poet lived for fifty years.

His marriage to Mary Hutchinson of Penrith took place in 1802. It was not an epoch-making event in his imaginative life, though it proved a happy and peaceful union. She made a good wife and an interesting companion; but as an influence cannot rank either with his sister Dorothy, or with Coleridge.

The record of these years is, on the whole, the pleasant, uneventful record of a man of simple, austere tastes, much goodness of heart and some

what limited powers of friend-making. One of the generous friendships to be noted was that with Sir George Howland Beaumont, who at an earlier period had become acquainted with Coleridge, and even before he met Wordsworth was a great admirer of his verse. To Beaumont, Wordsworth wrote many interesting letters relating to his work. Wordsworth's long poem *The Prelude*, finished in 1805, was intended as a sort of portico to *The Recluse*. *The Recluse* was never written; a fragment only surviving under the title of *The Excursion*—a poem which he had hoped to shape as "the first and only true philosophical poem in existence." During later years Wordsworth more considerably extended his circle of acquaintances. Keats saw and admired him, Rogers proved friendly and useful, and Sir Henry Taylor—a younger admirer—introduced the poet to some of the Benthamite school, while Crabb Robinson followed his movements with the attentive respect of a disciple; Robb at a later date showed him an almost fervid worship, that greatly delighted the old poet. In fact, after many years of neglect he was at last regarded by many with respect; with respect and affection by a few, but concerning his poetic genius there was no cavilling. Jeffrey's thundering "This will never do" had long since died into silence.

In 1843, on Southey's death, he accepted the Laureateship, but his work was done, and the few years that still remained were interesting to his personal friends, rather than to the world outside. He died in the spring of 1850.

The very reverse of Lamb in temperament, Wordsworth yet runs the same risk as Lamb did of being wrongly estimated. Lamb, full of whims and caprices, extravagant moods and a wilful childishness that puzzled and offended serious men like Carlyle, was often put down as a wild, irresponsible creature, amiable and amusing, perhaps, but with no solid depth. And yet, as we know, those surface qualities which so charmed some and so offended others, concealed a fine moral beauty and astonishing strength of character.

Wordsworth on the other hand, whose portentous seriousness often moved the irrepressible Elia to some prank, was obviously deficient in those touches of light and shade, those little graces of disposition that endear a man to his friends, and it is thought by many that he was a cold, self-sufficient man. But he was not cold, and behind his natural reserve glowed a strong, deep, even violent feeling. His affection for his sister and daughter bears witness to this. But he had subjected his feelings to a rigorous self-control, knowing his own passionate nature.

De Quincey speaks significantly of the brooding intensity of his eye, and the bursts of anger at the report of evil doings, and Coleridge has referred to him in some memorable lines as an "ever-enduring man."

Among the many pen sketches of the man, that of Carlyle is perhaps the happiest, and there is unerring penetration shown in the concluding sentence:

"He talked well in his way, with veracity, easy brevity and force, as a wise tradesman would of his tools and workshops, and as no unwise one would. His voice was good, frank and sonorous, though practically clear, distinct and forcible rather than melodious; the tone of him business-like, sedately confident, no discourtesy, yet no anxiety about being courteous; a fine, wholesome rusticity, fresh as his mountain breezes, sat well on the stalwart veteran and on all he said and did. You would have said he was a usually taciturn man, glad to unlock himself to audiences sympathetic and intelligent when such offered itself. His face bore marks of much, not always peaceful, meditation, the look of it not bland or benevolent so much as close, impregnable and hard. The eyes were not very brilliant but they had a quiet clearness; there was enough of brow and well-shaped; rather too much of cheek; face of squarish shape and decidedly boyish; large-boned, lean, and still firm knit, tall and strong-looking when he stood, a right good old steel-grey figure, with a fine rustic simplicity and dignity about him, and a veracious strength looking through him."

His treatment of Hartley Coleridge will serve to extenuate many little ungracious mannerisms. When all hope of reclaiming Hartley from drink was over, Wordsworth paid for his lodgings, took care of him and treated him with gentle, large-hearted consideration to the day of his death.

Miss Martineau, in her interesting description of him, has depicted him as being often attended by half a score of cottagers' children, the youngest pulling at his cloak or holding by his trousers, while he cut ash switches out of the hedge for them.

It is a pretty touch, and may be taken with other and less amiable vignettes of the "good old steel-grey figure."

His Work

It was Wordsworth's aim as a poet to seek for beauty in meadow, woodland, and the mountain top, and to interpret this beauty in spiritual terms. He is for ever spiritualising the moods of Nature and winning from them moral consolation; and it was his special characteristic to concern himself, not with the strange and remote aspects of the earth and sky, but with Nature in her ordinary, familiar, everyday moods.

Wordsworth's best work was done between 1796 and 1808. Although he lived until 1850 and was writing up to the very last, there are only occasional flashes of his real genius during this later period. Roughly speaking, one may say that the decline of his poetic inspiration and the decline of his revolutionary enthusiasm synchronised. The Republican Wordsworth is the great Wordsworth; the Tory Wordsworth is the second-rate and third-rate poet. It would be unfair to say that he did no work of the first order after 1808; part of *The Excursion* was written after that date, and there is fine work there; there are memorable Sonnets also, e.g. *I thought of Thee* (c. 1820), *Scorn not the Sonnet* (c. 1823). But the old power, the ancient magic, comes fitfully and rarely, whereas in the earlier period, the output is wonderfully level in its high quality.

Looking first of all at the poet's general outlook on life, it will be noted that he is concerned specially with two things—Nature and Man. The subject matter is less comprehensive than at first sight it appears.

In Nature, the poet is concerned far less with the sensuous manifestations that delight most of our

Nature poets, than with the spiritual that he finds underlying these manifestations. The primrose and the daffodil are symbols to him of Nature's message to man; the grandeur of the mountain torrent appeals to him because he can link its beauty in his mind with the glory of the floating clouds, with the charm of a young girl's face; a sunrise for Wordsworth is not a pageant of colour, it is a moment of spiritual consecration:

"Magnificent
The morning rose in memorable pomp
Glorious as e'er I had beheld—in front
The sea lay laughing at a distance; near
The solid mountain shone, bright as the clouds,
Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light;
And in the meadows and the lower grounds
Was all the sweetness of a common dawn—
Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,
And labourers going forth to till the fields.
. . . . . .
My heart was full; I made no vows, but vows
Were then made for me; bond unknown to me
Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
A dedicated Spirit."

With the outward show of things, with Nature's bewildering profusion, her teeming concrete life, her riddles, her magical appeal to the eye and the sense of touch, he is little concerned. The appeal to the ear does indeed interest him as a poet, but only because through sound he can interpret the particular consolation and benison he is seeking. He listens to the discords only to detect the harmony underlying "a central peace subsisting at the heart of endless agitation." Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats, were all poets of Nature, but in what different ways. Wordsworth and Shelley have this point in common. They, unlike their contemporaries, *intellectualised* Nature; their music, each glorious in its own way, is set to transcendental language. They are not merely poets of Nature, they are prophets of Nature; they are concerned less to depict than to explain; less to marvel at her beauty than to exult at its inner significance. They are ever moving from the external fact to the idea. It is otherwise with Coleridge, Byron, and Keats.

Coleridge, sympathising as he does intellectually with his friends' transcendentalism, is far more readily influenced by the multifold sensuous appeal of Nature; while Byron and Keats delight with a frankly pagan joy in landscape, waterscape, and cloudscape, and are content to worship the goddess, not to consult the oracle.

But if Wordsworth and Shelley have a common end in view, their way of achieving that end is sufficiently distinctive. Wordsworth proclaims peace and order to be at the heart of things; Shelley, Love; Shelley's method is largely diffusive, Wordsworth's concentrative. Shelley finds expression in a cry—sometimes of pain, sometimes of joy—but always at his most impassioned moments a cry; for Shelley's mind was ever overhung with wonderful dreams.

There is very little of the visionary in Wordsworth's spiritual meditation.

That this method of repression carried with it limitations is obvious. Variety, light and shade must needs be sacrificed. On the other hand it certainly gave depth and intensity, whence came what Matthew Arnold finely called "the bare, sheer, penetrating power" of his best work. And to achieve this stark splendour he is content to leave much on one side. Thus he speaks of times when

"The gross and visible frame of things
Relinquishes its hold upon the sense,
Yea, almost on the mind itself, and seems
All unsubstantialised."

He gazes around him and

"Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
And ocean's liquid mass in gladness lay
Beneath him.—Far and wide the clouds were touched
And in their silent faces could be read
Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank
The spectacle; sensation, soul and form
All melted into him; they swallowed up
His animal being; in them did he live,
And by them did he live; they were his life.
In such access of mind, in such high hour
Of visitation from the living God,
Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.
No thanks he breathed, he proffered no regret;
Rapt into still communion that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise
His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
That made him; it was blessedness and love."

The passage is a fine one, more notable, however, for its spiritual ecstasy than for its poetic presentment. To combine the two, and to be both deeply mystical and nobly poetical, that is the constant aim of Wordsworth, and while it is productive of many of his most disastrous experiments in verse, it is the source also of some of his greatest things—grand rhapsodies such as *Tintern Abbey*.

Unhappily it is so fatally easy for mysticism to slip into theological formulæ, and when the Moralist obtrudes poor Imagination has to hide away. One deplores the didacticism of Wordsworth the more, since he can when he wishes give delicate and subtle expression to the sheer sensuous delight of the world of Nature. He can feel the elemental joy of Spring:

"It was an April morning; fresh and clear.
The rivulet, delighting in its strength,
Ran with a young man's speed; and yet the voice
Of waters which the river had supplied
Was softened down into a vernal tone.
The spirit of enjoyment and desire,
And hopes and wishes, from all living things
Went circling, like a multitude of sounds."

And can take a pleasure fully as keen in the placid lake:

"The calm
And dead still water lay upon my mind
Even with a weight of pleasure, and the sky,
Never before so beautiful, sank down
Into my heart, and held me like a dream."

He can actualise with fine clarity all the little graces and charms of a summer day:

"The northern downs
In clearest air ascending, showed far off
A surface dappled o'er with shadows finely
From brooding clouds,"

and can throw the very spirit of June into a couplet:

"Haunting Summer when he throws
His soul into the briar rose."

A brief study of Wordsworth's scenic pictures, with their rhythmic felicities, will reveal to the student the peculiar power of the poet in actualising sound and its converse, silence.

An interesting contrast with Shelley is discernible here. Wordsworth is the poet of the ear just as Shelley is the poet of the eye, and never more felicitous than in conveying some phase of silence, tone of sound.

The following passages will illustrate to some extent the dominant characteristic, for, as Shelley said, Wordsworth has awakened "a kind of thought in sense."

"The winds that would be howling at all hours
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers."

"To lie and listen to the mountain flood
Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves."

"A gentle shock of mild surprise
Had carried far into his heart, the voice
Of mountain torrents."

How distinctively Wordsworthian these lines. What poet other than Wordsworth would have preferred the sound to the pictorial effect of the torrent? Shelley in particular would have delighted in dwelling on the prismatic effect of the sunshine upon the waters. Shelley, indeed, is a direct contrast, and insists on colour where we might reasonably expect that sound would have attracted him. Take his famous *Ode to the Skylark*. He is more concerned with colour effects than the song of the bird.

"Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest;
Like a cloud of fire
The blue deep thou wingest. . . ."

Then again, in the well-known description of skating—*The Prelude*—with what suggestive power does Wordsworth convey the still, frosty, sensitive atmosphere:

"So that the darkness and the cold are fled.
. . . . . .
Meanwhile the precipices rang aloud,
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron, while far-distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy not unnoticed."

The restfulness of evening, and the spacious quietness of the country allure him:

"It is a beauteous evening calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a nun
Breathless with adoration, the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity."

"How sweet it is, when Fancy rocks
The wayward brain, to saunter through a wood!
An old place full of many a lovely brood,
Tall trees, green arbours, and ground flowers in flocks;
And wild rose tip-toe upon hawthorn stocks. . . ."

In fact, just as the thinker in Wordsworth is always striving to realise the peace at the heart of things, and of the joy that comes from peace—so does the literary artist strive to exhibit this peace and joy through one of the channels of sense, the one most effective for his purpose.

Now and again the eye is charmed with some pictorial fancy, as the image of the mountain daisy with

"The beauty of its star-shaped shadow thrown
On the smooth surface of the naked stone,"

which was written when the poet was over seventy. But, the witchery of sound is the witchery that we realise with the most compelling beauty. As the poet of the eye he has many peers, and in richness of effect and subtlety of appeal must yield the palm to a crowd of singers less great than himself; but when it comes to the symbolism of sound, Wordsworth is supreme. No other poet could have written:

"A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In springtime from the cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides,"

or in a very different mood have given us this:

"Better than such discourse doth silence long,
Long, barren silence, square with my desire
To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
In the loved presence of my cottage fire,
And listen to the flapping of the flame,
Or kettle whispering its faint undersong."

If we pass from Wordsworth's attitude towards Nature to his attitude towards Man, the same method is observable. Just as in Nature he is always eager to pass from the concrete to the abstract, so in dealing with humanity he is less concerned with individuals than with certain qualities common to mankind. Nature had awakened his earliest inspiration; under her influence he had dedicated himself to the life of the interpretative imagination; and he saw man—if I may so put it—through Nature's eyes, dwelling therefore, not on accidents of temperament and disposition that go to differentiate men and women from each other, but on those primal qualities of humanity where Man and Nature touch and blend.

Thus his love of Nature is transferred to the shepherd and simple dalesman of the North, and after them to ordinary men and women with ordinary joys and sorrows.

The strong Republican sympathies of his earlier years gave a glow to his pictures of rural life where the real and ideal meet and blend, and where the humdrum is spiritualised. In later years, when the latent conservatism of his nature gained the mastery, and when he shrank from the Revolutionary watchword that inspired Shelley throughout life, his characterisation is less sure, and where once he had been content to let his pictures tell their own tale, he is anxious to emphasize some particular moral.

But already he had done much for the agricultural poor that Dickens was to achieve later for the town poor—had drawn attention to the tender homeliness of their lives, shown their fearless independence and rugged sincerity. Indeed, the sentiment of that hackneyed strophe from *Lady Clara Vere de Vere* concerning "kind hearts" and "simple faith" is more essentially Wordsworthian than Tennysonian in spirit; and his knowledge of peasant ways and of the peasant character was gained by patient, watchful investigation. He believed in them and he admired them, and with the passion of a scientist he collects eagerly facts and traits that may help him to build up his portraits; and it is ever one thing he is on the look out for—something to inspire man's higher faculties. He watches men and

women with the expectant gaze of a man who is looking for some particular attitude or posture which he is anxious to portray. No doubt by this method he missed a great deal of rich human material, but he is a moralist at heart, with one steady purpose in view, and leaving aside much that was fascinating and perplexing, he contents himself with a few broad, simple issues; and there, at his best, he exhibits a massive splendour of compelling power.

It is quite natural that Wordsworth should elect to deal with the more primal life of country places, where simple, human qualities were not overlaid by artificial conventions. Ignoring the coarseness and pettiness of this life, he fixed his gaze upon the qualities of strength, endurance, unaffected simplicity, courage, and hope. And thus he winnows away the baser elements, until he finds the pure gold. Nature and Humanity he treats over in the same way:

> "Love had he found in huts where poor men lie,
> His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
> The silence that is in the starry sky,
> The sleep that is among the lonely hills."

Only by purging away the accidentals, only by allowing your own emotion to be "recollected in tranquillity," only by climbing the heights of contemplation and ridding yourself of petty cares and distractions, will you get a true and faithful vision of human life. That was Wordsworth's view.

Some men are hard to read, because of their reserve:

> "He is retired as noontide dew,
> Or fountain in a noonday grove,
> And ye must love him, ere to you
> He will seem worthy of your love."

He draws our attention to the pathetic figure of the aged Cumberland beggar, and enlists our sympathies for the old leech gatherer; placing each of these simple figures in a noble background of landscape and cloudscape until they are dignified by the spacious beauty of the earth:

> "Gray locks profusely round his temples hung
> In clustering curls like ivy, which the bite
> Of Winter cannot chin; the fresh air lodged
> Within his cheek as light within a cloud."

Apart from the sanctifying touch of Nature, men and women are poor creatures to Wordsworth. The farther we travel from Nature, the more paltry we become. This is the burden of his splendid sonnet *The World is too much with us*. Better, he says in effect, people the woods and streams, the plains and ocean, with nymphs and gods and goddesses, and retain something of the fresh simplicity and austere endurance of Nature, than give up our souls to the mere accumulation of wealth and to the superficial life of pleasure.

From these general considerations of Wordsworth's poetry let us pass to consider more particularly the methods of the literary artist rather than the poetic thinker; the manner of the poet rather than his matter.

The forms he adopts are the narrative, the lyrical, the elegiac, and the sonnet.

His narrative poetry is sometimes cast into heroic metre, sometimes into that of the ballad, and in each medium he achieved distinction. His ballad verse has not the fire and lilt of Scott, but exhibits often a simple force and chaste tenderness unmatched by his contemporaries. Here, as always, in Wordsworth's poetry, simplicity lapses at times into triviality, but in ballads like *Lucy Gray*, there is no touch of triteness to mar the simple strength and unaffected beauty of the story. His narrative powers are considerable; and his gift of simple directness stands him in good stead here; yet he is not at his best in narrative for the simple reason that his deep interest in spiritual crises rather than physical, his preference for meditating over his subject and delaying or obscuring the story, renders him effective in snatches, but not effective as a good narrative poet should be.

The full force of his genius is best displayed in elegiac, sonnet, and lyric form. Read his narrative, and rarely do you feel the glow of romantic imagination. But once allow the meditative muse in Wordsworth to come to the fore, and the slumbering romantic fervour breaks forth at once in such lines as:

> "Old unhappy far-off things
> And battles long ago."

To the lyric Wordsworth brought a freshness and pensive sweetness that give them quite an original place in lyric literature. The Elizabethan lyric had become stereotyped; when not imitated it was neglected for other forms. Wordsworth breathes new life into it. He had not the force and versatility of Shelley, but he helped to prepare the way for that consummate lyric genius, by taking themes of rural life as inspirations. The dainty and delicate grace of poems like *Three years she grew*, *She dwelt among the untrodden ways*, *I wandered lonely as a cloud*, familiar and well-worn as they are, have no superior of their kind in our language.

There is a certain metallic quality in Wordsworth's poetic style, that gives a strength and grandeur to his happiest inspirations, and merely strikes one as hard and awkward in his uninspired moments. But whether good or poor, the metallic quality is never absent; it may be gold with which he provides us, it may be aluminium, but there is the inflexibility, the non-plasticity of metal in any case.

Here we may find an analogy with Milton's diction, which has the same hard strength, though not to the same extent as Wordsworth. This is not due to any literary influence, merely to the fact that there is a measure of the same spiritual temperament and way of expressing that temperament in both men. Wordsworth, as we know, admired Milton greatly, but he was far too individual, and unresponsive to external influences, to mould his diction on that of another, however great. This metallic quality gives a clear-cut purity to the poet's work, that invests the naturalness of his method with dignity. Why, we ask, is there this deplorable inequality in Wordsworth's style? No poet had a higher regard for his calling than he; the slap-dash carelessness of Byron is as alien to him as the crude luxuriance of the early Keats; yet no great poet has descended to greater depths of bathos and puerility

than he. The poet who could write with a fine austere reserve:

"She is dead,
The light extinguished of her lonely hut,
The hut itself abandoned to decay
And she forgotten in the quiet grave,"

could also perpetrate these lines about a grave:

"I've measured it from side to side,
'Tis three feet long and two feet wide."

The poet who could pen such a line as:

"The silence that is in the starry sky,"

could suffer this line without a qualm:

"The silent heavens have goings on."

His deficient sense of humour is accountable for many banalities, but the chief reason for this mixture of puerility and grandeur is due to his poetic theory. This theory is set forth elaborately in the preface to the later editions of the *Lyrical Ballads*, where Wordsworth professes to use "a selection of the language really used by men . . . in humble and rustic life," while at the same time he tried "to throw over" the matter described, "a certain colouring of imagination." Now, had Wordsworth meant by this a rich infusion into poetic diction of racy dialect and the quaint idiomatic expression of an unlettered rustic, he could no doubt have achieved some remarkable results, as Burns and others have done. But nothing was more remote from his intention. He would scrupulously purge the rustic speech of all particular conventions; and in so doing take away its individual flavour, reducing the diction to something that was merely bald and prosaic.

Poetry can learn something from rustic speech most assuredly, as Ebenezer Elliot showed, but this is something quite other than Wordsworth imagined.

Happily, Wordsworth's splendid imagination was often too potent for his theory, and in his best work he unconsciously ignores it altogether.

His natural diction is the "grand manner," resonant with stately beauty, and it is only when uninspired, or in some mistaken outburst of conscientious endeavour, that he jars upon us with his flat and foolish speech. But if the theory as he understood it and tried to practise it was an unsound one, there was behind the theory the entirely sound principle that poetic style should be as simple and sincere as the language of everyday life, and that the more the poet draws on elemental feelings and primal simplicities the better for his art.

If the lyric form suited him better than the narrative, the sonnet and elegy suited him even better still. He was first stirred in the direction of sonneteering by hearing his sister Dorothy read some of Milton's in 1801; and from this date to the end of his life he was richly productive in sonnet making, with an impressive total of five hundred to his credit.

The best of these were written during the early years of the century, mostly in 1802, and include: *Milton; Westminster Bridge; It is a beauteous evening;* and *The World is too much with us* (1806). After 1808 there is a decline, not in workmanship but in imaginative beauty; but right up to the last he will flash out again and again with something of the old passion and splendour, and this just when we had made up our minds that his inspired mood was a thing of the past. Of these later sonnets, some of the *River Duddon* group and one on *Mutability* are among his best.

The technical exaction of the sonnet medium, the necessity for clear and orderly development, and the opportunity it afforded for intellectual articulation, all these things lent themselves readily to Wordsworth's reflective cast of mind, and cool clarity of diction. The particular form he chooses is not that known as the Shakespearean form—only once does he experiment in this—but in the Miltonic form based on the traditional Italian structure. Wordsworth did valuable service to English poetry, by thus reinstating the sonnet; and the poets who followed him, notably Keats and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, were not slow to take the hint, and develop still further its possibilities.

His elegiac poems, with which we may couple the odes, also give us Wordsworth in his highest moments, and exhibit his power of fusing metaphysical thought with lyrical feeling. Nature and the spirit that animates and transcends Nature, this is the theme of *Tintern Abbey*, and *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*. Our appreciation of the *Ode* will depend to some extent upon our sympathy with its metaphysical standpoint; but even those who are not touched by Wordsworth's idealism of childhood, cannot be blind to the splendid rhythmic felicities with which the *Ode* abounds, felicities that have passed into our language and become incorporate with it.

What then is the cumulative effect of Wordsworth's verse; what its dominant note? It is not ecstatic, not gay, not tragic, but it is profoundly restful and restorative.

There is a fine sedative influence about Wordsworth's poetry which soothes and tranquillises, never enervates, and John Stuart Mill, distracted by the political problems of the day, turned to him with infinite relief. "I felt myself," he says, "at once better and happier as I came under their influence." The curative influence attributed to "light rays," from which heat rays have been excluded, suggest an analogy with the influence of Wordsworth's work. The "heat rays" of poetry find little place in his calm, meditative music; all that can fever or distract has been eliminated. What remains is a beneficent focus of cool light. Many have been the sick minds since Mill's time on whom the "medicine" of Wordsworth's poetry has wrought a like change.

In his admirable pen-portrait of Wordsworth, Carlyle speaks of his "veracious strength," and this perhaps is the most enduring quality in his best work. To many of us he has given a glimpse of "truths that wake to perish never"; while even to those for whom his mysticism carries no inspiration there are touches like these, splendid in their stoical fortitude:

"We men that in our morn of youth defied
The elements,—must vanish; be it so!—"

Ode

Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood

There was a time when Meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparell'd in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore:—
Turn whereso'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

The rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the rose;
The moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare;
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath pass'd away a glory from the earth.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the echoes through the mountains throng,
The winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every beast keep holiday;—
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd-boy!

Ye blessed creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
O evil day! if I were sullen
While earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning,
And the children are culling
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
And the babe leaps up on his mother's arm:—
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
—But there's a tree, of many, one,
A single field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homely nurse doth all she can
To make her foster-child, her inmate Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

Upon Westminster Bridge

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

Lucy

Three years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

"She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the storm
Grace that shall mould the maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772–1834)

His Life

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born at Ottery St. Mary in Devonshire on October 23, 1772. His father was an easy-tempered country parson, remarkable both for his knowledge of books and ignorance of practical affairs. It was fortunate, therefore, that in his mother he had a parent who proved more energetic in advancing her son's interests in life. The future "logician, metaphysician bard" was a dreamy and indolent lad, loving nothing better than to lie in the sun and read fairy tales, until he had thoroughly alarmed himself by all kinds of magical possibilities. Sensitive, introspective, highly imaginative and indolent, the child was in every respect father of the man. In 1781 his father died, and Coleridge obtained a preferment to Christ's Hospital. At this critical juncture, it is a pity that there was no one to exercise a wise directing influence upon him. His only relative in London was an affectionate but injudicious uncle who, declared Coleridge, "used to carry me from coffee-house to coffee-house and tavern to tavern, where I drank and talked and disputed as if I had been a man."

Coleridge's disposition was singularly attractive, and at this time he had shaken off his indolence for a while and was full of youthful enthusiasms. From the allurements of bootmaking to the study of Homer nothing came amiss to him. One day he was desperately anxious to be a cobbler; another day he pored over all the medical books he could find; at another time the accents of "the inspired charity boy," as Lamb called him, reciting Homer or Pindar, "sounded through the walls of the old Grey Friars." Even at this early age he suffered from bad health, particularly rheumatic trouble, the legacy of a childish runaway adventure.

At Cambridge 1791–4, he became an ardent republican, and was the leader of a band of enthusiasts apparently more addicted to wine parties than to the pursuit of learning. As an interlude he ran away and enlisted, a strange proceeding, as he had a horror of warfare. However, this freak soon came to an end, and shortly after we find Coleridge engrossed in a scheme for the reformation of the human race. The scheme bore the high-sounding term—Pantisocracy; and was communistic in essence. Kindred souls alone were to be admitted, while the scene of action selected was the backwoods of America. Southey participated in this scheme, which soon fell through when it came down to the sordid matter of ways and means.

In the spring of 1796, through the assistance of his friend Cottle, he published his first volume, *Poems on Various Subjects*, a volume curiously stiff and turgid in form for a poet who was to shape so soon as a pioneer of the simple style. Twelve months later he met William Wordsworth at the village of Racedown in Dorsetshire, a memorable encounter that proved the beginning of a memorable friendship.

The stimulus of Wordsworth's companionship helped to mature his poetic genius, and the sympathetic intelligence of Dorothy Wordsworth also had the happiest effect upon the young poet's imagination.

Dorothy Wordsworth had been impressed from the first by Coleridge's genius and attractive personality, and in 1845 we are told, across the mists of nearly half a century, she, as well as her brother, retained the liveliest possible image of Coleridge on his arrival at Racedown; how he did not keep to the high road but leapt over a gate and bounded down the pathless field by which he cut off an angle. And at the time she thus recorded her first impression of the visitor:

"He is a wonderful man. His conversation teems with soul, mind, and spirit. Then he is so benevolent, so good-tempered and cheerful, and like William. At first I thought him very plain, that is for about three minutes. . . . His eye is large and full and not very dark, but grey—such an eye as would receive from a heavy soul the dullest expression, but it speaks every emotion of his animated mind. It has more of the poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling, than I have ever witnessed. He has fine dark eyebrows and an overhanging forehead."

His marriage in 1795 to Sarah Fricker did not prove a happy one. It was the old story of incompatibility of temperament. Coleridge was a difficult man to get on with; erratic, indolent, and unbusinesslike; his wife felt keenly these deficiencies, and had not sufficient sympathy or imagination to see the better side of the man, or to realise what judicious management might effect.

About this time Coleridge had thoughts of entering the Unitarian ministry; and it was on the occasion of his preaching in the Unitarian Chapel at Shrewsbury that Hazlitt first heard him. Hazlitt's enthusiasm found expression in one of his best papers, and although years brought a measure of disenchantment, nothing ever quite dissipated that enthralment that the poet seemed to cast over all with whom he came into contact. Soon after this, however, Coleridge's religious opinions underwent a change, and in 1807 he was described as a fully developed Trinitarian. Probably the study of German philosophy contributed largely to this change. In other matters also, a conservative reaction set in; for his Revolutionary enthusiasm died away, and he threw in his lot with the Tory politicians.

Meanwhile the *Lyrical Ballads*, the fruit of a walking tour in North Devon with Wordsworth, had brought the two poets fame. But early in the new century the poet's health broke down, and as a solace for the physical pain that racked him, he had recourse to opium. "It acted," he said, "like a charm, like a miracle. I recovered the use of my limbs, of my appetite, of my spirits, and this continued for nearly a fortnight. At length the usual stimulus subsided, the complaints returned, the supposed remedy was resorted to, but"—adds the poet solemnly—"I need not go through the dreary history."

The slavery had now begun. The tyranny of opium spread its dark shadow over the remainder of Coleridge's life. He has given us some account of his state of mind in the pathetic *Ode to Dejection*, from which I quote a few lines.

"There was a time when, though my path was rough,
This joy within me dallied with distress,
And all misfortunes were but as the stuff
Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness.

But now afflictions bow me down to earth:
Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth;
But O, each visitation
Suspends what Nature gave me at my birth,
My shaping spirit of imagination."

In a letter written about this time he says:

"You bid me rouse myself. Go, bid a man paralytic in both arms, to rub them briskly together and that will cure him."

His friends did break him off the habit for a time; but he suffered so dreadfully as to say it was better to die than to endure his present sufferings. But the effort was persisted in. From time to time his health improved for a short space, and something of the old gaiety returned—and he was very amused at the theory advanced by one of his friends that the cause of his ills was not opium but Satanic power. His general attitude was one of melancholy, sometimes terrible in its self-abasement. To one friend who had been very kind to him he wrote thus:

"DEAR SIR,—For I am unworthy to call any good man friend—accept my entreaties for your forgiveness and prayers. Conceive a poor miserable wretch, who for many years has been attempting to beat off pain, to a constant recurrence to the vice that reproduces it. Conceive a spirit in Hell, employed in tracing out for others, the road to that heaven from which his crimes exclude him. In short, conceive whatever is most wretched, helpless and hopeless, and you will form as tolerable a notion of my state, as it is possible for a good man to have. I used to think the text in St. James, that 'he who offended in one point, offends in all,' very harsh; but I now feel the awful, the tremendous truth of it. In the one crime of opium, what crime have I not made myself guilty of—Ingratitude to my Maker, and to my benefactors—injustice and unnatural cruelty to my children, self-contempt for my rejected promise—breach, nay, too often falsehood. After my death I earnestly entreat that a full and unqualified narrative of my wretchedness and of its guilty cause may be made public, that at least some little good may be effected by my direful example."

What more terribly pathetic letter was ever penned by a man of genius. His health was consequently on a perpetual see-saw, and although his imaginative powers, excited to additional brilliance by the narcotic, flamed out at intervals, his power of concentration seemed growing weaker and weaker. A voyage to Malta and Italy effected little good. It is true that his intellectual powers were brilliant enough, but with an inability to fix his mind upon any consecutive piece of work, this availed him little. His fine intelligence, like a rudderless boat, drifted hither and thither on the stream of every passing emotion. Urged on by his friends, he started a course of lectures in London, which, though broken by ill-health and its usual attendants, achieved much success. A subsequent course on Shakespeare seems to have been even more striking. These lectures were delivered extemporaneously, and only fragmentary records exist of them. Coleridge began one of his lectures thus: "The lecture I am about to give you this evening is purely extemporary. Should you find a nominative case looking out for a verb or a fatherless verb for nominative case, you must excuse it." He spoke for nearly two hours and fascinated his audience by his eloquence of thought and expression.

In 1819, depressed by misunderstandings with his friends, and worried by the usual want of money, he received a fresh blow by the expulsion of his son Hartley, on the score of intemperance, from his Oxford Fellowship. The scholastic success and brilliant promise of his boy had always been a joy and pride to Coleridge. He saw in his degradation the inheritance of his own weakness of will. His health became worse, and he plunged yet more deeply into the solace offered by his grisly comforter. From this date until his death in July 1834 he never regained his health, except for brief intervals. The tortures of conscience, however, and the harsh but often salutary admonition of friends, helped to keep the opium habit within bounds, although it had affected his constitution far too deeply to admit of any permanent recovery, or of any complete emancipation. His days of literary work were now things of the past. It was as a talker, and one of the most marvellous that ever lived, that he is noted during the last ten years of his life. His reputation and his attractive personality brought to Highgate some of the first minds of the day. On those famous Highgate Thursdays men crowded to hear him speak in his strange chanting voice, on every conceivable subject. From 1830 till his death in 1834, he was practically confined to a sick-room. Harriet Martineau and Emerson sought him about this time. Despite his long rambling monologues, and the impossibility of engaging him in connected conversation, for his intellect invariably shot off into some meteoric display on its own account, despite this, he fascinated all hearers. Miss Martineau, whose way of thinking, and whose mental temperament was at the opposite pole to that of Coleridge, wrote, "His eyes were as wonderful as they were ever represented to be, light grey, and actually glittering. I am glad to have seen his weird face, and heard his dreamy voice." Even Carlyle, who humorously growled in characteristic caustic fashion that in listening to Coleridge you "swam and fluttered in the mistiest, wide, unintelligible deluge of things for most part, in rather profitless, uncomfortable manner," yet admitted that "glorious islets at times rose out of the haze." "Balmy, sunny islets of the blest and the intelligible; and that eloquent, artistically expressive words you always had."

In the summer of 1834, Coleridge felt that he was dying.

"I am dying," he said pathetically, "but without expectation of a speedy release. Is it not strange that very recently bygone images and scenes of early life have stolen into my mind like breezes blown from the spice islands of youth and hope—those twin realities of the phantom world? I do not add love, but what is love but youth and hope embracing, and seen as one?"

On the evening before his death he dictated to his friend, Mr. Green, portions of his Religious Philosophy, till gradually articulation became difficult: he fell into a state of unconsciousness, and a few hours later passed quietly away.

"He was the most wonderful man that I have ever known," faltered Wordsworth when he heard of his death. Such a tribute coming from a man always chary of praise, and never prone to gush, is

certainly significant. Various views are held as to Coleridge's place as a thinker; there is unanimity about his remarkable personality.

Richly imaginative, subtly humorous, acutely discerning; with a genius for friendship no less than for letters, he left an indelible impression upon all with whom he came into contact. Notwithstanding his infirmities of character, he was essentially a great man. Lamb's happy dictum was not the extravagant hyperbole of a partial friend, but the appraisement of a true critic, when he called him "an Archangel—slightly damaged."

His Work

The claims of Coleridge to a niche in the temple of poetic genius rest on a tenuous body of verse, the production of six short years. For the remaining thirty it is as an adventurer in other realms of literature that he must be appraised. With these aspects of his work we are not concerned here. It is Coleridge as one of the great poets of Romanticism that compels our immediate attention.

The first impulse towards expression in poetry came with the chance reading of the *Sonnets* of Bowles: it stirred within him that rich and ardent delight in natural beauty that had always been his dower, and of which he now became, for the first time, self-conscious as an artist.

His early experimental work merely shows us a young man of versatile intellect and highly sensitive imagination, with ill-regulated power of expression. Republican ideals claimed him for a brief space—briefer even than in the case of Wordsworth—but his political sonnets, turgid in quality, are interesting only so far as they show the intellectual influence of Priestley and Godwin. Social radicalism, however, never struck firm roots in his nature; and of far more importance in his earlier mental history is the influence of metaphysics.

Nominally an Unitarian, his religious philosophy is largely Pantheistic, and his Theism has little in common with the matter-of-fact Unitarian thought of his day. Attracted towards large monistic theories of life, he is fascinated by mystics like Boehme and Plotinus; and such philosophers as Spinoza, Hartley, and Berkeley appealed powerfully to his speculative imagination.

His spiritual interpretation of the universe, coupled with a rich yet delicate appreciation of the beauties of the physical world, may be traced in his verse at this period, in *The Song of the Pixies* (1793); the *Lines on an Autumnal Evening; Lewti* (1794); especially in *Religious Musings* (1794–1796). His *Full of Robespierre* is quite unimportant as a piece of literature, though here and in some of the *Religious Musings* the revolutionary ardour, always more idealistic than concrete, breaks out in vaguely rhetorical expression.

The first period ends with the rupture of his early intimacy with Southey, and in the memorable meeting with Wordsworth.

In the second period, the intimacy with Wordsworth and with his sister Dorothy bears its first fruits in the odes *To the Departing Year*, and *To France*. This abandonment of his youthful social ideals is celebrated here with a fire, passion, and freedom of expression hitherto lacking in his work, the scenery round Stowey moving him more profoundly than his former scenic surroundings. Probably the subtler charm of his fresh nature pieces, *The Lime Tree Bower, Frost at Midnight, Fears in Solitude* (1797–8), is due more to the influence of his new friends than to any greater appeal in the environment. But the full flowering of his genius—this was only the blossom time—came (in 1797–8), with *The Ancient Mariner, Christabel* (1797–1800), and *Kubla Khan* (1798). Of these poems, *Kubla Khan* is only an exquisite dream fragment. The other two exhibit the highest power of Coleridge as a poet; and Coleridge at his highest has no rival even among his great contemporaries. To have written one of these poems alone would have brought him within the small circle of supreme makers of verse. Each of its kind is unique. After *Christabel* the poet never reached the heights again, though a few minor pieces survive of his later writings, dealing with *Dejection, Love and Hope*, that show some measure of his ancient cunning. It was not a decline of poetic power, as in Wordsworth's case, but an arrest of poetic power, of creative imagination. His imagination was as rich as ever, his intellect as restless and keen, but they sought expression in channels other than those of verse.

This sudden drying up of the fount of poetry has been attributed by many critics to defects of character, especially infirmity of will. That infirmity of will had much to do with the chaotic and fragmentary character of his later work cannot be gainsaid; that it explains his abandonment of poetry I do not believe. The peculiar character of his poetic inspiration, its sudden outbursts, its dreamlike character, the mysterious way in which it would come and go, leaving him unable to complete what he had begun; these things suggest something that might well visit a youthful imagination, and then, when the flush of youth and youth's sensibility had passed, itself melt away. "The wind bloweth where it listeth. . . ." The quality of Coleridge's poetic genius does not suggest long life; it is like a superb sunrise that is bound by the laws of its being to fade into the light of common day; for it draws its sustenance from the mysterious half lights, the meeting of night and morning, and with the dissipation of nocturnal mysteries its magic is weakened and dissipated.

There are two outstanding characteristics in the poet's work, the first a psychical, the second an intellectual quality. The psychical element lies in its pervading sense of mystery; the intellectual in the crystalline simplicity with which this sense of mystery is expressed.

A love of mystery was, as we have seen, a dominant feature of romantic story-telling, from Horace Walpole and Mrs. Radcliffe down to Sir Walter Scott. It led its earlier votaries into the dim recesses of mediævalism, where the wealth of superstition, and the robuster excitements of stirring adventures furnished copious material for the mystery maker. But if we compare the supernaturalism of Walpole and Mrs. Radcliffe with that

of Coleridge, we realise in a moment the difference between the maker of horrors and the maker of horror. These romancers were not charlatans; their sense of mystery, though not delicate and subtle, was genuine enough so far as it went. But they mistook its manifestations; they felt bound to give their mysteries a "local habitation and a name," nor stayed to remember that the indefiniteness they strove so vigorously to banish lay at the source of its magic; and that by subtle suggestion, not by crude description, do you create the atmosphere.

Coleridge does not use the spells of mediævalism as so many stage properties, he absorbs them into himself, and they reappear rarely distilled and inextricably blended with the poet's exquisite perception of the mysteries that surround the commonplace things of everyday life. If we survey the content of *The Ancient Mariner*, its amazing comprehensiveness will strike us, no less than its imaginative power. Every phase of landscape, seascape, and cloudscape is touched upon, from the quiet scenery of an English woodland to the lurid scenery of the tropics. The poet touches with equal power and beauty every phase of life at sea: the ship flying before the freshening gale, the torrid fierceness of the stagnant waters, the freezing cold of the Arctic region, the horrors of the becalmed passage, the blessedness of the welcome rain, the clear sky, the storm cloud, the great sea fog, the incarnate fury of the storm, the soothing peace of the temperate seas, the loneliness of the great ocean, and the welcome sight of familiar landmarks once again as the mariner views the peaceful English harbour; and over the whole poem there is that strangeness and remoteness even when describing simple ordinary things, that marks the highest Romantic art. With that supreme art which ever seems artless, so simple and spontaneous are its methods, Coleridge gives us glimpses from time to time of the wedding feast to which the Mariner had been bidden—a ballad within a ballad; and how effective the contrast between the innocent merriments of the bridal feast from which the Guest has been detained and the tragic anguish of the mysterious Mariner's tale:

> "'The sun came up upon the left,
> Out of the sea came he!
> And he shone bright, and on the right
> Went down into the sea.
>
> 'Higher and higher every day,
> Till over the mast at noon—'
> The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
> For he heard the loud bassoon.
>
> The bride hath paced into the hall,
> Red as a rose is she;
> Nodding their heads before her goes
> The merry minstrelsy.
>
> The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
> Yet he cannot choose but hear;
> And thus spake on that ancient man,
> The bright-eyed Mariner."

The whole poem is wrought with the colour and glamour of the Middle Ages. From the quaint embroideries of the "merry minstrelsy" to the central pattern of the Catholic idea of penance; everywhere we see the mediæval touch—the fateful cross-bow; the vesper bell, the shriving hermit, the invocation to "Mary Queen." Yet there is no slavish attempt to reproduce another age. The voyage itself is not such a voyage as mediæval mariners were wont to make. The voyage, whatever use the poet may have made of Shelvocke's *Voyages*, with its story of a black albatross, is in essence created out of "such stuff as dreams are made on." It is the ethereal and subtle fancy of a great poet; "the baseless fabric of a vision." We do not know even if the weird scenes that the Mariner describes were actual occurrences or mere phantasmagoria, the product of his heated and distorted imagination. The poet leaves it splendidly vague, as it should be left. All we do realise is the spell of the story, the horrors of the lonely seafarer, the dreadful effect on the Mariner of the ghostly sights and sounds. The Mariner himself gathers up into his person the elements of romance, mesmeric and haunting in his compelling power, mysterious and awe-inspiring in appearance; with his glittering eye, his skinny hand, his arresting voice, and the spiritual misery that drives him into speech to ease his tortured soul.

The supernaturalism of the poem is no matter of stage-lighting as with "Monk" Lewis; of hysterical declamation as with Mrs. Radcliffe; of scenic accessories as with Scott; it is an atmosphere that suffuses the entire tale; the outcome of a hundred delicate touches and subtle hints, made convincing to the reader by the profound psychological insight of the poet.

Note the masterly skill with which we are prepared for the spiritual horror:

> "Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
> 'Twas sad as sad could be;
> And we did speak only to break
> The silence of the sea!"

The nerves are overwrought by the dreadful silence; then comes the physical strain of the parched system:

> "Water, water everywhere,
> And all the boards did shrink;
> Water, water, everywhere,
> Nor any drop to drink."

The stagnant waters with their myriad putrescent life, the intolerable waiting for the calm to break and *then*, when mind and body were broken down, the appearance of the phantom ship.

As the spectral horrors multiply, the poet reproduces for us with the imaginative fidelity of the great artist, those little pictures of sunrise and sunset, and the quiet beauty of the moonlight night, that give additional power to the strange and fearful sights:

> "The sun's rim dips; the stars rush out;
> At one stride comes the dark;
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The moving Moon went up the sky,
> And nowhere did abide;
> Softly she was going up,
> And a star or two beside—"

Nowhere in our literature is the benison of sleep to the tired, racked spirit suggested with more moving power than in these lines:

"Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul."

During sleep the spell is broken, and the long-hoped-for thing comes to pass:

"And when I awoke it rained."

The phantasmagoria melt away, the elements attune the watcher to the welcome change, while the very bush shares in the peaceful aftermath:

". . . the rain made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune."

Yet wild as the story is, with its mediæval superstitions and irresponsible happenings, it is not only made actual and vital to our imagination by its faithful picture of Nature, and its psychological insight, but by the simple humanity with which it is saturated. Interwoven with the strange and recondite are the primal emotions of love, hate, pain, remorse, and hope.

"He prayeth best who loveth best" is no moral tag at the close of a fine descriptive poem, but the summing up in a few lines of the spirit with which the entire poem is charged; an intimate kinship with all "happy living things."

So far we have dwelt more particularly on the psychical aspects of the poem; it remains to note the technical beauty of the work, with its simple clarity and artless art.

The homely diction of mediæval balladry is reproduced with a skill greater than that even of Scott:

"Day after day, day after day
We *stuck*. . . ."

"Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea."

"The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he;
And he shone bright and on the right
Went down into the sea."

"I moved and could not feel my limbs,
I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep
And was a blessed ghost."

All the resources of the old ballad metre are used by the poet, yet never overdone; for instance, the effective medial rhymes and the trick of alliteration:

"The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free—"

The ballad habit of repetition:

"With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could not laugh nor wail," &c.
"With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call."

"The seraph band each waved his hand,
It was a heavenly sight," &c.
"The seraph band each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart," &c.

A besetting sin with the Romantic poet is the abuse of archaic terms. Chatterton was the great sinner here; but Keats in his earlier work is nearly as bad. Coleridge, with finer instinct, just gives an occasional archaism to preserve the mediæval atmosphere:

"Eftsoons his hand dropt he."

"And, by the holy rood."

"And now all in my own countree."

"A certain shape, I wist."

Thus all the simple beauty of the old ballad is imparted with none of its extravagances; while with the mediævalism he blends the modern spirit, so as to convey a more moving magic to the reader to-day.

Where, in *The Ancient Mariner*, Coleridge reproduces for us the old ballad form, in *Christabel* he goes to the metrical romance, and uses variations of the octosyllabic couplet, variations introduced deliberately to harmonise with the "nature of the imagery or passion." In sheer artistic power the poem is scarcely inferior to *The Ancient Mariner*; where it yields precedence is in its more limited appeal and more circumscribed *milieu*. Whether it be taken as an allegory or merely as another excursion into the dim dream-world of fantasy, its beauty and magic are indisputable.

Once again we are in a mediæval atmosphere; there is the old moated castle with its feudal accompaniments of heralds and pages, with its massive gate "ironed within and without"; we have the witch woman with the evil spell and the innocent victim; hints of the tourney. This poem is a fantasia on the elemental theme of good and evil, light and darkness, set in the appropriate key of moonlight and nocturnal mystery. The precise character of Geraldine; how far she was evil; the nature of her spell; the reason for its failure; such matters are left as vague and indefinite as the flickering shadows cast by the great fireplace in the hall. Nor does it really matter. The essential point is that the poet triumphantly suggests the eeriness and remote horror of the scene without having recourse to any elaborate machinery.

The note is struck in the opening lines:

"'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock,
Tu-whit!——Tu-whoo!
And hark, again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew.

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff bitch;
From her kennel beneath the rock
She maketh answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour;
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud;
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?
The night is chilly, but not dark.
The thin grey cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is grey:
'Tis a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way."

Just as in *The Ancient Mariner*, the diction is homely and simple; you are conscious of no effort to make the flesh creep; yet every touch tells. You feel the oppressive silence, the ominous loneliness; the

Powers of Darkness are abroad; whatever light there is shrinks and dwindles; the firelight in the hall dies down, while in the chamber of Christabel "the silver lamp burns dead and dim."

The first part of the poem is flawless; the second part, for all its passages of beauty and tenderness, is in another key. The earlier mood has been forgotten; time has elapsed since the unfinished poem was put aside. Other interests have crowded upon the poet's mind, and it is obvious that he cannot recapture the elusive charm of the midnight scene. Yet the second part of *Christabel* abounds in noble lines and lovely images; and one could ill spare it on this account.

The fine passage:

> "Alas! they had been friends in youth;
> But whispering tongues can poison truth;
> And constancy lives in realms above;
> And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
> And to be wroth with one we love
> Doth work like madness in the brain.
> And thus it chanced, as I divine,
> With Roland and Sir Leoline.
> Each spake words of high disdain
> And insult to his heart's best brother:
> They parted—ne'er to meet again!
> But never either found another
> To free the hollow heart from paining—
> They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
> Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
> A dreary sea now flows between"—

touches a note of poignant personal emotion rare in the work of Coleridge.

Individual as his Nature poetry is, with a subtlety and delicacy rarely found in Wordsworth, yet undoubtedly he was influenced by his friend, and a comparison of the scenic touches in his earlier work and in his work after he had known Wordsworth, shows an intensity of affection and an accuracy of perception not to be explained away merely in terms of poetic development. Wordsworth's power of idealising the commonplace had impressed him. Wordsworth had shown the wonder of ordinary sights and sounds; it remained for Coleridge to exhibit their mystery.

His supreme strength lay in his marvellous dream faculty; one might add that the dream faculty lay at the root of his greatness as a poet and his weakness as a man. But there is no finer dreamer in English verse; this quality it is that gives distinction to *The Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel*, and makes of *Kubla Khan* so superb a triumph. His plays are not interesting, and despite the flashes of beauty in *Remorse* and *Zapolya*, it is quite clear that the medium is uncongenial to his powers.

Several of his briefer poems—*Love*, and *The Dark Ladie*, *Youth and Age*—have grace and tenderness, and touches of personal emotion; but his reputation as a poet will rest on *The Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel*, and *Kubla Khan*: to have written these is to touch the heights of poetry, and to mingle with the great immortals.

Youth and Age

> Verse, a breeze mid blossoms straying,
> Where Hope clung feeding, like a bee—
> Both were mine! Life went a-maying
> With Nature, Hope and Poesy,
> When I was young!
>
> When I was young?—Ah, woeful When!
> Ah! for the change 'twixt Now and Then!
> This breathing house not built with hands,
> This body that does me grievous wrong,
> O'er aery cliffs and glittering sands,
> How lightly then it flashed along:—
> Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,
> On winding lakes and rivers wide,
> That ask no aid of sail or oar,
> That fear no spite of wind or tide!
> Nought cared this body for wind or weather
> When Youth and I lived in't together.
>
> Flowers are lovely; Love is flower-like;
> Friendship is a sheltering tree;
> O! the joys, that came down shower-like,
> Of Friendship, Love, and Liberty,
> Ere I was old
>
> Ere I was old? Ah! woeful Ere,
> Which tells me, Youth's no longer here!
> O Youth! for years so many and sweet,
> 'Tis known, that Thou and I were one,
> I'll think it but a fond conceit—
> It cannot be that Thou art gone!
> Thy vesper-bell hath not yet toll'd:—
> And thou wert aye a masker bold!
> What strange disguise hast now put on,
> To make believe, that thou art gone?
> I see these locks in silvery slips,
> This drooping gait, this altered size:
> But Spring-tide blossoms on thy lips,
> And tears take sunshine from thine eyes!
> Life is but thought: so think I will
> That Youth and I are house-mates still.
>
> Dew-drops are the gems of morning,
> But the tears of mournful eve!
> Where no hope is, life's a warning
> That only serves to make us grieve,
> When we are old:
>
> That only serves to make us grieve
> With oft and tedious taking-leave,
> Like some poor nigh-related guest,
> That may not rudely be dismist;
> Yet hath outstay'd his welcome while
> And tells the jest without the smile.

Kubla Khan

> In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
> A stately pleasure-dome decree:
> Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
> Through caverns measureless to man
> Down to a sunless sea.
> So twice five miles of fertile ground
> With walls and towers were girdled round:
> And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
> Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
> And here were forests ancient as the hills,
> Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.
>
> But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
> Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
> A savage place! as holy and enchanted
> As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
> By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
> And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
> As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
> A mighty fountain momently was forced:
> Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
> Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
> Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
> And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
> It flung up momently the sacred river.
> Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
> Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
> Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
> And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
> And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
> Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

ROBERT SOUTHEY (1774–1843)

Robert Southey, at one time closely associated both in friendship and reputation with Wordsworth and Coleridge, is now practically a spent force in literature. Wordsworth and Coleridge live on as an inspiration, but Southey's writings have no following. Yet he played no small part in the literary history of the Romantic Revival, and a portion of his work at any rate merits the consideration of the literary student.

Born at Bristol of good middle-class stock, Southey was educated at Westminster and Balliol, Oxford. His earliest adventure was to marry without any prospect of a livelihood, and it was fortunate for him that his friend Charles Wynn made him an annuity of £160. A short sojourn in Portugal as a young man gave him a taste for the literature of the South, and he devoted his life to the pursuit of letters.

A thrifty and careful man, he lived for forty years at Greta Hall, near Keswick, and not only managed to live in tolerable comfort but to bring together a fine library, support a large family, and look after the children of his more brilliant and far more erratic brother-in-law, "S. T. C." In 1814 he had been made Poet Laureate, and he did good, solid work, poorly paid, for the *Quarterly Review*. For some time before his death, like Scott, his mind had been deranged.

His Work

His best verse was written in early life, and in the last few years of the eighteenth century. True to the fashion of the times, he turned his hand to ballad work, and his contribution here, if less attractive than Scott's, is certainly distinctive and original. The grotesqueries of German romance he could achieve with success; and he had the genuine gift of comic exaggeration that gave rise to a form of writing which probably inspired Barham's *Ingoldsby Legends*. His irregular metres had freshness and raciness; there is plenty of life, if little beauty, about such pieces as *The Old Woman of Berkeley*, there is humour and character about such ballads as *St. Michael's Chair*, while *The Devil's Walk* (originally published in the *Morning Post* as *The Devil's Thoughts*) is a breezy, effective, "ding-dong chime."

He had a turn for comedy of a rough and ready kind, and it is a pity that in his long epic narrative he kept it so severely in check. Of the Epics, *Thalaba, the Destroyer* (1801), *The Curse of Kehama* (1810), there is little to say. It is not that they are ill written, but they are lifeless. There is no transforming touch of high imagination about them. Scott, Byron, Shelley, and Keats, one and all have written cruder verse, but their worst verse has some redeeming touch that Southey's lacks: *Thalaba* is a good journeyman's work, and that is all that one can say about it. No doubt the methodical and too temperate soul of Southey was ill suited to an Eastern subject. No amount of industry can take the place of passion; nor scholarly care the office of the imagination. Yet the poem impressed his contemporaries, and from it Shelley borrowed his irregular blank metre in *Queen Mab*.

Better than this is *The Curse of Kehama*, where there is rhyme that falls more graciously on the ear than did the unrhymed Pindarics of *Thalaba*. But the story, for all its occasional picturesque strength, has little grip. Nor is the reason far to seek, for Southey is but following a literary convention of the time in thus trafficking with Orientalism, and has little temperamental sympathy with it. There was more Orientalism in Beckford's little finger than in Southey's whole body.

Don Roderick is the best of the epics, from the standpoint of the humanities, for Southey had really seized hold of the poetical spirit of the Peninsula, or at any rate an appreciable part of it.

His Protestantism revolted against the theology of the South, with which he had as little sympathy as with the quietism of the East; but the chivalrous romance did touch his imagination. His cycle of Spanish songs, *The Chronicle of the Cid*, is a spirited piece of work, while in *Don Roderick* (1814) he told a stirring story not merely with excellent zest, but with a power and sense of actuality too seldom found in his longer poems.

His early travels in Spain had impressed the scenery and Spanish ways of living upon his imagination, so that he had not to rely, as in his other epics, on merely bookish inspiration.

Southey's prose is better than his verse. Indeed the weaknesses of his verse became positive merits in the prose. The clear, even, business-like, unobtrusive style gives value to such subjects as *The Life of Wesley*, or that of *Nelson*. In many ways it is like the great prose of the eighteenth century, yet it falls below the level of the work of such prosemen as Addison, Defoe, or Swift, in its individual flavour: there is personality behind these; there is little personality in Southey's prose. He is at his best when purely objective. As soon as he comes forward himself he brings with him literary tricks culled from a score of sources—an affectation of Sterne, a flourish of Rabelais; and we sigh for the clear, straightforward manner in which, as a rule, his biographical studies were written.

Regarding his work as a whole, it may be said that it is like a vast stretch of tame-looking landscape with unexpected tracts here and there of sylvan charm and beauty, that the painstaking pedestrian will light upon and the casual traveller overlook. The real failure of Southey's staying power, despite his scholarship, industry, good sense, and wholesome feeling, lies in the sterility of his imagination. It can send forth picturesque grafts, but it has no fructifying power, no depth, no reserve. His mind is still and unyielding, and if we compare his inveterate conservatism with that of Scott, or Wordsworth, we shall appreciate this lack of plasticity.

Southey's Toryism springs from a preference for jog-trot methods of perception; Wordsworth's from a repugnance of lawlessness. There is always strong, elemental passion at the back of Wordsworth's mind, though sternly kept in check. He is cool and cautious by self-discipline; Southey by temperament. Again, Scott's Toryism is suffused with a warm humanitarianism and a mellow geniality; Southey was not ungenial, but his sympathies are narrow in range and he had little insight into character. Yet, with all his imperfection and limitations, he upheld worthily the dignity of letters, left behind him some good verse and better prose, and proved, as his correspondence shows, an amiable, wise, and agreeable friend to such men as Wordsworth, Lamb, and Landor. To have held their friendship is no slight tribute to any man.

His Books

My days among the Dead are past;
  Around me I behold,
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,
  The mighty minds of old:
My never-failing friends are they,
With whom I converse day by day.

With them I take delight in weal
  And seek relief in woe;
And while I understand and feel
  How much to them I owe,
My cheeks have often been bedew'd
With tears of thoughtful gratitude.

My thoughts are with the Dead; with them
  I live in long-past years,
Their virtues love, their faults condemn,
  Partake their hopes and fears:
And from their lessons seek and find
Instruction with an humble mind.

My hopes are with the Dead; anon
  My place with them will be,
And I with them will travel on
  Through all Futurity;
Yet leaving here a name, I trust,
That will not perish in the dust.

After Blenheim

It was a summer evening,
  Old Kaspar's work was done,
And he before his cottage door
  Was sitting in the sun:
And by him sported on the green
His little grandchild Wilhelmine.

She saw her brother Peterkin
  Roll something large and round
Which he beside the rivulet
  In playing there had found;
He came to ask what he had found
That was so large and smooth and round.

Old Kaspar took it from the boy
  Who stood expectant by;
And then the old man shook his head,
  And with a natural sigh,
"'Tis some poor fellow's skull," said he,
"Who fell in the great victory.

"I find them in the garden,
  For there's many here about;
And often when I go to plough
  The ploughshare turns them out.
For many thousand men," said he,
"Were slain in that great victory."

"Now tell us what 'twas all about,"
  Young Peterkin he cries;
And little Wilhelmine looks up
  With wonder-waiting eyes:
"Now tell us all about the war,
And what they fought each other for?"

"It was the English," Kaspar cried,
  "Who put the French to rout:
But what they fought each other for
  I could not well make out.
But everybody said," quoth he,
"That 'twas a famous victory.

"My father lived at Blenheim then,
  Yon little stream hard by:
They burnt his dwelling to the ground,
  And he was forced to fly:
So with his wife and child he fled,
Nor had he where to rest his head.

"With fire and sword the country round
  Was wasted far and wide,
And many a childing mother then
  And newborn baby died:
But things like that, you know, must be
At every famous victory.

"They say it was a shocking sight
  After the field was won;
For many thousand bodies here
  Lay rotting in the sun:
But things like that, you know, must be
After a famous victory.

"Great praise the Duke of Marlboro' won
  And our good Prince Eugene!"
"Why, 'twas a very wicked thing!"
  Said little Wilhelmine;
"Nay . . . nay . . . my little girl," quoth he,
"It was a famous victory.

"And everybody praised the Duke
  Who this great fight did win."
"But what good came of it at last?"
  Quoth little Peterkin:
"Why, that I cannot tell," said he,
"But 'twas a famous victory."

Wesley and Old Age

"Lord, let me not live to be useless!" was the prayer which Wesley uttered after seeing one whom he had long known as an active and useful Magistrate, reduced by age to be "a picture of human nature in disgrace, feeble in body and mind, slow of speech and understanding." He was favoured with a constitution vigorous beyond that of ordinary men, and with an activity of spirit which is even rarer than his singular felicity of health and strength. Ten thousand cares of various kinds, he said, were no more weight or burden to his mind, than ten thousand hairs were to his head. But in truth his only cares were those of superintending the work of his ambition, which continually prospered under his hands. Real cares he had none; no anxieties, no sorrows, no grief which touched him to the quick. His manner of life was the most favourable that could have been devised for longevity. He rose early, and lay down at night with nothing to keep him waking, or trouble him in sleep. His mind was always in a pleasurable and

wholesome state of activity, he was temperate in his diet, and lived in perpetual locomotion; and frequent change of air is perhaps, of all things, that which most conduces to joyous health and long life.

The time which Mr. Wesley spent in travelling was not lost. "History, poetry, and philosophy," said he, "I commonly read on horseback, having other employment at other times." He used to throw the reins on his horse's neck; and in this way he rode, in the course of his life, above a hundred thousand miles, without any accident of sufficient magnitude to make him sensible of the danger which he incurred. His friends, however, saw the danger; and in the sixty-ninth year of his age they prevailed upon him to travel in a carriage, in consequence of a hurt which had produced a hydrocele. The ablest practitioners in Edinburgh were consulted upon his case, and assured him there was but one method of cure. "Perhaps but one natural one," says he, "but I think God has made more than one method of healing either the soul or the body." He read upon the subject a treatise which recommends a seton or a caustic, "but I am not inclined," said he, "to try either of them: I know a physician that has a shorter cure than either one or the other." After two years, however, he submitted to an operation, and obtained a cure. A little before this, he notices in his Journal the first night that he had ever lain awake; "I believe," he adds, "few can say this; in seventy years I never lost one night's sleep."

He lived to preach at Kingswood under the shade of trees which he had planted; and he outlived the lease of the Foundry, the place which had been the cradle of Methodism.[1]

SAMUEL ROGERS

Samuel Rogers (1763–1855), like Southey and Tom Moore, occupied an important position among the men of letters of his day, and, like them, his literary influence was a transient one. He is inferior even to them as a creative force, but he had a sharp and caustic wit which made him an acquisition at social gatherings, and sufficient susceptibility to the romanticism of his time to give his verse the cachet of popularity. Original he certainly was not, and in poetry he shapes as a versatile and clever imitator of the various literary fashions which had taken the literary world by storm. He could be Byronic in mild fashion, as his narrative poem, *Italy*, testifies, just as earlier he could reproduce the tricks of the didactic eighteenth-century poet in his *Pleasures of Memory*.

A wealthy man and a generous host, he played no small part as patron of literary genius.

The Sleeping Beauty

Sleep on, and dream of Heaven awhile—
Tho' shut so close thy laughing eyes,
Thy rosy lips still wear a smile
And move, and breathe delicious sighs!

Ah, now soft blushes tinge her cheeks
And mantle o'er her neck of snow;
Ah, now she murmurs, now she speaks
What most I wish—and fear to know!

She starts, she trembles, and she weeps!
Her fair hands folded on her breast:
—And now, how like a saint she sleeps!
A seraph in the realms of rest!

Sleep on secure! Above control
Thy thoughts belong to Heaven and thee:
And may the secret of thy soul
Remain within its sanctuary!

A Wish

Mine be a cot beside the hill;
A bee-hive's hum shall soothe my ear;
A willowy brook that turns a mill,
With many a fall shall linger near.

The swallow, oft, beneath my thatch
Shall twitter from her clay-built nest;
Oft shall the pilgrim lift the latch,
And share my meal, a welcome guest.

Around my ivied porch shall spring
Each fragrant flower that drinks the dew;
And Lucy, at her wheel, shall sing
In russet gown and apron blue.

The village-church among the trees,
Where first our marriage-vows were given,
With merry peals shall swell the breeze
And point with taper spire to Heaven.

The Pleasures of Memory

Down by yon hazel copse, at evening, blazed
The gipsy's fagot—there we stood and gazed;
Gazed on her sunburnt face with silent awe,
Her tattered mantle and her hood of straw;
Her moving lips, her cauldron brimming o'er;
The drowsy brood that on her back she bore,
Imps in the barn with mousing owlets bred,
From rifled roost at nightly revel fed:
Whose dark eyes flashed through locks of blackest shade
When in the breeze the distant watch-dog bayed:
And hero's fled the sibyl's muttered call,
Whose elfin prowess scaled the orchard wall.
As o'er my palm the silver piece she drew,
And traced the line of life with searching view,
How throbbed my fluttering pulse with hopes and fears,
To learn the colour of my future years.

An Italian Song

Dear is my little native vale,
The ring-dove builds and murmurs there;
Close by my cot she tells her tale
To every passing villager.
The squirrel leaps from tree to tree,
And shells his nuts at liberty.

In orange groves and myrtle bowers,
That breathe a gale of fragrance round,
I charm the fairy-footed hours
With my loved lute's romantic sound;
Or crown of living laurel weave
For those that win the race at eve.

The shepherd's horn at break of day,
The ballet danced in twilight glade,
The canzonet and roundelay
Sung in the silent greenwood shade;
These simple joys that never fail,
Shall bind me to my native vale.

Among the crowd of minor and for the most part imitative romanticists are Mrs. Hemans (1793–1835), picturesque, melodious, and facile, and the two Montgomerys, James (1771–1854), and Robert (1807–1855). Robert is perhaps the better known name, thanks to the notoriety he attained through Macaulay's slashing attack; but James was the better poet, with many of Mrs. Hemans' qualities set in a more sober, humanitarian framework.

[1] Southey's *Life of Wesley*.

I. POETRY: (c) SIR WALTER SCOTT AND THE BALLAD MAKERS. Sir Walter Scott—Percy's *Reliques*—James Hogg ("Ettrick Shepherd")—Leyden—Tannahill—Allan Cunningham—Thomas Campbell—Thomas Moore.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

THE magic of the North, its rough tenderness, its elemental passion, its simple homeliness, its throbbing humanity, rich in laughter no less than in tears; these things had been revealed to Englishmen by the peasant poet, Burns. The intimate, everyday life of the poor Scot is seen through the strong and intense imagination of a great poet. It remained for Scott to exhibit the heroism and daring of the romantic past, thus completing the work of Burns, by tracing the source and confluence of this pulsing life, and dwelling upon its rich heritage of legendary lore, and the splendour of glen and loch that had nursed its people, feeding the Scot with their own wild beauty.

Born on August 15, 1771, at Edinburgh, Walter Scott had as his birthplace a city alive with associations of Scottish greatness and glory. His father was a Writer to the Signet, his mother the daughter of a well-known physician; while his ancestry was intimately connected with Border warfare. As a child he was delicate and ailing, the result of an illness while still an infant, but his fragile physique at this time lent a more vivid life to his imaginative sensibilities.

At the age of three he was sent to his grandfather's farm in the valley of the Tweed, where he was lapped round with many romantic associations, and, while lying on the grass, he would eagerly absorb any tale told him by the shepherds of the life of the Border, and drink in the songs and legends taught him by his grandmother. Indeed, even at this early age, he is said to have sung so loudly a ballad of Hardicnut as to prevent the village minister from "being heard or hearing himself." On the improvement of his health he went to school at Edinburgh, where he became, he tells us, "an incorrigibly idle imp," good at Latin but excelling chiefly in climbing and fighting. When he was thirteen he became familiar with Percy's *Reliques*, while the romances of Tasso, and Spenser's *Faerie Queene* proved more congenial than ordinary book learning. Any old song that came in his way he would seize upon "like a tiger"; and from boyhood upwards he never tired of telling stories to his companions, with an aptitude only equalled by another great popular writer, Charles Dickens. Even when called to the Bar, in 1792, he proved a more promising story-teller than a lawyer, was a delightful, high-spirited companion, by no means averse to a skirmish with the authorities, and the first to begin a row, the last to end it. He was as a young man handsome, tall, and vigorous, and if more interested in literature than in law books, gained an experience in his father-in-law's office that served him in good stead in *Redgauntlet*.

During his youth, while he travelled from one farmhouse to another, he had gained an intimate knowledge of the by-ways of Scottish life; while his retentive memory seized upon every association, treasuring it up till he could make use of it as a literary artist. In 1802 we have the earliest results of his enthusiastic indulgence in the two volumes of *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*; but before that time he had been attracted to German romantic literature (1788), and had taken to translating German ballads. The influence of "Monk" Lewis must also be noted; while the friendship with that erratic but brilliant, gifted poet, James Hogg, began in 1799, and proved a lively inspiration for many years to come.

The Lay of the Last Minstrel, his first original work, appeared in 1805, and was followed by *Marmion* in 1808 and *The Lady of the Lake* (1810). Scott did not take his verse seriously, and upon someone asking his daughter if she had read the *Lay*, came the unexpected reply: "No, papa says there is nothing so bad for young people as reading bad poetry."

About this time Byron sprang into sudden fame with his *Childe Harold*, displaying in his poem many of the gifts which had made popular Scott's own verse. With his usual good sense and geniality, Scott recognised the superiority of his rival, and decided to give up verse-making since Byron had beaten him at his own game.

Money difficulties supervening, he harked round for another source of livelihood, and while looking for fishing tackle one day came across the manuscript of a half-finished story, *Waverley*. Better bait he had never lighted upon for tempting fish. The change of literary expression was by no means so marked as it seemed. He had always been a story-teller in verse rather than a lyric poet, he now became a story-teller in prose, using the same fount of inspiration; and it was quite clear that the new medium suited him better than the old, giving him greater elbow-room, and an opportunity for exhibiting his rich sense of broad imagery, that had found no outlet in verse. *Waverley*, first published anonymously in 1814, was followed by other stories of Scottish life: *Guy Mannering*, *Rob Roy*, *The Antiquary*, and *Old Mortality*. Indeed for the next sixteen years he held the stage of fiction, publishing twenty-nine stories in all. No other novelist, save Dickens, appealed to so wide a circle or more entirely captured the fancy of the day. When asked for his opinion of *Waverley*, Lord Holland said, "We did not one of us go to bed last night—nothing slept but my gout." Meanwhile, in 1812, he had built himself a characteristic dwelling-place, Abbotsford, in imitation of an old baronial castle, on the Tweed, near Melrose.

For the next few years he was successful both in life and letters, and Abbotsford became a Scottish Mecca. Happy in his friendships and his life, famous in his work, his existence seemed ideally satisfying, when, with tragic suddenness, came the collapse of his publisher and of his own fortune. With fine manliness of spirit, and splendid industry, he set to work to repair his fortune, but now he

was no longer young, and his health was failing, so, although he managed to satisfy most of his creditors, the effort proved too great for his enfeebled body, and in 1832 he died, with the sound of the beloved Tweed in his ears, the music he loved best in all the world. At no time of his life were his great qualities of heart so manifest as in these last few years of struggle with adverse fate; we realise this in reading his pathetic *Journal*.

Characteristics of his Work

(a) *His Genius for Vitalising the Past.*—The quality most obvious in Scott's work, whether in prose or verse, is his genius for vitalising the past. His feudal home at Abbotsford was no literary affectation, as was Walpole's gimcrack affair at Strawberry Hill, but a genuine expression of the man's romantic mediæval spirit. He was born a story-teller, and had that delightful knack of improvisation which is the secret of all good story-telling.

Thus his best work has the spontaneity and ease of gossip by the fireside, for he was so saturated with old-time legends and his own associations that he exhaled them as inevitably as did his heather-clad hills exhale their fragrance.

Never did he see an old tower or a stream without instantly conjuring up its old-world associations. For him every common bush burned with the fire of romance. Dowered with this creative energy of imagination, he made the reader also feel the glamour of places and the actuality of the past. He could effect with an old legend what a great composer could with some folk-song. He could improvise round it a host of fantastic variations. A fluent and ready writer, his work suffered few corrections.

He compels our interest by no literary trick, but by making us feel that men and women of a past age were real live human beings. How does he manage this? By reason of his intuitive perception that the Scot of his own day was the product of the past, and organically connected with that past. Knowing his own peasantry with as intimate a knowledge as Burns, he makes the reader feel that his Dandie Dinmont, his Jeanie Deans, his Bailie, his Covenanters were no creations of other times, but might be found in modern dress in the Scotland of his own day.

Thus he welded together the past and present in a homogeneous whole, and shows us the spiritual continuity of history. Thus he makes manifest how the national type of character is the vital embodiment of centuries, and is evolved from countless customs and traditions. With this power, wherein we see the finer aspects of the conservative attitude of mind, he reconstructed Scottish Society, and looked with jealousy and fearful eye upon anything that threatened to sweep away some relic of the past. Hence his opposition to the French Revolution is readily understood, and is akin to Burke's, though Burke's was philosophically expressed.

Both men held that the "starch of tradition," to use one of George Eliot's phrases, was necessary to keep society together, and to ensure its well-being. Neither man saw through the merely destructive side of the Revolutionary movement, a wholesome and cleansing influence, that, despite incidental damage, would in the long run renovate society upon a saner and firmer basis.

If Scott exhibited something of the narrowness of the old Tory spirit, he had none of its exclusiveness and superciliousness. None loved the common people more than he; no man was tenderer to their weaknesses, more charitable in his sympathies.

The great failing of the eighteenth century, in its attitude towards the past, was its self-sufficiency. The chief idea of its great writers, when criticising the past, had been to compare it with the standards of the age, and if it did not conform with them to condemn. Little attempt was made to understand the standard of other times, and a ludicrous example of this spirit may be seen in dramatic performances, where Lady Macbeth appeared in hoops and the Greeks in crinolines. Abstract formulas interested them, not concrete embodiment of life. They were curious about theories of life, singularly incurious as to the drama of life. History for them was largely a peg for rhetorical generalities. What Scott did for history has been admirably expressed by Carlyle.

> "These historical novels," testifies he, "have taught all men this truth, which looks like a truism, and yet was as good as unknown to the writers of history and others, till so taught, that the bygone ages of the world were actually filled by living men, not by state papers, controversies, and abstractions of men. . . . It is a great service, fertile in consequence, this that Scott has done; a great truth laid open by him."

Leaving aside for the most part the mystical aspects of mediævalism that attracted the German romancers and our own Coleridge, he fastened upon its showy and picturesque externals. He is a kind of mediæval reporter, faithfully detailing the spectacular effects of the time, and concerned chiefly with the colour, the variety, the bustling vigour of mediæval times. The inner life of the Middle Ages, as fashioned by the austere mystical soul of Dante, was alien to his vision. The ecclesiastics of Scott are no living symbols of strange, passionate faiths, but picturesque people, jolly or evil-natured as the case might be, but with little demoniac or saintly about them. It is quite true that he genuinely admired Gothic architecture, and the ritual of Catholicism, but he did so for its external impressiveness. He revelled in their possibilities of local colour; he was touched by the part they played in moulding human lives. But he viewed them always from the outside; they never seized upon his inner life as they did that of the German romancers. So he remained a staunch adherent of the English Church to the end of his life, and stoutly opposed Catholic Emancipation.

(b) *His Love of the Earth.*—Scott's passionate attachment for the past of his country is blended with his equally passionate attachment to its soil. Critics have spoken of his love of Nature, but the phrase suggests the transcendental affection felt by Wordsworth or Shelley, rather than the hearty concrete attachment of Scott. It was with him Earth worship, not Nature worship; and the Earth in particular of special localities, endeared to him by a hun-

dred associations. This qualification differentiates his Earth worship from that of Meredith, which was general, cosmic, not specific and humanised. He loved his country's soil as a child loves, for its associations, and he told Washington Irving that if he did not see the heather once a year he thought he would die. Yet a beautiful landscape to him meant little without the human touch in it. Sanctify it with some legend or personal association, and he took it to his heart.

> "O Caledonia! stern and wild,
> Meet nurse for a poetic child,
> Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
> Land of the mountain and the flood,
> Land of my sires! What mortal hand
> Can e'er untie the filial band
> That knits me to thy rugged strand."

His sense of beauty was sufficient to make him kindle at any fine scene; but when to this beauty was superadded some historical association, then the liking became a passion. "Show me," he said, "an old castle and a field of battle, and I was at home at once."

The names of places had a natural magic for him as they had for Lamb. Hence the definite concrete character of his romances. Most of his legendary stories he connects with particular names and places. That nebulous atmosphere of dateless climes loved by some romancers, Coleridge for instance, in his *Christabel*, and Keats in his *La Belle Dame*, was alien to Scott's nature. He was never happy till he could give his fantasies a geographical label. It is here that the individuality of Scott's romances, be they in prose or verse, differentiates him so clearly from other great names in the Revival of Romance. Wordsworth's romantic leanings, for instance, were entirely diffused and spiritual. He had small historical sense, and certainly no faculty for externalising a legend or a story. Given some historical association, Scott will revitalise the entire scene, using his power of scenic description to visualise more clearly the drama he is presenting. Wordsworth, on the other hand, as in his *Incident of the Wars of the Roses*, moralises and spiritualises the matter, caring little for the actual scene, much for what it symbolised.

To Wordsworth the pageant of the Middle Ages was a dream of ancient strivings that stirred the imagination and touched him as another chord of that "still sad music of humanity," which came to him from a distance, as it were, sitting in philosophic aloofness. He would ruminate gently over "old, unhappy, far-off things and battles long ago," but to Scott the unhappiness concerned him far less than the variety and excitement, and battles for him were never "long ago," but exhilarating actualities near at hand.

(c) *His Hearty Humanity.*—The fictions of Scott are the inevitable expression of his temperament; they are genuinely romantic, not subtly so, not deeply so, but alive with the colour and movement of bygone times. Charles Reade worked up his subject with the patience and enterprise of a conscientious and imaginative journalist. George Eliot reconstructed the past with the laborious zeal of the scholar; the past and the present were as one to Scott; he had no need of research or working up his subject. He breathed the past; it was part of himself, not a masquerade garb but bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.

Yet Scott does not owe his superiority as an historical romancer to his greater store of knowledge but to his greater enthusiasm. In the long run, no doubt, the assimilation of years of antiquarian study gave him an advantage over novelists to whom an historical novel was wholly a *tour de force*. But there is no one of Scott's novels that shows a greater mastery over its material than, for instance, Thackeray's *Esmond*, while in sheer artistry he is, through carelessness, often inferior.

In historical enthusiasm, however, he is supreme among writers of fiction. It is no one particular century, no passing phase of social life that moved him, but the past as a whole. His antiquarian interests are so wide, so minute, that at times they overburden the narrative and make for tedium, but so sure is the man, so sure is his instinct for what is picturesque and dramatic, that we forget the antiquarian in the story-teller; and the lasting impression upon our minds is the impression of vitality.

And what gives his historical pictures their vital significance is the hearty humanity with which he endows them. Scott was no psychologist, in the sense that we apply the term to literary artists like George Eliot, Meredith, or Hardy. He was not given to analysis of any kind and was notoriously careless in giving reality to his heroes and heroines, whom he is quite content to leave as picturesque accessories to the stories. But whenever he has to deal with humble folk, he shows a lively sense of their virtues and foibles, and is as warm in his democratic sympathies as is Burns himself.

The essential kindliness and generous sympathies of the man exhale from his romances. Dealing as he often does with gross and barbarous times, he humanised their fiercer and more repellent elements. His simple direct nature, while impelling him to overlook much that was fascinating and mysterious, acted like a moral antiseptic when dealing with dubious and morbid subjects. That much abused word "wholesome" is peculiarly applicable to Scott's work. It is full of good sense, manly feeling, and a rich if not subtle humour. As a humorist his great divergence from the great humorists of the eighteenth century lies in his distaste for satire.

Satire presupposes the moralist. Scott was not a moralist, he was content to tell a good story in verse or prose, to dash off a situation, to light up an oddity, without ulterior comment. Yet, if no moralist by intent, he was a moralist in effect. After reading one of his romances, the tribute of Byron rises to our memory: "Walter Scott is as nearly a thoroughly good man as a man can be, because I know it by experience to be the case."

Scott's Influence and Significance in English Literature

Coleridge said of Schiller that he was "Master not of the intense drama of passion but the diffused

drama of history." The same might be said of Scott; and his greatness lies in the breadth and range of his romantic sympathies. Take his work piecemeal, and his limitations are soon perceived.

In his verse the elements of awe, mystery, and wonder are seldom touched. His muse is robust, facile, theatrical; not subtle, profound, inevitable.

His intimate acquaintance with mediæval romance is, in itself, a positive bar to high distinction of phrase. If he had captured the opulent variety of the old romances, he had carried away no little of their fluent redundancy, while his conservatism led him to retain something of the stilted phraseology of the age in which he had been cradled. His metrical inferiority to such a consummate master as Coleridge is made evident at once by comparing the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* with *Christabel*. It was on hearing the recital of *Christabel*, while that poem was still in manuscript, that inspired the "light horseman stanza," which he favoured so greatly. But the variety, the delicacy, the easy charm of Coleridge as a metrist were beyond his more vigorous, straightforward methods.

In his fiction the same defects are apparent, though less obtrusive, because of the fecundity of concrete life that crowds the pages. It is most distinctly felt in the bluntness of his characterisation, and the careless manipulation of his plots. Beside Dumas his awkwardness as a story-teller is realised again and again; beside the great novelists of the Victorian era, his characterisation is often insipid and superficial.

Let these failings and limitations be frankly acknowledged. It remains for us to say wherein, despite of these, lies his unassailable greatness.

In the first place, he is great because he links up most of the various phases of romanticism that meet us in his predecessors: the elemental charm of the Old English ballad, the *diablerie* of German romanticism, a love of the picturesque and sublime in nature, enthusiasm for the pomp and ritual of mediæval social life. These had already been heralded in Percy's *Reliques*, in Bürger's *Lenore* and Goethe's *Goetz*, in Mrs. Radcliffe's novels, the verse of Collins, Gray, and Cowper, and in the fiction of Horace Walpole. Scott brings them together, focussing their power, in both verse and prose. What is morbid and exotic he puts aside, and if he lacked the subtlety and delicacy of some of these exponents, there is no mistaking the big, massive effects of his large and varied canvases. Thus romanticism is no longer the literary inspiration of a few detached artists; it has become a power to move the many.

It has been often pointed out how that Scott's work falls into a threefold division; in the form of the popular ballad, of the metrical romance, of the historical novel; what has been less seldom emphasized is the fact that his greatness lies in all-round excellence, by the vigorous breadth and ease shown in each of these departments, rather than in his supreme technical mastery of any particular one. He succeeds by reason of his versatility and unerring popular appeal.

Critically considered, his ballads, with all their verve and swing and attractive charm, never attain the imaginative heights of such pieces as *The Ancient Mariner*, nor the exquisite workmanship of *Rose Mary* and *Sister Helen*. But, taken as a whole, there is no collection of ballads to equal, much less rival, Scott's, for he has not only greater knowledge but, what is more important, a surer taste than Percy. Mention of his ballad work must not pass without reference to his exceptionally fine ballad *Proud Maisie*, where he comes nearer than anywhere else to Coleridge and Keats.

Compared with his splendid work as a ballad writer, his metrical romances seem of less enduring fame. But it is easier to see their defects, perhaps, than appreciate their merits to-day. Despite their limitations and inequalities of workmanship, their narrative power is of the first order; and not only Macaulay and Browning, but more modern tellers of tales in verse, owe much to the vivid and graphic force displayed in *Marmion* and *The Lady of the Lake*.

Most important of all is Scott's significance as a novelist. Here he was both an innovator and a conserver.

He brought to converge upon the novel the same scattered influences of romanticism that he did in his poetry; enriching its thin, arid founts of inspiration with his wealth of antiquarian lore, his open-air enthusiasm, his delight in the colour and movement of bygone times, and his intimate knowledge of Scottish life.

And while doing this he retained many of those great qualities that had distinguished the masters of eighteenth-century fiction; humour, shrewd common-sense, actuality. Hitherto Romance and Realism had been sworn foes. It was the realism of Nash and Greene that had given the first blow to mediæval romance; a more effective blow had been struck by the artistry of Defoe, and now, when the literary tide was flowing strongly for romance once more, Scott, instead of placing them in violent opposition as mediævalists like Walpole and Mrs. Radcliffe were doing, blended them together.

The union did not prove a permanent one, for the romantic tendency and the realistic tendency urge of necessity in opposite ways; but both realism and romance were the better for this temporary partnership.

Thus the historical novel as created by Scott was an entirely fresh departure in fiction. One has only to compare the Waverley Novels with the historical fiction preceding these to realise the originality of his formula. Strictly considered, every historical novel is a romantic speculation. With the adroit use of material that has come down to us we may be able to reconstruct a picture of twelfth, fifteenth, or sixteenth century life; but, frankly, we have not the data for knowing exactly how the various classes of society spoke and acted in those times. The earlier historical story-teller had tried to surmount the difficulty by disconnecting the past from the present and by enclosing his tale in a strange and alien setting, to create the necessary illusion. Scott saw with his keen common-sense that this was entirely wrong. It is quite true that he possessed exceptional knowledge of the past, but his success did not lie in this.

His knowledge merely helped him. He succeeded because in place of hauling the past into the present and thereby disconnecting past and present, he boldly projected the present into the past, using his knowledge of contemporary life to humanise his old-world characters. Manners may change and fashions alter, but human nature remains constant; and thus we have the apparent paradox that Scott's success as an historical novelist lay in his sturdy realism; that he made the men of Robin Hood's day and Shakespeare's day alive and actual by virtue of his acquaintance with the men that lived around the Tweed of his own day. Wisely, moreover, he does not concentrate the interest around the historical figures of the past, but around his own fictitious characters, for his own characters, after all, were real, they were drawn from personal observation, his historical sketches were clever guesswork. He envelops his characters with the broad strands of real historical events, yet he bids us follow not the intrigues of Louis XI but the varying fortunes of Quentin Durward. Such was his method, and such the method adopted by his numerous followers—James, Ainsworth, Lytton, Kingsley, Hugo, Dumas.

Ivanhoe

The portal, which led from the inner wall of the barbican to the moat, and which corresponded with a sally-port in the main wall of the castle, was now suddenly opened; the temporary bridge was then thrust forward, and soon flashed in the waters, extending its length between the castle and outwork, and forming a slippery and precarious passage for two men abreast to cross the moat. Well aware of the importance of taking the foe by surprise, the Black Knight, closely followed by Cedric, threw himself upon the bridge, and reached the opposite side. Here he began to thunder with his axe upon the gate of the castle, protected in part from the shot and stones cast by the defenders by the ruins of the former drawbridge, which the Templar had demolished in his retreat from the barbican, leaving the counterpoise still attached to the upper part of the portal. The followers of the knight had no such shelter; two were instantly shot with cross-bow bolts, and two more fell into the moat; the others retreated back into the barbican.

The situation of Cedric and the Black Knight was now truly dangerous, and would have been still more so, but for the constancy of the archers in the barbican, who ceased not to shower their arrows upon the battlements, distracting the attention of those by whom they were manned, and thus affording a respite to their two chiefs from the storm of missiles which must otherwise have overwhelmed them. But their situation was eminently perilous, and was becoming more so with every moment.

"Shame on ye all!" cried De Bracy to the soldiers around him; "do ye call yourselves cross-bowmen, and let these two dogs keep their station under the walls of the castle?—Heave over the coping-stones from the battlements, an' better may not be—Get pickaxe and levers, and down with that huge pinnacle!" pointing to a heavy piece of stone carved-work that projected from the parapet.

At this moment the besiegers caught sight of the red flag upon the angle of the tower which Ulrica had described to Cedric. The good yeoman Locksley was the first who was aware of it, as he was hasting to the outwork, impatient to see the progress of the assault.

"Saint George!" he said, "Merry Saint George for England!—To the charge, bold yeomen!—why leave ye the good knight and noble Cedric to storm the pass alone?—make in, mad priest, show thou canst fight for thy rosary—make in, brave yeomen!—the castle is ours, we have friends within—See yonder flag, it is the appointed signal—Torquilstone is ours!—Think of honour, think of spoil—One effort, and the place is ours!"

With that he bent his good bow, and sent a shaft right through the breast of one of the men-at-arms, who, under De Bracy's direction, was loosening a fragment from one of the battlements to precipitate on the heads of Cedric and the Black Knight. A second soldier caught from the hands of the dying man the iron crow, with which he heaved at and had loosened the stone pinnacle, when, receiving an arrow through his head-piece, he dropped from the battlements into the moat a dead man. The men-at-arms were daunted, for no armour seemed proof against the shot of this tremendous archer.

"Do you give ground, base knaves!" said De Bracy; "*Mount joye Saint Dennis!*—Give me the lever."

And, snatching it up, he again assailed the loosened pinnacle, which was of weight enough, if thrown down, not only to have destroyed the remnant of the drawbridge which sheltered the two foremost assailants, but also to have sunk the rude float of planks over which they had crossed. All saw the danger, and the boldest, even the stout Friar himself, avoided setting foot on the raft. Thrice did Locksley bend his shaft against De Bracy, and thrice did his arrow bound back from the knight's armour of proof.

"Curse on thy Spanish steel-coat!" said Locksley, "had English smith forged it, these arrows had gone through, an as if it had been silk or sendal." He then began to call out,—"Comrades! friends! noble Cedric! bear back, and let the ruin fall."

His warning voice was unheard, for the din which the knight himself occasioned by his strokes upon the postern would have drowned twenty war-trumpets. The faithful Gurth indeed sprung forward on the planked bridge, to warn Cedric of his impending fate, or to share it with him. But his warning would have come too late; the massive pinnacle already tottered, and De Bracy, who still heaved at his task, would have accomplished it, had not the voice of the Templar sounded close in his ear.

"All is lost, De Bracy, the castle burns."

"Thou art mad to say so!" replied the knight.

"It is all in a light flame on the western side. I have striven in vain to extinguish it."

With the stern coolness which formed the basis of his character, Brian de Bois-Guilbert communicated this hideous intelligence, which was not so calmly received by his astonished comrade.

"Saints of Paradise!" said De Bracy; "what is to be done? I vow to St. Nicholas of Limoges a candlestick of pure gold——"

"Spare thy vow," said the Templar, "and mark me. Lead thy men down, as if for a sally; throw the postern-gate open. There are but two men who occupy the float, fling them into the moat, and push across to the barbican. I will charge from the main gate, and attack the barbican on the outside; and if we can regain that post, be assured we shall defend ourselves until we are relieved, or at least till they grant us fair quarter."

"It is well thought upon," said De Bracy; "I will play my part—Templar, thou wilt not fail me?"

"Hand and glove, I will not!" said Bois-Guilbert. "But haste thee, in the name of God!"

Rob Roy

As I sauntered on, I found the gardener hard at his evening employment, and saluted him, as I paused to look at his work. "Good even, my friend."

"Gude e'en—gude e'en t'ye," answered the man, without looking up, and in a tone which at once indicated his northern extraction.

"Fine weather for your work, my friend."

"It's no that muckle to be compleened o'," answered the man, with that limited degree of praise which gardeners and farmers usually bestow on the very best weather. Then raising his head, as if to see who spoke

to him, he touched his Scotch bonnet with an air of respect, as he observed, "Eh, gude safe us!—it's a sight for sair een, to see a gold-laced jeistiecor in the Ha' garden sae late at e'en."

"A gold-laced what, my good friend?"

"Ou, a jeistiecor—that's a jacket like your ain, there. They hae other things to do wi' them up yonder—unbuttoning them to make room for the beef and the bag-puddings, and the claret-wine, nae doubt—that's the ordinary for evening lecture on this side the border."

"There's no such plenty of good cheer in your country, my good friend," I replied, "as to tempt you to sit so late at it."

"Hoot, sir, ye ken little about Scotland; it's no for want of gude vivers—the best of fish, flesh, and fowl hae we, by sybos, ingans, turneops, and other garden fruit. But we hae mense and discretion, and are moderate of our mouths;—but here, frae the kitchen to the ha', it's fill and fetch noair, frae the tae end of the four-and-twenty till the t'other. Even their fast days—they ca' it fasting when they hae the best o' sea-fish frae Hartlepool and Sunderland by head carriage, forbye trouts, grilses, salmon, and a' the lave o't, and so they make their very fasting a kind of luxury and abomination; and then the awfu' masses and matins of the puir deceived souls—(but I shouldna speak about them, for your honour will be a Roman, I'se warrant, like the lave?"

"Not I, my friend; I was bred an English Presbyterian, or dissenter."

"The right hand o' fellowship to your honour, then," quoth the gardener, with as much alacrity as his hard features were capable of expressing, and, as if to show that his good-will did not rest on words, he plucked forth a huge horn snuff-box, or mull, as he called it, and proffered a pinch with a most fraternal grin.

Having accepted his courtesy, I asked him if he had been long a domestic at Osbaldistone Hall.

"I have been fighting with wild beasts at Ephesus," said he, looking towards the building, "for the best part of these four-and-twenty years, as sure as my name's Andrew Fairservice."

"But, my excellent friend Andrew Fairservice, if your religion and your temperance are so much offended by Roman rituals and southern hospitality, it seems to me that you must have been putting yourself to an unnecessary penance all this while, and that you might have found a service where they eat less, and are more orthodox in their worship. I dare say it cannot be want of skill which prevented your being placed more to your satisfaction."

"It disna become me to speak to the point of my qualifications," said Andrew, looking round him with great complacency; "but nae doubt I should understand my trade of horticulture, seeing I was bred in the parish of Dreepdaily, where they raise lang-kale under glass, and force the early nettles for their spring kale. And, to speak truth, I hae been flitting every term these four-and-twenty years; but when the time comes, there's aye something to saw that I would like to see sawn,—or something to mow that I would like to see mown, or something to ripe that I would like to see ripen,—and sae I e'en daiker on wi' the family frae year's end to year's end. And I wad say for certain, that I am gaun to quit at Cannlemas, only I was just as positive on it twenty years syne, and I find myself still turning up the mools here, for a' that. Forbye that, to tell your honour the evendown truth, there's nae better place ever offered to Andrew. But if your honour wad wush me to ony place where I wad hear pure doctrine, and hae a free cow's grass, and a oot, and a yard, and mair than ten punds of annual fee, and where there's nae leddy about the town to count the apples, I'se hold myself muckle indebted t'ye."

"Bravo, Andrew! I perceive you'll lose no preferment for want of asking patronage."

"I canna see what for I should," replied Andrew; "it's no a generation to wait till ane's worth's discovered, I trow."

"But you are no friend, I observe, to the ladies."

"Na, by my troth. I keep up the first gardener's quarrel to them. They're fasheous bargains—aye crying for apricocks, pears, plums, and apples, summer and winter, without distinction o' seasons; but we hae nae slices o' the spare rib here, be praised for't! except auld Martha, and she's wool enough pleased wi' the freedom o' the berry-bushes to her sister's weans, when they come to drink tea in the holiday in the housekeeper's room, and wi' a wheen codlings now and then for her ain private supper."

Proud Maisie

Proud Maisie is in the wood,
  Walking so early;
Sweet robin sits on the bush,
  Singing so rarely.

"Tell me, thou bonny bird,
  When shall I marry me?"
"When six braw gentlemen
  Kirkward shall carry ye."

"Who makes the bridal bed,
  Birdie, say truly?"
"The grey-headed sexton
  That delves the grave duly.

"The glow-worm o'er grave and stone
  Shall light thee steady.
The owl from the steeple sing,
  Welcome, proud lady."

The Lady of the Lake

Their light-arm'd archers far and near
  Survey'd the tangled ground,
Their centre ranks, with spike and spear,
  A twilight forest frown'd,
Their barbèd horsemen, in the rear,
  The stern battalia crown'd,
No cymbal clash'd, no clarion rang,
  Still were the pipe and drum;
Save heavy tread, and armour's clang,
  The sullen march was dumb.
There breathed no wind their crests to shake
  Or wave their flags abroad;
Scarce the frail aspen seem'd to quake,
  That shadow'd o'er their road.
Their vaward scouts no tidings bring,
  Can rouse no lurking foe,
Nor spy a trace of living thing
  Save when they stirr'd the roe:
The host moves like a deep-sea wave,
  Where rise no rocks its pride to brave,
High-swelling, dark, and slow.
The lake is pass'd, and now they gain
A narrow and a broken plain,
Before the Trosach's rugged jaws,
And here the horse and spearmen pause,
While, to explore the dangerous glen,
Dive through the pass the archer-men.

At once there rose so wild a yell
Within that dark and narrow dell,
As all the fiends from heaven that fell
Had peal'd the banner-cry of Hell!
  Forth from the pass, in tumult driven,
  Like chaff before the wind of heaven,
    The archery appear;
  For life! for life! their flight they ply,
  And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry,
  And plaids and bonnets waving high,
  And broadswords flashing to the sky,
    Are maddening in the rear.
Onward they drive, in dreadful race,
  Pursuers and pursued;
Before that tide of flight and chase,
How shall it keep its rooted place,
  The spearmen's twilight wood?
"Down, down," cried Mar, "your lances down,
Bear back both friend and foe!"
Like reeds before the tempest's frown,

That carried grove of leaves brown
At once lay levell'd low;
And, slowly shouldering side to side,
The bristling ranks the ones hide.—
"We'll quell the savage mountain
As their Tinchel cows the game!
They came as fleet as forest deer,
We'll drive them back as lambs."

Scott and the Ballad Makers

Scott's name and fame are associated closely with his two countrymen, James Hogg, the "Ettrick Shepherd," and John Leyden. Of Hogg I have spoken elsewhere; he was a genuine poet of a subtler though less varied imagination than Scott, and as a ballad writer found literature more profitable than "driving sheep to Edinburgh." Leyden was a scholar equally versed in Sanscrit and Borderlore. He had much to do with Scott's earlier studies in balladry, and though his own output was slight, is the author of a few ballads, the *Elf-King* and *The Mermaid* for instance, that deserve to rank alongside of the work of Scott and Hogg.

A Boy's Song

Where the pools are bright and deep,
Where the grey trout lies asleep,
Up the river and over the lea,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the blackbird sings the latest,
Where the hawthorn blooms the sweetest,
Where the nestlings chirp and flee,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the mowers mow the cleanest,
Where the hay lies thick and greenest,
There to track the homeward bee,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the hoard hauk is steepest,
Where the shadow falls the deepest,
Where the clustering nuts fall free,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Why the boys should drive away
Little sweet maidens from the play,
Or love to banter and fight so well,
That's the thing I never could tell.

But this I know, I love to play
Through the meadow, among the hay;
Up the water and over the lea,
That's the way for Billy and me.[1]

Kilmeny

She saw a sun on a summer sky,
And clouds of amber sailing by;
A lovely land beneath her lay,
And that land had glens and mountains gray;
And that land had valleys and hoary piles,
And marled seas, and a thousand isles.
Its fields were speckled, its forests green,
And its lakes were all of the dazzling sheen,
Like magic mirrors, where slumbering lay
The sun and the sky and the cloudlet gray;
Which heaved and trembled, and gently swung,
On every shore they seem'd to be hung;
For there they were seen on their homeward plain
A thousand times and a thousand again;
In winding lake and placid firth,
Little peaceful heavens in the bosom of earth.

Kilmeny sigh'd and sorn'd to grieve,
For she found her heart to that land did cleave;
She saw the corn wave on the vale,
She saw the deer run down the dale;
She saw the plaid and the broad claymore,
And the brows that the badge of freedom bore;
And she thought she had seen the land before.[1]

Another Scottish singer is Robert Tannahill (1774–1810). He was a weaver of Paisley with an original gift of song, and temperamentally had more in common with Burns than with Scott. His main concern is love—love primal and passionate, and such a lyric as *Jessie, the Flower of Dunblane*, is among the most intimate and moving songs that breathe an elemental atmosphere of nature and humanity.

Allan Cunningham (1784–1842) was a stonemason of Dumfriesshire. He attracted the notice and won the friendship of Sir Walter Scott, who admired his gift for vivid, homely ballad-writing. His stirring sea song, *A Wet Sheet and a Flowing Sea*, is a first-rate ballad of its kind, and there is a direct simplicity about *Hame, Hame, Hame*, that makes its appeal at once.

Cunningham wrote a useful *Life of Burns*, and will be remembered also for his services in collecting Scottish songs.

Hame, Hame, Hame

Hame, hame, hame, O hame fain wad I be—
O hame, hame, hame, to my ain countree!

When the flower is i' the bud and the leaf is on the tree,
The larks shall sing me hame in my ain countree;
Hame, hame, hame, O hame fain wad I be—
O hame, hame, hame, to my ain countree!

The green leaf of loyaltie's beginning for to fa',
The bonnie White Rose it is withering an' a';
But I'll water't wi' the blude of usurping tyrannie,
An' green it will grow in my ain countree.

O, there's nocht now frae ruin my country can save,
But the keys o' kind heaven, to open the grave;
That a' the noble martyrs who died for loyaltie
May rise again an' fight for their ain countree.

The great now are gane, a' who ventured to save,
The new grass is springing on the top o' their grave;
But the sun through the mirk blinks blythe in my e'e,
"I'll shine on ye yet in your ain countree."

Hame, hame, hame, O hame fain wad I be—
O hame, hame, hame, to my ain countree!

Along with Cunningham must be mentioned William Motherwell (1797–1835), who, like Tannahill, was a native of Paisley, and, like "honest Allan," was an admirer and editor of Burns. He wrote also a *Life of Tannahill*, and in 1819 and 1827 published a collection of songs: *The Harp of Renfrewshire* and *Minstrelsy Ancient and Modern*. His most distinctive claim to remembrance lies less in his Scottish songs, excellent as some of these are, than in his ballads from the Norse. The rich folk-lore of Scandinavia was yet to find its great modern discoverer, but Gray and Motherwell are certainly among the early pioneers.

The fighting note in Motherwell's muse finds a counterpart in Campbell's ballads. Thomas Camp-

[1] James Hogg.

BELL (1777–1844) has more affinity with the English Gothic School than with the simpler, more elemental ballad writers with whom we have been concerned. There is something of Mrs. Radcliffe's melodramatic violence in Campbell's effects, and the colours he lays on so freely are not free from the charge of tawdriness. None the less, at his best, he is a spirited and impressive song-writer in the realm of "battle, murder, and sudden death."

Born in Glasgow of a business family, he proceeded to the University in due course, where he experimented freely in his favourite form of rhetorical verse. He was well acquainted with the wild scenery of the Island of Mull, and while watching the storms break there he was eagerly watchful also of the fiercer storms enveloping Revolutionary France.

His earliest work, *The Pleasures of Hope*, though romantic in feeling, was cast into the familiar mould of Pope—a mould certainly not adapted for exhibiting Campbell's peculiar gifts to the best advantage. His vigorous imagination, however, impressed the readers of his day, and he won the notice of Scott, who soon interested him in ballad minstrelsy.

His early experiments in this direction are not happy; exhibiting the extravagances rather than the merits of the Romantic School, it was not until the time of his journey abroad, when the invading armies of France were carrying all before them, that his ballads caught fire. Revolutionary France warmed his blood, and all the horrors and fascinations of the fight took possession of his imagination. There he found the inspiration for *Ye Mariners of England*, *Hohenlinden*, and *The Battle of the Baltic*.

Apart from his songs, Campbell is not an interesting writer. He imitates Scott's romantic narrative with nothing of Scott's rich, concrete power.

YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND

Ye Mariners of England
That guard our native seas!
Whose flag has braved a thousand years,
The battle and the breeze!
Your glorious standard launch again
To match another foe;
And sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow!
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

The spirit of your fathers
Shall start from every wave—
For the deck it was their field of fame,
And Ocean was their grave:
Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell
Your manly hearts shall glow,
As ye sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow!
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

Britannia needs no bulwarks,
No towers along the steep;
Her march is o'er the mountain-waves,
Her home is on the deep.
With thunders from her native oak
She quells the floods below,
As they roar on the shore,
When the stormy winds do blow!
When the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

The meteor flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn;
Till danger's troubled night depart
And the star of peace return.
Then, then, ye ocean-warriors!
Our song and feast shall flow
To the fame of your name,
When the storm has ceased to blow!
When the fiery fight is heard no more,
And the storm has ceased to blow.

If Ireland can boast no such body of singers as can Scotland, she can at any rate claim one of the most popular literary personalities of his own or any other time, that of TOM MOORE (1779–1852). Born in Dublin, May 28, 1779, the son of a grocer, he received a good education, and after leaving Trinity College, Dublin, he went to study law at the Middle Temple. Like many another "literary gent," he speedily turned his attention from legal subtleties to the delights of letters, and in the early years of the century did well with a translation of Anacreon and the *Poems of Thomas Little*. An appointment in the Bermudas (1803) proved of some financial value, but subsequently, owing to the misconduct of his deputy, he became involved in pecuniary difficulties, through which he gallantly waded. Two volumes of verse in rapid succession, including the *Irish Melodies*, a duel with Jeffrey, and a brilliant explosion of political squibs entitled *The Twopenny Post-bag*, occupied the next few years. Jeffrey subsequently became a firm friend, and Moore varied his sentimental and satiric moods adroitly. *Lalla Rookh*, an Oriental fantasy, followed in 1817 and met with great success. *The Fudge Family* of the following year was in his satirical and jocular vein. If his later verse is not so happy as the earlier, he gave ample evidence of his mental vigour and versatility by an ingenious prose romance, *The Epicurean*, and an admirable *Life of Byron*. In 1835 he was pensioned, but his last years were somewhat clouded by mental disease.

The vogue of Moore has long since died out, and we are more likely to undervalue him to-day and to echo Hazlitt's caustic criticism. But he has not a few claims to our remembrance, and was something better than the shallow, facile rhymester he sometimes appears.

Certainly the personality that emerges from his own naïve and exuberant letters and journals is an attractive one. A cheerful, honest soul at heart, with a fund of genuine humour, vain but by no means self-sufficient, kindly and tender, terribly sentimental, though a fine strain of imagination breathes through the facile sentimentality at times. Something of a *poseur* and a dandy it is true, but in this he was of his time, and he never took his own pranks and posings seriously. If not original, and too often commonplace, he is sincere and almost invariably pleasing, whether in his graceful and tender melodies or his smartly-written and neatly effective sarcasms.

In his own day he was amazingly popular. Shelley admired his verse, Coleridge praised his deftly mingled poetry and music, and "the music, like the honeysuckle round the stem, twining round the meaning and at last overtopping it," and he

retained, through varying vicissitudes, the friendship of Byron despite the poet's gibe on a certain occasion when they stood watching a Venetian sunrise: "Damn it, Tom, don't be poetical!" When he entered a Dublin theatre the audience acclaimed him as if he had been royalty, and even on a rough sea voyage, we are told, he was not safe from the admiring embraces of elderly ladies!

Of Moore's poetry, the *Irish Airs* present him at his happiest. His Orientalism was a veneer, and he had little power to suggest the mysticism and passion of the East. *Lalla Rookh*, inspired by Southey and Byron, is no more than a fancy dress masquerade, for all its brave show of learning, and the irrepressible Tom, with his fine Whig sympathies and fashionable sentimentalism, can be discerned easily. The *Irish Airs* stand on another plane. It is true that they have no touch of what we call "Celtic magic," and give no expression to the subtler spiritual ecstasies of the Irish temperament, but they have a sweet cadence, a delicate pathos, and if they do not transport you to "a peak in Darien," they conduct you through very agreeable meadowland.

THE YOUNG MAY MOON

The young May moon is beaming, love,
The glow-worm's lamp is gleaming, love;
How sweet to rove
Through Morna's grove,
When the drowsy world is dreaming, love!
Then awake!—the heavens look bright, my dear,
'Tis never too late for delight, my dear;
And the best of all ways
To lengthen our days
Is to steal a few hours from the night, my dear!
Now all the world is sleeping, love,
But the Sage, his star-watch keeping, love,
And I, whose star
More glorious far
Is the eye from that casement peeping, love
Then awake!—till rise of sun, my dear,
The Sage's glass we'll shun, my dear,
Or in watching the flight
Of bodies of light
He might happen to take thee for one, my dear!

THE LIGHT OF OTHER DAYS

Oft, in the stilly night,
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Fond Memory brings the light
Of other days around me:
The smiles, the tears
Of boyhood's years,
The words of love then spoken;
The eyes that shone,
Now dimm'd and gone,
The cheerful hearts now broken!
Thus, in the stilly night,
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Memory brings the light
Of other days around me.

When I remember all
The friends, so link'd together,
I've seen around me fall
Like leaves in wintry weather,
I feel like one
Who treads alone
Some banquet-hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled,
Whose garlands dead,
And all but he departed!
Thus, in the stilly night,
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Memory brings the light
Of other days around me.

I. POETRY: (*d*) SHELLEY AND HIS CIRCLE. Introduction—Byron—Shelley—Keats—Leigh Hunt—W. S. Landor—C. J. Wells—Thomas Wade—Bryan Waller Procter ("Barry Cornwall")—George Darley—T. Lovell Beddoes.

SHELLEY AND HIS CIRCLE

WHATEVER intellectual and emotional differences may separate the various circles of Romantic poets, one and all paid whole-hearted allegiance to Nature. Even that restless man of the world, Byron, could enjoy to the full the charms of a solitary landscape: while the song of a bird took captive the rich, concrete imagination of Keats, the transcendental ecstasy of Shelley, the brooding spirit of Wordsworth. This is the bond uniting all the Romantic singers. It was an intimate and potent one, and it is well to bear it in mind when noticing the particular characteristics of each circle, and the idiosyncrasies of individual members of these circles. For while it is convenient to treat of these poets in groups, and while mutual influences were considerable, the artistic originality and intense individuality of the greater souls must always be borne in mind.

In the poetry passed under review, the main thing has been the reiteration of the importance of ordinary folk and commonplace things, and of the simple joys and beauties of Nature. But these, as we have seen, by no means exhaust the Romantics. The intellectual implications of Romanticism, only hinted at now and again in Wordsworth and Coleridge, come boldly to the fore in the small choric circle of poets with whom we shall now be dealing.

Moral and intellectual freedom, social emancipation, and a rich abandonment to the sensuous delights of life, these are matters that find full expression in the work of poets like Byron, Shelley, Keats.

GEORGE GORDON NOEL, 6TH LORD BYRON (1788–1824)

HIS LIFE

One of Byron's early biographers, John Galt, has summarised the poet as "a mystery in a winding-sheet crowned with a halo." His latest biographer, Miss Ethel Colburn Mayne, sees in this self-styled "victim of her sex" one of "the most splendid examples we have of the struggling, winning and losing, enjoying and scorning, aspiring and falling, loving and hating human spirits."[1]

Born on January 22, 1788, in London, Byron was

[1] *Byron*, by E. C. Mayne (Methuen).

singularly unfortunate in both his parents. His father was a handsome blackguard, nominally a soldier, who, having squandered his wife's fortune, deserted her and their child, and died in France in 1791. His mother, Miss Gordon of Gight, a woman of the most passionate extremes, would at one time spoil her son by over-indulgence and immediately after goad him into fury by her cruel taunts at his lameness, although he had bravely suffered the most excruciating torture at the hands of incapable practitioners in the vain hope of a cure.

During an early upbringing in comparative poverty he attended a cheap day-school at Aberdeen, but failed here to learn even his letters, for which his mother "boxed his ears": private tuition followed, and then—a warm-hearted, lively lad, quicker to give a blow than accept one—pursued his instruction at Aberdeen Grammar School until 1798, when, on the death of his great-uncle, he inherited the title and an impoverished estate.

Removing with his mother, first to Nottingham, then to London, the youthful peer was placed with Dr. Glennie at Dulwich, preparatory to his entrance at Harrow, but his mother's injudicious behaviour and self-will so greatly impeded his studies, that the boy was considerably below the standard of other boys of his age when he went up in 1801, shy and sensitive, "more easily led by a silken thread than by a cable." Cricket and boating were always favourite pastimes, and in the noble art of self-defence he "lost but one battle in seven."

With the reputation of an idler he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1805, though he had wished for Christ Church, Oxford, but there was no vacancy. He made no profession of serious study, but was an omnivorous reader, particularly interested in Oriental history; and while "I took my gradations in the vices with great promptitude," he says, "I could not share in the commonplace libertinism of the place and time without disgust." To the alarm and indignation of the college authorities he kept bulldogs in his rooms, and a bear cub that he said was "in training for a fellowship." In 1808 he left the University with an M.A. degree, "because the old beldam could not avoid it."

On coming of age in 1809 he took his seat in the House of Lords, but with party politics would have nothing to do on either side. After wild revels at Newstead, Byron with his friend Hobhouse left England on July 2 for his first tour on the Continent. Throughout his letters at this period it is easy to trace his varying moods: the excitements of his travels when "I was very happy at Lisbon because I love oranges, talk bad Latin to the monks . . . ride on an ass or mule, and swear Portuguese"; again, his passion for Nature and love of solitude: "My old seas and mountains are the only acquaintances I ever found improve upon me" . . . "twelve months of any given individual was perfect ipecacuanha"; and throughout all we find an underlying bitterness that merged into the melancholy so peculiarly his own: "I begin to find out that nothing but virtue will do in this damned world. I am tolerably sick of vice. . . . I am very serious and cynical, and a good deal disposed to moralise."

His return to England in July 1811 was marked by the loss of his friend Matthews, who was drowned while bathing, and the death of his mother on August 1. Byron was a dutiful son, and despite her faults would hear no ill spoken of her. "Cost what it may, gold or blood, I will pursue to the last the cowardly calumniator . . . of a defenceless woman."

"A wife would be the salvation of me," he once wrote in his Journal, so in 1813, when he met the clever, beautiful, and wealthy only child of Sir Ralph Milbanke, it was, to use his own words to her, "the first approach ever made on my part to a permanent union with any woman;" she refused the offer, but a meeting twelve months later ended in their marriage at Seaham on January 2, 1815. They lived together, first at Seaham, then in London, a life of hopeless financial embarrassment and painful disagreements; doubtless there were faults on both sides, though Byron chivalrously takes the blame: "Where there is blame it belongs to myself, and if I cannot redeem I must bear it."

The birth of their baby girl in December made matters no better, and in January 1816 Lady Byron, to outward appearance quite friendly, left him on a temporary visit to her parents; she never returned, and on April 21 a legal deed of separation was made. Lady Byron died in 1860, and their daughter, Ada, afterwards Lady Lovelace, in 1852.

Four days after the deed was signed, Lord Byron left England never to return. During his wanderings he made the acquaintance of the Shelleys and Claire Clairmont, the mother of Allegra, and on the tragic death of Shelley, Byron witnessed the grim rite of cremation on the shore of the Italian lake.

In 1823, when Greece was struggling for independence, the poet threw all his energies into the cause. "The imaginative poet became a practical politician, and the unrestrained libertine changed to a sturdy military disciplinarian." "I have come to help none of you as a partisan, but all of you as a friend," and his whole heart, mind, and body were given to his self-imposed task, until seized with sudden illness on February 15, 1824. He lingered for two months in distressing suffering, and died at Missolonghi in Western Greece on Easter Monday, April 19, "engaged in the glorious attempt to restore that country to her ancient freedom and renown." His body was brought to England and laid to rest in the family vault at Hucknall Torkard.

His Work

Whatever view we British people may hold of Byron's work, there can be no doubt that on the Continent he was in his own day, and still is in ours, one of the greatest figures in English literature. There is no other poet in the Romantic Revival who touched Europe so unmistakably as Byron. Yet his detractors are many and formidable, and there are not a few critics who would deny him any place in the firmament of great poets. Let us admit his faults at the outset if we would judge him fairly. His slovenliness of diction, his cheap rhetoric, his gross errors of taste, these things are obvious enough, and infect his work just as his

theatricality and lack of self-control condition any personal estimate we make of the man. Yet it is hard to understand how any careful student of his writings can help feeling that many splendid flashes of beauty and insight overshadow the faults in any final appreciation of his work as a whole.

In the first place, he had from the outset an instinct for admirable and telling prose. His letters scintillate in nicy humour and lively personal touches; they are rarely negligible, for Byron was a sound critic—exaggerations notwithstanding—and an excellent observer of men and manners. As a writer of verse his progress was more chequered.

In his experimental period his poetic style is often commonplace and tawdry. The experimental years start in 1807 with *Hours of Idleness*, include *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, and end with the *Siege of Corinth*. Even here the intellectual power of the man triumphs over the faulty medium, just as his genuine love of beauty raises some of the rhetoric to a high level. But the work is very uneven. After 1816, the era of his exile, the style improves steadily, and there is an ampler power of self-expression. If we except the majority of his dramas, mostly uneasy experiments, we may trace a gradual progress of his art until, in *Don Juan* and the *Vision of Judgment*, we have the richest fruits of his genius—richest not merely because of their hardly acquired artistic excellencies, but because the various sides of the man, his wit, his fancy, his passion for beauty, his graphic sensuality, find here in these poems their happiest expression.

His Bold Imagination

Lacking the intensity of Wordsworth, the subtlety of Coleridge, the receptivity of Keats, the aerial fire of Shelley, Byron possessed a breadth and vigour of imagination beyond that of any contemporary. Nowhere is this more agreeably illustrated than in his love of Nature. In this love he is at one with all the Romantic poets, and he expresses it quite in his own particular way; there is no meditative musing, little sense of mystery, but a very live sense of wonder and delight in the energising glories of Nature.

> 'The morn is up again, the dewy morn
> With breath all incense and with cheek all bloom,
> Laughing the clouds away with playful scorn,
> And living as if earth contained no tomb
> And glowing into day: we may resume
> The march of an existence."

It is "over the hills and far away" with Byron. Nature for him is a splendid background against which human activities depict themselves. There is no mistaking the sincerity of his enthusiasm, or the attractive glow it gives to his facile rhetoric. Nature intoxicates him with an almost bodily delight.

> 'To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,
> To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,
> Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
> And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been,
> To climb the trackless mountain all unseen
> With the wild flock that never needs a fold,
> Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean—
> This is not solitude: 'tis but to hold
> Converse with Nature's charms, and view her stores unroll'd."

In his descriptive passages we are reminded of Scott at his best. There is the same easy vigour and fire. Such poems as the *Siege of Corinth* are rich in brilliant sketches like this:

> "'Tis midnight: on the mountains brown
> The cold, round moon shines deeply down;
> Blue roll the waters, blue the sky
> Spreads like an ocean hung on high,
> Bespangled with those isles of light. . . .
> The waves on either shore lay there
> Calm, clear, and azure as the air;
> And scarce their foam the pebbles shook,
> But murmur'd meekly as the brook.
> The winds were pillow'd on the waves;
> The banners droop'd along their staves. . . .
> And that deep silence was unbroke,
> Save where the watch his signal spoke,
> Save where the steed neighed oft and shrill. . . .
> And the wide hum of that wild host
> Hustled like leaves from coast to coast. . . ."

His Strong Individuality

He was a *poseur*, with phases of simplicity and naturalness; an actor with a strain of fierce sincerity; a revolutionary in thought and a conservative in art. A man of violent emotion, he was constantly betrayed into extravagant assertion. But he was by no means so unstable as he seemed. He loved to shock people and magnify his lawlessness. But he was not a bad man; he was merely a man who did bad things. The distinction is a real one. Considering his wretched childhood, with a "brutal roysterer" for a father, and a virago for a mother, there is scant wonder that his temper was so gusty, and his emotional life so exaggerated. But he had fine enduring traits: courage, generosity, and a capacity for friendship.

He was one of the most widely travelled of our poets, and what he paints he paints from actual observation. The local colour is not "mugged up." A man who lived with Byron for several years declared that on certain days he was mad, while at other times, in presence of beautiful things, he became sublime. Scott spoke of him as "being a man of real goodness of heart, and the kindest and best feelings, miserably thrown away by his foolish contempt of public opinion. Instead of being warned or checked by public opposition, it roused him to go on in a worse strain, as if he said, 'Ay, you don't like it; well, you shall have something worse for your pains.'"

But such as he was, with all his contradictions, his sensuality, his sublimity, his wit, his spleen, his moody restlessness, his individuality is so strong that it breaks through all his poems. There is no poet less objective than he. His heroes and villains (the distinction is not always apparent) are coloured stage editions of himself. *Manfred*, *Childe Harold*, *Lara*, *Don Juan*; we can see the insolent dandy, the daring adventurer, the intrepid fighter, the amorist in cash. Such force of personality will not be schooled to the requirements of a finished art. No great poet has ever been more shamelessly bombastic and turgid; but amidst stanzas of third-rate rhetoric are passages of real power and beauty.

"I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;
A palace and a prison on each hand;
I saw from out the wave her structure rise
As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand
A thousand years, their cloudy wings expand
Around me, and a dying Glory smiles
O'er the far times, when many a subject land
Look'd to the winged Lion's marble piles,
Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred isles!

. . . . . .

What from this barren being do we reap?
Our senses narrow, and our reason frail,
Life short, and truth a gem which loves the deep,
And all things weigh'd in custom's falsest scale;
Opinion an omnipotence, whose veil
Mantles the earth with darkness, until right
And wrong are accidents, and men grow pale
Lest their own judgments should become too bright,
And their free thoughts be crimes, and earth have too much light."

His Wit

If the flexibility of Byron's verse was well adapted for rhetorical purposes, it was equally well adapted for satiric use. His satire, indeed, is more remarkable than even his rhetoric. *Beppo* and *Don Juan* scintillate with humour. There is no delicacy, no subtlety about it; but it has a daring and liveliness that reminds one of the Restoration wits rather than of any contemporary models. Moreover, there is abundant sound sense in Byron's persiflage.

"One hates an author that's all *author*, fellows
In foolscap uniforms turn'd up with ink,
So very anxious, clever, fine, and jealous,
One don't know what to say to them, or think,
Unless to puff them with a pair of bellows;
Of coxcombry's worst coxcombs e'en the pink
Are preferable to these shreds of paper,
These unquench'd snuffings of the midnight taper.

Of these same we see several, and of others,
Men of the world who know the world like man,
Scott, Rogers, Moore, and all the better brothers,
Who think of something else beside the pen:
But for the children of the 'mighty mothers,'
The would-be wits, and can't-be gentlemen,
I leave them to their daily 'tea is ready,'
Smug coterie, and literary lady."

Slovenly and meretricious Byron can be, and often is. Scarcely ever does he lack vitality. He has been accused of insincerity, and insincere he could be when he wished. But it was a thing done deliberately—malice aforethought; an actor's pose. Despite occasional attitudinising in the limelight, there was an elemental greatness and fierce integrity about the man. For this reason preference must be given to *Don Juan* above all his other work. For there you have the real Byron—a medley of perverse humour, keen-sighted wit, heady passion, and—its coarseness notwithstanding—with that unmistakable thirst after beauty which you find in none but the live and genuine poet.

As an artist it is interesting to compare his quick, vivid impressionism with the caressing exactitude of Keats. He has an eye for essentials, and can dash off a pictorial effect or a character sketch with amazing dexterity and skill. The effect may be rather of the flamboyant poster type than that of the finished picture. But, allowing for this, there can be no question of his success. Wholly admirable in its way is the pen sketch of London:

"A mighty mass of brick and smoke and shipping,
Dirty and dusky, but as wide as eye
Could reach, with here and there a sail just skipping
In sight, then lost amidst the forestry
Of masts; a wilderness of steeples peeping
On tiptoe thro' their sensual canopy;
A huge, dim cupola like a foolscap crown
On a fool's head—and there is London Town."

It might serve as a motto to a Whistler study. The magic of London held Juan as it has held many since:

"But Juan saw not this: each wreath of smoke
Appear'd to him but as the magic vapour
Of some alchymic furnace, from whence broke
The wealth of worlds (a wealth of Tax and paper);
The gloomy clouds, which o'er it as a yoke
Are bow'd and put the Sun out like a taper—
Were nothing but the natural atmosphere,
Extremely wholesome, tho' but rarely clear."

Of his lyrics it may be said that while lacking the elusive delicacy of Shelley, and the noble distinction of Wordsworth, they have none the less a lilting charm and gracious music of their own.

That well-known lyric,

"She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies . . ."

will take its place beside the best lyrics in our language.

Profoundly touched at certain points by romanticism, Byron was never a poet of romanticism in the sense that Shelley, Scott, and Coleridge were. Like Wordsworth and Southey, he is deeply touched by its influences at one moment, but is far away at the next. A certain stolidity in Wordsworth's nature, coupled with a chariness in yielding to emotions, give his romanticism very definite limitations; while about both Southey and Byron there was a strong practicality, a vivid sense of the present that circumscribe their romanticism. Of all the great poets of the time, Byron presents the curious and piquant combination of an ardent romantic imagination, and an intellect and outlook essentially worldly and matter-of-fact. With Keats it was the past, with Shelley the future, with Byron it is the present that really interests and grips him. His ardent fancy dallied with the past on occasion; but he is most at home with the England of his day, the Europe of his day, its social hypocrisies, its literary conventions and affectations. He is always at heart a society gentleman, and both in its good and bad sense, a man of the world. Here is the explanation of his genuine admiration for Pope and the Popian methods, and his attack on Bowles (see *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*) for depreciating Pope. He never took his *Childe Harold* as seriously as the *English Bards*—which is purely eighteenth-century in spirit—and thought far more of his *Vision of Judgment*, which is pure satire, than of his *Corsair*. His own slap-dash methods of writing were not after Pope, it is true, but none knew this better than he did, and he criticised his own slovenliness of writing and lauded the careful finish and polish of Pope. No doubt there is a touch of personal malice in his early attack on Wordsworth and his circle, and for this reason he exaggerated all that was anti-romantic in his nature. But, while making allowance for this, there was real

sincerity in his critical attitude; real value also at a time when romanticism was at its height, and when the eighteenth-century poets suffered a good deal of undeserved obloquy. But the spirit of the age was too strong for him. He may have felt scornful of the saccharine joys of romanticism, but he had a sweet tooth and yielded to its blandishments. On the whole Byron was more interesting as a man, a personality, than a writer, because of his complex nature and of his picturesque setting in the social conditions of his time. His influence for a time was tremendous, though always at bottom more personal than literary. Then, as is always the case when the spell waned, the reaction ran violently to the other extreme, and the Victorian unduly depreciated him. Perhaps we are beginning to-day to get the right perspective of this strange compound of greatness and littleness. If not one of our greatest poets, there are few literary personalities more interesting than he, and he was undoubtedly a powerful force in English letters.

Don Juan

A long, long kiss, a kiss of youth and love,
And beauty, all concentrating like rays
Into one flame, kindled from above;
Such kisses as belong to early days,
Where heart, and soul, and sense, in concert move,
And the blood's lava, and the pulse a blaze,
Each kiss a heart-quake,—for a kiss's strength,
I think it must be reckon'd by its length.

By length I mean duration; theirs endured
Heaven knows how long—no doubt they never reckon'd;
And if they had, they could not have secured
The sum of their sensations to a second:
They had not spoken; but they felt allured,
As if their souls and lips each other beckon'd,
Which being join'd, like swarming bees they clung—
Their hearts the flowers from whence the honey sprung.

They were alone, but not alone as they
Who shut in chambers think it loneliness;
The silent ocean, and the starlit bay,
The twilight glow, which momently grew less,
The voiceless sands, and dropping caves, that lay
Around them, made them to each other press,
As if there were no life beneath the sky
Save theirs, and that their life could never die.

They fear'd no eyes nor ears on that lone beach.
They felt no terrors from the night, they were
All in all to each other; though their speech
Was broken words, they *thought* a language there,—
And all the burning tongues the passions teach
Found in one sigh the best interpreter
Of nature's oracle—first love,—that all
Which Eve has left her daughters since her fall.

Haidée spoke not of scruples, ask'd no vows,
Nor offer'd any; she had never heard
Of plight and promise to be a spouse,
Or perils by a lawful maid incurr'd;
She was all which pure ignorance allows,
And flew to her young mate like a young bird,
And never having dreamt of falsehood, she
Had not one word to say of constancy.

She loved, and was beloved—she adored,
And she was worshipp'd: after nature's fashion,
Their intense souls, into each other pour'd,
If souls could die, had perish'd in that passion,—
But by degrees their senses were restored,
Again to be o'ercome, again to dash on;
And, beating against his bosom, Haidée's heart
Felt as if never more to beat apart.

Alas! they were so young, so beautiful,
So lonely, loving, helpless, and the hour
Was that in which the heart is always full,
And, having o'er itself no further power,
Prompts deeds eternity cannot annul,
But pays off moments in an endless shower
Of hell-fire—all prepared for people giving
Pleasure or pain to one another living.

Alas! for Juan and Haidée! they were
So loving and so lovely—till then never,
Excepting our first parents, such a pair
Had run the risk of being damn'd for ever;
And Haidée, being devout as well as fair,
Had, doubtless, heard about the Stygian river,
And hell and purgatory—but forgot,
Just in the very crisis she should not.

They look upon each other, and their eyes
Gleam in the moonlight; and her white arm clasps
Round Juan's head, and his around her lies
Half buried in the tresses which it grasps;
She sits upon his knee, and drinks his sighs,
He hers, until they end in broken gasps;
And thus they form a group that's quite antique,
Half naked, loving, natural, and Greek.

And when those deep and burning moments pass'd,
And Juan sunk to sleep within her arms,
She slept not, but all tenderly, though fast,
Sustain'd his head upon her bosom's charms;
And now and then her eye to heaven is cast,
And then on the pale cheek her breast now warms,
Pillow'd on her o'erflowing heart, which pants
With all it granted, and with all it grants.

An infant when it gazes on the light,
A child the moment when it drains the breast,
A devotee when soars the Host in sight,
An Arab with a stranger for a guest,
A sailor when the prize has struck in fight,
A miser filling his most hoarded chest,
Feel rapture: but not such true joy are reaping
As they who watch o'er what they love while sleeping.

For there it lies so tranquil, so beloved,
All that it hath of life with us is living:
So gentle, stirless, helpless, and unmoved,
And all unconscious of the joy 'tis giving;
All it hath felt, inflicted, pass'd, and proved,
Hush'd into depths beyond the watcher's diving;
There lies the thing we love with all its errors,
And all its charms, like death without its terrors.

The lady watch'd her lover—and that hour
Of Love's, and Night's, and Ocean's solitude,
O'erflow'd her soul with their united power;
Amidst the barren sand and rocks so rude,
She and her wave-worn love had made their bower,
Where nought upon their passion could intrude,
And all the stars that crowded the blue space
Saw nothing happier than her glowing face.

Alas! the love of women! it is known
To be a lovely and a fearful thing;
For all of theirs upon that die is thrown,
And if 'tis lost, life hath no more to bring
To them but mockeries of the past alone,
And their revenge is as the tiger's spring,
Deadly, and quick, and crushing; yet, as real
Torture is theirs, what they inflict they feel.

They are right; for man, to man so oft unjust,
Is always so to women: one sole bond
Awaits them, treachery is all their trust;
Taught to conceal, their bursting hearts despond
Over their idol, till some wealthier lust
Buys them in marriage—and what rests beyond?
A thankless husband, next a faithless lover,
Then dressing, nursing, praying, and all's over.

Some take a lover, some take dreams or prayers,
Some mind their household, others dissipation,
Some run away, and but exchange their cares,
Losing the advantage of a virtuous station;

Few changes e'er can better their affairs,
Theirs being an unnatural situation,
From the dull palace to the dirty hovel;
Some play the devil, and then write a novel.

Haidée was Nature's bride, and knew not this;
Haidée was Passion's child, born where the sun
Showers triple light, and scorches even the kiss
Of his gazelle-eyed daughters; she was one
Made but to love, to feel that she was his
Who was her chosen: what was said or done
Elsewhere was nothing. She had nought to fear,
Hope, care, nor love beyond, her heart beat here.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792–1822)

His Life

The poet Shelley was the eldest son of the narrow-minded representative of an old county family, the Shelleys of Field Place, Sussex, where this "brilliant, wayward, ill-fated youth" was born on August 4, 1792.

A mischievous, lovable lad, of independent, energetic, generous disposition, with large, beautiful blue eyes, long bushy hair, delicate features, and strong, slender figure, his whole appearance, it is said, "breathed an animation, a fire, an enthusiasm, a vivid and preternatural intelligence." Yet how many of his contemporaries have also likened him to a flower: "An elegant and slender flower whose head drooped from being surcharged with rain," said one; with features of "an unhealthy paleness, like a flower that has been kept from the light of day," was the remark of another; while a third tells us that his form, "graceful and slender, drooped like a flower in the breeze."

Shelley's early education was given at home in company with his sisters; in 1802 he went to school at Sion House, Brentford, where he was looked upon as "a strange, unsocial being," and three years later passed into Eton. His school experiences, however, were somewhat unfortunate; he hated tyranny and brutal force, and the system of fagging was utterly repugnant to the boy's love of freedom and independence:

> "I will be wise,
> And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies
> Such power, for I grow weary to behold
> The selfish and the strong still tyrannize
> Without reproach or check."

The choice of tutor for a boy with a disposition such as Shelley's was also an unwise one; the pupil himself tells us that "he was one of the dullest men in the establishment":

> "And from that hour did I with earnest thought
> Heap knowledge from forbidden mines of lore,
> Yet nothing that my tyrants knew or taught
> I cared to learn."

Withal, he became a good Greek scholar, produced a considerable amount of Latin verse, and with still greater zest pursued his experiments in chemistry and electricity, that culminated in many boyish pranks—from an electric shock to a tutor to the setting on fire of a haystack, "because he wanted to have a hell of his own." It was his delight to dress his sisters and himself "in strange costumes to personate spirits or fiends, to take a fire-stove and fill it with some inflammable liquid, and to carry it flaming into the kitchen," and "it seemed too probable," says his sister, "that some day the house would be burned down."

From Eton he went up to Oxford in 1808, revolutionary in spirit and bitterly opposed to the existing state of society; he was a diligent student, read hard if not along the lines prescribed by the university, and with frank independence spoke and wrote as he thought. It is therefore needless to say that when his pamphlet, *The Necessity of Atheism*, appeared, it caused considerable friction with the authorities, but, having the courage of his conviction, he asked them to discuss the subject with him, and was met with an indignant refusal—he must subscribe to the college rule of faith or depart. Refute his pamphlet he would not, so he was dismissed, and with his friend Thomas Jefferson Hogg, left Oxford for London with the impression that the world is against him and a determination from henceforth to be against the world. His expulsion but fixed the more firmly his revolutionary and atheistical ideas, and his father, by withdrawing his allowance, alienated his affection without any good result.

Shelley was but nineteen when he first met Harriet Westbrook. She quickly aroused his sympathy by hints of tyranny and persecution from members of the home circle, and a few months later they eloped to Edinburgh. At first they appear to have been quite happy: "My wife," says Shelley, "is the partner of my thoughts and feelings."

Always on the side of liberty, in 1812 the cause of Catholic Emancipation in Ireland claimed Shelley's attention, and with his wife and her sister he crossed the Channel. An *Address to the Irish People* was printed and circulated, in which he asked them, "Does not your heart bound at the bare possibility of your posterity possessing liberty and happiness? . . . Oh! if your hearts do not vibrate at such as this; then ye are dead and cold—ye are not men." There was, however, no warmth in the response to his kind offices, the police were also beginning to suggest that his departure would not be lamented, so on April 7 the trio left for Wales. After a brief sojourn at Tremadoc they returned to London, where Ianthe, their first child, was born in June 1813; the second, a boy, was born at Bath the following year.

Shelley's love for his children is well known, but for some reason his wife was an indifferent mother, and to this is attributed the beginning of his coldness towards her. With Godwin and his family Shelley was on intimate terms, and the gradual estrangement from the now uncongenial companionship of his wife and her sister, threw him more and more into the Godwin circle and the society of Godwin's daughter, a girl of sixteen, "fair and fair-haired, pale indeed, and with a piercing look," with whom, finding much in common, he fell passionately in love.

Gradually the rift widened between Shelley and his wife, and in June 1814 they agreed to separate; Harriet went to her father at Bath, and Shelley quite openly left London with Mary Godwin. The

[1] Canto II, clxxxvi–ccii.

tragic circumstances of Harriet's death, two years later, are well known.

At first we may be tempted to blame the youthful Mary Godwin for the step she had taken, until we call to mind her antecedents and upbringing; and may quote Lady Shelley in extenuation:

"By the words of her father whom she loved—by the writings of her mother whom she had been taught to venerate, it was natural that she should listen to the dictates of her own heart, and willingly unite her fate with one who was so worthy of her love."

In 1816, immediately after the death of his wife, Shelley spent some days with Leigh Hunt at Hampstead, *Alastor* was published, and on December 30 married Mary Godwin in London; early in the following year he made frantic efforts to regain the control of his motherless children, but the law, in the person of Lord Eldon, then Chancellor, decided that he was "unfitted for parental responsibilities." Smarting with indignation, worried in mind, ill in body, and socially ostracised, Shelley and his wife left England in March 1818, with no prospect, as he wrote bitterly, of returning to a country where "I am regarded as a rare prodigy of crime and pollution, whose look even might infect."

The last four years of Shelley's life (1818–1822), spent mainly in Italy with his friends Byron and Leigh Hunt, were also the most prolific in his work; he had believed thoroughly in his own early work, frequently quoting Milton's words, "There is something in my writings that shall live for ever"; towards the end he became somewhat pessimistic, and used to say that, "produce what I may, I am doomed to be unread." Though not indifferent to fame, the attack of an anonymous critic afforded him "exquisite entertainment," and while "perhaps justly condemned," wrote Shelley, "I feel that I am there sitting, where he durst not soar."

The year before his tragic death, Shelley was living a quiet, studious life at Pisa, translating Spinoza, in which he was assisted by his wife, seeing much of Byron and Byron's friends, devoting considerable time to boating and fishing, but although never happy away from the water he was unable to swim. On one occasion he resolved to try, and had it not been for Trelawney would have perished. "I always find the bottom of a well," he said to his rescuer, "and they say Truth lies there. In another minute I should have found it."

"I always go on until I am stopped," said Shelley, "and I am never stopped." Had he been less headstrong and fearless he would probably have taken the advice of those friends who endeavoured to restrain him from leaving Leghorn in that frail boat so unskilfully handled, "the smoke on the water, and the devil brewing mischief." In the white fog the *Ariel* was soon enveloped, and nothing more was seen of boat or occupants until two months later, when the bodies of Shelley and his friend Williams were found upon the shore of the lake; pending the arrival of Byron and Leigh Hunt, Shelley's body was buried in the sand, to be burned later in the presence of his friends, with a strange ritual of wine poured over the body: "This, with the oil and salt, made the yellow flames glisten and quiver. The heat from the sun and fire was so intense that the atmosphere was tremulous and heavy." The ashes were collected, and with the heart, that Trelawney had snatched from burning, were placed in a box and eventually buried in Rome.

"The fine spirit that had animated us and held us together is gone," wrote Trelawney, "and left to our own devices we degenerated apace."

His Work

Shelley exhaled verse as a flower exhales fragrance, and just as the fragrance of a blossom varies in quality and power, so did Shelley's verse vary in poetic merit. The essential point is that there was no effort or laborious artistry about it at any time. He may not always have been a great poet—much in *Queen Mab* is second-rate poetry—but he was always a poet. Rhythm came as naturally to him as breathing. This distinguishes him at once from his contemporaries, several of whom served a laborious apprenticeship to the poetic Art. Keats especially, whom one always thinks of in connection with Shelley, for personal reasons, strove long and arduously before he arrived at that consummate art that conceals art in such flawless gems as the *Ode to Autumn*.

One other thing distinguishes Shelley from his contemporaries. He is a reformer as well as a poet. Little interested in the past, mindful only of the present when it jarred on his social idealism, his eyes are fixed intensely on the future. To renovate the world, to bring about Utopia, that is his constant aim, and for this reason we may regard Shelley as emphatically the poet of eager, sensitive youth, not the animal youth of Byron, but the spiritual youth of the visionary and reformer. In his earlier years Godwin was the figure who most readily impressed his mobile imagination, and in many of the poems dealing with social subjects—*Queen Mab*, and *The Revolt of Islam*—he is little more than Godwin made musical. In later life Wordsworth's influence is more clearly discernible. But the most potent inspiration came from Greek literature, first brought before his notice by his kindly friend and critic, Peacock.

Shelley, like his admirer Browning, needed the sunshine of the South to rouse his finest powers. *Alastor* is the splendid product of his first acquaintance with the Alps; and his loveliest lyrics were written under Italian skies.

Two notes dominate all Shelley's work, epic, narrative, and lyric alike—his devotion to liberty, and his whole-hearted belief in love as the prime factor in all human progress. The Revolution to Shelley was much more than a political upheaval, it was a spiritual awakening, the beginning of a new life. All that was evil in life he traced to Slavery. Natural development for him was the only development. He believed that men would never be men, never give what was best in them until they could give it out freely. Master yourself, he cries, and external freedom will enable you to realise your utmost capabilities. These are the thoughts underlying *The Revolt of Islam*, *The Masque of Anarchy*, *Julian and Maddalo*, and the noble lyric drama, *Prometheus Unbound*. Liberty, in Shelley's

eyes, was freedom from external restraint. It is opposed to licence, for to "rule the Empire of Self" was, with Shelley, a moral necessity. What then, if force is withdrawn from Society, is to take its place? Shelley's answer is, Love. Love is to reign supreme, for only in an atmosphere of love can liberty efficiently work. Love is, with Shelley, a transcendental force kindling all things into beauty. In his treatment of it we miss the more concrete touch of Keats, and the homeliness of Wordsworth's steady affection.

But Shelley was no ordinary human being. There is a touch of elfin magic about all his work; he sings of human passions, yet as one almost aloof from them or feeling them only in some etherealised way. This is at once his great merit and his weakness. Consider, for instance, the *Epipsychidion*, where the poet pictures certain influences that have come into his life. Here surely is a subject wrought out of the poet's most intimate experiences, which might have been profound, vital, and stirring: the love of woman and the power of that love in shaping human life!—how poignantly and graciously has Browning dealt with this in his dramatic romances; with what quiet strength does Wordsworth suggest its spiritual aspects; with what fierce ardour does Byron surround its physical manifestation; or look, on the other hand, at the subtle witchery of Sex that Keats gives us in *La Belle Dame*, and Coleridge in *Christabel*. Yet none of these things move Shelley. No poet felt more deeply the dynamic influence of love in moulding human destiny; none realised more utterly the insignificance of life devoid of love; yet Shelley's women are merely lovely wraiths that greet us to the strains of delicious music. For instance:

"See where she stands! a mortal shape indued
With love and life and light and deity,
And motion which may change but cannot die;
An image of some bright eternity;
A shadow of some golden dream; a splendour
Leaving the third sphere pilotless; a tender
Reflection of the eternal Moon of Love
Under whose motions life's dull billows move;
A metaphor of Spring and Youth and Morning;
A vision like incarnate April, warning
With smiles and tears, Frost the anatomy
Into his summer grave."

A mortal shape, the poet assures us. Can we believe him? The shape is more impersonal than the Princess of some old fairy tale. The poet has visualised a thing of beauty, but surely not a woman, merely an exquisite abstraction, a charming metaphor. The only touch of reality in the poem comes with the scenic setting; that indeed is palpable enough, and has no peer in English verse save in the Lotus land of Tennyson.

"And all the place is peopled with sweet airs;
The light clear element which the isle wears
Is heavy with the scent of lemon flowers,
Which floats like mist laden with unseen showers,
And falls upon the eyelids like faint sleep;
And from the moss violets and jonquils peep,
And dart their arrowy odour through the brain
Till you might faint with that delicious pain.
And every motion, odour, beam, and tone,
With that deep music is in unison:
Which is a soul within the soul—they seem
Like echoes of an antenatal dream,—
It is an isle 'twixt Heaven, Air, Earth, and Sea,
Cradled, and hung in clear tranquillity;
Bright as that wandering Eden, Lucifer,
Washed by the soft blue Oceans of young air."

But if, when dealing with human passions, the dreamlike quality of Shelley's verse is a defect rather than a merit; yet given a note of fantasy to start with, no poet can compel our imagination as he does. The spontaneity, the splendid abandonment, the musical rush of the lines, these things make us his willing captives. He has made our hard, sibilant language a thing of fire and air. The beauty of the visible world strikes his prismatic imagination and is dissolved into rainbow colours; the very personality of the singer melts into his song, until he ceases to be a man and becomes a voice, a lyric incarnate.

Yet, for all the visionary quality of the verse, for all that strange aloofness, there is no vagueness of effect, or intellectual mistiness. The outlines may be faint, but they are unmistakable, and in such incomparable lyrics as *The Cloud* and *The Ode to the West Wind*, there is a logical development of idea that blends perfectly with the exquisite music, making it a thing of thought and beauty all compact.

Passing from these general considerations of Shelley's work, let us watch for a while the artistic growth of the poet. His earliest work, *Queen Mab* (1813), is individual enough in its outcry against the unspiritual forces that weigh down mankind, but is crude in expression, and is obviously written under the influence of Southey's Orientalism. In the next poem, *Alastor* (1815), Shelley found his true greatness for the first time. Written under the inspiration of congenial companionship and of the glories of Alpine scenes, we find ourselves bathed in that atmosphere of luminous beauty and etheral music so peculiarly Shelleyan. The aspiring youth in the poem is the poet himself on his life quest, and if the story becomes at times obscure and over digressive, the main drift is clear enough. It is the revolt of the imagination against the limitations of human life. Following this poem, and spiritually akin to it, is the fine *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* (1816), and the glowing tribute to *Mont Blanc* (1816).

Life at West Marlow (1816–1817) brought the poet into intimate contact with social misery, and the outcome of this may be seen in *The Revolt of Islam* (1818), with its passionate plea for freedom. The poem abounds in fine imagery and musical cadences, but is marred by incoherence, and charms the fancy rather than holds the imagination. Still less successful is the diatribe against marriage, *Rosalind and Helen* (1819), unexpectedly strong and forceful at times, but on the whole weak and ineffectual.

The skilful use of the heroic couplet in *Julian and Maddalo* (1818) is interesting, and the picture of Byron is vivid and intimate, but there is too much screaming, too much verbal hysteria, to make it great or memorable: very different are the *Lines written among the Euganean Hills* in the same year, where the discords of life and the passionate idealism of the poet, hoping against hope, are present with supple grace and power. In *Prometheus Unbound*

(1818–1819), the Shelleyan thirst for freedom reappears in a noble and expansive setting. The machinery of this mystical drama is as usual none too clear, and even when clear, anything but convincing, but the meaning of the poem is clear enough, and the poetic symbolism used to depict the joy of Nature at the liberation of Prometheus is magnificent. "The bright blue sky of Rome and the effect of the vigorous awakening spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it dominates the spirits even to intoxication were the inspiration of this drama." Thus wrote Shelley, and in the fresh loveliness of the jets of song that break forth from time to time, we can realise the measure of the poet's spiritual intoxication.

If the *Prometheus* is mainly remarkable for its lyrical greatness, Shelley was soon to show in *The Cenci* (1819) that he was not lacking in dramatic power.

The story of Beatrice Cenci is just such an one as would have stirred the Jacobean dramatists, who loved a theme at once tragic and morbid, and Shelley's drama has been compared with the work of Webster and Tourneur, both of whom were known to the poet. But Shelley's imagination lacked both the passionate intensity of Webster and the coarse, undisciplined violence that accompany his genius. Webster would have made the play much more vital; at the same time he would have made it too horrible. Shelley, deliberately eschewing here poetic beauties and giving it that touch of aloofness inherent in all his work, makes it not horrible, merely terrible. *The Cenci*, in fact, with its austere atmosphere and undeviating thread of tragedy, has more points in common with the Greek than the romantic drama.

Although Shelley had no genuine sense of humour he had a queer, elfish spirit of mockery, and this breaks out (perhaps as a relief to the strain of *The Cenci*) in his next work, *Peter Bell the Third*.

It is instructive to compare this satirical attack on Wordsworth with Byron's *English Bards and The Vision of Judgment*. Byron is in his element: Shelley is not. The criticism in *Peter Bell* is not unfair—he is never spiteful like Byron—but the jesting has no savour; and as a satire it is only exceeded in ineffectiveness by *Swellfoot the Tyrant*.

Swellfoot the Tyrant (1820) deals with the King and Queen Caroline. Shelley is far more happily inspired by current affairs in his stirring protest, written after the Peterloo Massacre at Manchester—*The Masque of Anarchy*.

About this time the Shelleys change their residence for the hilly region of Pisa, and the year 1820 sees the birth of Shelley's most exquisite imaginings. Of these, *The Witch of Atlas* is the most ambitious. The witch is a beautiful goddess who watches human destinies; she is tender and beneficent, yet with a calm detachment from human passion. She visits mortal beings and gives them fair dreams of beauty.

The treatment is delicately fantastic, and the spell of fantasy is never rudely broken. In the *Letter to Maria Gisborne*, the vein of fantasy runs into a lighter and more jesting mood. This poem is the nearest approach to real humour that may be found in Shelley:

> "The liquor doctors rail at—and which I
> Will quaff in spite of them—and when we die
> We'll toss up who died first of drinking tea,
> And cry out—heads or tails?—where'er we be."

To some critics this is a triumphant refutation of the charge of "no humour" brought against him. I cannot see it in this light; there is a sportive gaiety about the piece that, had he never known Byron, might have served as some evidence on the vexed problem. As it is, we have to remember the close friendship with Byron—that certainly will serve to explain the form and visage that his gay ebullitions took at times; while the whole tenor of Shelley's life, the character of his letters, afford overwhelming evidence to the contrary. But the poem, all the same, is an agreeable *souffé*.

The Sensitive Plant (1819) is less satisfying as a fantasy than *The Witch of Atlas*, but has a delicate, exotic grace and many haunting lines.

Greatest, however, are the lyrical pieces, where Shelley's genius always exults: *The Skylark* (1820), the most popular of these, though not the finest, is rich in melodious charm (too often mangled by intrepid reciters); but infinitely superior in imaginative conception and metrical power are *The Cloud* (1820) and the *Ode to the West Wind* (1819).

The Cloud is a nature myth of flawless beauty. The complete identification of the poet with his subject, the superb rush of music, the crystalline clearness of the picture, not for a moment marred by over-profusion of metaphor as in *The Skylark*, these things make criticism tongue-tied. Even to comment on its beauties is an impertinence. It is made for our wonder and delight.

The *Ode to the West Wind* is not greater artistically—that were impossible; but it has an intellectual and human interest designedly absent from the shorter piece.

The logical development of the imaginative idea is so admirable that it deserves the fullest attention. Walking along the banks of the Arno, the poet has seen from the wood land by the rising autumnal storm carrying with it its freight of leaves. Surging along comes this beneficent destroyer, scattering the black, scarlet, and yellow leaves far and wide:

> "Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
> Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
> Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed
>
> The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
> Each like a corpse within its grave, until
> Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow
>
> Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
> (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
> With living hues and odours plain and hill:
>
> Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
> Destroyer and preserver; hear, O hear!"

The "wild Spirit" is then both "a destroyer and preserver."

As the wind purifies the woods, so does the wind sweeten the sky, clarify the ocean, and make stronger and sounder the heart of man.

With each fresh variation of the original thought the poet gives us a flood of superb imagery, strengthening the main theme, never weakening by far-

fetched conceits. We pass in turn over earth, sky, and sea, the music growing fuller and more majestic as the poem sweeps on, "O lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud." And as in the visible world so in the poet's soul, the wind is both Destroyer and Preserver:

"Make me as thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. . . .
Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!"

Then from the individual the poem passes to the universal. The old world must go, a new world must come with the Spring, laden with fresh sweet promises for suffering humanity:

"O, wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?"

Thus does this wonderful lyric end. There is no greater lyric in our language.

In the following year, 1821, came *Adonais*, a noble and eloquent elegy, deliberate and concentrative in its method, the finest of his non-lyrical pieces. As in *Adonais* he celebrates his love and admiration of a brother poet, so in *Epipsychidion* does he voice his affection for certain feminine influences that have entered his life. The poem is rich in atmosphere, but not the warm, vibrant atmosphere we are anticipating.

Hellas (1822) is inspired by the Greek Revolution, to which Byron gave his life and Shelley some of his most impassioned music. As a garner of lyrical song it is a worthy pendant to *Prometheus Unbound*, reflecting not merely the superb lyrical invention of the poet but his love and intense humanitarianism. Then, in the early flush of the Italian summer, came the *Triumph of Life*—a beautiful fragment left incomplete by his death.

Turning from his verse to his prose, we are struck by its even clarity and sober sense. His letters have not the pungency of Byron's, but they are never dull; and the later ones abound in rich and satisfying phrases. Certainly the prose is worthy of the poet.

As a thinker starting with the crude materialism and extreme social ideals of Godwin, he accommodated Godwin's philosophy to his own sensitive and imaginative nature, but under the influence of Plato, Godwin's materialism dropped out of the way, although there was much in Godwin's thought that always appealed to him. He believed to the end that the unaided reason would put an end to wickedness and error, and that all government was oppression. But Reason with him lacked the cold and formal quality of Godwin's tenets, being transformed with the poet's ardent love. His philosophy is often pantheistic in expression—notably in *Adonais*; and he is frequently spoken of as a pantheist; but he obviously vacillates between dualism and pantheism, and the struggle between the good and evil Deities is clearly the burden of such poems as *Alastor* and *Prometheus*. On the whole, he believes that the light will swallow up the darkness, but, like most optimists worth their salt, he has moods of doubt and dejection. In his attitude towards art and the relation between art and conduct, he is as clear-headed as Coleridge, and saw plainly the quagmire of didacticism into which Wordsworth had fallen. As he says in his *Defence of Poetry*, "the great instrument of moral good is the imagination"; thereby touching in a single phrase the ethereal power of all great literature; parting company with those who think that the poet can only reform mankind when he does so in the form of Dr. Watts' moral songs.

Although in Shelley's diction we find favourite words like "curse," "poison," "demon," that remind us of the Gothic school of terror, where Horace Walpole and Mrs. Radcliffe ruled; yet the mediæval note is strikingly absent from Shelley's poetry. He cared as little for the past as did Byron, and the dim cloistral mysticism of the Middle Ages, with its magic and its pageantry, stirred no pulse-beat in the author of *Hellas*. His passion for freedom, his craving for moral harmony, drew him towards Greek ideals. Intellectually his sympathies were always with Greek thought; though temperament and idiosyncrasies made his own poetic art something very different from the measured, orderly beauty of Hellenic culture. Yet we must not make too much of this disparity. Despite the heroic note in Shelley and the difficulty he experienced in schooling his impetuous and ready muse, his constructive power is remarkable in his later work, and the Hellenic ideal is assuredly not lost sight of. This is especially noticeable in the briefer lyrics, where his mastery is more apparent. There the form, the idea, the development from start to finish are beautifully fashioned and correlated. The stream of song is bright and clear; and while apparently rushing anywhere, pursues a definite course and achieves a definite purpose with marvellous ease and absence of conscious effort.

The peculiar quality of Shelley's lyrical genius demands some comment. As a rule our great lyric poets have excelled in portraying sexual emotion, sometimes striking the note of elemental passion, as did the Elizabethans and Robert Burns, sometimes improvising tender sentimentalism and exquisite conceits around the primitive themes, as the Caroline singers and Tennyson were wont to do. But, whether directly or indirectly, the call of Sex has evoked their finest songs. This is not the case with Shelley.

It is somewhat of a paradox that a poet to whom human love is the vital inspiration of his art should prove so elusive in his love lyrics. The sentiment is so rarefied, so readily does he pass from the personal to the universal, so engrossed is he with love as an abstract ideal, that as a love poet, as we ordinarily understand the term, he is curiously unsubstantial and ineffective. Certain events in his own life tend to persuade one here, that this quality in his love songs, satisfying in every respect *save as expressions of love*, is due to an elfin, a non-human element in the man's nature. But the real solution does not lie here, I think, though there may be a grain of truth in the view.

In some ways Shelley is intensely human, vividly passionate; but he is far more easily stirred by an

idea than by a person; and his singularly subtle intellect exercises a cooling and impersonal influence upon his imaginative life.

We cannot read of his life at Marlow without feeling the tender, sympathetic side of the man; his many rich friendships attest his sympathetic personality; but he lives so much in the future; he looks up so long at the sky that he seems to lose touch of earth. His intellect rules him, not any human emotion. He is quickly, not deeply emotional.

Liberty for the downtrodden, hope for the oppressed, peace for the storm-tossed, these are things that fire his songs and stir his imagination to its depths. For this reason *The Masque of Anarchy*, the *Prometheus Unbound*, *Hellas*, the *Ode to the West Wind* move us in a way that none of his love poetry does; and for the rest, when he holds us with his magic music, it is when he becomes as one of the elements himself, and, stripping himself of human emotion and thought, projects himself into the universe, loses his own self-identity, and charms us in just the same way as might a storm, a sunset, or the moon upon the waters.

Hellas

The world's great age begins anew,
  The golden years return,
The earth doth like a snake renew
  Her winter weeds outworn:
Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
  From wave serener far;
A new Peneus rolls his fountains
  Against the morning star;
Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep
Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

A loftier Argo cleaves the main,
  Fraught with a later prize;
Another Orpheus sings again,
  And loves, and weeps, and dies;
A new Ulysses leaves once more
Calypso for his native shore.

O write no more the tale of Troy,
  If earth Death's scroll must be—
Nor mix with Laian rape the joy
  Which dawns upon the free,
Although a subtler Sphinx renew
Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

Another Athens shall arise,
  And to remoter time
Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
  The splendour of its prime;
And leave, if naught so bright may live,
All earth can take or Heaven can give.

Saturn and Love their long repose
  Shall burst, more bright and good
Than all who fell, than One who rose,
  Than many unsubdued:
Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,
But votive tears and symbol flowers.

O cease! must hate and death return?
  Cease! must men kill and die?
Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn
  Of bitter prophecy!
The world is weary of the past—
O might it die or rest at last!

Music

I pant for the music which is divine,
  My heart in its thirst is a dying flower;
Pour forth the sound like enchanted wine,
  Loosen the notes in a silver shower;
Like a herbless plain, for the gentle rain,
I gasp, I faint, till they wake again.

Let me drink of the spirit of that sweet sound,
  More, oh more,—I am thirsting yet,
It loosens the serpent which care has bound
  Upon my heart to stifle it;
The dissolving strain, through every vein,
Passes into my heart and brain.

The Cloud

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
  From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
  In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
  The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast
  As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
  And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
  And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
  And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
  While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
  Lightning my pilot sits,
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
  It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
  This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
  In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the hills, and the crags, and the hills,
  Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
  The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
  Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
  And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
  When the morning star shines dead,
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
  Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
  In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
  Its ardours of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
  From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
  As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,
  Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
  By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
  Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
  The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
  Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my well-built tent,
  Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
  Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-coloured bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain when with never a stain,
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams,
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

JOHN KEATS (1795–1821)

His Life

An ostler who married his master's daughter, acquired the business of his father-in-law, and set up at the Swan and Hoop, Finsbury Pavement. Such was the poet's progenitor, and in the atmosphere of a thriving inn was the author of *Endymion* reared. Parentage assuredly throws no light on genius here. The father was a shrewd, careful man of business, the mother a lively young woman, fond of enjoyment; but not only did neither parent exhibit any taste or feeling for art of any kind, but, so far as we know, neither did any other member of the family.

Popular estimation pictures Keats as a morbid, hysterical youth. As a matter of fact he was a bright, enthusiastic youth, shy and reserved at times, but in the company of friends sane and cheerful in talk, often with a vivacious humour of which there is little trace in his work. Afterwards disease sapped his energies and he became moody, but to the last he was brave and stoical. The best side of Keats' nature is not displayed in the love letters to Fanny Brawne.

Nor did he show any special intellectual interests as a boy. He was not a dreamer like young Coleridge, nor a voracious reader like the youthful Morris. He was just a high-spirited boy with the ordinary boy's love of outdoor sports; simple in his tastes, and lovable in his nature. His one hobby was for fighting. "He would fight anyone," said one of his school friends, "morning, noon, and night," and was noted for his "terrier courage." Then suddenly, in his fourteenth year, the mind woke up and he gave to his books the energy and zest he had before bestowed on games. He read all day—just as before he had sparred all day. Classical antiquity especially appealed to him, and even the somewhat arid charm of Lempriere's *Classical Dictionary* held him in thrall. His parents died while he was still a lad, and his guardians took him from school at the age of fifteen and apprenticed him for five years to a surgeon, Hammond, who lived at Edmonton. But his heart was not in the problems of compound fractures, but in literature, and his leisure time was devoted to his books.

A notable event was the reading of the *Faerie Queene*, lent him by his friend Cowden Clarke. Through Spenser's romantic realms "he romped," said his friend, "like a young horse turned into a spring meadow, revelling in the rhythmic beauties and sensuous charms." No other writer had so utterly possessed his imagination, and his earliest poetic effort was to imitate his master.

Thus did he begin to find his powers; and later on, when his poetic apprenticeship was past, achieved one of his great successes with the Spenserean stanza in *The Eve of St. Agnes*.

In the spring of 1816 we find him "a dresser" at Guy's Hospital, assisting the surgeons and dreaming of fairyland all the while with a detachment of mind that would have horrified both the operator and the patient had they known about it.

Little wonder that he soon gave up all thought of a medical career, and devoted himself to literature. Spenser had been his first enchanter, the second was Homer. Once again the introducer was Cowden Clarke. After poring over Chapman's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* with fascinated delight, he wrote his fine sonnet. He had found his "Peak in Darien" and never deserted it.

In 1816 Keats made the acquaintance of Leigh Hunt, whose agreeable personality and cultured tastes attracted him at once. This "matchless fireside companion," as Elia called him, proved an excellent mentor, and in the rural retirement of Hunt at Hampstead, Keats spent many happy days. "No imaginative pleasure was left unnoticed by us or unenjoyed, from the recollection of the bards and patriots of old to the luxury of a summer rain at our window, or the clicking of the coal in winter-time." Thus wrote the author of *Rimini* in later years. Another friend at this time was the brilliant and unfortunate painter, Robert Haydon, whom the young poet addressed in enthusiastic verse:

"Great spirits now on earth are sojourning:
He of the cloud, the cataract, the lake,
Who on Helvellyn's summit, wide awake,
Catches his freshness from Archangel's wing:
He of the rose, the violet, the spring,
The social smile, the chain for Freedom's sake:
And lo! whose steadfastness would never take
A meaner sound than Raphael's whispering.
And other spirits there are standing apart
Upon the forehead of the age to come:
These, these will give the world another heart,
And other pulses. Hear ye not the hum
Of mighty workings?—
Listen awhile, ye nations, and be dumb."

Indeed, Keats was in a circle where great spirits abounded. Wordsworth and Lamb and Leigh Hunt met the young enthusiast, and each in his own way fed the poetic enthusiasm. Hunt has neatly and admirably etched for us Keats' portrait during these years:

"He was under the middle height; and his lower limbs were small in comparison with the upper, but neat and well-turned. His shoulders were very broad for his size; he had a face in which energy and sensibility

were remarkably mixed up: an eager power, checked and made patient by ill-health. Every feature was at once strongly cut, and delicately alive. If there was any faulty expression, it was in the mouth, which was not without something of a character of impatience. His face was rather long than otherwise; the upper lip projected a little over the under; the chin was bold; the cheeks sunken; the eyes mellow and glowing; large, dark, and sensitive. At the recital of a noble action, or a beautiful thought, they would suffuse with tears, and his mouth trembled. In this there was ill-health as well as imagination, for he did not like these betrayals of emotion: and he had great personal as well as moral courage. He once chastised a butcher, who had been insolent, by a regular stand-up fight. His hair, of a brown colour, was fine, and hung in natural ringlets. The head was a puzzle for phrenologists, being remarkably small in the skull—a singularity which he had in common with Byron and Shelley, whose hats I could not get on."

About this time he met Shelley, but did not take to him so unreservedly as he had done to the others. Shelley, on the other hand, was greatly struck by Keats, and his admiration for the poet impelled him to one of his supreme inspirations, years afterwards, when the tragedy of Keats' life had closed.

After publishing his first volume of verse, Keats went to the Isle of Wight in order to obtain the quietude and freedom from distraction that was needed for the ripening of his powers. Haydon had advised this; but the advice ill-suited one of Keats' temperament. He needed the stimulus of friendly intercourse, and grew restless and nervous when left to his own resources. So he returned to London, and at the close of the year had completed the first draft of *Endymion*—the last lines being written during an excursion to Burford Bridge, near Dorking. The reception of the poem was unfavourable. Keats' association with Leigh Hunt was sufficient in itself in certain quarters to discredit him, for Hunt's political radicalism had made him odious to the great Tory Reviews. Keats, always sensitive, and at this stage beginning to feel the onset of the disease that finally overwhelmed him, took the savage onslaught of the critics deeply to heart. But it is a mistake to think that he was killed by criticism—"snuffed out by an article"; deeply as he resented the gross unfairness of the attack, he soon took their snarlings at their proper valuation. "Praise or blame has but a momentary effect on the man whose love of beauty in the abstract makes him a severe critic on his own works. My own domestic criticism has given me pain without comparison beyond what *Blackwood* or the *Quarterly* could inflict; and also when I feel I am right, no external praise can give me such a glow as my own solitary reperception and ratification of what is fine. J. S. is perfectly right in regard to the 'slipshod *Endymion*.' That it is so is no fault of mine. No! though it may sound a little paradoxical, it is as good as I had power to make it by myself. Had I been nervous about it being a perfect piece, and with that view asked advice, and trembled over every page, it would not have been written, for it is not in my nature to fumble. I will write independently. I have written independently 'without judgment'—I may write independently and *with judgment*, hereafter. The Genius of Poetry must work out its own salvation in a man. It cannot be matured by law and precept, but by sensation and watchfulness in itself. That which is creative must create itself. In *Endymion* I leapt headlong into the sea, and thereby have become better acquainted with the soundings, the quicksands, and the rocks, than if I had stayed upon the green shore, and piped a silly pipe, and took tea and comfortable advice. I was never afraid of failure; for I would sooner fail than not be among the greatest."

But misfortunes accumulated. In 1818 his brother Tom died of consumption, while his other brother, George, emigrated to America. Keats himself fell ill and never recovered fully from the fever that had ravished him. Yet in this and the next year he wrote some of his greatest poems; for while his body was wasting away his imagination was becoming more vital, his creative power more wonderful. The love affair with Fanny Brawne came at a time when his nerves were already strained to breaking point by physical frailties, so that the letters to that young woman, on which the popular estimate of Keats' character is largely based, must be taken as showing the poet at a special disadvantage, and in no way expressing his naturally virile and courageous self.

In February 1820 he caught a chill and spat blood. "I know the colour of that blood," he said to a friend, "it is arterial blood . . . that drop of blood is my death warrant—I must die."

A slight rally following upon a change of air heartened his friends, but a relapse soon followed, and the doctor warned him that to winter in England would be fatal. Quietly and resolutely, though it agonised him to part from Fanny, who had nursed him during his illness, he made plans to travel with a friend, Joseph Severn, and on September 8 set sail from Gravesend. He realised he would never return, and in a letter home said piteously, "I can bear to die—I cannot bear to leave her." Gradually his grief lost its first poignancy, and at the end he was reconciled to his fate. Early in 1821 he passed away, in the arms of his loyal and tender-hearted friend, Severn, and found his last resting-place in the Protestant cemetery at Rome.

His Work

Intellectually Keats was strongly in sympathy with Shelley and Byron. Indeed in religious philosophy he was really more extreme, more wholeheartedly pagan than either. Byron, for all his cynicism, never freed himself entirely from the spell of Christianity, and Shelley's transcendental fervour is far more obvious than his so-called atheism. But Keats had no religion save the religion of beauty, no God save Pan; the Earth was his great consoler, and so passionately did he love her, with a love far more concrete and personal than that of Wordsworth or even Shelley, that no other consideration impinges upon his work. So, whatever his political sympathies were, he never suffered them to colour his poetry. He fled from the work-a-day world into an enchanted realm of his own, jealously closed against the intrusion of ordinary human affairs. Shelley's idealism is continually coloured by his revolutionary ardour. Keats' idealism reflects nothing

of the life of his day. He took from Mediævalism and Hellenism material for fashioning his secluded land of beauty, but what he found here he used for sensuous delight, not ethical inspiration.

To Scott the appeal of the landscape lay in its historical associations; to Keats in its legendary inspiration. As Leigh Hunt said of him, "He never beheld the oak tree without seeing the Dryad."

At the same time it is well to remember that this artistic eclecticism, so uncongenial to some minds, was the eclecticism of youth. There are indications towards the end of his brief career which show that he was approximating gradually to the actualities of life; and in criticising his exclusive preoccupation with Arcady and Fairyland, we must make allowances for the rich, artistic endowment of a very young man who responded more readily to the glories of art than to the problems of life. None of his contemporaries saw more clearly than he, precisely where Pope and his school failed. It was not merely a matter of prosody; not merely a question of subject matter—Town *versus* Country. Keats reproached Pope as

> ". . . forgetting the great end
> Of Poetry, that it should be a friend
> To soothe the cares and lift the thoughts of man."

Where Wordsworth spiritualises, and Shelley intellectualises Nature, Keats is content to express her through the senses: the colour, the scent, the touch, the pulsing music; these are the things that stir him to his depths; there is not a mood of Earth he does not love, not a season that will not cheer and inspire him. "The setting sun will always set one to rights, or if a sparrow come before my window, I take part in its existence and pick about the gravel."

When first he began to write, the wealth of his perceptive life bewildered and embarrassed him. The influence of mediæval Italy and its store of legend, the pastoral sweetness and sensuous beauty of Spenser, coming upon him in his early impressionable years, almost overpowered his abnormal sensibility. He owed much to his friend Leigh Hunt for wise and generous encouragement and direction; and at a time when he was all tremulous with delight at the imaginative feast before him, there came another revelation, the revelation of Greek Art and Life through the medium of Chapman's *Homer*. The splendid sincerity of that famous sonnet attests the mental state of the man:

> "Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
> When a new planet swims into his ken;
> Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
> He star'd at the Pacific—and all his men
> Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—
> Silent, upon a peak in Darien."

Need we wonder that the "wild surmise" on the peak in Darien which he had climbed, led at first to an extravagance of speech and excess of emotion? Need we wonder that his early experiments in verse, *Calidore*, *Sleep and Poetry*, even *Endymion*, are overcharged with Spenserean imagery, and Elizabethan conceits? Yet even here there is an individual note, and in *I stood tip-toe upon a little hill*, there are touches that no other poet but Keats could have given us:

> "A little noiseless noise among the leaves,
> Born of the very sigh that silence heaves."

Sleep and Poetry is faulty in execution, but the point of view of the young poet is unmistakable:

> "Beauty was awake:
> Why were ye not awake?"

We read these early efforts, discerning amid all their ornate extravagances, their abuse of double rhymes, their faulty emphasis, their occasional vulgarities, the stammerings of a great poet. The soul is already there, the gift of satisfying speech is at present denied. But the inspiration of Greece will prove his guerdon if we give him time. Surely from a youth of nineteen who could give us *On first looking into Chapman's Homer*, splendid things may be expected.

Meanwhile there is the glorious promise and immature fulfilment of *Endymion*. The old myth concerned with the secret for ideal beauty with all its mythological accessories is but indifferently told, and much of the descriptive writing is weak and diffuse. But there are Songs by the Way, for which, as in Tennyson's *Princess*, we may forgive many a nerveless line, and no lover of poetry would forego the lovely "roundelay" to Sorrow, and the splendid Bacchanalian Ode.

In one of his happy phrases Keats tells us that "Poetry should please by a fine excess"; and no one could strike the note of "fine excess" more triumphantly. Yet in his most perfect work, in the *Odes*, *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, and that fragment *The Eve of St. Mark*, he shows that the pleasure of poetry depends no less on the fine restraint.

It is the lack of this restraint that troubles us in the rarely imaginative version of a tale from Boccaccio, *Isabella*; in the glowing diction of *Lamia*; in the tapestried beauty of *The Eve of St. Agnes*.

Of these, perhaps, *Isabella*, despite its morbid sensibility, alone achieves its purpose. *Lamia*, with its serpent woman, certainly fails to grip the imagination in the way intended. To realise how imperfectly Keats has wrought his atmosphere of mystery, one has only to compare it with the *Christabel* of Coleridge. There is mystery in the one and genuine *diablerie*. But Keats can no more make the flesh creep, than the Fat Boy in *Pickwick*.

Regarded as a piece of richly decorative verse, *The Eve of St. Agnes* is pleasant enough with its "lucent syrops tinct with cinnamon." But the "lucent syrops" are too generously supplied, and there are times in the poem when we would gladly welcome the romantic vigour and directness of Scott to give life and zest to the story.

In all these poems, mediævalism serves as the inspiration, and though it gave him ample opportunities for that richness of colouring that was at once his merit and his failing, it did not appeal to the strongest side of his nature. On two occasions, by some happy chance, it inspires him in high vein, that is, in his ballad *La Belle Dame* and the *Ode to a Nightingale*, but it is under Hellenic influence as a rule that he gives us of his best.

Placing on one side for the moment the *Odes*, let us consider *The Eve of St. Mark*. We have here only the Prologue to the poem, for the legendary subject of the poem is never reached. But how consummately the scene is set; the atmosphere suggested. The quaint old-world town with its leisurely quietude; the girl brooding intently on the legend, half fascinated, half afraid; the chilly sunset tremulous with premonition.

The picture is perfectly visualised, and the details so unobtrusively given, so cunningly observed, make the whole thing amazingly actual. The restraint, the balance, the simplicity, the ease, are beyond praise; with rare economy of effort, he arrests the reader and makes him feel the impending tragedy.

But just as Byron finds the ultimate and most complete expression of his personality and temperament in *Don Juan*, so in the *Odes* does Keats give us most of his inmost self, and when he does so it is with the sure hand of the great artist. Not all the *Odes* stand on this footing. The *Ode to Indolence*, faithfully portraying as it does a transient mood, has no high beauty to commend it; the *Ode to Psyche*, reminiscent of his mythological loves, shows too clearly the tool-mark of the craftsman. But the *Ode to a Nightingale*, the *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, the *Ode on Melancholy*, and the *Ode to Autumn* are among the mightiest achievements of English verse. The note of sadness sounds through all, that insistent minor that rings dirge-like through all the haunting music of Nature and of Art; and the vivid joy of the perceptive life, the ideal permanence of Art, the glamour of romance, the benison of Nature's varying moods, are contrasted with the mutability of life and the transience of pleasure.

Melancholy, as he knew,

> ". . . dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;
> And joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
> Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
> Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:
> Ay, in the very temple of Delight
> Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine. . . ."

The *Ode to a Nightingale*, embodying the very spirit of old romance, is the most voluptuous and passionate in its emotion. At points the emotion threatens to overpower the writer, and an hysterical euphuism here and there jars on the reader. But for the most part the passion, for all its intensity, is focussed and controlled, as for instance in such inspired felicities as the oft-quoted (and mis-quoted):

> ". . . magic casements, opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn";

in the lovely image of Ruth,

> ". . . when, sick for home,
> She stood in tears amid the alien corn";

and above all, in the wistful beauty of the stanza, where the poet cries out to

> "Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
> What thou among the leaves hast never known,
> The weariness, the fever, and the fret
> Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
> Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last grey hairs,
> Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
> Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
> And leaden-ey'd despairs,
> Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
> Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow."

Passages such as these are among his choicest and best.

The solace of romance is exchanged for the solace of art in the *Ode on a Grecian Urn*. Human life and happiness may be brief, yet Art may enshrine them with an ideal beauty that outlives the years. The figures and all they symbolised are gone, but Art has given them a lasting durability, and so links the ages together.

Most satisfying of all the *Odes*, in thought and expression, is the *Ode to Autumn*. Most satisfying because, for all the splendour of diction in the others, there are times when the poetic fire dwindles for a moment, whereas in this *Ode*, from its inception to its close, matter and manner are not only superbly blended, but every line carries its noble freight of beauty. The first stanza is a symphony of colour, the second a symphony of movement, the third a symphony of sound. The artist shapes the first and last, and in the midst the man, the thinker, gives us its human significance. Thus is the poem perfected, its sensuous imagery enveloping as it were its vital idea.

Hyperion, written about the same time as the *Odes*, is a fine fragment marked, on the whole, by an austere Miltonic beauty that shows how far Keats had travelled since *Endymion* days. That Keats was for some reason dissatisfied with it, we know, for when he reviewed it later it was to revise, not to continue it. Perhaps there were elements in the story that did not appeal to him; perhaps the interest of the old Greek legend was yielding to the more compelling interest of actual human life, and he felt he could express himself more amply and more happily in another form. Be the reason what it may, the poem is left unfinished; to show the heights of metrical achievement to which the poet could rise, and to hint that with fuller life and development he might have added a great epic poem to our language. With the merest smattering of mediæval life and literature, he has yet seized upon certain aspects of its magic more surely than any other English poet. With a rough second-hand knowledge of Greek art and culture, he grasped the secret of Hellenism in a way never attained by poets far richer than he in Hellenistic lore—Shelley, Landor, and Swinburne. He saw by the intuition of genius into the spirit of the people, and we are really little concerned by such technical slips as the mention of Cortez in place of Balboa, as the discoverer of the Pacific, or the anachronistic reference to carpets in *The Eve of St. Agnes*.

Among the formative influences in his work, Spenser stands first, but Chaucer and Milton influenced only in a secondary degree his poetic style and vocabulary; lesser poets, like Chapman, William Browne, and his friend Leigh Hunt, affected him especially in his earlier work, in his choice of words and phrases, and in his search for colour. But the finest part of Keats' work owes nothing to a deriva-

tive source. In the fragmentary *Ode to Maia*, with its purity of phrase and chastened beauty, there are no echoes, no obligations:

"O, give me their old vigour, and unheard
Save of the quiet Primrose, and the span
Of heaven and few ears,
Rounded by thee, my song should die away
Content as theirs,
Rich in the simple worship of a day."

Perhaps his most notable divergence as a poet, from his contemporary Shelley, is that he elects, as a rule, to deal with sensations rather than ideas, with concrete life than with abstract imaginings—Sight and hearing respond to ideas; touch, to sensations. The metaphysical power that charges with intellectual fire the visions of Shelley, is outside of his scope. Not that he eschews ideas, the *Odes* eloquently refute such a suggestion; but when he elects to deal with ideas, he chooses such human things as love, sorrow, life, and beauty, and presents them in concrete shape:

"The moving waters at their priest-like task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores."

"She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss
For ever will thou love, and she be fair."

Thus do his ideas, like his memory, become incarnate with the shaping splendour of the consummate Artist; and thus does he help us to realise, as no other poet has done since Shakespeare, the oneness of Truth and Beauty.

To Autumn

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit and vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core:
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook:
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft:
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

Ode on a Grecian Urn

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter: therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone.
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

On First Looking into Chapman's Homer

Much have I travelled in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen,
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse have I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne:
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He star'd at the Pacific—and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

The Eve of St. Mark

A Fragment

Upon a Sabbath-day it fell;
Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell,
That call'd the folk to evening prayer;
The city streets were clean and fair
From wholesome dreuch of April rains,
And, on the western window panes,
The chilly sunset faintly told
Of unmatur'd green valleys cold,
Of the green thorny bloomless hedge,
Of rivers new with spring-tide sedge,
Of primroses by shelter'd rills,
And daisies on the aguish hills.

Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell:
The silent streets were crowded well
With staid and pious companies,
Warm from their fire-side orat'ries;
And moving, with demurest air,
To even-song, and vesper prayer.
Each arched porch, and entry low,
Was fill'd with patient folk and slow,
With whispers hush, and shuffling feet,
While play'd the organ loud and sweet.

The bells had ceas'd, the prayers began,
And Bertha had not yet half done
A curious volume, patch'd and torn,
That all day long, from earliest morn,
Had taken captive her two eyes,
Among its golden broideries;
Perplexed her with a thousand things,—
The stars of Heaven, and angels' wings,
Martyrs in a fiery blaze,
Azure saints and silver rays,
Moses' breastplate, and the seven
Candlesticks John saw in Heaven,
The winged Lion of Saint Mark,
And the Covenantal Ark,
With its many mysteries,
Cherubim and golden mice.

Bertha was a maiden fair,
Dwelling in th' old Minster Square;
From her fire-side she could see,
Sidelong, its rich antiquity,
Far as the Bishop's garden-wall;
Where sycamores and elm-trees tall,
Full-leav'd, the forest had outstript,
By no sharp north-wind ever nipt,
So sheltered by the mighty pile.
Bertha arose, and read awhile,
With forehead 'gainst the window-pane.
Again she try'd, and then again,
Until the dusk eve left her dark,
Upon the legend of St. Mark.
From plaited lawn-frill, fine and thin,
She lifted up her soft warm chin,
With aching neck and swimming eyes,
And dazz'd with saintly imageries.

All was gloom, and silent all,
Save now and then the still foot-fall
Of one returning homewards late,
Past the echoing minster-gate.
The clamorous daws, that all the day
Above tree-tops and towers play,
Pair by pair had gone to rest,
Each in its ancient belfry-nest,
Where asleep they fall betimes,
To music and the drowsy chimes.

All was silent, all was gloom,
Abroad and in the homely room:
Down she sat, poor cloistered soul!
And struck a lamp from the dismal coal;
Lean'd forward, with bright drooping hair
And slant book, full against the glare.
Her shadow, in uneasy guise,
Hover'd about, a giant size,
On ceiling-beam and old oak chair,
The parrot's cage, and panel square;
And the warm angled winter-screen,
On which were many monsters seen,
Call'd doves of Siam, Lima mice,
And legless birds of Paradise,
Macaw, and tender Avadavat,
And silken-furr'd Angora cat.
Untir'd she read, her shadow still
Glower'd about, as it would fill
The room with wildest forms and shades,
As though some ghostly queen of spades
Had come to mock behind her back,
And dance, and ruffle her garments black.
Untir'd she read the legend page,
Of holy Mark, from youth to age,
On land, on sea, in pagan chains,
Rejoicing for his many pains.
Sometimes the learned eremite,
With golden star, or dagger bright,
Reform'd to pious poesies
Written in smallest crow-quill size
Beneath the text; and thus the rhyme
Was parcell'd out from time to time:
"Als writith he of swevenis,
Men han beforne they wake in blis,
Whanne that hir friendes thinke him bound
In crimped shroude farre under groundo;
And how a litling child mote be
A saint er ite nativitie,
Gif that the modre (God her blesse!)
Kepen in solitarinesse,
And kissen devoute the holy croce.
Of Goddes love, and Sathan's force,—
He writith; and thinges many mo
Of swiche things I may not show
Bot I must tellen verilie
Somdel of Sainté Cicilie,
And chiefliè what he auctorethe
Of Sainté Markis life and dethe:"
At length her constant eyelids come
Upon the fervent martyrdom;
Then lastly to his holy shrine,
Exalt amid the tapers' shine
At Venice, . . .

La Belle Dame sans Merci

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
Alone and palely loitering;
The sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow,
With anguish moist and fever dew;
And on thy cheek a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads
Full beautiful, a faery's child;
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long;
For sidelways would she lean, and sing
A faery's song.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew;
And sure in language strange she said,
I love thee true.

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she gaz'd and sighed deep,
And there I shut her wild sad eyes—
So kiss'd to sleep.

And there we slumber'd on the moss,
And there I dream'd, ah woe betide,
The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hillside.

I saw pale kings, and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
Who cry'd—"La belle Dame sans merci
Hath thee in thrall!"

I saw their starv'd lips in the gloom,
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke, and found me here
On the cold hillside.

And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

LEIGH HUNT (1784–1859)

Closely connected with the great triumvirate of poets, is that agreeable and versatile man of letters, Leigh Hunt. His career and his prose work have been dealt with elsewhere; here it remains to touch on his share in the Romantic movement of the time so far as poetry is concerned; and of his influence upon Keats in particular.

It would be hard to overestimate the work done by Hunt in reviving the interest of the reading public in Italian literature. While yet a lad in Christ's Hospital, he had been drawn to Ariosto, being attracted by a picture in a studio of Angelica and Medoro; and when in 1822 he came to Italy to stay with Byron and Shelley, he pursued his Italian studies with a livelier zest than ever, and obtained a firmer mastery of the Italian tongue. Some years before this, in 1816, he had published what the critical wags of *Blackwood's* called "Mr. Hunt's smutty story of *Rimini*"—it would have been more to the point to have called it "sugary." The story itself is a grim study of primal passion of the Paolo and Francesca drama, but Hunt sweetened and sentimentalised this tale of Dante's, making of its tragedy melodrama, turning its passion into a "pretty-pretty" amorousness. The poem has good points; it exhibits Hunt's undoubted skill in picturesque description, daintiness of phrasing, and an intimate ease that is pleasant enough when it does not descend (as it has a way of doing) into mere vulgar loquacity. But Hunt's strength lay really in interpretative rather than in creative work. He was a fine scholar, an excellent "taster," and is acknowledged universally as an admirable translator. More important than his *Rimini*, therefore, was the volume of *Stories from the Italian Poets*, published in 1846, where he paraphrases freely *The Divine Comedy*, and passages from Ariosto, Tasso, and other Italian poets. With Ariosto and Tasso he had some temperamental kinship; a nature more opposed to Dante's at every point one could not imagine; with his almost perky optimism, and carpet-slipper attitude towards life. Notwithstanding this, his catholicity of taste made him a just and fair critic in many ways of Dante's greatness, and it is certainly true to say of him that "in his view of the sacred art of the Italian Middle Ages, he anticipated the Pre-Raphaelite and the modern interpreter of Dante."

Hunt's influence on Keats was on the whole certainly for good. If Keats owed to him many of his cumbrous rhymes and his early lapses from good taste, he owed also his introduction into the rich pasturage of mediæval romance. Hunt was a better mentor than his verse sometimes suggested, and his critical acumen and wide reading did a good deal to inspire the eager imaginative life of the youthful genius.

On the whole, Hunt's chief merit as a poet lies in his short pieces. His *Sonnet* on the Nile is one of remarkable beauty, and was written in amicable rivalry between himself and his friends, Keats and Shelley.

Competition, however friendly, is not congenial to genius, and there is little reason for surprise that Hunt's poem should excel those of his greater friends. The most surprising part is the intrinsic excellence of Hunt's work under these conditions. Here are the three sonnets, and the reader may judge for himself of their merits:

LEIGH HUNT

It flows through old hushed Egypt and its sands,
Like some grave mighty thought threading a dream,
And times and things, as in that vision, seem—
Keeping along it their eternal stands,—
Caves, pillars, pyramids, the shepherd bands
That roamed through the young world, the glory extreme
Of high Sesostris, and that southern beam,
The laughing queen that caught the world's great hands.

Then came a mightier silence, stern and strong,
As of a world left empty of its throng.
And the void weighs on us; and then we wake,
And hear the fruitful stream lapsing along
'Twixt villages, and think how we shall take
Our own calm journey on for human sake.

KEATS

Son of the old moon-mountains African!
Chief of the Pyramid and Crocodile!
We call thee fruitful, and, that very while
A desert fills our seeing's inward span:
Nurse of swart nations since the world began,
Art thou so fruitful? or dost thou beguile
Such men to honour thee, who, worn with toil,
Rest for a space 'twixt Cairo and Ocean?

O may dark fancies err! They surely do;
'Tis ignorance that makes a barren waste
Of all beyond itself. Thou dost bedew
Green rushes like our rivers, and dost taste
The pleasant sun-rise. Green isles hast thou too,
And to the sea as happily dost haste.

SHELLEY

Month after month the gathered rains descend,
Drenching you secret Ethiopian dells,
And from the desert's ice-girt pinnacles
Where frost and heat in strange embraces blend
On Atlas, fields of moist snow half depend.
Girt there with blasts and meteors Tempest dwells
By Nile's aerial urn; with rapid spells
Urging those waters to their mighty end.

O'er Egypt's land of memory floods are level
And they are thine, O Nile,—and well thou knowest
Thah soul-sustaining airs and blasts of evil
And fruits and poisons spring where'er thou flowest.
Beware, O Man—for knowledge must to thee
Like the great flood to Egypt, ever be.

With the exception of the line "their eternal stands," which illustrates Hunt's unhappy tendency to plunge into bathos, with disconcerting unexpectedness, the poem is wholly admirable. In another bout of rivalry, this time dealing with the Grasshopper and Cricket, Hunt was worsted, if not badly. This sonnet is a lively and genial piece of verse, though undistinguished. Keats keeps less to the subject at hand, but achieves a beauty of phrasing here and there, far excelling Hunt's. Cowden Clarke thus records the incident:

"No one but myself was present, and they accordingly set to." Keats was the first to finish his task. "The after scrutiny . . . was one of many such

occasions which have riveted the memory of Leigh Hunt in my affectionate regard and admiration for unaffected generosity and perfectly unpretentious encouragement." On reading Keats' poem "a sincere look of pleasure" came into his face, and he read out the first line—"The poetry of earth is never dead." "Such a prosperous opening!" exclaimed Hunt. Later, when he came to the tenth and eleventh lines:

> "On a lone winter evening, when the frost
> Has wrought a silence . . ."

"Ah, that's perfect! Bravo, Keats!" And then, says Clarke, "he went on in a dilatation on the dumbness of nature during the season's suspension and torpidity."

Here is Hunt in one of his blithe and graceful fancies:

JENNY KISS'D ME

> Jenny kiss'd me when we met,
> Jumping from the chair she sat in;
> Time, you thief, who love to get
> Sweets into your list, put that in!
> Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
> Say that health and wealth have miss'd me,
> Say I'm growing old, but add,
> Jenny kiss'd me.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR (1775–1864)

Very different in temperament and craftsmanship was Walter Savage Landor, who lived through the Romantic movement, witnessed its glorious achievements and decline, and saw the rise and meridian of the greatest Victorians.

Born at Warwick, January 30, 1775, he signalised early his characteristic tempestuousness by expulsion from Rugby at the age of ten. Later on at Oxford, he took an encore, and "the mad Jacobin," as he was called, suffered rustication for firing a gun in the room of a Tory undergraduate and declining to explain his conduct. Shortly after this there was a fresh explosion of Landor's "life-force," a quarrel with his father which led to a temporary separation. Fortunately, a reconciliation was patched up, but the young firebrand found it better to retreat to South Wales with £150 a year, "one servant and a chest of books."

His first volume of poems had been published in 1795 and in 1798 came *Gebir*, the fruits of studying Milton and Pindar. *Gebir* is an Oriental tale, told with an artistic reserve that signalised his lack of sympathy with the prodigal exuberance of his great contemporaries.

In 1802 and 1804 came *Chrysaor* and *Gualaug and Helga*. The first is a classic legend congenial to the poet's methods. Chrysaor is "wielder of the golden sword," defies the Titan, and pays for his temerity by the summary vengeance of Neptune. The second poem, Norse in inspiration, is less happily suited to Landor's style and spirit. In 1805, on his father's death, the poet settled in Bath, but he did not treat his material means with the same reserve as he did his artistic. After an experiment in military adventure (1808), when with a few volunteers raised at his own expense he went to Spain in order to help to emancipate the Spaniards from the tyranny of Buonaparte, he returned to England, bought an estate in South Wales, and soon managed, despite his more laudable intentions, to alienate all his neighbours and bring himself to the verge of financial ruin. His marriage in the meantime (1811) with a lady whom he had met at a ball and knew nothing about, proved equally disastrous. But troubles notwithstanding, his literary ardour never abated, and his tragedy of *Don Julian*, published at this period, found an enthusiastic admirer in De Quincey.

A stay in France was followed by a wander journey to Italy. He lived successively at Como, Pisa, and Florence, and wrote under a southern sky his *Imaginary Conversations*, the most notable of his writings.

Critical and creative work in prose and verse came rapidly from his pen during the ensuing years, naturally varied by some external excitement, this time in the shape of an action for libel, at home. Finally, he made his home at Florence, where his rooms were constantly visited by the most eminent men of the day, and here, the "unsubduable old Roman," as Carlyle called him, died in September 1864.

HIS PERSONALITY AND WORK

Handsome and impressive in appearance, passionate and self-willed, yet lovable, irrational with a strain of admirable sense, Landor is one of the most striking and original figures of his age. The external history of his life exhibits him at the least favourable point of view; for there was something noble and great about the man deep down, as his many friends were quick to recognise. Dickens' portrait of Boythorn, in *Bleak House*, is no unkindly sketch, making allowances for the usual Dickensian extravagances, but does not indicate the intellectual vigour of Landor.

Yet despite the ardent admiration and homage of a few, his work appeals but slightly to the many. Splendid in patches, his work as a whole is too eclectic and circumscribed, and lacks the universal appeal that gives durability to the work of men like Shelley and Keats, Coleridge and Wordsworth.

As a literary artist he stands rather by himself, though intellectually he had much in common with the Hellenistic sympathies of Keats and Shelley. There is no mistaking his Revolutionary ardour: he is with Freedom wherever he finds it, whether in Ancient Greece or Republican Rome, or in the dusty arena of modern politics. With no little of Byron's contempt for the crowd, but with a surer instinct for the true aristocrat, he admired heartily such democrats as Mazzini. Yet in his presentation of Greek ideals he is closer to the bare splendour of Wordsworth's style than to the rich colouring of Keats; and though like Byron in his scorn of conventions, and resembling Shelley in his belief in liberty, his fastidious and measured workmanship has neither the careless ease of the one, nor the lyrical spontaneity of the other.

His earlier work is almost wholly poetical, and for the most part in heroic blank verse, excelling in detailed effect and isolated passages, and lacking organic unity and homogeneity of style. Then came the *Imaginary Conversations*, planned on the principle of the *De Consolatione Philosophiæ* of

Boethius, though unlike him in method. If he has any master here it is Plato, against whom he ever harboured one of his inexcusable critical perversities. These *Conversations* are, in substance, varying heroic and idyllic episodes, strong in primal passion and tender grace, and recounted with a noble beauty of style and a subtle appreciation of "the sense of tears in mortal things." Occasionally the strength degenerates into weakness as in the dialogue of *Peter the Great and Alexis*, but it is more often immensely effective, with a throbbing, full-blooded vitality, more Elizabethan than modern, yet with nothing of the Elizabethan extravagance and coarse profusion. *Marcellus and Hannibal* is an example in point, with its poignant pathos, and *Tiberius and Vipsania*, with its dramatic intensity. The idyllic dialogues present another side of Landor, that of the gracious and kindly companion of women. *Æsop and Rhodope* is exquisite in its tender pathos; *Euthymedes and Thelymnia* is delightful in its light gaiety. *Bossuet and the Duchess de Fontanges, Eugenius IV and Lippi*, show a rich sense of ironic humour, that remind one of Browning's full-length portraits.

The more argumentative *Conversations* are less interesting, not because of any intellectual weakness in the writer—Landor's level is uniformly high—but because of a certain monotony of style and lack of plasticity in treatment. He is at his best when illustrating some phase of human nature, where a more generous call is made on his power of fancy and emotion.

Alike in his prose and verse, Landor is sculptural in method, with all the merits of the sculptured style, and with its concomitant weakness in literature. That is to say, he excels in epigrammatic power, fine distinctions of phrase, delicately wrought embellishments of fancy, and suffers from a certain stiff restraint and monotony of effect.

In the early work the defects are more obvious than the merits, and *Gebir*, for all its occasional magnificence, has too chilly a beauty to capture the reader's imagination. There is the same chill though rather more beauty about the rough-hewn drama of *Count Julian*. Here the blank verse rises to a height of gracious dignity and force that is only equalled by Wordsworth's finest work; yet the cumulative effect is not happy. We are constantly led to the verge of some great moment, some splendid scene that shall take us by the throat, and it never comes. The exquisite marble needs to be kissed into life.

With his lyric poems and briefer excursions in verse, this charioteer of prose is no longer needed; nowhere is he more original or distinctive; nowhere is he less affected by the literary influences of his age, or of any other age. There is nothing of Byron, Shelley, Keats, or Scott in his lyrics; he belongs far more by spiritual affinity to the late Elizabethans, and his kinship with Ben Jonson has been noticed by many critics.

His love poems are suffused with stately chivalry rather than with passion; clear and sweet they always are, thrilling never. But they exhibit deep feeling none the less, and are strong in epigrammatic power.

> "Stand close around yet Stygian sob
> With Dirce in one boat convey'd
> Or Charon, seeing may forget
> That he is old, and she a shade."

He is equally happy in the mood of pensive reminiscences. It is impossible to overpraise the mellow beauty of those well-known lines:

> "I strove with none, for none was worth my strife;
> Nature and I loved and, next to Nature, Art:
> I warmed both hands before the fire of life;
> It sinks, and I am ready to depart;"

or the delicate charm of his poetic compliment to E. Arundell:

> "Nature! thou may'st laugh and fret:
> There's but one white violet
> Scatter'd o'er the vernal ground,
> Faint resemblances around,
> Nature! I will tell thee yet
> There's but one white violet."

Sometimes in his "invocations and reminiscences" he strikes a gay and playful note, but it is not the playfulness of the Romantics, it is of the gay and polished verse of such men as Prior that we are reminded. He never forsakes classical traditions. Shelley's lyrics embody the very spirit of incarnate youth; and Landor expresses the spirit of middle age. For this reason if for no other, their popularity and appeal is necessarily limited. There is not and cannot be the same glamour and magic round maturity; though to the few, and in certain moods perhaps to all, the philosophic calm and genial breadth of Landor has a fascination all its own. Yet the last word on Landor must always concern his prose. He is a striking and scholarly poet, with occasional flashes of greatness; he is a noble master of prose, with occasional tracts of cultured dullness. He was sufficiently imbued with the romanticism of his time to endow prose with the glow and colour of a poetic imagination; while his self-critical and classical sympathies gave it body and dignity. If he lacked De Quincey's touch of mystery, the tender whimsicality of Lamb, the brilliant incisiveness of Hazlitt,—his prose could rise to greater heights of sonorous and chastened beauty, and enjoyed a wider range of artistic effects, from the calm and stately to the tender and playful.

To Lætitia

Away, my verse; and never fear,
As men before such beauty do;
On you she will not look severe,
She will not turn her eyes from you.
Some happier graces could I lend
That in her memory you should live,
Some little blemishes might blend,
For it would please her to forgive.
On the smooth brow and clustering hair
Myrtle and rose! your wreath combine,
The duller olive I would wear,
Its constancy, its power, be mine.
There is a flower I wish to wear,
But not until first worn by you—
Heartsease—of all earth's flowers most rare!
Bring it; and bring enough for two.
It often comes into my head
That we may dream when we are dead.
But I am far from sure we do.
O that it were so! then my rest
Would be indeed among the blest;
I should for ever dream of you.

All tender thoughts that e'er possess'd
The human brain or human breast,
Centre in mine for thee—
Excepting one—and that must thou
Contribute: come, confer it now
Grateful I fain would be.

Pleasure! why thus desert the heart
In its spring-tide?
I could have seen her, I could part,
And but have sigh'd!
O'er every youthful charm to stray,
To gaze, to touch—
Pleasure! why take so much away,
Or give so much?

MARCELLUS AND HANNIBAL

MARCELLUS, *the Commander of the Roman army, lies before* HANNIBAL, *mortally wounded.*

Hannibal. Could a Numidian horseman ride no faster? Marcellus! oh! Marcellus! He moves not—he is dead. Did he not stir his fingers? Stand wide, soldiers—wide, forty paces—give him air—bring water—halt! Gather those broad leaves, and all the rest, growing under the brushwood—unbrace his armour. Loose the helmet first—his breast rises. I fancied his eyes were fixed on me—they have rolled back again. Who presumed to touch my shoulder! This horse? It was surely the horse of Marcellus. Let no man mount him. Ha! ha! the Romans, too, sink into luxury: here is gold about the charger.

Gaulish Chieftain. Execrable thief! The golden chain of our king under a beast's grinders! The vengeance of the gods hath overtaken the impure——

Hannibal. We will talk about vengeance when we have entered Rome, and about purity among the priests, if they will hear us. Sound for the surgeon. That arrow may be extracted from the side, deep as it is.—The conqueror of Syracuse lies before me.—Send a vessel off to Carthage. Say Hannibal is at the gates of Rome.—Marcellus, who stood alone between us, fallen. Brave man! I would rejoice and cannot.—How awfully serene a countenance! Such as we hear are in the islands of the blessed. And how glorious a form and stature! Such too was theirs! They also once lay thus upon the earth wet with their blood—few other enter there. And what plain armour!

Gaulish Chieftain. My party slew him—indeed I think I slew him myself. I claim the chain: it belongs to my king: the glory of Gaul requires it. Never will she endure to see another take it.

Hannibal. My friend, the glory of Marcellus did not require him to wear it. When he suspended the arms of your brave king in the temple, he thought such a trinket unworthy of himself and of Jupiter. The shield he battered down, the breast-plate he pierced with his sword—these he showed to the people and to the gods; hardly his wife and little children saw this, ere his horse wore it.

Gaulish Chieftain. Hear me, O Hannibal!

Hannibal. What! when Marcellus lies before me? when his life may perhaps be recalled? when I may lead him in triumph to Carthage? when Italy, Sicily, Greece, Asia, wait to obey me? Content thee! I will give thee mine own bridle, worth ten such.

Gaulish Chieftain. For myself?

Hannibal. For thyself.

Gaulish Chieftain. And these rubies and emeralds, and that scarlet——

Hannibal. Yes, yes.

Gaulish Chieftain. O glorious Hannibal! unconquerable hero! O my happy country! to have such an ally and defender. I swear eternal gratitude—yes, gratitude, love, devotion, beyond eternity.

Hannibal. In all treaties we fix the time: I could hardly ask a longer. Go back to thy station.—I would see what the surgeon is about, and hear what he thinks. The life of Marcellus! the triumph of Hannibal! what else has the world in it? Only Rome and Carthage: these follow.

Marcellus. I must die then? The gods be praised! The commander of a Roman army is no captive.

Hannibal. (*To the* SURGEON.) Could not he bear a sea-voyage? Extract the arrow.

Surgeon. He expires that moment.

Marcellus. It pains me: extract it.

Hannibal. Marcellus, I see no expression of pain on your countenance, and never will I consent to hasten the death of an enemy in my power. Since your recovery is hopeless, you say truly you are no captive. (*To the* SURGEON.) Is there nothing, man, that can assuage the mortal pain? for, suppress the signs of it as he may, he must feel it. Is there nothing to alleviate and allay it?

Marcellus. Hannibal, give me thy hand—thou hast found it and brought it me, compassion. (*To the* SURGEON.) Go, friend, others want thy aid; several fall around me.

Hannibal. Recommend to your country, O Marcellus, while time permits it, reconciliation and peace with me, informing the Senate of my superiority in force, and the impossibility of resistance. The tablet is ready: let me take off this ring—try to write, to sign it at least. Oh, what satisfaction I feel at seeing you able to rest upon the elbow, and even to smile!

Marcellus. Within an hour or less, with how severe a brow would Minos say to me, "Marcellus, is this thy writing?" Rome loses one man: she hath lost many such, and she still hath many left.

Hannibal. Afraid as you are of falsehood, say you this? I confess in shame the ferocity of my countrymen. Unfortunately, too, the nearer posts are occupied by Gauls, infinitely more cruel. The Numidians are so in revenge: the Gauls both in revenge and in sport. My presence is required at a distance, and I apprehend the barbarity of one or other, learning, as they must do, your refusal to execute my wishes for the common good, and feeling that by this refusal you deprive them of their country, after so long an absence.

Marcellus. Hannibal, thou art not dying.

Hannibal. What then? What mean you?

Marcellus. That thou mayest, and very justly, have many things yet to apprehend: I can have none. The barbarity of thy soldiers is nothing to me: mine would not dare be cruel. Hannibal is forced to be absent; and his authority goes away with his horse. On this turf lies defaced the semblance of a general, but Marcellus is yet the regulator of his army. Dost thou abdicate a power conferred on thee by thy nation? Or wouldst thou acknowledge it to have become, by thy own sole fault, less plenary than thy adversary's? I have spoken too much: let me rest; this mantle oppresses me.

Hannibal. I placed my mantle on your head when the helmet was first removed, and while you were lying in the sun. Let me fold it under, and then replace the ring.

Marcellus. Take it, Hannibal. It was given me by a poor woman who flew to me at Syracuse, and who covered it with her hair, torn off in desperation that she had no other gift to offer. Little thought I that her gift and her words should be mine. How suddenly may the most powerful be in the situation of the most helpless! Let that ring and the mantle under my head be the exchange of guests at parting. The time may come, Hannibal, when thou (and the gods alone know whether as conqueror or conquered) mayest sit under the roof of my children, and in either case it shall serve thee. In thy adverse fortune, they will remember on whose pillow their father breathed his last; in thy prosperous (Heaven grant it may shine upon thee in some other country!) it will rejoice thee to protect them. We feel ourselves the most exempt from affliction when we relieve it, although we are then the most conscious that it may befall us. There is one thing here that is not at the disposal of either.

Hannibal. What?

Marcellus. This body.

Hannibal. Whither would you be lifted? Men are ready.

Marcellus. I meant not so. My strength is failing. I seem to hear rather what is within than what is with-

out. My sight and my other senses are in confusion. I would have said—This body, when a few bubbles of air shall have left it, is no more worthy of thy notice than of mine; but thy glory will not let thee refuse it to the piety of my family.

Hannibal. You would ask something else. I perceive an inquietude not visible till now.

Marcellus. Duty and Death make us think of home sometimes.

Hannibal. Thitherward the thoughts of the conqueror and of the conquered fly together.

Marcellus. Hast thou any prisoners from my escort?

Hannibal. A few dying lie about—and let them lie—they are Tuscans. The remainder I saw at a distance, flying, and but one brave man among them—he appeared a Roman—a youth who turned back, though wounded. They surrounded and dragged him away, spurring his horse with their swords. These Etrurians measure their courage carefully, and tack it well together before they put it on, but throw it off again with lordly ease. Marcellus, why think about them? or does aught else disquiet your thoughts?

Marcellus. I have suppressed it long enough. My son—my beloved son!

Hannibal. Where is he? Can it be? Was he with you?

Marcellus. He would have shared my fate—and has not. Gods of my country! beneficent: throughout life to me, in death surpassingly beneficent: I render you, for the last time, thanks.[1]

Fame, and True and False Greatness

Dante

Greatness is to goodness what gravel is to porphyry; the one is a moveable accumulation, swept along the surface of the earth; the other stands fixed, and solid, and alone, above the violence of war and of the tempest; above all that is residuous of a wasted world. Little men build up great ones; but the snow colossus soon melts; the good stand under the eye of God; and therefore stand.

Diogenes and Plato

Diogenes. The great man is he who hath nothing to fear and nothing to hope from another. It is he who, while he demonstrates the iniquity of the laws, and is able to correct them, obeys them peaceably. It is he who looks on the ambitious both as weak and fraudulent. It is he who hath no disposition or occasion for any kind of deceit, no reason for being or for appearing different from what he is. It is he who can call together the most select company when it pleases him.

. . . . . .

Plato. There are great men of various kinds.

Diogenes. No, by my beard, are there not.

Plato. What! are there not great captains, great geometricians, great dialecticians?

Diogenes. Who denied it? A great man was the postulate. Try thy hand now at the powerful one.

Plato. On seeing the exercise of power, a child cannot doubt who is powerful, more or less; for power is relative. All men are weak, not only if compared to the Demiurgos, but if compared to the sea or the earth, or certain things upon each of them, such as elephants and whales. So placid and tranquil is the scene around us, we can hardly bring to mind the images of strength and force, the precipices, the abysses—

Diogenes. Prythee hold thy loose tongue, twinkling and glittering like a serpent's in the midst of luxuriance and rankness. Did never this reflection of thine warn thee that, in human life, the precipices and abysses would be much farther from our admiration, if we were less inconsiderate, selfish, and vile? I will not however stop thee long, for thou wert going on quite consistently. As thy great men are fighters and wranglers, so thy mighty things upon the earth and sea are troublesome and intractable incumbrances. Thou perceivest not what was greater in the former case, neither art thou aware what is greater in this. Didst thou feel the gentle air that passed us?

Plato. I did not just then.

Diogenes. That air, so gentle, so imperceptible to thee, is more powerful not only than all the creatures that breathe and live by it; not only than all the oaks of the forest, which it rears in an age and shatters in a moment; not only than all the monsters of the sea, but than the sea itself, which it tosses up into foam and breaks against every rock in its vast circumference; for it carries in its bosom, with perfect calm and composure, the incontrollable ocean and the peopled earth, like an atom of a feather.

To the world's turmoils and pageantries is attracted, not only the admiration of the populace, but the zeal of the orator, the enthusiasm of the poet, the investigation of the historian, and the contemplation of the philosopher: yet how silent and invisible are they in the depths of air! Do I say in those depths and deserts? No; I say at the distance of a swallow's flight; at the distance she rises above us, ere a sentence brief as this could be uttered.

What are its mines and mountains? Fragments welded up and dislocated by the expansion of water from below; the most part reduced to mud, the rest to splinters. Afterwards sprang up fire in many places, and again tore and mangled the mutilated carcase, and still growls over it. What are its cities and ramparts, and moles and monuments? Segments of a fragment, which one man puts together and another throws down. Here we stumble upon thy great ones at their work. Show me now, if thou canst, in history, three great warriors, or three great statesmen, who have acted otherwise than spiteful children.

Amazagoras. It will appear wonderful and perhaps incredible to future generations, that what are now considered the two highest gifts of man, oratory and poetry, should be employed, the one chiefly in exciting, the other in emblazoning, deeds of slaughter and devastation. If we could see, in the nature of things, a child capable of forming a live tiger, and found him exercising his power of doing it, I think we should say to him, "You might employ your time better, child!"

Charles Jeremiah Wells (1800–1879) was an early companion of Keats, and like Keats, went to mediæval Italian romance for his more youthful inspiration. But his most important work, the drama *Joseph and his Brethren*, suggests the influence of Marlowe and Peele, rather than any Italian source. This lengthy drama was published in 1824, under another name, and attracted little attention. Years after it was discovered by Rossetti, who was much impressed by its magnificence of diction, and beside this distinguished admirer it enjoyed further the enthusiastic commendation of Swinburne. The poem was re-written, and has recently been published in the "World's Classics" with Swinburne's eulogy and an interesting note on Rossetti and Charles Wells by Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton.

The following fine passage is certainly not unworthy of the creator of *Tamburlaine*:

"Within the car
Sat Pharaoh, whose bare head was girt around
By a crown of iron; and his sable hair,
Like stonkey as a mane, fell where it would,
And somewhat hid his glossy sun-brent neck
And carcanet of precious sardonyx.
His jewell'd armlets, weighty as a sword,
Clasp'd his brown naked arms—a crimson robe
Deep edg'd with silver, and with golden thread,
Upon a bear-skin kirtle deeply blush'd,
Whose broad resplendent braid and shield-like clasps

[1] *Imaginary Conversations.*

Were hoar'd with diamonds large, by rubies fir'd,
Like beauty's eye in rage, or cheek white
Lit by the glowing red. Beside him lay
A bunch of popped corn; and at his feet
A tamed lion as his footstool crouch'd.
Cas'd o'er in burnish'd plates I, hors'd, did bear
A snow-white eagle on a silver shaft,
From whence great Pharaoh's royal banner stream'd,
An emblem of his might and dignity. . . ."

The love scenes centring round Potiphar's wife, are less in the Marlowe vein than in that of some of the post-Shakespearean dramatists. There is something of Webster's full-blooded intensity in the love passages; though little of his vivid dramatic power. Indeed, the Elizabethan and Jacobean analogy must not be pressed too far, and relates to the poetical substance rather than to the dramatic imagination. For, as Mr. Watts-Dunton points out, "*Joseph and his Brethren* does not pretend to be a play. It is the precursor of those dramatic poems such as *Festus*, &c., which were once the fashion."

The Elizabethan drama came into its own again in the age of Wordsworth. Lamb, Hazlitt, Coleridge, De Quincey, had rediscovered not merely the greatness of Shakespeare but, as we have seen, the greatness of many a fugitive dramatist, and in the years that followed, this enthusiasm exhibited itself in many dramatic experiments. As dramas, none of these experiments are of much value; but they exemplify the Romantic tendencies of the time and the legacy of the Romantics to the age succeeding.

Along with Wells may be mentioned THOMAS WADE (1805–1875), also a narrative and dramatic poet of power. Wade's imagination is less rich and concrete than Wells', and whereas Wells and Keats may be associated together, Wade has more spiritual affinity with Shelley. His drama, *Woman's Love, or the Triumph of Patience*, met with success at Covent Garden. His lyrics and sonnets are more agreeably typical of his gifts. A collection of these, *Mundi et Cordis Carmina*, was published in 1835.

THE HALF-ASLEEP

O for the mighty wakening that aroused
The old-time prophets to their missions high;
And to blind Homer's inward sunlike eye
Show'd the heart's universe where he caroused
Radiantly; the fishers poor unhoused,
And sent them forth to preach divinity;
And made our Milton his great dark defy,
To the light of one immortal theme espoused!

But half-asleep are those now most awake;
And save calm-thoughted Wordsworth, we have none
Who for eternity put time at stake,
And hold a constant course as doth the sun:
We yield but drops that no deep thirstings slake,
And feebly cease ere we have well begun.

Two other poets of distinction are BRYAN WALLER PROCTER (1787–1874), known as "Barry Cornwall," and GEORGE DARLEY (1795–1846). Procter enjoyed the greater popularity, and much of his verse appeared before the great Romantic singers had departed. Mediæval and Elizabethan inspiration is once more to be noted; it may be traced in the *Dramatic Scenes* (1819), that won the praise of Lamb. In later volumes, the influence of his great contemporaries is too overpowering for the modest creative impulse of the writer. The most interesting is the volume of *English Songs* (1832), where he makes a not unsuccessful attempt to give the public popular lyrics on familiar themes, agreeable and musical in quality. These show little originality or sense of style, but are frankly unpretentious, and in the opinion of the not over-fastidious, supplied a genuine want.

"Barry Cornwall" was also a playwright, whose tragedy *Miranda* made a mark at Covent Garden. But *Miranda* has no vitality as a drama, and Cornwall is best remembered as a writer of pleasant verse, and as a staunch friend of the unhappy Beddoes.

Less facile and more individual is George Darley. Like many a greater writer, his dramas are more remarkable for their incidental songs than for their dramatic texture. *Sylvia, or the May Queen* (1827), is a medley of fairy fantasy; and he has steeped himself to good purpose in his Shakespeare here, for both the fantasy proper and incidental songs abound in charming fancies and sweet melodies.

But though his indebtedness to the Elizabethans is obvious, he is by no means so imitative as Procter. He is a talented disciple, derivative rather than imitative. His lyric, *It is not beauty I demand*, is a case in point. One cannot imagine it being written without the Elizabethan model; but conceding the framework and turn of speech, the shaping imagination is distinctive and happy. It is an inspiration from, not an echo of the past.

In fact there is real brainwork in Darley's writings, and even when the poetic fancy runs thin as it does in some of his songs, he never quite loses this distinctive and original touch.

As a prose writer he is bright and informing, very often more readable than in his verse. But there is less distinction here. In style he is a blend (considerably diluted) of Lamb and Hazlitt. He has a share of Elia's whimsicality, a larger share of Hazlitt's incisive humour. But his vigorous intellect is always to the fore, and he has that saving quality—a real delight in literature and a contagious zest and relish in dealing with his enthusiasms. With the exception of Hazlitt, no contemporary wrote more luminously about Fletcher than he.

TO HELENE

I sent a ring—a little band
Of emerald and ruby stone,
And bade it, sparkling on thy hand,
Tell thee sweet tales of one
Whose constant memory
Was full of loveliness, and thee.

A shell was graven on its gold.—
'Twas Cupid fix'd without his wings—
To Helene once it would have told
More than was ever told by rings:
But now all's past and gone,
Her love is buried with that stone.

Thou shalt not see the tears that start
From eyes by thoughts like these beguiled,
Thou shalt not know the beating heart,
Ever a victim and a child:
Yet Helene, love, believe
The heart that never could deceive

I'll hear thy voice of melody
In the sweet whispers of the air;
I'll see the brightness of thine eye
In the blue evening's dewy star;
In crystal streams thy purity;
And look on Heaven to look on thee.

A Song

Sweet in her green doll the flower of beauty slumbers,
  Lull'd by the faint breezes sighing through her hair;
Sleeps she and hears not the melancholy numbers
  Breathed to my sad lute 'mid the lonely air.

Down from the high cliffs the rivulet is teeming
  To wind round the willow banks that hide him from above;
O that in tears, from my rocky prison streaming,
  I too could glide to the bower of my love!

Ah! where the woodbines with sleepy arms have wound her,
  Opes she her eyelids at the dream of my lay,
Listening, like the dove, while the fountains echo round her,
  To her lost mate's call in the forest far away.

Come then, my bird! For the peace thou ever bearest,
  Still Heaven's messenger of comfort to me—
Come—this fond bosom, O faithfullest and fairest,
  Bleeds with its death-wound, its wound of love for thee!

The Fallen Star

A star is gone! a star is gone!
  There is a blank in Heaven;
One of the cherub choir has done
  His airy course this even.

He sat upon the orb of fire
  That hung for ages there,
And lent his music to the choir
  That haunts the nightly air.

But when his thousand years are pass'd,
  With a cherubic sigh
He vanish'd with his car at last,
  For even cherubs die!

Hear how his angel brothers mourn—
  The minstrels of the spheres—
Each chiming sadly in his turn
  And dropping splendid tears.

The planetary sisters all
  Join in the fatal song,
And weep this hapless brother's fall,
  Who sang with them so long.

But deepest of the choral band
  The Lunar Spirit sings,
And with a bass-according hand
  Sweeps all her sullen strings.

From the deep chambers of the dome
  Where sleepless Uriel lies,
His rude harmonic thunders come
  Mingled with mighty sighs.

The thousand ear-horns cherubim,
  The wandering eleven,
All join to chant the dirge of him
  Who fell just now from Heaven.

Among all these derivative forces of Romanticism, there is no figure, excepting Landor's, so considerable as that of Thomas Lovell Beddoes (1803–1849). Profoundly affected by his great contemporaries Keats and Shelley, he yet retains an individuality of his own. At Oxford he had saturated himself with the Elizabethans; later in Germany he felt the magic of Goethe at a time when the great man was yet unknown to the majority of Englishmen. But he was too exclusively romantic in temperament and outlook to be a whole-hearted admirer of Goethe, and his admiration fell short of that of Carlyle. *Death's Jest Book* (1825) is the title of his most characteristic work, and abounds in all the extravagance of Gothic fancy. Beddoes is richer indeed in fancy than in imagination, and shows a quick sense of the picturesque and bizarre. But there is more than fancy and grotesquerie in his work; there is real if fitful emotional power; and in his rapid transition of mood one is reminded often of Heine.

He died by his own hand, of poison, in 1849. Death always fascinated him; finally, from a literary inspiration it became an obsession.

He is an admirable song writer, and his best lyrics have a magic all their own. As a literary critic he is often excellent, if not wholly reliable; and his opinions are never echoed but are always well thought out, while as a letter writer he ranks high.

Wolfram's Dirge

If thou wilt ease thine heart
Of love and all its smart,
  Then sleep, dear, sleep;
And not a sorrow
  Hang any tear on your eyelashes;
    Lie still and deep,
  Sad soul, until the sea-wave washes
The rim o' the sun to-morrow,
    In eastern sky.

But wilt thou cure thine heart
Of love and all its smart,
  Then die, dear, die;
'Tis deeper, sweeter,
  Than on a rose-bank to lie dreaming
    With folded eye;
  And there alone, amid the beaming
Of Love's stars, thou'lt meet her
    In eastern sky.

A Song

How many times do I love thee, dear?
  Tell me how many thoughts there be
    In the atmosphere
    Of a new-fall'n year,
Whose white and sable hours appear
  The latest flake of Eternity:
So many times do I love thee, dear.

How many times do I love again?
  Tell me how many beads there are
    In a silver chain
    Of evening rain,
Unravell'd from the tumbling main,
  And threading the eye of a yellow star
So many times do I love again.

II. PROSE: (*a*) ROMANTICISM IN ENGLISH FICTION. Horace Walpole—Clara Reeve—Thomas Leland—Anne Radcliffe—William Beckford—Matthew Lewis—Mary Shelley—William Godwin—Mrs. Opie—Mrs. Inchbald—Sophia Lee—James White—Jane Porter—Joseph Strutt.

(*a*) ROMANTICISM IN ENGLISH FICTION

Just as Bishop Percy's *Reliques* and Macpherson's *Ossian* heralded in the romantic revival in poetry, so did HORACE WALPOLE'S *Castle of Otranto* (1764) proclaim its entrance into fiction. The story is placed in mediæval Italy (about the twelfth century), but an historical background was no integral part of Walpole's plan of fiction. He merely wished to remove his characters from a present-day environment; and a mediæval castle, with its sombre tower and secret passages, seemed the best way of effecting this. The actual tale need not detain us, for its puerility is extreme, and its interest to-day is merely an historical one, as the pioneer of the so-called Gothic romance.

Distressed ladies, and spectral appearances, set in a background of mediæval upholstery, no longer appeal to our taste, but the sudden change from the boisterous realism of much contemporary fiction was significant. That the change was welcome to many, whose imaginations had been starved on "common-sense" fare, is quite clear from Gray's letter to Walpole: "It makes some of us cry a little, and all in general, afraid to go to bed o' nights." To-day it would serve more likely as a safe hypnotic. None the less, it produced a considerable stir, and seemed to have inspired many talented imitators.

Walpole was a virtuoso and collector of no slight knowledge, but he knew more about mediæval art than literature, and even the mediævalism of *The Castle of Otranto* is a very indifferent matter.

THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO

The lower part of the castle was hollowed into several intricate cloisters; and it was not easy for one under so much anxiety to find the door that opened into the cavern. An awful silence reigned throughout those subterraneous regions, except now and then some blasts of wind that shook the doors she had passed, and which, grating on the rusty hinges, were re-echoed through the long labyrinth of darkness. Every murmur struck her with new terror: yet more she dreaded to hear the wrathful voice of Manfred urging his domestics to pursue her.

She trod as softly as impatience would give her leave, yet frequently stopped and listened to hear if she was followed. In one of those moments she thought she heard a sigh. She shuddered and recoiled a few paces. In a moment she thought she heard the step of some person. Her blood curdled: she concluded it was Manfred. Every suggestion that horror could inspire rushed into her mind. She condemned her rash flight, which had thus exposed her to his rage in a place where her cries were not likely to draw anybody to her assistance. Yet the sound seemed not to come from behind. If Manfred knew where she was he must have followed her. She was still in one of the cloisters, and the steps she had heard were too distinct to proceed from the way she had come. Cheered with this reflection, and hoping to find a friend in whoever was not the Prince, she was going to advance, when a door that stood ajar, at some distance to the left, was opened gently: but ere her lamp, which she held up, could discover who opened it, the person retreated precipitately on seeing the light.

Isabella, whom every incident was sufficient to dismay, hesitated whether she should proceed. Her dread of Manfred soon outweighed every other terror. The very circumstance of the person avoiding her gave her a sort of courage. It could only be, she thought, some domestic belonging to the castle. Her gentleness had never raised her an enemy, and conscious innocence made her hope that, unless sent by the Prince's order to seek her, his servants would rather assist than prevent her flight. Fortifying herself with these reflections, and believing by what she could observe that she was near the mouth of the subterraneous cavern, she approached the door that had been opened; but a sudden gust of wind that met her at the door extinguished her lamp, and left her in total darkness.

Words cannot paint the horror of the Princess's situation. Alone in so dismal a place, her mind imprinted with all the terrible events of the day, hopeless of escaping, expecting every moment the arrival of Manfred, and far from tranquil on knowing she was within reach of somebody, she knew not whom, who for some cause seemed concealed thereabouts; all these thoughts crowded on her distracted mind, and she was ready to sink under her apprehensions. She addressed herself to every saint in heaven, and inwardly implored their assistance. For a considerable time she remained in an agony of despair.

At last, as softly as was possible, she felt for the door, and having found it, entered trembling into the vault from whence she had heard the sigh and steps. It gave her a kind of momentary joy to perceive an imperfect ray of clouded moonshine gleam from the roof of the vault, which seemed to be fallen in, and from whence hung a fragment of earth or building, she could not distinguish which, that appeared to have been crushed inwards. She advanced eagerly towards this chasm, when she discerned a human form standing close against the wall.

In 1777, CLARA REEVE (1729–1807) published her *Champion of Virtue*, afterwards called *The Old English Baron*, obviously inspired by Walpole's story.

Miss Reeve thought to improve upon the original and economised with her supernatural effects; but she only succeeded in exceeding Walpole's tale in its tedium, reposting most of his absurdities and showing even less acquaintance with mediæval life.

A more interesting romance than either Walpole's or Clara Reeve's had been published in 1762. This was *Longsword, Earl of Salisbury*, and is really the first historical romance in our fiction. It was written by an Irish cleric, THOMAS LELAND, and despite the inability to reproduce the language and customs of the time, there is a genuine attempt at historical detail, the period being the reign of Henry III.

A more remarkable force in romantic fiction appeared in the pen of ANNE RADCLIFFE (1764–1823), the lonely wife of a busy journalist. To wile away the time, she wrote five romances, that displayed a lively if undisciplined imagination, and a skilful faculty of depicting wild scenery. Her stories were published between 1789 and 1797. The elements of mediævalism are all here: monks, inquisition, disguises, intrigues, escapes, gloomy castles, fierce banditti—with scenery and language to match.

Despite wild improbabilities and conventional

characterisation, there is power and charm in the writing. Mrs. Radcliffe makes greater use of the prevalent sentimentalism than her contemporaries, weaving it skilfully into her sensational melodrams. Her heroines are generally affected by their scenic surroundings; shudder at the whistling winds, dissolve into tears when the moon shines upon them; though they would have been more acceptable young women had they been blest with a sense of humour.

It is interesting to note the influence upon Mrs. Radcliffe of the Thomsonian school of verse, with its increased sensibility to Nature, and the way she combines this with the influence of Richardson. The heroines are true sisters of Clarissa, both in emotional expression and in moral impeccability.

Her best stories were *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1797), these being the two latest. The former is a tale of the sixteenth century, and the latter of the eighteenth century. There are some spirited and vivid passages describing the ritual of the Roman Church in *The Italian*, and the scenic effects in *Udolpho*, though highly coloured, show real appreciation of the sublime in nature. Certainly they influenced Scott, just as Mrs. Radcliffe's picturesque, dark-browed villains reappeared later in Byron's *Lara* and *Manfred*. That sense of mystery which was so noted a characteristic of romance, is certainly better exemplified in these fictions than those with which we have dealt. She could create an atmosphere of suspense and dread.

As an illustration of her style:

MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO

The sun at length set behind the western mountains; his fiery beams faded from the clouds, and then a dun, melancholy purple drew over them, and gradually involved the features of the country below. Soon after, the sentinels passed on the rampart to commence the watch.

Twilight had now spread its gloom over every object: the dismal obscurity of her chamber wrought fearful thoughts, but she remembered that to procure light she must pass through a great extent of the castle, and, above all, through the halls, where she had already experienced so much horror. Darkness, indeed, in the present state of her spirits, made silence and solitude terrible to her; it would also prevent the possibility of her finding her way to the turret, and condemn her to remain in suspense concerning the fate of her aunt: yet she dared not to venture forth for a lamp. . . .

Daylight dispelled from Emily's mind the glooms of superstition, but not those of apprehension. The Count Morano was the first image that occurred to her waking thoughts, and then arose a train of anticipated evils which she could neither conquer nor avoid. She rose, and to relieve her mind from the busy ideas that tormented it, accustomed herself to notice external objects. From her casement she looked out upon the wild grandeur of the scene, closed nearly on all sides by Alpine steeps, whose tops, peeping over each other, faded from the eye in misty hues, while the promontories below were dark with woods, that swept down to their base, and stretched along the narrow valleys. The rich pomp of these woods was particularly delightful to Emily, and she viewed with astonishment the fortifications of the castle spreading along a vast extent of rock, and now partly in decay, the grandeur of the ramparts below, and the towers and battlements and various features of the fabric above. From these her sight wandered over the cliffs and woods into the valley, along which foamed a broad and rapid stream, seen falling among the crags of an opposite mountain, now flashing in the sunbeams, and now shadowed by overarching pines, till it was entirely concealed by their thick foliage. Again it burst from beneath this darkness in one broad sheet of foam, and fell thundering into the vale. Nearer, towards the west, opened the mountain vista, which Emily had viewed with such sublime emotion on her approach to the castle; a thin, dusky vapour, that rose from the valley, overspread its features with a sweet obscurity. As this ascended and caught the sunbeams it kindled into a crimson tint, and touched with exquisite beauty the woods and cliffs, over which it passed to the summit of the mountains; then, as the veil drew up, it was delightful to watch the gleaming objects that progressively disclosed themselves in the valley—the green turf—dark woods—little rocky recesses—a few peasants' huts—the fanning stream—a herd of cattle, and various images of pastoral beauty. Then, the pine forests brightened, and then the broad breast of the mountains, till, at length, the mist settled round their summit, touching them with a ruddy glow. The features of the vista now appeared distinctly, and the broad, deep shadows, that fell from the lower cliffs, gave strong effect to the streaming splendour above; while the mountains, gradually sinking in the perspective, appeared to shelve into the Adriatic Sea, for such Emily imagined to be the gleam of bluish light that terminated the view.

Another romancer is WILLIAM BECKFORD (1760–1844) a wealthy dilettante whose imagination sought in the fables of the East the inspiration others had found nearer home. In 1782, he wrote in French an "Arabian tale," *Vathek*, which was translated and published without his consent in England, before its publication abroad. Satire mingles with sensation in Beckford's fiction; but the horrors of Beckford are drawn with greater power than those of Walpole or Mrs. Radcliffe. Beckford was certainly a man of considerable force of intellect and brilliant though hectic imagination.

He was influenced to an extent by the satirical romances of Voltaire, and stands somewhat apart from other fantastic writers of the time.

THE PALACES OF THE CALIPH VATHEK

He (the Caliph Vathek) surpassed in magnificence all his predecessors. The palace of Alkoremmi, which his father, Motassem, had erected on the hill of Pied Horses, and which commanded the whole city of Samarah, was in his idea far too scanty; he added, therefore, five wings, or rather other palaces, which he destined for the particular gratification of each of his senses. In the first of these were tables continually covered with the most exquisite dainties, which were supplied both by night and by day, according to their constant consumption, whilst the most delicious wines and the choicest cordials flowed forth from a hundred fountains that were never exhausted. This palace was called the Eternal, or Unsatiating Banquet. The second was styled the Temple of Melody, or the Nectar of the Soul. It was inhabited by the most skilful musicians and admired poets of the time, who not only displayed their talents within, but dispersing in bands without, caused every surrounding scene to reverberate their songs, which were continually varied in the most delightful succession.

The palace named the Delight of the Eyes, or the Support of Memory, was one entire enchantment. Rarities collected from every corner of the earth were there found in such profusion as to dazzle and confound, but for the order in which they were arranged. One gallery exhibited the pictures of the celebrated Mani (the founder of the Manichæans, who was famed as a magician and painter), and statues that seemed to be alive. Here a well-managed perspective attracted the sight; there the magic of optics agreeably deceived it;

whilst the naturalist, on his part, exhibited in their several classes the various gifts that Heaven had bestowed on our globe. In a word, Vathek omitted nothing in this palace that might gratify the curiosity of those who resorted to it, although he was not able to satisfy his own, for he was of all men the most curious.

The Palace of Perfumes, which was termed likewise the Incentive to Pleasure, consisted of various halls, where the different perfumes which the earth produces were kept perpetually burning in censers of gold. Flambeaux and aromatic lamps were here lighted in open day. But the too powerful effects of this agreeable delirium might be alleviated by descending into an immense garden, where an assemblage of every fragrant flower diffused through the air the purest odours.

The fifth palace, denominated the Retreat of Mirth, or the Dangerous, was frequented by troops of young females, beautiful as the Houris and not less seducing, who never failed to receive with caresses all whom the caliph allowed to approach them and enjoy a few hours of their company. For he was by no means jealous, as his own women were secluded within the palace he inhabited himself.

The lineal descendant of Mrs. Radcliffe was MATTHEW LEWIS (1775–1818), who tried his best to excel her in mystery and sensation.

In 1795 he published *The Monk*, and was afterwards known as "Monk" Lewis. Byron's lines describe him neatly and humorously:

> "O wonder-working Lewis, Monk or Bard,
> Who fain would'st make Parnassus a churchyard;
> Lo! wreaths of yew, not laurel, bind thy brow;
> Thy muse a sprite, Apollo's sexton thou;
> Whether on ancient tombs thou tak'st thy stand,
> By gibbering spectres hailed, thy kindred band,
> Or tracest chaste descriptions on thy page,
> To please the females of our modest age—
> All hail, M.P.,[1] from whose infernal brain
> Thin sheeted phantoms glide, a grisly train."

Magic and witchcraft were to him congenial matters for the business of fiction. "A ghost or a witch," he says, "is a *sine qua non* ingredient in all the dishes of which I mean to compose my hobgoblin repast."

Lewis's acquaintance with Shelley was not without literary results; these may be seen in Mrs. Shelley's extraordinary romance, *Frankenstein*.

Contemporary with this Gothic romance, where "horrors on horror's head accumulate," and the main idea seems to be the reproduction of ancient sorceries and superstitions, is a type of fiction, where romance is only an ingredient and the didactic note is especially emphasized.

Among makers of fiction, WILLIAM GODWIN (1756–1836) takes the most important place. He had absorbed the principles underlying the French Revolution, and aimed at reconstructing a new society.

Godwin's social writings are so matter-of-fact, that it comes as a surprise in *The Adventures of Caleb Williams* to find a writer of such genuine imaginative power. *Caleb Williams* is a good sensational story that may be read with no little enjoyment, if one skips the didactic discussions interwoven with it. In his subsequent novels, *St. Leon* (1799) and *Fleetwood* (1804), Godwin's skill as a story-teller is even better exemplified. The supernaturalism of *St. Leon*, if not wholly convincing, is certainly a *tour de force* for one with Godwin's materialistic views; while in *Fleetwood*, it would really seem as if Godwin the novelist has to some extent triumphed over Godwin the matter-of-fact philosopher and champion of reason.

ST. LEON GAINS THE ELIXIR OF LIFE

Months, years, cycles, centuries! To me all these are but as indivisible moments. I shall never become old; I shall always be, as it were, in the porch and infancy of existence: no lapse of years shall subtract anything from my future duration. I was born under Louis the Twelfth; the life of Francis the First now threatens a speedy termination; he will be gathered to his fathers, and Henry his son will succeed him. But what are princes and kings and generations of men to me? I shall become familiar with the rise and fall of empires; in a little while the very name of France, my country, will perish from off the face of the earth, and men will dispute about the situation of Paris, as they dispute about the site of ancient Nineveh and Babylon and Troy. Yet I shall still be young. I shall take my most distant posterity by the hand; I shall accompany them in their career; and when they are worn out and exhausted shall shut up the tomb over them, and set forward. . . . I could have been well contented to be partaker with a race of immortals, but I was not satisfied to be single in this respect. I was not pleased to recollect how trivial would appear to me those concerns of a few years, about which the passions of men are so eagerly occupied. I did not like the deadness of heart that seemed to threaten to seize me. I began to be afraid of vacancy and torpor, and that my life would become too uniformly quiet. Nor did it sufficiently console me, to recollect that, as one set of friends died off the stage, another race would arise to be substituted in their stead. I felt that human affections and passions are not made of this transferable stuff, and that we can love nothing truly, unless we devote ourselves to it heart and soul, and our life, as it were, bound up in the object of our attachment.

It was worse when I recollected my wife and children. When I considered for the first time that they were now in a manner nothing to me, I felt a sensation that might be said to amount to anguish. How can a man attach himself to anything, when he comes to consider it as the mere plaything and amusement of the moment! . . . Past times had attached me deeply, irrevocably, to all the members of my family. But I felt that I should survive them all. They would die one by one, and leave me alone. I should drop into their graves the still renewing tear of anguish. In that tomb would my heart be buried. Never, never, through the countless ages of eternity, should I form another attachment. In the happy age of delusion, happy and suspicious at least to the cultivation of the passions, when I felt that I also was a mortal, I was capable of a community of sentiments and a going forth of the heart. But how could I, an immortal, hope ever hereafter to feel a serious, an elevating and expansive passion for the ephemeron of an hour!

The didactic note persists through the tales of Mrs. OPIE (1769–1853), who wrote *Adeline Mowbray, or the Mother and Daughter* (1804), and Mrs. INCHBALD's more artistic work, *A Simple Story* (1791), and *Nature and Art* (1796); while the sudden passion for educational fiction aroused by Rousseau's *Emile* found expression in a number of decorous and extremely dull stories for children, including Thomas Day's *Sandford and Merton*.

Finally, there remains for us to note the immediate predecessors of Scott in historical fiction.

Longsword for a time found no successor; though it gave a vogue to historical background in romance, more or less successfully introduced by Mrs. Radcliffe.

[1] Lewis sat as Member of Parliament for Hindon, Wilts (1796–1802).

Then in 1783, SOPHIA LEE wrote the first part of a tale dealing with the days of Queen Elizabeth, published later in parts in 1786. Here the sentimentalism of Richardson and Sterne is noticeable.

More adventurous, and in the Smollett vein, are JAMES WHITE'S *Adventures of John of Gaunt*, and *Earl Strongbow*. But none of these writers of fiction equal in power and knowledge JANE PORTER (1776–1850), whose *Scottish Chiefs* (1810) is an excellent melodramatic romance dealing with the time of Wallace, and *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (1803), concerned with the partition of Poland, an earlier and well-written story.

JOSEPH STRUTT'S *Queenhoo Hall* brings us to Scott himself.

Strutt was an antiquary who left behind him a half-finished romance. The story, completed by Scott and published in 1808, exhibits more knowledge of mediæval England than previous writers had shown, and his picture of the manners and customs of the time—the pageants, the May games, and the social life of the streets and taverns—is admirably well informed. Unhappily, there is no lifting power of imagination to fuse the ambiguous knowledge, and Jane Porter with her more limited historical knowledge remains the most able historical romancer previous to Scott.

II. PROSE: THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK, 1785–1866

His Life

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK, born on October 18, 1785, at Weymouth, was the only son of a glass merchant. His boyhood was spent chiefly at Chertsey, and from his seventh to his thirteenth year he was educated at a private school in Englefield Green. He proved an apt and industrious student, took instinctively to literature and broke out into verse-writing as most book-loving boys do at an early age.

In 1808 he was employed on a man-of-war, being assistant secretary to Admiral Popham, but found his duties on this "floating inferno" did not conduce to literary study, so gave up the appointment within the year. Soon after this he found employment at the East India House, but never took kindly to any business occupation. During a tramp in North Wales he fell in love with a pretty Welsh girl, and when his finances were in a more settled condition, wooed and won her. She was the "Caernarvonshire nymph" whom he mentions in a letter to a friend as having "pleased him by talking of Scipio and Hannibal and the Emperor Otho." Evidently the interest felt in this young lady was not so entirely academic as he wished to make out. Certainly Jane Gryffyd was much more than a Cymric edition of Cornelia Blimber. The marriage, in 1820, proved a long and happy one despite the delicate health of Mrs. Peacock.

Previous to his marriage, Peacock had published a volume of verse, and three of his satires and romantic novels: *Headlong Hall* (1816), *Melincourt* (1817), *Nightmare Abbey* (1818). In the year of his marriage he published his *Four Ages of Poetry*. In 1822, his most romantic and least satirical fiction, *Maid Marian*; his Arthurian fantasy *The Misfortunes of Elphin* (1829), *Crotchet Castle* (1831), then after a long interval, *Gryll Grange* in 1860, written when he was an old man.

After he had married, Peacock lived in the country near Shepperton. He was not a sociable man, though kindly in his own household, but he was much attached to a few friends such as Hobhouse (Lord Broughton), and the poet Shelley; and though a quick-tempered man and something of a crank, was essentially lovable. He was passionately fond of wild scenery, a fact obvious to readers of his fiction, where he never loses an opportunity of satirising landscape gardening. His acquaintance with Shelley started in 1812, and in 1813 we find Peacock, Shelley, and Harriet living together at Edinburgh. Peacock introduced Shelley to Greek Literature and read Greek with him during the next five years. He tried to wean the poet, moreover, from his vegetarian fare and monotonous round of lemonade, tea, and bread and butter, so dieted him for a while with well-peppered chops. Thus, in his own words, he "gave him one week of thorough enjoyment." His friendship with Shelley may have predisposed him to regard with disfavour the so-called Lake Poets. In any case he never did justice to the genius of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and some of his poorest humour is seen in his satires of these poets. Though his enthusiasm was focussed upon literature he was an able business man, often helped Shelley in his affairs, and looked after the interests of Harriet on Shelley's behalf, when the two had separated.

Apart from literature, music was his only other relaxation, and for some years he attended the opera and wrote criticisms for the *Globe* and *Examiner*. He had no little of Landor's independence and self-sufficiency, as well as his fiery nature.

Both writers are acquired tastes; and both appeal very strongly to the select few, but have no universality of appeal. An interesting link between the age of Shelley and the age of Meredith is found in the first marriage of the Victorian novelist with the eldest daughter of Peacock. Meredith's first volume of verse is dedicated to his father-in-law with "affectionate respects," and the influence of Peacock as a writer may be traced in some of Meredith's scenes and characterisation, such for instance as the interview between Sir Willoughby Patterne and Dr. Middleton over the old port.

Peacock died in January 1866.

His Work

Peacock's association with the literary history of the earlier years of the nineteenth century were many and interesting. He was the friend and adviser of Shelley, knew most of the Benthamite Radicals, and had written for many of the important

reviews and magazines, including Bentley's (which he helped to start) and Fraser's. Byron admired his work, especially *Melincourt*, and his literary eclogue exhibits traces of Peacock's influence.

Robert Buchanan admitted frankly to his influence, while a modern writer like Dr. Garnett shows unmistakably the Peacock touch in his *Twilight of the Gods*. Thackeray and Frederick Locker admired his verse and have recorded their admiration; while, putting aside his son-in-law's appreciation and probable indebtedness, the majority of the best critics to-day are unanimous in their praise of Peacock's power.

In fact, we shall find that the further we move from Peacock's time, the more considerably has Peacock's reputation advanced. With a few exceptions he was practically disregarded when at the height of his powers, and never received the critical meed of praise that was his due. The reason for this may be found in the character of the satirist's work. Writing in the full flush of the Romantic revival, Peacock is far too eclectic in his tastes to catch the ear of the lover of Romanticism.

Nor did he fit in any better with the literary tendencies of the succeeding age; neither with the democratic ideals of the early Victorian Era, nor the scientific tendencies of the Mid-Victorian, had he anything especially in common. He declines to be placed. No label fits him. The friend of Shelley, he mocks at romanticism. A lover of the Classics, he is far too idiosyncratic a writer to observe the classical conventions; a writer of fiction, he flouts all those points over which the novelist usually expends his art; there is the roughest characterisation, next to no plot, scarcely any action and no passion. As a witty controversialist he is no more likely to attract those who care for didactic writing; for he plays with rather than advocates opinions, and makes merry at everyone's expense. Life for Peacock was a pleasant holiday where everything was fit food for laughter. Yet to the few who are attracted by the cynic's attitude, once again Peacock proves disconcerting. He is for ever railing at men and women, but there is no bitterness in his mockery. Yet there is not, as there was with men like Hood, warm democratic feeling at the back of his jesting. He is kindly enough, but an intellectual aristocrat to the core. "I am more afraid of deference to public clamour," he said, "than I am of anything under heaven."

Here then one may think to fix Peacock—among the Tory thinkers of his day; and his abuse of the present, his praise of the past, would tend to suggest that view. Yet once again he eludes. With a strong Conservative bias in his nature there existed a contradictory strain of Liberalism. Most of his friends were Radicals, and his own seal bore the Horatian tag, "I neither follow in the rear, nor pursue those who go before me." He loved the past, not with the Tory love of tradition, but for certain harmonious elements which he found lacking in the present.

In short, this paradoxical personality, with its many contradictions, must be taken as an independent force in letters and not bound over to any school. The one thing about him that is clear, straightforward and indisputable, is that he was an artist in irony, who loved to depict human frailties from sheer high spirits. And so he made of farcical extravagance a fine art. He is serious about nothing save his work as an artist. As Friar Tuck said, "The worst thing is good enough to be laughed at, though it be good for nothing else; and the best thing, though it be good for something else, is good for nothing better."

It is this point that divides Peacock from the contemporary satirists of his day. Dickens, Thackeray, Disraeli, were moralists as well as satirists; humour with them subserved a serious purpose. Peacock is as guiltless of preaching as was Jane Austen. He did not laugh at the world to improve its morals, but merely to improve his own digestion. It pleased him to do so, and he would laugh at his best friends or himself with the same zest as he laughed at those whom he disliked.

His style is admirable: lucid, harmonious, apposite. In his care for achieving his effects, in his fastidious sensibility for the precise phrase and proper emphasis, he reminds one rather of the great eighteenth-century humorists than of his contemporaries. We think of Congreve rather than Hood; of Sterne rather than Thackeray. Romantic, satirical, tender, sardonic, reactionary, liberal; a cynic to outward appearance, a sensitive and affectionate man beneath the cold exterior. Let us not be misled by his ironic detachment, and devotion to the comic spirit; it was an artist's pose to conceal from the world a proud and over delicately responsive nature. He jested wildly often as Lamb did, to conceal some inner ache. And he pays the penalty as a writer for thus concealing his finer qualities as a man. But all who care for ironic humour, flecked with flashes of poetic feeling, will hold Peacock in affectionate remembrance.

A Discussion at Headlong Hall

The Reverend Doctor Gaster seated himself in the corner of a sofa near Miss Philomela Poppyseed. Miss Philomela detailed to him the plan of a very moral and aristocratical novel she was preparing for the press, and continued holding forth, with her eyes half shut, till a long-drawn nasal tone from the reverend divine compelled her suddenly to open them in all the indignation of surprise. The cessation of the hum of her voice awakened the reverend gentleman, who, lifting up first one eyelid, then the other, articulated, or rather murmured, "Admirably planned, indeed!"

"I have not quite finished, sir," said Miss Philomela, bridling. "Will you have the goodness to inform me where I left off?"

The doctor hummed awhile, and at length answered, "I think you had just laid it down as a position, that a thousand a year is an indispensable ingredient in the passion of love, and that no man who is not so far gifted by nature, can reasonably presume to feel that passion himself, or be correctly the object of it with a well-educated female."

"That, sir," said Miss Philomela, highly incensed, "is the fundamental principle which I lay down in the first chapter, and which the whole four volumes, of which I detailed to you the outline, are intended to set in a strong practical light."

"Bless me!" said the doctor, "what a nap I must have had!"

Miss Philomela flung away to the side of her dear friends Gall and Treadle, under whose fostering patronage she had been puffed into an extensive reputation, much

to the advantage of the young ladies of the age, whom she taught to consider themselves as a sort of commodity, to be put up at public auction, and knocked down to the highest bidder. Mr. Nightshade and Mr. MacLaurel joined the trio; and it was secretly resolved, that Miss Philomela should furnish them with a portion of her manuscripts, and that Messieurs Gall and Co. should devote the following morning to cutting and drying a critique on a work calculated to prove so extensively beneficial, that Mr. Gall protested he really *envied* the writer.

While this amiable and enlightened quintette were busily employed in flattering one another, Mr. Cranium retired to complete the preparations he had begun in the morning for a lecture, with which he intended, on some future evening, to favour the company: Sir Patrick O'Prism walked out into the grounds to study the effect of moonlight on the snow-clad mountains; Mr. Foster and Mr. Escot continued to make love, and Mr. Panscope to digest his plan of attack on the heart of Miss Cephalis: Mr. Jenkinson sate by the fire, reading *Much Ado About Nothing*: the Reverend Doctor Gaster was still enjoying the benefit of Miss Philomela's opiate, and serenading the company from his solitary corner: Mr. Chromatic was reading music, and occasionally humming a note: and Mr. Milestone had produced his portfolio for the edification and amusement of Miss Tenorina, Miss Graziosa, and Squire Headlong, to whom he was pointing out the various beauties of his plan for Lord Littlebrain's park.

Mr. Milestone. This, you perceive, is the natural state of one part of the grounds. Here is a wood, never yet touched by the finger of taste: thick, intricate, and gloomy. Here is a little stream, dashing from stone to stone, and overshadowed with these untrimmed boughs.

Miss Tenorina. The sweet romantic spot! How beautifully the birds must sing there on a summer evening!

Miss Graziosa. Dear sister! how can you endure the horrid thicket?

Mr. Milestone. You are right, Miss Graziosa: your taste is correct—perfectly *en règle*. Now, here is the same place corrected—trimmed—polished—decorated—adorned. Here sweeps a plantation, in that beautiful regular curve: there winds a gravel walk: here are parts of the old wood, left in these majestic circular clumps, disposed at equal distances with wonderful symmetry: there are some single shrubs scattered in elegant profusion: here a Portugal laurel, there's a juniper; here a laurustinus, there a spruce fir; here a larch, there a filan; here a rhododendron, there an arbutus. The stream, you see, is become a canal: the banks are perfectly smooth and green, sloping to the water's edge: and there is Lord Littlebrain, rowing in an elegant boat.

Squire Headlong. Magical, faith!

Mr. Milestone. Here is another part of the grounds in its natural state. Here is a large rock, with the mountain-ash rooted in its fissures, overgrown, as you see, with ivy and moss: and from this part of it bursts a little fountain, that runs bubbling down its rugged sides.

Miss Tenorina. O how beautiful! How I should love the melody of that miniature cascade!

Mr. Milestone. Beautiful, Miss Tenorina! Hideous. Base, common, and popular. Such a thing as you may see anywhere, in wild and mountainous districts. Now, observe the metamorphosis. Here is the same rock, cut into the shape of a giant. In one hand he holds a horn, through which that little fountain is thrown to a prodigious elevation. In the other is a ponderous stone, so exactly balanced as to be apparently ready to fall on the head of any person who may happen to be beneath: and there is Lord Littlebrain walking under it.

Squire Headlong. Miraculous, by Mahomet!

Mr. Milestone. This is the summit of a hill, covered, as you perceive, with wood, and with those mossy stones scattered at random under the trees.

Miss Tenorina. What a delightful spot to read in, on a summer's day! The air must be so pure, and the wind must sound so divinely in the tops of those old pines!

Mr. Milestone. Bad taste, Miss Tenorina. Bad taste, I assure you. Here is the spot improved. The trees are cut down: the stones are cleared away: this is an octagonal pavilion, exactly on the centre of the summit: and there you see Lord Littlebrain, on the top of the pavilion, enjoying the prospect with a telescope.

Squire Headlong. Glorious, egad!

Mr. Milestone. Here is a rugged mountainous road, leading through impervious shades: the ass and the four goats characterise a wild uncultured scene. Here, as you perceive, it is lously changed into a beautiful gravel road, gracefully curving through a belt of limes: and there is Lord Littlebrain driving four-in-hand.

Squire Headlong. Egregious, by Jupiter!

Mr. Milestone. Here is Littlebrain Castle, a Gothic, moss-grown structure, half-bosomed in trees. Near the casement of that turret is an owl peeping from the ivy.

Squire Headlong. And devilish wise he looks.

Mr. Milestone. Here is the new house, without a tree near it, standing in the midst of an undulating lawn: a white, polished, angular building, reflected to a nicety in this waveless lake; and there you see Lord Littlebrain looking out of the window.

Squire Headlong. And devilish wise he looks too. You shall cut me a giant before you go.

Mr. Milestone. Good. I'll order down my little corps of pioneers.

During this conversation, a hot dispute had arisen between Messieurs Gall and Nightshade: the latter pertinaciously insisted on having his new poem reviewed by Treacle, who he knew would extol it most loftily, and not by Gall, whose sarcastic commendation he held in superlative horror. The remonstrances of Squire Headlong silenced the disputants, but did not mollify the inflexible Gall, nor appease the irritated Nightshade, who secretly resolved that, on his return to London, he would beat his drum in Grub Street, form a mastigophoric corps of his own, and hoist the standard of determined opposition against this critical Napoleon.

An Episode in "Maid Marian"

Matilda, not dreaming of visitors, tripped into the apartment in a dress of forest green, with a small quiver by her side, and a bow and arrow in her hand. Her hair, black and glossy as the raven's wing, curled like wandering clusters of dark ripe grapes under the edge of her russet bonnet: and a plume of black feathers fell back negligently above it, with an almost horizontal inclination, that seemed the habitual effect of rapid motion against the wind. Her black eyes sparkled like sunbeams on a river: a clear, deep, liquid radiance, the reflection of ethereal fire tempered, not subdued, in the medium of its living and gentle mirror. Her lips were half opened to speak as she entered the apartment: and with a smile of recognition to the friar, and a courtesy to the stranger knight, she approached the baron and said, "You are late at your breakfast, father."

"I am not at breakfast," said the baron. "I have been at supper: my last night's supper; for I had none."

"I am sorry," said Matilda, "you should have gone to bed supperless."

"I did not go to bed supperless," said the baron: "I did not go to bed at all: and what are you doing with that green dress and that bow and arrow?"

"I am going a-hunting," said Matilda.

"A-hunting!" said the baron. "What, I warrant you, to meet with the earl, and slip your neck into the same noose?"

"No," said Matilda: "I am not going out of our own woods to-day."

"How do I know that?" said the baron. "What surety have I of that?"

"Here is the friar," said Matilda. "He will be surety."

"Not he," said the baron: "he will undertake nothing but where the devil is a party concerned."

"Yes, I will," said the friar: "I will undertake anything for the lady Matilda."

"No matter for that," said the baron: "she shall not go hunting to-day."

"Why, father," said Matilda, "if you coop me up here in this odious castle, I shall pine and die like a lonely swan on a pool."

"No," said the baron, "the lonely swan does not die in the pool. If there be a river at hand, she flies to the river, and finds her a mate; and so shall not you."

"But," said Matilda, "you may send with me any, or as many, of your grooms as you will."

"My grooms," said the baron, "are all false knaves. There is not a rascal among them but loves you better than me. Villains that I feed and clothe."

"Surely," said Matilda, "it is not villainy to love me: if it be, I should be sorry my father were an honest man." The baron relaxed his muscles into a smile. "Or my lover either," added Matilda. The baron looked grim again.

"For your lover," said the baron, "you may give God thanks of him. He is as arrant a knave as ever poached."

"What, for hunting the king's deer?" said Matilda. "Have I not heard you rail at the forest laws by the hour?"

"Did you ever hear me," said the baron, "rail myself out of house and land? If I had done that, then were I a knave."

"My lover," said Matilda, "is a brave man, and a true man, and a generous man, and a young man, and a handsome man; aye, and an honest man too."

"How can he be an honest man," said the baron, "when he has neither house nor land, which are the better part of a man?"

"They are but the husk of a man," said Matilda, "the worthless coat of the chestnut: the man himself is the kernel."

"The man is the grape stone," said the baron, "and the pulp of the melon. The house and land are the true substantial fruit, and all that give him savour and value."

"He will never want house or land," said Matilda, "while the meeting boughs weave a green roof in the wood, and the free range of the hart marks out the bounds of the forest."

"Vert and venison! vert and venison!" exclaimed the baron. "Treason and flat rebellion. Confound your smiling face! what makes you look so good-humoured? What! you think I can't look at you, and be in a passion? You think so, do you? We shall see. Have you no fear in taking that, when here is the king's fingerman come to take us all into custody, and confiscate our goods and chattels?"

"Nay, Lord Fitzwater," said Sir Ralph, "you wrong me in your report. My visit is one of courtesy and excuse, not of menace and authority."

"There it is," said the baron; "every one takes a pleasure in contradicting me. Here is this courteous knight, who has not opened his mouth three times since he has been in my house except to take in provision, cuts me short in my story with a flat denial."

"Oh, I cry you mercy, sir knight," said Matilda; "I did not mark you before. I am your debtor for no slight favour, and so is my liege lord."

"Her liege lord!" exclaimed the baron, taking large strides across the chamber.

"Pardon me, gentle lady," said Sir Ralph. "Had I known you before yesterday, I would have cut off my right hand ere it should have been raised to do you displeasure."

"Oh, sir," said Matilda, "a good man may be forced on an ill office; but I can distinguish the man from his duty." She presented to him her hand which he kissed respectfully, and simultaneously with the contact thirty-two invisible arrows plunged at once into his heart, one from every point of the compass of his peri-cardia.

"Well, father," added Matilda, "I must go to the woods."

"Must you?" said the baron. "I say you must not."

"But I am going," said Matilda.

"But I will have up the drawbridge," said the baron.

"But I will swim the moat," said Matilda.

"But I will secure the gates," said the baron.

"But I will leap from the battlement," said Matilda.

"But I will lock you in an upper chamber," said the baron.

"But I will shred the tapestry," said Matilda, "and let myself down."

"But I will lock you in a turret," said the baron, "where you shall only see light through a loophole."

"But through that loophole," said Matilda, "will I take my flight, like a young eagle from its aerie; and, father, while I go out freely, I will return willingly; but if once I slip out through a loophole——" She paused a moment, and then added, singing:

"'The love that follows fain
Will never its faith betray;
But the faith that is held in a chain
Will never be found again,
If a single link give way.'"

The melody acted irresistibly on the harmonious propensities of the friar, who accordingly sang in his turn:

"'For hark! hark! hark!
The dog doth bark,
That watches the wild deer's lair,
The hunter awakes at the peep of the dawn,
But the lair is empty, the deer it is gone,
And the hunter knows not where.'"

Matilda and the friar then sang together:

"'Then follow, oh follow! the hounds do cry:
The red sun flames in the eastern sky:
The stag bounds over the hollow.
He that lingers in spirit, or loiters in hall,
Shall see us no more till the evening fall,
And no voice but the echo shall answer his call:
Then follow, oh follow, follow:
Follow, oh follow, follow!'"

During the process of this harmony, the baron's eyes wandered from his daughter to the friar, and from the friar to his daughter again, with an alternate expression of anger differently modified: when he looked on the friar, it was anger without qualification: when he looked on his daughter it was still anger, but tempered by an expression of involuntary admiration and pleasure. These rapid fluctuations of the baron's physiognomy, the habitual, reckless, resolute merriment in the jovial face of the friar,—and the cheerful, elastic spirit that played on the lips and sparkled in the eyes of Matilda,—would have presented a very amusing combination to Sir Ralph if one of the three images in the group had not absorbed his total attention with feelings of intense delight very nearly allied to pain. The baron's wrath was somewhat counteracted by the reflection that his daughter's good spirits seemed to show that they would naturally rise triumphant over all disappointments: and he had had sufficient experience of her humour to know that she might sometimes be led, but never could be driven. Then, too, he was always delighted to hear her sing, though he was not at all pleased in this instance with the subject of her song. Still he would have endured the subject for the sake of the melody of the treble, but his mind was not sufficiently attuned to unison to relish the harmony of the bass. The friar's accompaniment put him out of all patience, and "So," he exclaimed, "this is the way you teach my daughter to renounce the devil, is it? A hunting friar, truly! Who ever heard before of a hunting friar? A profane, roaring, bawling, bumper-bibbing, neck-breaking, catch-singing friar!"

"Under favour, bold baron," said the friar; but the friar was warm with canary, and in his singing vein;

and he could not go on in plain unmusical prose. He therefore sang in a new tune:

"'Though I be now a grey, grey friar,
Yet I was once a hale young knight;
The cry of my dogs was the only music
In which my spirit did take delight.

Little I recked of matin bell,
But drowned its toll with my clanging horn:
And the only beads I loved to tell
Were the beads of dew on the sprangled thorn.'"

"Over, Over!"

A damsel came in midnight rain,
And called across the ferry;
The weary wight she called in vain,
Whose senses sleep did bury.
At evening, from her father's door
She turned to meet her lover;
At midnight on the lonely shore,
She shouted, "Over, over!"

She had not met him by the tree
Of their accustomed meeting,
And sad and sick at heart was she,
Her heart all wildly beating.
In chill suspense the hours went by,
The wild storm burst above her;
She turned her to the river nigh,
And shouted, "Over, over!"

A dim, discoloured, doubtful light
The moon's dark veil permitted,
And thick before her troubled sight
Fantastic shadows flitted.
Her lover's form appeared to glide,
And beckon o'er the water;
Alas! his blood that morn had dyed
Her brother's sword with slaughter.

Upon a little rock she stood,
To make her invocation;
She marked not that the rain-swoll'n flood
Was inundating her station.
The tempest mocked her feeble cry;
No saint his aid would give her;
The flood swelled high and yet more high,
And swept her down the river.

Yet oft beneath the pale moonlight,
When hollow winds are blowing,
The shadow of that maiden bright
Glides by the dark stream's flowing.
And when the storms of midnight rave,
While clouds the broad moon cover,
The wild gusts wail across the wave
The cry of "Over, over!"[1]

Love and Age

I played with you 'mid cowslips blowing,
When I was six and you were four;
When garlands weaving, flowers-balls throwing,
Were pleasures soon to please no more.
Through groves and meads, o'er grass and heather,
With little playmates, to and fro,
We wandered hand in hand together;
But that was sixty years ago.

You grew a lovely roseate maiden,
And still our early love was strong;
Still with no care our days were laden,
They glided joyously along;
And I did love you very dearly,
How dearly words want power to show;
I thought your heart was touched as nearly;
But that was fifty years ago.

Then other lovers came around you,
Your beauty grew from year to year,
And many a splendid circle found you
The centre of its glittering sphere.
I saw you then, first vows forsaking,
On rank and wealth your hand bestow;
Oh, then I thought my heart was breaking—
But that was forty years ago.

And I lived on to wed another;
No cause she gave me to repine;
And when I heard you were a mother,
I did not wish the children mine.
My own young flock, in fair progression
Made up a pleasant Christmas row:
My joy in them was past expression—
But that was thirty years ago.

You grew a matron, plump and comely,
You dwelt in fashion's brightest blaze;
My quiet life was far more homely;
But I too had my festal days.
No marrier eyes have ever glistened
Around the hearthstone's wintry glow,
Than when my youngest child was christened—
But that was twenty years ago.

Time passed. My eldest girl was married,
And I am now a grandsire grey;
One pet of four years old I've carried
Among the wild flowers' meads to play.
In our old field of childish pleasure,
Where now, as then, the cowslips blow,
She fills her basket's ample measure—
And that is not ten years ago.

But though first love's impassioned blindness
Has passed away in colder light,
I still have thought of you with kindness,
And shall do, till our last good-night.
The ever-rolling silent hours
Will bring a time we shall not know,
When our young days of gathering flowers
Will be an hundred years ago.[1]

II. PROSE: (b) *Criticism and the Essay.* Charles Lamb—William Hazlitt—S. T. Coleridge—Thomas de Quincey—Leigh Hunt.

CHARLES LAMB (1775–1834)

His Life

Charles Lamb was cradled in the quiet cloisters of the Temple, and the old-world atmosphere of the Temple clung about him all his life. Like the mediæval retreat that nestles in the very heart of Fleet Street, lapped by its ceaseless flow of life, so did Lamb, hugging always the concrete actualities and humanities of the great City, keep none the less a cloistral recess in his nature, redolent of old-time ways and fashions.

The first seven years of his impressionable youth were passed within the precincts of Crown Office Row (1775–1782), and in one of his many introspective musings he has pictured for us with finely sympathetic touch his father, "a man of an incorrigible and losing honesty," once "the liveliest little fellow

[1] *Maid Marian.*

[1] *Gryll Grange.*

breathing . . . brimful of roguories and inventions"; later, "in the last sad stage of human weakness, a remnant most forlorn of what he was."

John Lamb was a barrister's clerk, with seven children, and had to fight hard against the encroachments of poverty. Little money could be spared for educational purposes, and it might have fared ill with Charles had not Samuel Salt, his father's patron, obtained for him, when he was seven, a presentation to Christ's Hospital. He could thus bid farewell to his earlier mentor, "Mr. William Bird, eminent writer and teacher of languages," whose readiness with the birch was more obvious than his readiness with learning.

At Christ's Hospital he stayed for another seven years. Here he made the acquaintance of the youthful Coleridge, three years his senior, and the acquaintance soon ripened into a friendship that was to last a lifetime. Lamb proved a fairly good scholar, and when he left in November 1789, obtained a post in the South Sea House, where the friendly Salt was a Deputy Governor. His family had left the Temple, the father by reason of increasing infirmities having retired on a small pension, and we find them in Little Queen Street, Holborn.

In his scanty leisure, Lamb threw himself with keen zest into the joys of reading, a joy he shared with his sister Mary. This was varied by occasional visits to the theatre, a brief excursion to Hertfordshire—where some of his happiest moments were spent, and where the one romance of his life budded and faded. His home life was wearisome and gloomy. His father was growing childish and querulous; his mother was an invalid, and the strain of insanity in the family suddenly showed itself in poor Mary, upon whom all the household cares had devolved. In a fit of frenzy she pursued a girl apprentice, and upon her mother interfering turned upon her with a knife that she had snatched up. It seemed as if Mary's only future lay within the walls of a public asylum, but her brother Charles offered to be her guardian, and this alternative was accepted; but it involved the sacrifice of Lamb's romantic dreams, and of many other ambitions, for Charles would have realised full well the probable strain upon his care and attention, and the necessary elimination of many congenial ties and distractions: but he neither hesitated at the time, nor complained afterwards, accepting the duty cheerfully and courageously. In her lucid intervals Mary was an interesting if trying companion—what these were, has not "Elia" pictured for us with tender charity and humorous toleration; but as time went on the intervals of mental obscurity became more frequent, and the life of "dual loneliness" must have proved more and more irksome.

While brother and sister moved from lodging to lodging, the incessant change of place being a painful necessity, Charles started in his literary career. His early verse was inspired, with that of his friend Coleridge, by the quiet charm and pensive delicacy of W. L. Bowles. It served well to enshrine some of these memories, that always formed the staple of Lamb's original work.

Financial necessities urged Lamb to try his hand at a farce, though his previous Elizabethan experiment, *John Woodvil* (1802) was much more to his taste. He had, however, little dramatic power, and *Mr. H*—— proved no more successful than the poetic play. It was characteristic of Lamb that with critical detachment and unfailing humour he should have seen the weakness of *Mr. H*——, and joined heartily in the hisses that greeted the performance.

Writing about the farce to Hazlitt, he said: "I know you'll be sorry, but never mind. We are determined not to be cast down; I am going to leave off tobacco and then we must thrive. A smoky man must write smoky farces." His friendship at this time with that eccentric philosopher, William Godwin, provided the opportunity for Lamb's first literary success. In 1807, he and Mary wrote the familiar *Tales from Shakespeare*, Mary undertaking the comedies, Charles the harder task of making the tragedies acceptable and understandable by children. The result was sixty guineas—and fame.

Between 1807 and 1817, Lamb's contributions to literature were frequent and important, though we must think of him during this time as the critic rather than as the intimate essayist.

In 1817 the Lambs left the Temple for Covent Garden, and an interesting chapter in his life was closed, for it was at the Temple where the famous Wednesday evening gatherings took place—at the Temple moreover, where he made so many of his lasting friendships.

The most interesting chapter in his literary life was to start, however, in 1820, when Hazlitt introduced him to the editor of the *London Magazine*, and the famous *Elia* essays came into existence.

In the summer of 1823 the Lambs once again migrated yet further north, this time to Islington. Failing health made Lamb consider the question of retirement, and he was delighted when in the spring of 1825 a pension—practically three-quarters of his salary—was awarded him. "After thirty-three years' slavery, here am I a freed man." Thus he wrote to Wordsworth. But the change did not carry with it all the delight he had hoped for. The routine had been irksome, but to an extent with one of his habits, had proved not unsalutary; his unconditional liberty bewildered and confounded him.

Perhaps the loss of some of his best friends weighed upon him also. The fact remains that neither brother nor sister got so much pleasure from this retirement as had been anticipated.

He found the folk at Enfield slow, and too prone to talk about cattle. To relieve his boredom he would indulge in farcically extravagant letters—such as the following to Coventry Patmore:

"Excuse my anxiety, but how is Dash? Are his intellects sound, or does he wander a little in his conversation? All the dogs here are going mad, if you believe the overseers, but I protest they seem to me very rational and collected. Nothing is so deceitful as mad people to those who are not used to them. Try him with hot water: if he won't lick it up it is a sign he doesn't like it. Does his tail wag horizontally or perpendicularly? That has decided the fate of many dogs in Enfield. Has he bit any of the children yet? If he has, have them shot, and keep him as a curiosity"—

and so on in the same ridiculous strain.

Mary's health grew worse, the country life that

was best for her did not suit Charles. He was ill at ease away from Fleet Street and the ready touch of people for whom he cared.

"The lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet Street; life, awake, if you awake at all, at all hours of the night, the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street, the crowds, the print shops, the old book-stalls, the pantomime, London itself a pantomime and a masquerade, all these things work themselves into my mind, and feed me without the power of satisfying me. The wonder of these nights compels me into night walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears for fulness of joy at so much life."

In a letter to another friend, he says:

"Aren't you mightily moped on the banks of the Cam? Had you not better come and set up here? You can't think what a difference; all the streets and pavements are pure gold. I warrant you, at least I know an alchemy that turns her mud into that metal, a mind that loves to be at home in crowds."

The death of Coleridge depressed him: the friendship had been so long and precious a one; and when owing to an accident he fell ill of erysipelas, the disease easily mastered his devitalised body. He passed away painlessly on December 27, 1834, his sister surviving him nearly thirteen years.

His Work

Lamb started as a writer about 1793, when Burke and Gibbon were at the height of their glory, and some years before Scott had given romantic narrative verse its astonishing vogue. He experimented both in prose and verse; sonnet-making, playwriting, with a mild excursion into fiction—*Rosamund Gray*. Here one may see traces of his as yet undeveloped literary gifts, but the most notable characteristic of this early work is its Elizabethan inspiration, and its power of literary mimicry. Then, in the pot-boiler written by Mary and himself, the *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807), his Elizabethan affinities are exhibited more fully, and prepare the way for the specimens of *English Dramatic Poets* who lived about the time of Shakespeare (1808).

The tenderness of Lamb, and his genius for reminiscence, find expression in *Mrs. Leicester's School* and *Poetry for Children* (1809)—works written also in collaboration and designed for Mr. Godwin's "Juvenile Library."

For some years he wrote little, but his literary friendships helped to stimulate his slowly maturing powers, and in 1820 he finds in the person of "Elia," the medium best fitted to display his peculiar qualities.

Beginning as a writer, therefore, in the days before the Romantic Revival, he "found himself" in its last phase, when Wordsworth and Coleridge had done their best work, and Keats and Shelley were the great stars in the firmament of poesy.

His verse owes nothing to modern romantic inspiration; it has something of Cowper's tender homeliness, but is more in tune with the wistful Jacobean singers, and has a distinct if not very strong individuality in its gravity and delicacy of touch.

The same gift of pathos, the same delicacy of touch we find in *Rosamund Gray*, but this little tale, written in Lamb's twenty-third year, is on the whole too timid and conventional in treatment to arouse more than a mild interest. The *Tales from Shakespeare*, written one year later, show the rapid development of the writer's powers, and testify to the way in which he had steeped himself in Elizabethan literature until he could tell the stories of Shakespeare's plays in childlike language without making them childish—a distinction of the first importance in juvenile literature. Mary Lamb must share with her brother the praise due to this memorable and difficult effort; though it was naturally easier to deal with the comedies than with the tragedies.

Lamb thus explains the principles of his diction:

"Diligent care has been taken to select such words as might least interrupt the effect of the beautiful English tongue in which he wrote; those few words introduced into our language since his time have been as far as possible avoided."

Shakespeare's speech, clarified and simplified, is used with admirable effect. The tales themselves are not sentimentalised, but the passion is presented with the strength and dignity of the old fairy stories, yet with a reticence that keeps back anything that might shock or disturb a child's mind.

Scarcely less excellent, though less popular, is the *Adventures of Ulysses*. Lamb, like Keats, had been stirred by the voice of Chapman "loud and bold," and his version of the Homeric story is therefore Elizabethan in its dress, rather than Greek. But here again he adheres rigidly to the note of simplicity, and leaves necessarily Chapman's method again and again. It is assuredly not merely a prose version of Chapman, any more than it is a prose version of Homer; but an original and charming blend.

Mrs. Leicester's School was written conjointly with his sister. It consists of various tales told by the girls themselves, tender, graceful little things, somewhat conventional in theme, but abounding in that happy gift of reminiscence to be employed amply later on with such inspiring results.

To turn to Lamb's dramatic experiments, *John Woodvil*, written in 1802, and called originally *Pride's Cure*, exhibits his power of reproducing the Elizabethan diction, and was sufficiently happy to deceive Godwin, who imagined it to be a genuine old play. But if the dramatic verse has power and beauty, there is little trace of dramatic imagination in the telling of the story.

Of the farce *Mr. H——*, little can be said. It had next to no story, while the form was of the thinnest, and though the play was well acted, nothing could save it. Lamb the playwright deplored the failure; Lamb the critic knew the failure was deserved.

And Lamb's quality as a critic of the first order, was soon after this to make an undeniable appeal. As a result of a commission he produced the famous *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets contemporary with Shakespeare*. The principle on which these *Specimens* were selected, is made clear in the preface:

"The kind of extracts which I have sought after have been, not so much passages of wit and humour—though the old plays are rich in such—as scenes of passion, sometimes of the deepest quality, interesting situations, serious descriptions, that which is more nearly allied to poetry than to wit, and to tragic rather than comic poetry. The plays which I made choice of have been with few exceptions those which treat of human life and manners, rather than masques and Arcadian Pastorals, with their

train of abstractions, unimpassioned deities, passionate mortals, Claius, and Medorus, and Amintas, and Amaryllis. My leading design has been to illustrate what may be called the moral sense of our ancestors. To show in what manner they felt when they placed themselves by the power of imagination in trying situations, in the conflicts of duty and passion, or the strife of contending duties; what part of loves and enmities theirs were; how their griefs were tempered, and their full-swoln joys abated; how much of Shakespeare shines in the great men his contemporaries, and how far in his divine mind and manners he surpassed them and all mankind."

Shakespeare is taken as the standard by which his contemporaries were to be measured, and this standard was faithfully kept in view and was provocative of some illuminative comparisons. The importance of this volume cannot be over-estimated. When it was published, the Elizabethan dramatists were little known to the public at large, and Lamb was the first to sound the note of high praise. Coleridge did not lecture on the Shakespearean drama until three years later, and Hazlitt was still an Elizabethan critic of the future. So we may fairly regard Lamb as the pioneer of the New Criticism.

Together with the *Specimens* with their notes may be placed Lamb's *Essay on the Tragedies of Shakespeare*, and that *On the Genius and Character of Hogarth*. Lamb's qualities as critic are, his gift of luminous enthusiasm, his faculty for distinguishing the human qualities from the academic. But he has neither Hazlitt's breadth of range, nor Coleridge's subtlety of analysis, and he is happier in noting the mountain tops than in estimating the sweep of table-land.

Lamb's work as a critic precedes his work as an essayist, though the essays no less than the letters scintillate in brilliant flashes of criticism. His earlier essay work, between 1811 and 1820, is scarcely up to the level of Leigh Hunt's. The flowering time came in 1820 when "Elia" entered upon his own and started with the *South Sea House*, rich in observant humour and reminiscent charm.

In 1833, the final fruits of Lamb were gathered together in *The Last Essays of Elia*.

The genius of Lamb lay in his power of visualising memories. As a stylist does he walk in the past, gathering to himself the pleasant tricks and mannerisms of bygone writers, just as a girl plucks flowers instinctively that blend with her looks and carriage. The blossoms are culled from other men's gardens, but their blending is all Lamb's own. Passing through Lamb's imagination, they become something fresh and individual. His style is a mixture certainly of many styles, but a chemical not a mechanical mixture.

The matter harmonises with the manner. It also belongs to the past; its charm, too, is a retrospective one. In his dearly loved haunts it is the shadow of bygone times that he sees, rather than present actualities; a vanished face, a hushed voice, a recollected gesture, some familiar friend from book-land, the memory of some treasured joyance. But Lamb's memories are not like Wordsworth's, "emotions recollected in tranquillity." He recalls them not to wring from them some spiritual rapture, or ethical significance, but merely as material for his intellect and fancy to play upon. He plays with his thoughts as the wind plays with the leaves, tossing them hither and thither, circling them round in strange eddies, scattering, combining, in all manner of queer ways. Dearly did he love "to chew the cud of a bygone vision," to dally with his dreams, to reinvest the common streets of London, and her well-worn sights, with a glamour of retrospective fantasy.

All the conventional approaches of the Essay are quietly ignored by him. Never was any man more intimate in print than he. He has made of chatter a fine art, for he is enchantingly easy with no suspicion of vulgarity, simple in his choice of subjects, never trite in his treatment, and he can trifle delicately without being trivial.

A visualiser of memories! Yes, it is this faculty for haunting the past in the familiar habiliments of to-day, of suggesting a shadowy city beyond the actual London he sketches with such caressing zest, that gives Lamb's method its compelling appeal.

If we analyse their appeal still further we shall see how admirably the atmosphere of his mind reflects the pictures that he conjures up.

"Some things are of that nature as to make one's fancy chuckle while his heart doth ache," wrote Bunyan. The nature of things mostly appealed to Lamb in that way. Humour with him is never far from tragedy; through his tears you may see the rainbow in the sky; for his humour and pathos are really inseparable from one another, they are different facets of the same gem; or to change the simile, one may say that Lamb's moods, whether grave or gay, are equally the natural effervescence of an exquisitely mobile imagination: whether you call it humour or pathos depends entirely upon where the light may strike the bubbles.

Some, like Carlyle, who did not understand the man, were puzzled and offended by the wildness of some of his verbal extravagances. They looked on them as the irresponsible fooling of a shallow nature, never realising that these absurd antics were but safety-valves for a hypersensitive mind, that had to fight hard for its sanity, on occasion.

It is characteristic of the Romantic writer that he should be confidential. As a rule he tells the world more about himself than he tells his friend. This is due to no morbid egotism, no mere loquacity, it is a necessity of his nature to express *himself*. In fiction it is the least apparent, because of the exigencies of this particular art form. A novelist may dramatise his moods and experiences, and this to an extent disguises his self-revelation; but in the essay form the intimate confidential note is the most obtrusive, and the disregard for classical standards and rigidity of form that is peculiar to romantic literature of all kinds, necessarily helps this self-revealing process.

For this reason the *Essays of Elia* especially, and the critical essays to a less extent, are practically autobiographical fragments, from which we may reconstruct with little difficulty the inner life and no little of the outer life of Lamb.

We may learn of the boyish Charles in *Night Fears*, and in *Christ's Hospital*; be introduced to his family in *The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple* and in *My Relations*; read of his youthful experiences in *Mackery End in Hertfordshire*; get a vivid

glimpses of his long intimacy with Mary in *Mrs. Battle's Opinions*; of his official work in *The South Sea House*; of his sentimental memories in *Dream Children*; of his prejudices and temptations in *Imperfect Sympathies* and *The Confessions of a Drunkard*.

Even in his most irresponsible dallyings there are flashes of self-revelation, and his *Popular Fallacies* might be described as personal idiosyncrasies in terms of farcical humour.

There is no touch of vulgarity in these intimacies; for all their frank unreserve we feel the delicate refinement of the man's spiritual nature, and—paradoxical though it may sound—the continual presence of a fine reticence. If we wish to compare Lamb with another garrulous self-revealer who lacks that fine reticence, we have but to turn to the *Confessions of Rousseau*. Lamb omits no essential; he does not sentimentalise, and he does not brutalise his memories. He poetises them, preserving them for us in an art that can differentiate between genuine reality and crude realism.

Lamb's Essay work is so individual in its cumulative effect, despite the borrowed ornaments of style, that we cannot place him in any particular school of prose. The formal quality of his work approximates often to the eighteenth-century essay or "Character Sketch" of Addison and Steele, especially Steele. Yet no sooner do we think we detect the hand of Steele, than we find the voice is the voice of Sir Thomas Browne, and no sooner have we caught the echoes of Browne than a richer and intenser music hurries us through the years to the prose utterances of Keats.

Nor is this due in any way to a merely versatile gift of imitativeness. Lamb's reminiscences of style are really due to the fact that he is a poet at heart and unconsciously suits his manner to his matter. Every essay is in essence a tone poem, set in the proper key and never transgressing it; the variations are many, but never away from the central theme; and its apparent discord resolves itself to a higher harmony. Or to vary the metaphor, we may describe Lamb's discursive papers as arabesques, observing geometrical patterns, seemingly careless but following out cunningly preconceived designs; seemingly digressive but with every by-path leading back into the high road.

Within the boundaries of his temperament, Lamb was a great critic. His Elizabethan affinities made him a fine interpreter of the beauties of that age; while his insight into the merits of the Jacobean and Caroline dramatists was even more remarkable, even allowing for certain extravagances of praise into which his enthusiasm led him. It was sufficient for him that many Jacobean dramatists were cold-shouldered and ignored; and with the warmth of the partisan he is led to over-emphasise the undoubted beauty and strength scattered over their work.

Comparing his work here with Hazlitt's brilliant and more astringent criticism, one must admit to a preference for the saner perspective of Hazlitt. Lamb's defence of the Restoration dramatists, on the other hand, is not merely the masterpiece of special pleading that at first sight it appears. It indicates the best possible way for a modern reader to appreciate the mingled wit and indecency of such men as Wycherley and Congreve—and that is not to judge the plays by ordinary human standards at all, nor to measure their trend by the foot-rule of conventional morality; but to look upon the world of the Restoration dramatists as an unreal fantastic world, where the only thing that matters is the intellectual delight of the flash of repartee, or witty illumination of character.

In short, they must be appraised not as emotional human beings but as unmoral puppets. Such an attitude is scarcely possible to the average reader, who is far more likely to endorse the verdict of Macaulay upon these writers; but the mood it postulates for a right enjoyment, is one that has a real and solid value in the realm of literary criticism. Indeed it lies at the root of the difference between comedy and tragedy. Tragedy must be adjudged on the plane of the human passions; it lies at the very heart of life, and is or should be a vital and elemental thing. Comedy is of the head rather than the heart; it plays with ideas, sports with intellectual fancies. If you deny Lamb's way of approach you will miss much of the provocative brilliance in Mr. Bernard Shaw's plays and entirely elude (as many people do) the peculiar genius of Oscar Wilde.

Lamb's appreciation of verse is more limited, less catholic than his appreciation of prose. In dealing with prose, two sides of his nature are brought into operation; the warmly imaginative concrete side that loves the human quality in things, and the cool intellectual relish for incongruities and extravagances. In his own creative work those sides blend and amalgamate, while his basic material is ever the concrete aspect of life; and over the concrete picture tingling with tender emotions and extravagant sympathies he weaves his fantasies, with the deliberate joy of the inventive logician. But when as a critic he turns to poetry, this intellectual, fantastic Lamb disappears; strength and passion, nobility of thought, are the qualities that chiefly move him here. He can admire the austere dignity of Wordsworth and the vigorous sledge-hammer satire of Dryden, but Byron disgusts him and Shelley leaves him cold. It seems strange that he should have found nothing to admire or take pleasure in as regards Byron's work except, as Talfourd tells us, "the apostrophe to Parnassus"; but his attitude to both Byron and Shelley helps us to understand the man's attitude towards poetry and his limitations as a critic. It shows quite clearly that the fantastic dreamer in *Elia* is not an imaginative or poetic dreamer but an intellectual and logical dreamer, otherwise he would have felt otherwise towards the visionary Shelley and the fanciful mythology of Southey, and would not have welcomed with a shout of joy the intellectually brilliant but coldly imaginative work of the Restoration dramatist.

Keeping this view of Lamb in mind, the whimsical quality of his work and its apparently inconsequential ramblings assume a rather different complexion from that popularly assigned them. The reiterated apostrophes to the "gentle Charles," the references to Lamb as a writer that suggest him as a quaint, soft-hearted prattler, or irresponsible jester, convey a wrong impression of the man's personality. Tender he was, inasmuch as his intense humanity

made him tolerant and charitable to those around him; but there was behind the tenderness a stern inflexibility of character. The man who could deliberately put aside his youthful dreams of love, who could set himself to watch over and guard, unremittingly and uncomplainingly, a mentally afflicted sister not for a brief space but for a lifetime, and who could fight so grimly and persistently his own weaknesses, handicapped as he was by something of the same darkness that was always obscuring his sister's life—such a man was not the mild sentimentalist of popular estimation. There is a strain of iron in a nature that could shape his destiny along these lines of self-discipline and disinterested affection, and compel the love and admiration of fiery, impatient souls like Hazlitt.

His very extravagances are not the ebullitions of an irresponsible personality but the distractions of a strong and afflicted one. The jester does not frolic out of lightness of heart, but to escape from the gloom that might otherwise crush.

Thus may we leave him, reserved beneath all his confidences, serious behind all his whimsical gaieties; true and steadfast at the back of his wilful caprices—a strong, lovable, human soul.

The Old Familiar Faces

I have had playmates, I have had companions,
In my days of childhood, in my joyful school-days—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have been laughing, I have been carousing,
Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom cronies—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I loved a Love once, fairest among women:
Closed are her doors to me, I must not see her—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have a friend, a kinder friend has no man:
Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly;
Left him, to muse on the old familiar faces.

Ghost-like I paced round the haunts of my childhood,
Earth seem'd a desert I was bound to traverse,
Seeking to find the old familiar faces.

Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother,
Why were not thou born in my father's dwelling?
So might we talk of the old familiar faces—

How some they have died, and some they have left me,
And some are taken from me; all are departed—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

Grace before Meat

I own that I am disposed to say grace upon twenty other occasions in the course of the day besides my dinner. I want a form for setting out upon a pleasant walk, for a moonlight ramble, for a friendly meeting, or a solved problem. Why have we none for books, those spiritual repasts—a grace before Milton—a grace before Shakespeare—a devotional exercise proper to be said before reading the Fairy Queen?—but the received ritual having prescribed these forms to the solitary ceremony of mastication, I shall confine my observations to the experience which I have had of the grace, properly so called. . . . The form, then, of the benediction before eating has its beauty at a poor man's table, or at the simple and unprovocative repast of children. It is here that the grace becomes exceedingly graceful. The indigent man, who hardly knows whether he shall have a meal the next day or not, sits down to his fare with a present sense of the blessing, which can be but feebly acted by the rich, into whose minds the conception of wanting a dinner could never, but by some extreme theory, have entered. The proper end of food—the animal sustenance—is barely contemplated by them. The poor man's bread is his daily bread, literally his bread for the day. . . .

When I have sate (*a rarus hospes*) at rich men's tables, with the savoury soup and messes steaming up the nostrils, and moistening the lips of the guests with desire and a distracted clamour, I have felt the introduction of that ceremony to be unseasonable. With the ravenous orgasm upon you, it seems impertinent to interpose a religious sentiment. It is a confession of purpose to mutter out praises from a mouth that waters. The heat of epicurism puts out the gentle flame of devotion. . . .

I hear somebody exclaim,—Would you have Christians sit down at table like hogs to their troughs, without remembering the Giver?—No—I would have them sit down as Christians, remembering the Giver, and less like hogs.

A Quakers' Meeting

Reader, would'st thou know what true peace and quiet mean; would'st thou find a refuge from the noise and clamours of the multitude; would'st thou enjoy at once solitude and society; would'st thou possess the depth of thine own spirit in stillness, without being shut out from the consolatory faces of thy species; would'st thou be alone and yet accompanied; solitary, yet not friendless; singular, yet not withheld some to keep thee in countenance; a unit in aggregate; a simple in composite:—come with me into a Quakers' Meeting.

Dost thou love silence deep as that "before the winds were made"? go not out into the wilderness, descend not into the profundities of the earth; shut not up thy casements; nor pour wax into the little cells of thy ears, with little-faith'd self-mistrusting Ulysses. Retire with me into a Quakers' Meeting.

For a man to refrain even from good words, and to hold his peace, it is commendable; but for a multitude it is great mastery.

What is the stillness of the desert compared with this place? what the uncommunicating muteness of fishes?—here the goddess reigns and revels.—"Bosses, and Cosses, and Argosies load," do not with their interconfounding uproars more augment the brawl, nor the waves of the blown Baltic with their clubbed sounds—than their opposite (Silence her sacred self), is multiplied and rendered more intense by numbers, and by sympathy. She too hath her depth, that call unto deeps. Negation itself hath a positive more or less: and closed eyes would seem to obscure the great obscurity of midnight.

There are wounds which an imperfect solitude cannot heal. By imperfect I mean that which a man enjoyeth by himself. The perfect is that which he can sometimes obtain in crowds, but nowhere so absolutely as in a Quakers' Meeting.—Those first hermits did certainly understand this principle, when they retired into Egyptian solitudes, not singly, but in shoals, to enjoy one another's want of conversation. The Carthusian is bound to his brethren by this agreeing spirit of incommunicativeness. In secular occasions, what so pleasant as to be reading a book through a long winter evening, with a friend sitting by—say, a wife—he, or she, too, (if that be probable), reading another without interruption, or oral communication?—can there be no sympathy without the gabble of words?—away with this inhuman, shy, single, shade-and-cavern-haunting solitariness. Give me, Master Zimmerman, a sympathetic solitude.

Witches, and other Night Fears

From my childhood I was extremely inquisitive about witches and witch-stories. My maid, and more legendary aunt, supplied me with good store. But I shall mention the accident which diverted my curiosity originally into this channel. In my father's book closet the history of the Bible by Stackhouse occupied a distinguished station. The pictures with which it abounds—one of the ark, in particular, and another of Solomon's Temple, delineated with all the fidelity of ocular admeasurement, as if the artist had been upon the spot—attracted my childish attention. There was a picture, too, of the Witch raising up Samuel, which I wish that I had never

soon. We shall come to that hereafter. Stackhouse is in two huge tomes; and there was a pleasure in removing folios of that magnitude, which, with infinite straining, was as much as I could manage, from the situation which they occupied upon an upper shelf. I have not met with the work from that time to this, but I remember it consisted of Old Testament stories, orderly set down, with the *objection* appended to each story, and the *solution* of the objection regularly tacked to it. The *objection* was a summary of whatever difficulties had been opposed to the credibility of the history by the shrewdness of ancient or modern infidelity, drawn up with an almost complimentary excess of candour. The *solution* was brief, modest, and satisfactory. The bane and antidote were both before you. To doubts so put, and so quashed, there seemed to be an end for ever. The dragon lay dead, for the foot of the veriest babe to trample on. But—like as was rather feared than realised from that slain monster in Spenser—from the womb of those crushed errors young dragonets would creep, exceeding the prowess of so tender a Saint George as myself to vanquish. The habit of respecting objections to every passage set me upon starting more objections, for the glory of finding a solution of my own to them. I became staggered and perplexed, a sceptic in long-coats. The pretty Bible stories which I had read, or heard read in church, lost their purity and sincerity of impression, and were turned into so many historic or chronologic cases to be defended against whatever impugners. I was not to disbelieve them, but—the next thing to that—I was to be quite sure that some one or other would or had disbelieved them. Next to making a child an infidel is the losing him know that there are infidels at all. Credulity is the man's weakness, but the child's strength. O, how ugly sound scriptural doubts from the mouth of a babe and a suckling!—I should have lost myself in these mazes, and have pined away, I think, with such unfit sustenance as these husks afforded, but for a fortunate piece of ill-fortune which about this time befell me. Turning over the picture of the ark with too much heave, I unhappily made a breach in its ingenious fabric—driving my inconsiderate fingers right through the two larger quadrupeds, the elephant and the camel, that stare (as well they might) out of the two last windows next the steerage in that unique piece of naval architecture. Stackhouse was henceforth locked up, and became an interdicted treasure. With the book, the *objections* and *solutions* gradually cleared out of my head, and have seldom returned since in any force to trouble me. But there was an impression which I had imbibed from Stackhouse which no lock or bar could shut out, and which was destined to try my childish nerves rather more seriously—That detestable picture!

I was dreadfully alive to nervous terrors. The night-time, solitude, and the dark, were my hell. The sufferings I endured in this nature would justify the expression. I never laid my head on my pillow, I suppose, from the fourth to the seventh or eighth year of my life—so far as memory serves in things so long ago—without an assurance, which realised its own prophecy, of seeing some frightful spectre. Be old Stackhouse then acquitted in part, if I say, that to the picture of the Witch raising up Samuel—(O that old man covered with a mantle!)—I owe—not my midnight terrors, the hell of my infancy—but the shape and manner of their visitation. It was he who dressed up for me a hag that nightly sate upon my pillow—a sure bedfellow, when my mamma or my maid was far from me. All day long, while the book was permitted me, I dreamed waking over his delineation, and at night (if I may use so bold an expression) awoke into sleep, and found the vision true. I durst not, even in the daylight, once enter the chamber where I slept, without my face turned to the window, aversely from the bed where my wrish-ridden pillow was. Parents do not know what they do when they leave tender babes alone to go to sleep in the dark. The feeling about for a friendly arm—the hoping for a familiar voice—when they awake screaming—and find none to soothe them—what a terrible shaking it is to their poor nerves! The keeping them up till midnight, through candle-light and the unwholesome hours, as they are called, would, I am satisfied, in a medical point of view, prove the better caution.

That we should Lie Down with the Lamb

We could never quite understand the philosophy of this arrangement, or the wisdom of our ancestors in sending us for instruction to these woolly bedfellows. A sheep, when it is dark, has nothing to do but to shut his silly eyes and sleep if he can. Man found out long since—Lord, candle-light! without disparagement to sun or moon, the kindliest luminary of the three—if we may not rather style them their radiant deputy, mild viceroy of the moon!—We live to read, talk, eat, drink, sleep, by candle-light. They are everybody's sun and moon. This is our peculiar and household planet. Working it, what savage unsocial nights must our ancestors have spent, wintering in caves and unilluminated lastnesses! They must have lain about and grumbled at one another in the dark. What reparees could have passed, when you must have felt about for a smile, and handled a neighbour's cheek to be sure that he understood it? . . . Jokes came in with candles. We wonder how they saw to pick up a pin, if they had any. How did they sup? what a *mélange* of chance carving they must have made of it!—here one had got a leg of a goat when he wanted a bone's shoulder—there another had dipped his scooped palm in a kid-skin of wild honey, when he meditated right mare's milk. There is another good eating nut drinking in fresco. Who, even in these civilised times, has never experienced this, when at some economic table he has commenced dining after dusk, and waited for the flavour till the lights came? The sauces absolutely give and take reciprocally. Can you tell pork from veal in the dark? Take away the candle from the smoking man; by the glimmering of the left ashes, he knows that he is still smoking, but he knows it only by an inference; till the restored light, coming in aid of the olfactories, reveals to both senses the full aroma.

WILLIAM HAZLITT (1778–1830)

William Hazlitt, son of a Unitarian minister of Irish blood, was born at Maidstone in 1778, and nurtured in the keen atmosphere of progressive thought. Social and political problems preoccupied him as a youth, and he paid more attention to these matters than to theology, which annoyed his tutors at the Unitarian College. It was soon quite obvious that the ministry for which he had been intended exercised no compelling interest upon his energies, and he gave up the idea of becoming a minister. From Radical politics he plunged into philosophy and studied the philosophic thinkers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Hitherto the intellectual life had been fostered somewhat at the expense of the imaginative, but in 1796 Burke's *Letter to a Noble Lord* arrested his attention, and the rich eloquence fascinated him. The influence of Burke was reinforced by the yet greater influence of Coleridge in 1798, and Hazlitt's account of their first meeting is written in his happiest vein. Clearly it was a spiritual crisis in his life.

"I was at that time dumb, inarticulate," he wrote, "but now my ideas float on winged words." He had little thought of earning a livelihood by literature, however, at this time, despite his ambition to write an essay on the *Principles of Human Action*, and tried to earn a living as a portrait painter.

In 1807 he published some political essays, including a reply to Malthus, and in 1808 married Miss

Stoddart, and went to live at Winterslow in Wiltshire.

Meanwhile portrait painting had chiefly occupied him. In 1802 he had gone to Paris to study art, and despite the fact that financial straits and unusually cold weather made this sojourn a trying and exacting one, his tremendous enthusiasm, and youthful capacity for extracting joy out of life, made the stay a happy and agreeable one.

On his return he became an itinerant portrait painter, which suited his tastes, if it did not fill his pocket. He loved tramping over the roads, and he had plenty of self-confidence and sufficient ability to get work of a kind. He was more fortunate with his rich manufacturers than with his poets. Southey compared his picture of Coleridge with a "horse-dealer on his trial, evidently guilty, but clever enough to have a chance of getting off," while Wordsworth's portrait was stated by another critic to be like "a criminal on the gallows deeply affected by a fate he held to be deserved."

Hazlitt bore these criticisms with good humour, perhaps he did not take his art very seriously, and was only too delighted when after receiving a small commission he could dine on sausages and mashed potatoes, "a noble dish for strong stomachs."

Hazlitt certainly loved his work, and his *Essay on the Pleasures of Painting* lets us into his state of mind at this period.

"The first head I ever tried to paint was an old woman with the upper part of the face shaded by her bonnet, and I certainly laboured at it with great perseverance. It took me numberless sittings to do it. I have it by me still, and sometimes look at it with surprise, to think how much pains were thrown away to little purpose; yet not altogether in vain if it taught me to see good in everything, and to know that there is nothing vulgar in Nature seen with the eye of science or of true art. Refinement creates beauty everywhere; it is the grossness of the spectator that discovers nothing but grossness in the object. Be this as it may, I spared no pains to do my best. If art was long, I thought that life was so too at that moment."

His last portrait, and one of his best, was that of Charles Lamb, now to be seen in the National Portrait Gallery.

In 1805 he abandoned painting as a profession, and for the time gave his best energies to literature.

Previous to his marriage with Jane Stoddart, he had figured in various rural love affairs, in one of which he narrowly escaped ducking in the village pond. Amorous by nature and susceptible to feminine charms, he was continually falling in and out of love, and his marriage with Miss Stoddart was not such a love match as to absorb all of Hazlitt's emotional nature.

In 1812 Hazlitt came up from Wiltshire and settled in London, first of all in 19 York Street, Westminster, where Milton had lived for some years; he gave lectures on philosophy at the Russell Institution in Bloomsbury, and wrote for the *Morning Chronicle* and *Examiner*. He was Parliamentary reporter at first, and then became dramatic reporter. Both experiences enriched his position as a writer; the House of Commons with its flights of oratory and *ad captandum* appeals; the theatre, by stimulating his liking for dramatic literature. But he was less of a theatrical critic than a dramatic critic; he judged a play rather by its literary qualities than its stage effectiveness.

Meanwhile his married life was no smooth one. His wife was matter-of-fact and angular in character, and a poor housewife. Hazlitt found no congenial life at home, sought for it elsewhere, and found it in the friendship of Lamb. Lamb understood him better than most men, and discerned sterling qualities beneath his moodiness and capricious temper. Hazlitt's tastes were simple and inexpensive, and it was chiefly due to this rather than to any domestic economy on the part of Mrs. Hazlitt, that he got along so tolerably as he did, for his finances were never otherwise than modest.

He lectured in 1818 at the Surrey Institution on the *English Poets*, and these lectures met with better success than his previous ones. Talfourd's account of the lectures gives us an excellent idea of Hazlitt's method and reception.

"Mr. Hazlitt delivered three courses of lectures at the Surrey Institution, to the matter of which we have repeatedly alluded—on 'The English Poets,' on 'The English Comic Writers,' and on 'The Age of Elizabeth'—before audiences with whom he had but 'an imperfect sympathy.' They consisted chiefly of Dissenters, who agreed with him in his hatred of Lord Castlereagh, but who 'loved no plays'; of Quakers, who approved him as the opponent of Slavery and Capital Punishment, but who 'heard no music'; of citizens, devoted to the main chance, who had a hankering after 'the improvement of the mind,' but to whom his favourite doctrine of its natural disinterestedness was a riddle; of a few enemies, who came to sneer; and a few friends, who were eager to learn and to admire. The comparative insensibility of the bulk of his audience to his finest passages sometimes provoked him to awaken their attention by points which broke the train of his discourse, after which he could make himself amends by some abrupt paradox which might set their prejudices on edge, and 'make them fancy they were shocked. He startled many of them at the outset by observing that since Jacob's dream 'the heavens have gone further off and become astronomical,' a fine extravagance, which the ladies and gentlemen who had grown astronomical themselves under the preceding lecturer felt called on to resent as an attack on their severer studies. When he read a well-known extract from Cowper, comparing a poor cottager with Voltaire, and had pronounced the line 'a truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew,' they broke into a joyous shout of self-gratulation, and they were so much wiser than a wicked Frenchman. When he passed by Mrs. Hannah More with observing that 'she had written a great deal which he had never read,' a voice gave expression to the general commiseration and surprise by calling out 'More pity for you!' They were confounded at his reading, with more emphasis perhaps than discretion, Gay's epigrammatic lines on Sir Richard Blackmore, in which scriptural persons are freely hitched into rhyme; but he went doggedly on to the end, and, by his perseverance, baffled those who, if he acknowledged himself wrong by stopping, would have hissed him without mercy. He once had an edifying advantage over them. He was enumerating the humanities which embraced Dr. Johnson to his mind; and at the close of an agreeable catalogue mentioned, as last and noblest, his 'carrying the poor victim of disease and dissipation on his back through Fleet Street,' at which a titter arose from some, who were struck by the picture as ludicrous, and a murmur from others, who deemed the allusion unfit for mere polite. He paused for an instant, and then added in his sturdiest and most impressive manner, 'an act which realises the parable of the Good Samaritan,' at which his moral and delicate hearers shrank rebuked into deep silence. He was not eloquent in the true sense of the term; for his thoughts

were too weighty to be moved along by the shallow stream of feeling which an evening's excitement can arouse. He wrote all his lectures, and read them as they were written; but his deep voice and earnest manner suited his matter well. He seemed to dig into his subject—and not in vain. In delivering his longer quotations, he had scarcely continuity enough for his versification of Shakespeare and Milton, 'with linked sweetness long drawn out'; but he gave Pope's brilliant satire and divine compliments, which are usually complete within the couplet, with an elegance and point which the poet himself would have felt as their highest praise."

In 1819 his wife and he had separated, and in 1823 they were divorced. Between this period came the episode of the "cold and sullen" Miss Walker and Hazlitt's mad infatuation for her. This episode he afterwards turned to literary account in the *Liber Amoris*; a brilliant though morbid piece of work. Undeterred by his unhappy matrimonial experience and by his chronic ill success as a peripatetic lover, Hazlitt married in 1824 a widow lady whom he had met for the first time in a stage coach. With her Hazlitt travelled abroad, and seems to have enjoyed his travels more than he did his wife's companionship, judging by the negative part she plays in his literary record. In Florence, Hazlitt made the acquaintance of Landor, and the two men, who had no little in common, got on excellently well.

During the return journey the second Mrs. Hazlitt left her husband, and they never lived together again.

During the next few years some of his finest essay work was published. But about 1828 his health, that had been always indifferent, became worse, and his last few years were darkened by physical disabilities and money troubles. But he continued writing gamely up to the very end, despite all the miseries of gastric inflammation. His mind was clear and vigorous despite his enfeebled body, and when dying he remarked to his friend Procter, "Well, I've had a very happy life."

His Work

Hazlitt's intellectual awakening came on that eventful morning when he listened to the talk of Coleridge: "The light of his genius shone into my soul, like the sun's rays glittering in the puddles of the road." This was in 1798. His earlier literary labour had been chiefly philosophical; and formal at that. He had not, as yet, found individuality of style, nor the kind of work in which he could amply and characteristically express himself. The first taste of the real Hazlitt is not to be found in his political pamphleteering (*Free Thoughts on Public Affairs*, 1806), nor in his *Principles of Human Action*, nor his *Reply to Malthus*, but in the vivid portraits of Walpole and others that served to introduce "the eloquence of the British Senate"; while his work as a dramatic critic, even his experience in art, served as a valuable apprenticeship to the Hazlitt of the *Table Talk* and *The Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*.

Between 1813 and 1822 Hazlitt had passed through the experimental stage and reached to maturity. His Shakespearean criticism, rich in incisive vigour and freshness of imagination, his *English Poets* (1818) and *English Comic Writers* (1819), caustic in wit yet with the salt of true critical wisdom, his *Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth*, with its fine catholicity of taste—all these are memorable additions to English critical literature. Capricious at times (it would not otherwise be Hazlitt), they none the less exhibit an astonishing vitality of thought, a pungency of expression, unexcelled even among the great names of English criticism. With a large measure of Dryden's freshness and acumen he combines the romantic fervour of Coleridge.

As a critic of Elizabethan literature he is more reliable but less eclectic than Lamb. *The Round Table* (1817), and *Table Talk* (1821–22), exhibit more particularly his aphoristic power. He forgets his domestic troubles, his infirmities of health, and plunges with keen and warm delight into the sea of literature, relishing the buffeting of the billows, contending hilariously with the cross currents, pursuing, with the joy of the discursive mind, every vagrant eddy and tributary stream.

In 1823 came the *Liber Amoris*. Despite its psychological power, this record of his violently morbid attachment for Sarah Walker is unworthy of his great reputation. But great things were still before him. If in his book of maxims, *Characteristics*, he does but mark time, in his *Notes of a Journey through France and Italy* (1820) he gives us some of his best things on the Fine Arts; while *The Plain Speaker* (1826) shows him at his mellowest as a discursive essayist. Then came the *Spirit of the Age* (1825), where his scintillating humour reaches its highest point of ironical invective. As a piece of brilliant literary portraiture, the book is a masterpiece. After this he did nothing of the first order, for his *Life of Napoleon* is a dull and lifeless thing. But when he died at fifty-two he might well look back with a certain fierce complacency at what he had achieved. Whether as a discursive essayist, a critic of the arts, or a taster of books, he is supremely excellent.

Wordsworth claimed for imaginative vision an inner veracity, a power of penetrating to the root of things, but it was Coleridge who first appropriated this faculty of the imagination for critical purposes. Thus he made criticism, no less than poetry, a creative art. Hazlitt was his lineal successor in criticism, and if less penetrating in insight he yet transcended his master in lucidity and incisive vigour. Hazlitt's personality was a complex one. There are two strongly marked opposing tendencies in his nature that called for no ordinary power of co-ordination. On one side we have the austere, individualistic Puritan strain that came from his Presbyterian forefathers, on the other a sensuous, voluptuous strain that often ran athwart his Puritanism and occasioned him many a mental struggle. The general effect of these two elements in his nature was this: in matters of the intellect the Puritan was uppermost; in the realm of the emotions you felt the dominant presence of the opposing element.

In his finest essays one feels the presence at once of the Calvinist and the Epicurean, not as two incompatibles, but as opposing elements that have blent together into a noble unity, would-be

rivals that have co-ordinated so that from each the good has been extracted, and the less worthy sides eliminated. Thus the sweetness of the one and the strength of the other have combined to give more distinction and power to the utterance.

Take this passage from one of his lectures:

"The poet of nature is one who, from the elements of beauty, of power, and of passion in his own breast, sympathises with whatever is beautiful, and grand, and impassioned in nature, in its simple majesty, in its immediate appeal to the senses, to the thoughts and hearts of all men; so that the poet of nature, by the truth, and depth, and harmony of his mind, may be said to hold communion with the very soul of nature; to be identified with, and to foreknow, and to record, the feelings of all men, at all times and places, as they are liable to the same impressions; and to exert the same power over the minds of his readers that nature does. He sees things in their eternal beauty, for he sees them as they are; he feels them in their universal interest, for he feels them as they affect the first principles of his and our common nature. Such was Homer, such was Shakespeare, whose works will last as long as nature, because they are a copy of the indestructible forms and everlasting impulses of nature, welling out from the bosom as from a perennial spring, or stamped upon the senses by the hand of their Maker. The power of the imagination in them is the representative power of all nature. It has its centre in the human soul, and makes the circuit of the universe."

And this:

"The child is a poet, in fact, when he first plays at hide-and-seek, or repeats the story of Jack the Giant-killer; the shepherd boy is a poet when he first crowns his mistress with a garland of flowers; the countryman when he stops to look at the rainbow; the city apprentice when he goes after the Lord Mayor's show; the miser when he hugs his gold; the courtier who builds his hopes upon a smile; the savage who paints his idol with blood; the slave who worships a tyrant, or the tyrant who fancies himself a god; the vain, the ambitious, the proud, the choleric man, the hero and the coward, the beggar and the king, the rich and the poor, the young and the old, all live in a world of their own making; and the poet does no more than describe what all the others think and act."

"Poetry is not a branch of authorship; it is the stuff of which our life is made."

The artist is speaking in Hazlitt, but beneath the full, rich exuberance of the artist you can detect an undernote of austerity.

Then, again, his memorable utterance about the Dissenting minister from one of his essays on *Court Influence*:

"A Dissenting minister is a character not so easily to be dispensed with, and whose place cannot be well supplied. It is a pity that this character has worn itself out; that that pulse of thought and feeling has ceased almost to beat in the heart of the nation, who, if not remarkable for sincerity and plain downright well-meaning, are remarkable for nothing. But we have known some such, in happier days, who had been brought up and lived from youth to age in the one constant belief in God and of His Christ, and who thought 'all other things but dross compared with the glory to be hereafter revealed.' Their youthful hopes and vanity had been mortified in them even in their boyish days, by the neglect and supercilious regards of the world; and they turned to look into their own minds for something else to build their hopes and confidence upon. They were true priests. They set up an image in their own minds—it was truth; they worshipped an idol there—it was justice. They looked on man as their brother, and only bowed the knee to the Highest. Separate from the world, they walked humbly with their God, and lived in thought with those who had borne testimony of a good conscience, with the spirits of just men in all ages. . . . Their sympathy was not with the oppressors, but the oppressed. They cherished in their thoughts—and wished to transmit to their posterity—those rights and privileges for asserting which their ancestors had bled on scaffolds, or had pined in dungeons, or in foreign climes. Their creed, too, was 'Glory to God, peace on earth, goodwill to man.' This creed, since profaned and rendered vile, they kept fast through good report and evil report. This belief they had, that looks at something out of itself, fixed as the stars, deep as the firmament; that makes of its own heart an altar to truth, a place of worship for what is right, at which it does reverence with praise and prayer like a holy thing, apart and content; that feels that the greatest Being in the universe is always near it; and that all things work together for the good of His creatures, under His guiding hand. This covenant they kept, as the stars keep their courses; this principle they stuck by, for want of knowing better, as it sticks by them to the last. It grows with their growth, it does not wither in their decay. It lives when the almond tree flourishes, and is not bowed down with the tottering knees. It glimmers with the last feeble eyesight, smiles in the faded cheek like infancy, and lights a path before them to the grave!"

Here is a man of Puritan lineage speaking, but is it the voice of Puritanism only? Surely it is a Puritanism softened and refined, a Puritanism which is free of those harsh and unpleasing elements that have too often obscured its finer aspects. I know of no passage in his writings which for spacious eloquence, nobleness of thought, beauty of expression can rival this. It was written in 1818, when Hazlitt was forty years old, and in the plenitude of his powers.

But the power of co-ordination was not always exerted, perhaps not always possible. There are times when the Puritan element disappears; and it is Hazlitt the eager, curious taster of life that is presented to us. For there was the restless inquisitiveness of the literary vagabond about him. This gives such delightful piquancy to many of his utterances. He wanders far and wide, and is willing to go anywhere for a fresh sensation that may add to the flavour of his intellectual life. He has no patience with readers who will not quit their own small back gardens. He is for ranging "over the hills and far away."

No sympathy he with the readers who take timid constitutionals in literature, choosing only the well-worn paths. He is a true son of the road; the world is before him, and high roads and byways, rough paths and smooth paths, are equally acceptable, provided they add to his zest and enjoyment.

Not that he cares for the new merely because it is new. The essay *On Reading Old Books* is proof enough of that. A literary ramble must not merely be novel; it must have some element of beauty about it, or he will revisit the old haunts of whose beauty he has full cognizance.

Appreciative as he is of primal qualities, of sincerity and simplicity, he has not the patience of Wordsworth to disengage these things from the unattractive aspects of rural life. He cannot forgive dullness, and is far more alive to the failings of country people than to their solid merits.

"All country people hate one another," he says. "They have so little comfort that they envy their neighbours the smallest pleasure and advantage, and nearly

grudge themselves the necessaries of life. From not being accustomed to enjoyment, they become hardened and averse to it—stupid, for want of thought, selfish, for want of society."

No: it is the sheer joy of being in the open, and learning what Whitman called "the profound lesson of reception" that attracted Hazlitt. "What I like best," he declares, "is to lie whole mornings on a sunny bank on Salisbury Plain without any object before me, neither knowing nor caring how time passes, and thus with light-winged toys and feathered idleness, to melt down hours to moments." A genuine vagabond mood this.

Hazlitt, like De Quincey, had felt the glamour of the city as well as the glamour of the country, not with the irresistibility of Lamb, but for all that potently. Yet an instinct for the open, the craving for pleasant spaces, and the longing of the hard-driven journalist for the gracious leisure of the country, these things were paramount with both Hazlitt and De Quincey.

In Hazlitt's case there is a touch of wildness, a more primal delight in the roughness and solitude of country places than we find in De Quincey.

"One of the pleasantest things," says Hazlitt, in true vagabond spirit, "is going on a journey, but I like to go by myself."

He justifies his feeling thus with an engaging frankness:

"The soul of a journey is liberty, perfect liberty to think, feel. Do just as one pleases. We go a journey chiefly to be free of all impediments, and of all inconveniences; to leave ourselves behind; much more to get rid of others. . . . It is hard if I cannot start some game on these long heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy. From the point of yonder rolling cloud I plunge into my past being and revel there, as the sunburnt Indian plunges headlong into the wave that wafts him to his native shore. Then, long-forgotten things like 'sunken wreck and sunless treasures' burst upon my eager sight, and I begin to feel, think, and be myself again."

Moody as he was at times, sour-tempered and whimsical as he could be, yet there was a fine quality of joy about Hazlitt. It is this quality of joy that gives the sparkle and relish to his essays. He took the same joy in his books as in his walks, and he communicates this joy to the reader. He appears misanthropic at times, and rages violently at the world; but it is merely a passing gust of feeling, and when over, it is easy to see how superficial it was, so little is his general attitude affected by it.

Trying beyond doubt as was the wayward element in Hazlitt's disposition to his friends, it is not without its charm, as a literary characteristic. His bitterness against Coleridge in his later years leads him to dwell the longer upon the earlier meetings, upon the Coleridge of Wem and Nether Stowey, and thus his very prejudices leave his readers frequently as gainers.

A passing whim, a transient resentment, will be the occasion of some finely discursive essay on abstract virtues and vices. And, after all, there is at bottom such noble enthusiasm in the man, and where his subjects were not living people, and his judgment is not blinded by some small prejudices, how fair, how just, how large and admirable his view. His faults and failings were of such a character as to bring upon the owner their own retribution. He paid heavily for his mistakes. His splenetic moods and his violent dislikes arose not from a want of sensibility, but from an excess of sensibility. So I do not think they need seriously disturb us. After all, the dagger he uses as a critic is uncommonly like a stage weapon, and does no serious damage.

Better even than his brilliant, suggestive, if capricious criticisms, are his discursive essays on men and things. These abound in a tonic wisdom, a breadth of imagination as welcome as they are rare.

Although Hazlitt gave up the brush, he never gave up painting, and his brilliant audacities in prose have survived his experiments in pigment.

Shy and reserved as he was, no one could be more confidential with a pen in hand. Every essay is a fragment of autobiography and every sentence a confession. There is something of Rousseau's sentimental garrulousness about Hazlitt, and this increases the human interest of his writings. We may dissent from his conclusions, or take exception to certain moods, but he never bores us.

As examples of his powers of portraiture a passage or so from his papers on Wordsworth and Tom Moore will suffice. Here we shall find mingled honey and gall.

What could be better than the eulogium of Wordsworth:

"He gathers manna in the wilderness, he strikes the barren rock for the gushing moisture. He elevates the mean by the strength of his own aspirations; he clothes the naked with beauty and grandeur from the stores of his own recollections. No cypress grove loads his verse with funeral song, but his imagination lends a sense of joy

> 'To the bare trees and mountains bare,
> And grass in the green fields.'

No storm, no shipwreck startles us by its horrors, but the rainbow lifts its head in the clouds and the breeze sighs through the withered fern. No sad vicissitude of fate, no overwhelming catastrophe in Nature deforms his page; but the dewdrop glitters on the bending flower, the tear collects in the glistening eye. As the lark ascends from its low bed and salutes the morning skies, so Mr. Wordsworth's unpretending muse in russet guise scales the summit of reflection, while it makes the round earth its footstool and its home."

But the man who wrote these honeyed words could write also words of gall, as that genial but certainly second-rate poet, Tom Moore, found to his cost. It would be hard to deny the truth of the criticism, despite its almost brutal frankness.

"Mr. Moore has a little mistaken the art of poetry for the cosmetic art. He makes out an inventory of beauty, the smile on the lips, the dimple on the cheeks, item golden locks, item a pair of blue wings, and thinks it a character and story. This disjointed, fulsome, painted patchwork style may succeed in the levity and languor of the boudoir, but it is not the style of Parnassus nor a passport to immortality. We cannot except the Irish melodies from the same criticism. If these national airs do indeed express the soul of impassioned feeling in his countrymen, the case of Ireland is hopeless. There are no tones to waken liberty, to console humanity. Mr. Moore converts the wild harp of Erin into a musical snuff-box."

More interesting, however, than these clever por-

traits, are his *Miscellaneous Essays* and *Table Talk*, as they enable the writer better to display his wit, fancy, and originality of thought. How profoundly suggestive is his essay on *Cant and Hypocrisy*. The following fragment may convey some idea of the line of thought, but the essay must be read in its entirety to be fully appreciated.

"We often see that a person condemns in another the very thing he is guilty of himself. Is this hypocrisy? Not necessarily (is Hazlitt's reply). If he really feels none of the disgust and abhorrence he expresses, this is quackery and impudence. But if he really expresses what he feels then this is not hypocrisy, but want of strength in the moral sense. All morality consists in squaring one's actions and sentiments to one's ideas of what is fit and proper, and it is the incessant struggle and alternate triumph of the two principles that is one great source of all the good and evil in the world. The mind of man is like a clock that is always running down and requires to be as constantly wound up. The ideal principle is the master key that winds it up, and without which it will come to a stand. A man is only a thorough hypocrite when he has not even the wish to be what he appears. Anyone may yield to temptation and yet feel a sincere love and aspiration after virtue. The hypocrisy of priests has been a butt for ridicule in all ages, but I am not sure that there has not been more wit than philosophy in it. I cannot admit that though he may exaggerate or even make an ostentatious display of religion and virtue through habit and spiritual pride, that this is a proof he has not those sentiments in his heart, or that his whole behaviour is the mere acting of a part. One of the finest remarks that has been made in modern times is that of Lord Shaftesbury, that there is no such thing as a perfect Theist or an absolute Atheist, that whatever may be the general conviction entertained on the subject, the evidence is not, and cannot be at all times equally present to the mind; that, even if it were, we are not in the same humour to perceive it; a fit of gout, a shower of rain, shake our best established conclusions. The grossness of religion and its stickling for mere forms as its essence have given a handle, and a just one, to impugners. At the Feast of Ramadan, says Voltaire, the Musulmans wash and pray five times a day, and then fall to cutting one another's throats again with the greatest deliberation and goodwill. The two things, I grant, are sufficiently at variance, but they are, I contend, equally sincere in both. Thus, though I think there is very little downright hypocrisy in the world, I do think there is a good deal of cant. Though few people have the face to set up for the very thing they in their hearts despise, we almost all want to be thought better than we are, and affect a greater admiration or abhorrence of certain things than we really feel. Cant is the voluntary overcharging or prolongation of a real sentiment, hypocrisy is the setting up a pretension to a feeling you never had and have no wish for. There are people who are made up of cant, but who have not sincerity enough to be hypocrites, that is, have not hearty dislike or contempt enough of anything to give the lie to their puling profession of admiration and esteem for it."

Again: what could be truer in substance and more striking in treatment than this, from another essay *On Vulgarity and Affectation*?

"A thing is not vulgar merely because it is common. . . . Nothing is vulgar that is natural, spontaneous, unavoidable. Grossness is not vulgarity; ignorance is not vulgarity; awkwardness is not vulgarity; but all these become vulgar when they are affected and shown off on the authority of others, or to fall in with the fashion or the company we keep. Caliban is coarse enough, but surely he is not vulgar. We might as well spurn the clod under our feet and call it vulgar. Cobbett is coarse enough, but he is not vulgar. . . . Nothing original, nothing real can be vulgar. The upper are not wiser than the lower orders, because they resolve to differ from them. The fashionable have the advantage of the unfashionable in nothing but the fashion. The truly vulgar are the herd of pretenders to what they do not feel, and to what is not natural to them, whether in high or low life."

His habit of introducing personal matter into his essays gives frequently a pleasant intimate flavour to his writing, and your interest in the written matter is none the less because of the interesting glimpses afforded of the writer's personality.

He will tell you with gleeful particularity of detail the exact circumstances in which he first made the acquaintance of certain books. He will recall how he sat up half the night to read *Paul and Virginia*, which he picked up at an inn at Bridgewater, after being drenched in the rain all day; he mentions how he sat down to read Rousseau at the inn at Llangollen, over a bottle of sherry and cold chicken. In a beautiful passage he describes the time when he walked between Wrexham and Llangollen, his imagination aglow with some lines of Coleridge, and says that ever after the beauty of the hill-girt valley was inseparably connected in his mind with the glamour of Coleridge's verse and his own tumultuous, revolutionary sympathies. This walk in North Wales seems to have been to him what that Cumbrian walk was to Wordsworth —a time of rapture and consecration.

In his essay *On the Conversation of Authors*, he takes a look out of a window first, tells us what he sees, and uses his comments as tags to moralise on, or as fresh illustrations for some theory he is elaborating. In another essay the sight of a spider crawling along the floor furnishes the preamble. In another a thunderstorm suggests an analogy with his own explosive moods. At another time he tells you he is looking forward to pastry for dinner. At another time he changes from one place to another whilst writing an essay. The new environment suggests a flow of fresh ideas, ideas that frankly bear little relation to the matter preceding. So we get a big digression, fascinating but discursive to a degree.

With all his love of philosophy and serious thought he hated the man who never relaxes. There is no starch in Hazlitt's writings. Says he:

"I hate to be always wise or aiming at wisdom. I do not desire to be always posing myself and others with the questions of fate, free-will, fore-knowledge absolute, &c. I must occasionally lie fallow. Give a man a tongue in his head, a throb of pleasure in his heart, and he will be glad to share it with the first person he meets."

There was something of Mrs. Gummidge about him. His friends were many, but he liked to feel he was unbefriended. It gave a relish to his solitary moods. Yet he was good and modest at heart, and when on one occasion the urbane Leigh Hunt gave him a piece of his own mind quite in the Hazlitt vein, all he said was: "By Gad, there's a great deal in what you say!"

With all his infirmities of temperament, Hazlitt had a singularly open mind. The reader is never worried by those notice boards, dear to the hearts of some critics, warning off writers of a certain type, and obliging all wayfarers to comply with some æsthetic formula before they can be welcomed.

Hazlitt does not mind who you are, so long as you have something to express and know how to express it. He will delight equally in the vigorous, racy vernacular of Cobbett, and the splendid rhetoric of Burke; can appraise with fine discrimination the wit of Congreve, without losing any appreciation for the subtler aroma of Cervantes' humour. Admiration for Titian does not prevent him doing the amplest justice to the *genre* work of Hogarth; and he can appreciate the genius of Wordsworth without being blind to the merits of Pope. Naturally his waywardness of disposition shows itself in some of his estimates; he is not always a sure guide in matters of purely *literary* taste, as in his treatment of some of the Jacobean dramatists, and personal prejudices confound his judgment on occasion in dealing with his contemporaries. But, on the whole, there is no finer critic of all that pertains to "life and manners." He may miss the merits of a *writer*; never those of a *man*; and the inspiring enthusiasm with which he speaks, gives an incomparable gusto to his writings that is their endearing charm.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772–1834)

His Prose

Coleridge has no substantial and connected body of prose to his credit as have Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey. His prose is a collection of brilliantly discursive fragments; and this, less on account of many-sided intellectual interests—though that was a factor—as because of the author's lack of concentrativeness, and his constitutional tendency to fly off at a tangent. Yet allowing for this fragmentary character of his prose, it must be admitted the fragments were extremely valuable. For his critical faculty was second to none, and in purely literary subjects he is easily first in an age of great critics. In addition to a fine literary palate, he had a natural bent for metaphysics, that was fed and nourished by his German studies, and thus there was a vigorous intellectual groundwork for his literary preferences. His æsthetic judgments were regulated and clarified by his philosophical speculations; and he was the first to *show*, though Wordsworth realised it as well as he, that criticism in the highest sense is a creative feat of the imagination. The difference between this view and that of the elder school of critics need scarcely be pressed. It is obviously fundamental; for to Coleridge, and those who followed him, criticism connotes interpretation; it is less a vehicle for finding faults than for discovering beauties.

There is much sound sense in many of the *obiter dicta* of the eighteenth-century critics, but it is accidental, and necessarily lacks illuminating power when we remember that men like Pope and Johnson made no attempt to understand the point of view of the writers criticised, or the standards of their time, but merely assized them by eighteenth-century ideals. Thus we have Dr. Johnson sententiously disposing of *Lycidas* as "easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting," and Pope taking Shakespeare to task for his "wrong choice of subjects."

Germany had led the way in this revolution of criticism, in the person of Lessing. Lessing was one of the early big influences in Coleridge's intellectual life; and the rediscovery of Shakespeare by Coleridge is the outcome.

In dealing with the general aspects of German romanticism, it was pointed out how that from the first it had a definite metaphysic of its own. This metaphysic prompts Lessing, and was further elaborated by Kant, Schiller, and Schelling, and these men in turn further influenced Coleridge.

In the view of these men, genius is organic, not mechanical as mere talent is; genius arrives therefore by instinct at that harmonious blend of things which we call Art. Genius, like Nature, is self-organising; and Art is the self-expression of the creative power of Nature.

Various subsidiary doctrines attach themselves to this central conception; such as the distinction between Imagination and Fancy, formulated by Richter and developed by Coleridge; while Schlegel, the great Shakespearean critic, held as the basic formula of romantic art—the blending of opposites, the union, for instance, of Passion and Humour.

While admitting that in both the great German critics and in Coleridge there is a tendency to over-elaborate exegesis, yet the main result is finely illuminating.

The imaginative greatness of Shakespeare was realised as it had never been realised before. The conditions under which he wrote, how far he was of his age, how far of the ages, the transcendent power of his characterisation; all these matters were brought before the attention and impressed on the imagination of the ordinary reader. In much the same way he deals with the poetry of Wordsworth, reveals its defects and exhibits its strength. Criticism, therefore, in the hands of Coleridge, ceases to be a merely arbitrary bundle of whims and prejudices, and in such papers as *An Essay on Taste*, on *Beauty*, and on *Poesy or Art*, the nature of artistic pleasure is analysed with clarity and subtlety.

Poetry is not the unaccountable fever in the blood, held by so many, but has a logic of its own no less than philosophy, which it is the critic's business to unfold.

In political thought he parted early with the creed of revolutionary radicalism, and became a philosophic Tory. From this standpoint he wrote vigorously and acutely. With Burke he emphasized expediency as the touchstone of legislation, distrusting "universal principles." The State for him was an organic body, with a definite life of its own, that must be materialised through its institutions. He would have endorsed Comte's aphorism that "Progress is the development of order"; and his attempt to reconcile Progress and Permanence delighted John Stuart Mill. In fact, Coleridge anticipated the evolutionary idea of Progress that came into vogue with the writings of Spencer and Darwin: and replaced the utilitarianism of Bentham with its mechanical totting up of Pleasure and Pain in estimating the value of any particular measure. But his suggestions are more valuable as seminal ideas, than for any actual practicality; and we can appreciate the fascination

with which the youthful minds of his age caught hold of the reconciliation "in a higher unity" of the contending forces of Progress and Order.

The most profound influence exerted by Coleridge upon his generation and the generation that succeeded, lay in the domain of religious thought. In his *Aids to Reflection*, Coleridge attempts to harmonise the reason with spiritual experience. He adopts and elaborates here the Kantian distinction between the reason and the understanding. The reason was defined as the inward vision, the spiritual intuition to be found in every man; whereas the understanding being merely sensuous, varied with the individual. Thus he parts absolutely with the prudential utilitarianism of the eighteenth-century divines. On the other hand, his religious philosophy is not pure mysticism. Religion to him, as to Erskine and Thomas Arnold, was a life, not a creed; and touching life it must be a rational, not an irrational thing. He rejects literal inspiration, and is averse from pietistic extravagances. In short, the religious philosophy outlined in this little book proved a fount of refreshment to the impoverished Anglicans of the time: that practical mystic Frederic Denison Maurice avowed his indebtedness to Coleridge; Thomas Arnold, a churchman of another type, sang his praises; while Cardinal Wiseman expressed his admiration for the spiritual philosophy he propounded.

He touched, therefore, both the High and Broad Church movements; the Broad by his attempt to reconcile faith and reason; the High, by his conception of the National Church—*On the Constitution of Church and State*—and by the way he blended historical feeling and spiritual experience.

Even apart from his specific contribution to religious, political, or literary thought, Coleridge is full of good things, sharp, pungent sayings, illuminating apothegms.

As for instance, these stray examples from his *Table Talk*:

"A man of maxims only, is like a Cyclops with one eye, and that eye placed in the back of his head."

"A poem is that species of composition which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its immediate object pleasure not truth. . . . Good sense is the body of poetic genius, fancy its drapery, motion its life, and imagination the soul that is everywhere and forms all into one graceful and intelligent whole."

"In the treatment of nervous cases, he is the best physician who is the most ingenious inspirer of hope."

"Really the metre of some of the modern poems I have read bears about the same relation to metre properly understood, that dumb-bells do to music, both are for exercise and pretty severe too, I think."

Insufficient justice is often done to his fine sense of humour. One can imagine that it was one of the traits that endeared him most to Lamb.

When in the early days of his political enthusiasm he meditated bringing out a weekly journal called *The Watchman*, which was intended to register the political atmosphere of the time, he relates how, whilst canvassing for subscribers, he endeavoured to persuade a tallow chandler at Birmingham what a magnificent production his paper would be. He argued, he prophesied, and beginning with the captivity of nations he ended with the near approach of the Millennium. The man of tallow listened with noble patience and then said, after a pause:

"And what, sir, might the cost be?"

"Only fourpence."

Another pause.

"That comes to a deal of money at the end of the year. How much did you say there would be for the money? Thirty-two pages? Bless me, why, except what I does in the family way on the Sabbath, that's more than I ever read, sir, all the year round. I am as great a man as any one for liberty and truth, and all them sort of things, but asto this, no offence, I hope, sir, I must beg to be excused."

Coleridge would relate this story with great relish.

While there can be no question as to the immense influence of Coleridge upon English thought, the extent of his originality as a thinker is debatable. That he learned much and borrowed much from Shakespearean critics like Schlegel, and philosophers such as Schelling and Kant, is admitted on all sides. But his plagiarisms are really less formidable than at first sight they appeared. His easy-going method of lifting whole passages from these writers without the faintest acknowledgment, has led some to look upon him as merely a purveyor of other men's thoughts. But if he stole from other men, he certainly paid handsome tribute for his thefts.

The greatness of Wordsworth lay in his work, not his personality. Coleridge, like Dante Gabriel Rossetti, seems to have been more remarkable as a personality than as a writer. His personal magnetism seems to have been extraordinary; and even Wordsworth, always chary in praise even of friends, has said that though "he had seen many men do wonderful things, Coleridge was the only wonderful man he had ever met." This power of personality in itself is allied to genius, for it implies a unique quality of imagination, and enables its fortunate possessor to influence other minds in an extraordinary manner. It is true that it perishes with the man; but the fertilising power goes on through other men, and so it is that his very limitations as a thinker, his immense discursiveness, his fragmentary brilliance, prove an advantage rather than a drawback. For the subtle suggestiveness of his versatile and wide-ranging mind stimulated others in a variety of directions that would have been impossible had he concentrated more and elaborated with fuller completeness. Like Bacon before him, he pointed the way he was constitutionally unable to travel; he opened up lines of thought he had neither the patience nor constructive power to pursue. But no man did more to give a philosophical background to creative art, and an æsthetic value to intellectual processes, such as made of literature a fresher and more vital power.

On Poesy or Art

In every work of art there is a reconcilement of the external with the internal; the conscious is so impressed on the unconscious as to appear in it; as compare mere letters inscribed on a tomb with figures themselves constituting the tomb. He who combines the two is the man of genius; and for that reason he must partake of both. Hence there is in genius itself an unconscious

activity; nay, that is the genius in the man of genius. And this is the true exposition of the rule that the artist must first cloign himself from nature in order to return to her with full effect. Why this? Because if he were to begin by mere painful copying, he would produce masks only, not forms breathing life. He must out of his own mind create forms according to the severe laws of the intellect, in order to generate in himself that co-ordination of freedom and law, that involution of obedience in the prescript, and of the prescript in the impulse to obey, which assimilates him to nature, and enables him to understand her. He merely absents himself for a season from her, that his own spirit, which has the same ground with nature, may learn her unspoken language in its main radicals, before he approaches to her endless compositions of them. Yes, not to acquire cold notions—lifeless technical rules—but living and life-producing ideas, which shall contain their own evidence, the certainty that they are essentially one with the germinal causes in nature—his consciousness being the focus and mirror of both—for this does the artist for a time abandon the external real in order to return to it with a complete sympathy with its internal and actual. For of all we see, hear, feel, and touch, the substance is and must be in ourselves; and therefore there is no alternative in reason between the dreary (and thank heaven! almost impossible) belief that everything around us is but a phantom, or that the life which is in us is in them likewise; and that to know is to resemble, when we speak of objects out of ourselves, even as within ourselves to learn is, according to Plato, only to recollect; the only effective answer to which, that I have been fortunate enough to meet with, is that which Pope has consecrated for future use in the line—

"And coxcombs vanquish Berkeley with a grin!"

The artist must imitate that which is within the thing, that which is active through form and figure, and discourses to us by symbols—the *Natur-geist*, or spirit of nature, as we unconsciously imitate those whom we love; for so only can he hope to produce any work truly natural in the object and truly human in the effect. The idea which puts the form together cannot itself be the form. It is above form, and is its essence, the universal in the individual, or the individuality itself—the glance and the exponent of the indwelling power.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY (1785–1859)

His Life

Thomas De Quincey was born at Greenhay, Manchester, in August 1785; his father was a well-to-do merchant, and Thomas was the fifth of a family of eight—a shy, sensitive lad greatly under the influence of an elder brother—and from earliest days lived half his time in a dream world of his own.

Quick and responsive intellectually, he took a delight in his school work; first at the Bath Grammar School, where he excelled in Greek. "At thirteen I wrote Greek with ease," he says, "and at fifteen . . . could converse in Greek fluently, and without embarrassment." One of his tutors, "a ripe and good one," once remarked to a friend that the boy "could harangue an Athenian mob better than you or I could address an English one."

An illness necessitated his removal from Bath, after which for about a year he was at Dr. Spencer's school at Winkfield, Wiltshire; here, the pupil was found to be in advance of his master in classical knowledge, and the boy conceived a dislike for private schools in consequence. "I had no one to praise me, to spur me on, or to help me." A still later educational experiment at Manchester Grammar School was also an unhappy one. He had been sent there in 1800, with a view to getting a school exhibition that might help his expenses at Oxford; but the youth was anxious to proceed earlier to the University than his guardians had intended, and showed his displeasure by running away from the school to his mother's house at Chester. He was then given a weekly allowance of one guinea and began his wanderings among the hillsides of Wales, sleeping in rural inns when the money held out, but more often under a hedge or in a field, making friends with the labourers and writing love-letters for the girls.

De Quincey soon grew weary of this nomadic life, and the restricted library at his disposal; so ran away once more, this time to London; but he was soon to realise the loneliness of a great city, his slender means failed him, and he was reduced to the direst poverty.

At this juncture he made some strange acquaintances. A Jewish money-lender's agent, a disreputable attorney who kept a lodging-house in Greek Street, Soho, gave him a shelter; while here for a time his companion was a poor, forlorn, half-starved child of ten years old with whom he shared a "bundle of law papers for a pillow and a tattered horseman's cloak for a covering," where in the empty rooms the noise of the rats "made a prodigious echoing." "I loved this child," he says, "because she was my partner in wretchedness." The kind-hearted Ann, who spent her last sixpence in order to restore him when he had fainted on a doorstep from exhaustion, and his unavailing efforts to trace and reward her later, is well known to all his readers.

Inexperienced and unpractical, it had never occurred to him to utilise his classical knowledge in order to gain a livelihood, and seek relief from home he would not, for fear he should be forced to return to school. After a fruitless endeavour to see the young Lord Westport, with whom he had spent some time in Ireland, an unexpected reconciliation took place with his guardians, and he was sent to Worcester College, Oxford, in 1803.

In 1804, in order to fight the neuralgic pains from which he suffered, he had recourse to opium that not only lulled the pain, but unfortunately became a "minister of celestial happiness," and for a few coppers he found "portable ecstasies might be had corked up in a pint bottle, but," he added, "the reader will think I am laughing; and I can assure him, that no one will laugh long who deals much in opium."

At the examination for his degree, Dr. Goodenough, one of the examiners, declared him to be "the cleverest man I ever met with"; and, "if his *viva voce* examination to-morrow corresponds with what he has done to-day, he will carry everything before him." For some reason De Quincey failed to appear the following day, and disappeared from Oxford forthwith.

An enthusiastic admirer of Coleridge and *The Ancient Mariner*, De Quincey, while on a visit to Bristol in 1807, made the acquaintance of the poet. The two soon became close friends, and later, when Coleridge went to London to lecture, De Quincey

offered himself as escort to Mrs. Coleridge and her three children on their journey North; the pleasure was doubly enhanced by the long-looked-for meeting with Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy. Shortly after his sudden disappearance from Oxford in 1808, he made his way to that little band of "Lakists," where he enjoyed the hospitality of the Wordsworths till February 1809, making several visits to London in order to keep terms with a view to being called to the Bar, seeing much of Lamb, whose acquaintance he had made in 1804. In the facetious conversation of Charles Lamb he took no interest at first, in fact he was greatly irritated by it, and it was some years before a real and close friendship existed between the two men.

In 1809 De Quincey acquired the lease of Dove Cottage, just vacated by the Wordsworths. The poet's sister, Dorothy, had undertaken to set the cottage in order, and showed the keenest interest in the choice of suitable furniture and drapings; for instance, knowing the tenant's restlessness, mahogany was chosen for the bookshelves as "should he leave the country, and have a sale, no sort of wood sells so well at second-hand." Here, says De Quincey, in this "cottage immortal in my remembrance," the scene of many happy friendships, also bitter struggles and much despondency, we find him a migratory inmate for twenty-seven years, many days of which were "set . . . and insulated in the gloom and cloudy melancholy of opium."

In 1818 De Quincey married Margaret Simpson, the young daughter of a Westmorland farmer. Delicate in health, she had a wonderful fascination of manner, and it was said by a much-travelled friend of the family, that "he had never seen a more gracious or a more beautiful lady" than Mrs. De Quincey.

A decreasing patrimony and an increasing family made De Quincey look about him for ways and means to augment his income; brave efforts were also made to restrict his use of the opium that were partially successful. In 1819 he became editor of the *Westmorland Gazette*, and began writing for most of the important magazines and reviews. *The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* were published in the *London Magazine* in 1821, and from this year until 1849, when *The English Mail Coach* and *The Vision of Sudden Death* appeared, was the most important period of his literary career.

In 1830 De Quincey removed with his wife and family to Edinburgh, constantly changing his place of abode there; in 1837 his wife died, and his children then found a permanent home at Lasswade, near Edinburgh, he living a solitary life in out-of-the-way lodgings, till his death in 1859.

Small, and insignificant in appearance, De Quincey's manner was peculiarly fascinating; his voice, said Harriet Martineau, "so clear, so soft, so sweet." He had a great love for children and music, loving the "silvery tinkle of sheep bells" no less than the beautiful strains of his favourite Beethoven. If solitary and simple in his habits he was not unsocial; visitors from all parts who came to see him were always made welcome, and wherever he went, people of all classes were happy in his society. His liberality was unbounded, even to the impoverishment of himself; loans made in large sums being sometimes repaid but more often ignored. A good man, a true gentleman, a cultivated scholar, and one of the most remarkable figures among our literary personalities, with but one real enemy—the Opium.

His Work

De Quincey, like Wordsworth, was a voluminous writer, from whose *litera scripta* the fine ore of literature must be sifted with care. But whereas Wordsworth was voluminous from lack of self-criticism, De Quincey is voluminous because much that he wrote was written as journalism is written, under financial pressure. He was a writer of great versatility, capable of turning out an article on almost any subject; and the wonder is not that he turned out matter that was often quite ephemeral in character, but that despite this habit he wrote so much that is of permanent value.

His literary life started in 1821, with the first version of *The Confessions of an Opium-Eater*; in this work he utilises his early experiences and exhibits his fantastic imagination. In the *Dialogue of Three Templars*, he displays that passion for logical analysis which is as distinctive of his genius as his fantasy. This is the fruit of his study of Ricardo. Further, in the twenties he makes his first essay into German literature, and this gives him his earliest incursion into narrative writing.

These three notes, meditative, analytical, descriptive, are inseparable from his work; and in the development of his power, sometimes one is prominent, sometimes another; but no one is entirely dropped. The fantastic note is enriched and mellowed in the longer *Opium-Eater* and *Reminiscences*—and in such essays as *On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth* (1823); the analytical faculty marks his critical work, *e.g.* Style, Rhetoric; while the descriptive and visualising power of De Quincey does not reach its maturity save in the *Suspiria de Profundis* and other sketches of "impassioned prose." Sometimes, as in articles like *The Revolt of the Tartars*, fancy, logic, and actuality are admirably blended; while in his purely critical work, logic and fancy give a piquant flavour to the dish. He is a brilliant but austere critic, with little of Hazlitt's catholicity of taste; and is really more trustworthy in detecting bad logic than for appreciating good literature. Given the fantastic vein he can be fair enough, as in his estimate of Richter; but with genius of another type to his own, Goethe for example, he is flagrantly unjust.

From early days, when as a boy he slept on the bare hillside in Wales, cheerfully trusting to some chance kindness for food and drink, throughout his London struggles and his peregrinations in "stony-hearted Oxford Street," down to the days of his brilliant reputation in Edinburgh, he was the same fantastic dreamer, restless spirit, grotesque child. Yes, he was a vagabond child. He never grew up, he never gained experience, and was even less familiar with the ways of the world than Leigh Hunt. Fleeced of his money when he was a struggling journalist in London, and the easiest dupe possible for the unscrupulous, he never became

cynical or lost faith in human nature. He was as generous and tender-hearted as Lamb. Fame and affluence came, but the vagabond child never changed. His friends at Edinburgh rarely knew where to find him, and when they chanced on him he was as meanly dressed as if he had scarcely a penny in the world. Were he wanted for a dinner-party—and there was a fine wisdom in his conversation—it was the hardest thing in the world to persuade him to come; if he did come he presented the strangest appearance in his tattered attire. But that was a slight set-off to his companionship. Like Coleridge, however, when he had a fancy for his company he would stay on in the most unexpected way, at times sublimely oblivious to any inconvenience he might be occasioning—a stay of some weeks it might be—so that the difficulty of persuading him to come shrank into insignificance beside the task of suggesting to him to go. A story is told in the *Life of Christopher North* how that he dined with the Professor one night, was detained for the night by a heavy storm of rain, and prolonged his impromptu visit for a year.

Of the merit of his own work he had a just appreciation, but of its financial value not the slightest, and he made a strange figure seeking out editors and publishers when he was sixty, with a big reputation, as if he were the veriest tyro hawking articles—but he liked it. One feels sure he liked the shiftless, nomadic life. To have regarded his fame as a sound business asset would have annoyed him extremely. He loved uncertainties and peradventures; so he made even the actualities of his life seem unreal and illusory. At one time, it has been said, he went into hiding to avoid arrest for debt, when all the time large sums of money were due to him and his debts were quite insignificant.

The first important event in De Quincey's life was the roaming life on the hillside of North Wales; the second, the wanderings in "stony-hearted Oxford Street." Later on the spell of London faded away, and a longing for the country possessed him once more. But the spell of London was important in shaping his literary life, and must not be under-estimated. Lamb also felt the spell, but it was of another kind. But these men were not attracted in the same way. What drew De Quincey to London was its mystery; whereas it was the stir and colour of the crowded streets that stirred the imagination of "Elia." We scarcely realise, as we read of those harsh experiences, those bitter struggles with poverty and loneliness, that the man is writing of his life in London, is speaking of some well-known thoroughfare. It is like viewing a familiar scene in the moonlight, when all looks strange and weird. A faint but palpable veil of phantasy seemed to shut off De Quincey from the outside world. In his most poignant passages the voice has a ghostly ring; in his most realistic descriptions there is a dreamlike unreality. A tender and sensitive soul in his dealings with others, there are no tears in his writings. One has only to compare the early recorded struggles of Dickens with those of De Quincey to feel the difference between the two temperaments. The one passionately concrete, the other dispassionately abstract. De Quincey will take some heartfelt episode and deck it out in so elaborate a panoply of rhetoric that the human element seems to have vanished. Beautiful as are many of the passages describing the pathetic outcast Ann, the reader is too conscious of the stylist and the full-dress stylist.

That he feels what he is writing about, one does not doubt; but he does not suit his manner to his matter. For expressing subtle emotions, half shades of thought, no writer is more wonderfully adept than De Quincey, but when the episode demands simple and direct treatment, his elaborate cadences feel out of place.

When he pauses in his description to apostrophise, then the disparity affects one far less; as, for instance, in this apostrophe to "noble-minded" Ann after recalling how on one occasion she had saved his life:

"O youthful benefactress! how often in succeeding years, standing in solitary places, and thinking of thee with grief of heart and perfect love—how often have I wished that, as in ancient times the curse of a father was believed to have a supernatural power, and to pursue its object with a fatal necessity of self-fulfilment, even so the benediction of a heart oppressed with gratitude might have a like prerogative, might have power given it from above to chase, to haunt, to waylay, to pursue thee into the central darkness of a London brothel, or (if it were possible) even into the darkness of the grave, there to awaken thee with an authentic message of peace and forgiveness, and of final reconciliation!"

Perhaps the passage describing how he befriended the small servant girl in the half-deserted house in Greek Street is among the happiest, despite a note of artificiality towards the close:

"Towards nightfall I went down to Greek Street, and found, on taking possession of my new quarters, that the house already contained one single inmate—a poor, friendless child, apparently ten years old; but she seemed hunger-bitten; and sufferings of that sort often make children look older than they are. From this forlorn child I learned that she had slept and lived there alone for some time before I came: and great joy the poor creature expressed when she found that I was in future to be her companion through the hours of darkness. The house could hardly be called large—that is, it was not large on each separate storey; but, having four storeys in all, it was large enough to impress vividly the sense of its echoing loneliness; and, from the want of furniture, the noise of the rats made a prodigious uproar on the staircase and hall; so that, amidst the real fleshly ills of cold and hunger, the forsaken child had found leisure to suffer still more from the self-created ones of ghosts. Against these enemies I could promise her protection; human companionship was in itself protection; but of other and more needful aid I had, alas! little to offer. We lay upon the floor, with a bundle of law papers for a pillow, but with no other covering than a large horseman's cloak; afterwards, however, we discovered in a garret an old sofa-cover, a small piece of rug, and some fragments of other articles, which added a little to our comfort. The poor child crept close to me for warmth, and for security against her ghostly enemies. . . . Apart from her situation, she was not what would be called an interesting child. She was neither pretty, nor quick in understanding, nor remarkably pleasing in manners. But, thank God! even in those years I needed not the embellishments of elegant accessories to conciliate my affections. Plain human nature, in its humblest and most homely apparel, was enough for me; and I loved the child because she was my partner in wretchedness."

In the delineation of certain moods De Quincey is supremely excellent; but the style is not a plastic

style; and its appeal to the ear rather than to the pictorial faculty limits its emotional effect upon the reader. Images pass before his eyes, and he tries to depict them by cunningly devised phrases; but the veil of phantasy through which he sees those images has blurred their outline and dimmed their colouring. The phrase arrests by its musical cadences, by its solemn, mournful music. Even some of his most admirable pieces—the dream fugues—leave the reader dissatisfied when they touch poignant realities like sorrow. Despite its many beauties, that dream fugue, *Our Ladies of Sorrow*, seems too misty, too ethereal in texture for the intense actuality of the subject.

Here is a passage from *Levana and Our Ladies of Sorrow*:

"The eldest of the three is named Mater Lachrymarum, Our Lady of Tears. She it is that night and day raves and moans, calling for vanished faces. She stood in Rama, where a voice was heard of lamentation—Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted. She it was that stood in Bethlehem on the night when Herod's sword swept its nurseries of Innocents, and the little feet were stiffened for ever which were heard at times as they trotted along floors overhead, woke pulses of love in household hearts that were not unmarked in heaven. Her eyes are sweet and subtle; wild and sleepy by turns; oftentimes rising to the clouds, oftentimes challenging the heavens. She wears a diadem round her head. And I knew by childish memories that she could go abroad upon the winds, when she heard the sobbing of litanies or the thundering of organs, and when she beheld the mustering of summer clouds."

Of suffering and privation, of pain and anguish—bodily and mental—he had experiences more than the common lot. But when he tries to show this bleeding reality to us a mist invariably arises, and we see things as in a glass darkly.

There is a certain passage in his Autobiography which affords a key to this characteristic of his work.

When quite a boy he had constituted himself imaginary king of an imaginary kingdom of Gombroon. Speaking of this fancy he writes:

"O reader! do not laugh! I lived for ever under the terror of two separate wars and two separate worlds; one against the factory boys in a real world of flesh and blood, of stones and brickbats, of flight and pursuit, that were anything but figurative; the other in a world purely astral, where all the combats and the sufferings were absolute moonshine. And yet the simple truth is that for anxiety and distress of mind the reality (which almost every morning's light brought round) was as nothing in comparison of that Dream Kingdom which rose like a vapour from my own brain, and which apparently by the fiat of my will could be for ever dissolved. Ah, but no! I had contracted obligations to Gombroon; I had submitted my conscience to a yoke; and in secret truth my will had no autocratic power. Long contemplation of a shadow, earnest study for the welfare of that shadow, sympathy with the wounded sensibilities of that shadow under unnumbered wrongs; these bitter experiences, nursed by brooding thought, had gradually frozen that shadow into a region of reality far denser than the material realities of brass or granite."

This confession is a remarkable testimony to the reality of De Quincey's imaginative life. "I had contracted obligations to Gombroon." Yes, despite his practical experiences with the world, it was Gombroon, "the moonlight" side of things, that appealed to him. The boys might fling stones and brickbats, just as the world did later—but though he felt the onslaught, it moved him far less than did the phantasies of his imagination.

"The Dream Kingdom that rose like a vapour" from his brain, this it was—this Vagabond imagination of his—that was the one great reality in life. It is a mistake to assume, as some have done, that this faculty for day-dreaming was a legacy of the opium-eating. The opium gave an added brilliance to the dream-life, but it did not create it. He was a dreamer from his birth—a far more thoroughgoing dreamer than was ever Coleridge. There was a strain of insanity about him undoubtedly, and it says much for his intellectual activity and moral power that the Dream Kingdom did not disturb his mental life more than it did. Had he never touched opium to relieve his gastric complaint, he would have been eccentric—that is, if he had lived. Without some narcotic it is doubtful whether his highly sensitive organisation would have survived the attacks of disease. As it was, the opium not only eased the pain, but lifted his imagination above the ugly realities of life, and afforded a solace in times of loneliness and misery.

Small and insignificant in appearance to the casual observer, there was something arresting, fascinating about the man that touched even the irascible Carlyle. Much of his work, one can well understand, seemed to this lover of facts "full of wire-drawn ingenuities." But with all his contempt for phantasy, there was a touch of the dreamer in Carlyle, and the imaginative beauty, apart from the fanciful prettiness in De Quincey's work, would have appealed to him. For there was power, intellectual grip, behind the shifting fancies, and both as a critic and historian he has left behind him memorable work. As critic, he has been taken seriously to task for his judgments on French writers and on many lights of eighteenth-century thought. Certainly De Quincey's was not the type of mind we should go to for an interpretative criticism of the eighteenth century. Yet we must not forget his admirable appreciation of Goldsmith. At his best, as in his criticism of Milton and Wordsworth, he shows a fine, delicate, analytical power, which it is hard to overpraise.

"Obligations to Gombroon" do not afford the best qualifications for the historian. One can imagine the hair rising in horror on the head of the late Professor Freeman at the idea of the opium-eater sitting down seriously to write history.

Yet he had, like Froude, the power of seizing upon the spectacular side of great movements which many a more accurate historian has lacked. Especially striking is his *Revolt of the Tartars*—the flight eastward of a Tartar nation across the vast steppes of Asia, from Russia to Chinese territory. Ideas impressed him rather than facts, and episodes rather than a continuous chain of events. But when he was interested, he had the power of describing with picturesque power certain dramatic episodes in a nation's history.

A prolific writer for the magazines, it is inevitable that there should be a measure that is ephemeral in De Quincey's voluminous writings. But it is im-

possible not to be struck by the wide range of his intellectual interests. A mind that is equally at home in the economics of Ricardo and the transcendentalism of Wordsworth; that can turn with undiminished zest from Malthus to Kant; that could deal lucidly with the *Logic of Political Economy*, despite the dream world that finds expression in the "impassioned prose"; that could delight in such broadly farcical absurdities as *Sortilege and Astrology*, and such delicately suggestive studies as *On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth*, a mind of this adventurous and varied type is assuredly a very remarkable one. That he should touch every subject with equal power was not to be expected, but the analytical brilliance that characterises even his mystical writings enabled him to treat such subjects as political economy with a sureness of touch and a logical grasp that has astonished those who had regarded him as merely an inconsequential dreamer of dreams.

What gives his works their especial attraction is not so much the analytic faculty, interesting as it is, or the mystical turn of mind, as in the piquant blend of the two. Thus, while he is poking fun at astrology or witchcraft, we are conscious all the time that he retains a sneaking fondness for the occult. He delights in dreams, omens, and coincidences. He reminds one at times of the lecturer on superstitions, who, in the midst of a brilliant analysis of its futility and absurdity, was interrupted by a black cat walking on to the platform, and was so disturbed by this portent that he brought his lecture to an abrupt conclusion.

On the whole, the Mystic triumphed over the Logician. His poetic imagination impresses his work with a rich inventiveness, while the logical faculty, though subsidiary, is utilised for giving form and substance to the visions.

It is curious to contrast the stateliness of De Quincey's literary style, the elaborate full-dress manner, with the extreme simplicity of the man. One might be tempted to add, surely here the style is *not* the man. His friends have testified that he was a gentle, timid, shrinking little man, and abnormally sensitive to giving offence; and to those whom he cared for—his family, for instance—he was the incarnation of affection and tenderness.

Yet in the writings we see another side, a considerable sprinkle of sturdy prejudices, no little self-assertion and pugnacity. But there is no real disparity. The style is the man here as ever. When roused by opposition he could even in converse show the claws beneath the velvet. Only the militant, the more aggressive side of the man is expressed more readily in his writings; and the gentle and amiable side more readily in personal intimacy. Both the life and the writings are wanted to supply a complete picture.

In one respect the records of his life efface a suspicion that haunts the reader of his works. More than once the reader is apt to speculate as to how far the arrogance that marks certain of his essays is a superficial quality, a literary trick; how far a moral trait. The record of his conversations tends to show that much of this was merely surface. Unlike Coleridge, unlike Carlyle, he was as willing to listen as to talk; and he said many of his best things with a delightful unconsciousness that they were especially good. He never seemed to have the least wish to impress people by his cleverness or aptness of speech.

De Quincey was an artist of moods, skilfully adapting his style to the theme chosen. He had a ready perception of the congruous atmosphere in which to deal with his various topics, *e.g.* the ironical opening of *Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts*; the satirical banter of Dr. Andrew Bell; the solemn rhythmic cadence of *A Vision of Sudden Death*. It is, however, in writing of the latter class that he excels. Subtle effects, delicate gradations of emotion; these things De Quincey could render with exquisite delicacy. Sometimes, however, Carlyle's sardonic reference to his "wire-drawn ingenuities" recurs to the reader's mind, and the ornamentation becomes wearisome. One remembers the dictum of the Scotch cook, "The body has an awfu' sight of words."

At its best, however, the elaborate poetical prose in which De Quincey couched his imaginative dreams has a fine and delicate beauty about it—a beauty which is quite distinctive and bears little resemblance to the beauty of other prose stylists.

Whether the matter of De Quincey was always worth the fastidious craftsmanship expended on it is another question—but looking at the manner merely, few of our writers possessed so rare a sense of the value of words.

A word may be said here about his well-known distinction between the literature of knowledge and the literature of power:

> "The function of the first is to teach; the function of the second is to move: the first is a rudder, the second an oar or a sail. The first speaks to the mere discursive understanding; the second speaks ultimately, it may happen, to the higher understanding or reason, but always through affections of pleasure and sympathy. Remotely, it may travel towards an object seated in what Lord Bacon calls 'dry light'; but approximately it does and must operate else it ceases to be a literature of power, in and through that humid light which clothes itself in the mists and glittering iris of human passions, desires and genial emotions."

Now undoubtedly literature does appeal to us in two ways: it appeals to the intellect and it appeals to the imagination. It equips us with material for fashioning our lives wisely; it provides us with foresight. On the other hand, it furnishes us with inspiration, for fashioning our lives nobly; it provides us with insight. The pursuit in the one case is Truth; and in the other Beauty. But when Keats declared Truth and Beauty to be one, he said what is incontestable. The way of approach may be different, but the goal is the same.

The distinction between knowledge and power melts away upon examination. Knowledge that is of value necessarily makes for power; and there is no literature of power, no work of high imagination, that does not move us intellectually as well as morally.

The real value of De Quincey's remarks seems to me to lie in the rebuke he administers to those who think that it is the main purpose of literature to provide information. He is right in calling this a

mean or subordinate purpose, and those who approach literature merely with this view miss the great function of literature, which is to provide inspiration, not information.

This, however, implies not so much an exclusive concern with the literature of knowledge, as an imperfect appreciation of what knowledge is. Knowledge is something deeper than information; it is information which has fructified because it has become vital and reproductive; in other words, it possesses dynamic force.

Writers with subtle imagination like De Quincey and Lamb, possess an "electric aptitude" for seizing upon analogies. One thing invariably suggests another, and consequently a large discursiveness of manner is the consequence. To suggest a thing to De Quincey was like bringing an object into a room covered by mirrors. The object assumed at once a myriad shapes; it could be seen from every possible angle. But there is a reason for this; and there is a reason for the apparent complexity of De Quincey's treatment.

We must not forget that the logical faculty in De Quincey is as manifest as his inventive imagination. His discursiveness often merely indicates the spaciousness of his ground plan. He is not really introducing other irrelevant objects, but reflecting the same object from many points of view.

De Quincey's imagination was fertile rather than deep; this again is of special value to the discursive writer. Then his retentive memory, his out-of-the-way knowledge, his instinct for parallelisms apparently remote, give his manner a peculiar fascination and interest.

This discursiveness is of great value in his critical work, for it provides a leisurely elaboration of his subject, and a host of subtle touches which help to illuminate.

The two qualities which go to make criticism of the first order, are subtlety and acuteness: the first a faculty of the imagination—an instinct for detecting what is beneath the surface; the other an intellectual process which arrives by virtue of an alert logic at a certain conclusion. Some critics excel in one, some in another. Hazlitt is the more remarkable for acuteness—De Quincey for subtlety; sometimes, as in the essay on *Macbeth*, the subtlety rather overreaches itself, but often, as in the essays on *Milton*, on *Coleridge*, and *Wordsworth*, it is of great service.

The mysterious side of life, the night side of things, appealed irresistibly to De Quincey. Few writers have given a more vivid impression of the mystery of London, the sense of immensity in its surging crowds, the tragic loneliness of its bustling thoroughfares. He discovers an arresting symbolism in ordinary sights and sounds (e.g. *The Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth*). He is attracted towards certain dramatic movements in history fraught with latent possibilities (e.g. *The Revolt of the Tartars*, *Spanish Nun*, and *Joan of Arc*). To have written that gruesome masterpiece, the footnote on the Williams murders, formerly appended to the *Essay on Murder*, is to have assured for himself a place among artists of the horrible, such as Edgar Allan Poe. Few realised more intensely, more subtly, the horror of the unexpressed; the brooding sense of some impending disaster, than did De Quincey. Whereas Horace Walpole and Mrs. Radcliffe had been trying to make the flesh creep with moaning winds, and ancient battlements, with Byronic robbers, and spectral hands and hollow voices, De Quincey approaches with far finer artistry the potency of suggesting—of hinting. With Walpole, the supernatural was a useful stage property far too obvious to deceive any but the most credulous. With De Quincey it is a vague background. The banging of the street door and the dreadful silence which followed, when Williams gets in the house, has a ghastliness about it that surpasses the actual murders. The gruesome silence, then the faint creaking as the criminal moves about, the suspense, these are the things that freeze the blood.

Apart from the horrible, however, the dark, the shadowy side appealed to De Quincey, just as it appealed to Nathaniel Hawthorne. Hawthorne preferred, as we know, to take his walks after sunset, and when night was gathering over Edinburgh, then De Quincey sallied forth with a zest which he never showed in daylight.

"It is strange," says Mr. Masson, "to think of the little figure in those weary wanderings of his, round and through the city evening after evening."

It was his custom, we are told, in these nocturnal rambles, and chiefly for his convenience in certain labyrinths of pathway about the Esk, with a footbridge or two in them, to carry a small lantern with a means of lighting it when he chose. What a trial to the senses of the hardiest belated tramp or other night bird, with any dread of the supernatural, to have come upon De Quincey in such a spot, striking his match by a bush or advancing through the trees with his bull's eye. He himself was perfectly fearless of night bird or demon. Night was his natural element. What could it bring forth that it should alarm him?

As the man, so the writer. Along the byways of literature, he shuffled with a glimmering lantern turned in this direction or that, to light up with a radiance that decorated rather than illumined the darkness of some special tract. Surely it was no mere literary preference that led him to descant on *Macbeth* (where the chief events take place after sunset), or to quote, of all Lamb's essays, the one on *Evening*, "That we should lie down with the Lamb."

De Quincey himself, though his avowedly autobiographic writings are well defined, is as a matter of fact almost always autobiographic. This does not mean that he is telling us explicitly always what has happened to him, but he reveals himself, his moods, his tastes, his peculiarities of temper, in all that he writes.

In one particular De Quincey's idiosyncratic writing differs from that of his contemporaries—Byron, Hazlitt, and Lamb. He makes use of his temperamental peculiarities as an artist rather than as a man. The consequence is he is less confidential than he seems. This is not so, say, with a writer like Lamb; Lamb is far more intimate and frank; he wants to open his mind to his readers, and although he hides from us many of his darkest moments by

an extra flourish of witticisms, yet it is not difficult to see through this simple histrionic deception. De Quincey, on the other hand, looks upon the experiences of life as so much plastic material for his artistry. He manipulates his material primarily for artistic effect, and only secondarily because he wishes to be confidential. There is none of the impulsiveness about him—the yearning to take the world into his confidence—that there is in the case of Byron and Hazlitt. The history of the *Confessions* serves as a case in point. Pleased with their artistic as well as popular success, he elaborated a much longthier later edition. There is more of the literary artist, less of the confidential opium-eater in the later version.

This deliberate detachment, so characteristic of the artist, reminds one more of Walter Pater than of Hazlitt and Lamb.

De Quincey's attitude towards life was essentially that of the artist to whom every experience may serve possibly some artistic end. Such men welcome the light, not as Browning did from the ethical point of view, but from the æsthetic. One could not say of him what Arnold said of Emerson, "A voice oracular has pealed." Not on the bracing uplands of high imagination, but in the soft gracious woodlands of luxuriant fancy shall we find him.

Although our best friends in literature as in everyday life are always welcome, yet there are times and seasons when they make a special appeal to us. There is a literature of the noonday—and there is a literature of the half-lights. De Quincey's writings belong to the literature of the half-lights, and should for the most part, I think, be read in the "clear brown twilight," which Hawthorne desiderates for his delightful tales. Given the time and mood, the fantastic opium-eater will rarely fail to hold us with persuasive charm, by virtue of his quaint, elusive personality, and his attractive garrulousness; above all, by reason of his exquisite and delicate art.

"So sweet, so ghostly, in its soft, golden smiles, silent as a dream, and quiet as the dying trance of a saint, faded through all its stages this departing day, along the whole length of which I bade farewell for many a year to Wales, and farewell to summer. In the very aspect and the sepulchral stillness of the motionless day, as solemnly it wore away through morning, noontide, afternoon, to meet the darkness that was hurrying to swallow up its beauty, I had a fantastic feeling as though I read the very language of resignation when bending before some irresistible agency. And at intervals I heard—in how different a key!—the raving, the everlasting uproar of that dreadful metropolis, which at every step was coming nearer, and beckoning (as it seemed) to myself for purposes as dim, for issues as incalculable, as the path of cannon-shots fired at random and in darkness.

. . . . . .

"For nearly two hours I had heard fierce winds arising, and the whole atmosphere had by this time become one vast laboratory of hostile movements in all directions. Such a chaos, such a distracting wilderness of dim sights and of those awful 'sounds that live in darkness,' never had I consciously witnessed. Rightly, and by a true instinct, had I made my farewell adieus to summer. All through the day, Wales and her grand mountain ranges—Penmaenmawr, Snowdon, Cader Idris—had divided my thoughts with London. But now rose London, solo, dark, infinite, brooding over the whole capacities of my heart. Other object, other thought, I could not admit. Long before midnight the whole household (with the exception of a solitary waiter) had retired to rest. Two hours, at least, were left to me, after twelve o'clock had struck, for heart-shaking reflections. . . . The unusual dimensions of the rooms, especially their towering height, brought up continually and obstinately, through natural links of associated feelings or images, the mighty vision of London waiting for me afar off. An altitude of nineteen or twenty feet showed itself unavoidably upon an exaggerated scale in some of the smaller side-rooms, meant probably for cards or refreshments. This single feature of the rooms, their unusual altitude, and the echoing hollowness which had become the exponent of that altitude, this one terrific feature (for terrific it was in the effect), together with crowding and evanescent images of the flying feet that so often had spread gladness through these halls on the wings of youth and hope at seasons when every room rang with music; all this, rising in tumultuous vision, whilst the dead hours of night were stealing along, all around me, household and town, sleeping, and whilst against the windows more and more the storm outside was raving, and to all appearances endlessly growing, threw me into the deadliest condition of nervous emotion under contradictory forces, high over which predominated horror recoiling from that unfathomed abyss in London into which I was now so wilfully precipitating myself."[1]

Essay on Rhetoric

Charles Lloyd never returned to Brathay after he had once been removed from it. . . . But often and often, in years after all was gone, I have passed old Brathay, or have gone over purposely after dark, about the time when, for many a year, I used to go over to spend the evening; and seating myself on a stone by the side of the mountain river Brathay, have staid for hours listening to the same sound to which so often Charles Lloyd and I used to hearken together with profound emotion and awe—the sound of pealing anthems, as if streaming from the open portals of some illimitable cathedral; for such a sound does actually arise, in many states of the weather, from the peculiar action of the river Brathay upon its rocky bed; and many times I have heard it, of a quiet night, when no stranger could have been persuaded to believe it other than the sound of choral chanting—distant, solemn, saintly. . . . Since the ruin or dispersion of that household, after the smoke had ceased to ascend from their hearth, or the garden walk to re-echo their voices, oftentimes, when lying by the river side, I have listened to the same aerial saintly sound, whilst looking back to that night, long hidden in the frost of receding years, when Charles and Sophia Lloyd, now lying in foreign graves, first dawned upon me, coming suddenly out of rain and darkness; then young, rich, happy, full of hope, belted with young children (of whom also most are long dead), and standing apparently on the verge of a labyrinth of golden hours.

Joan of Arc

At the farewell crisis, when the gates of death are opening, and flesh is resting from its struggles, oftentimes the tortured and torturer have the same truce from carnal torment; both sink together into sleep; together both sometimes kindle into dreams. When the mortal mists were gathering fast upon you two—bishop and shepherd girl—when the pavilions of life were closing up their shadowy curtains about you—let us try, through the gigantic glooms, to decipher the flying features of your separate visions.

The shepherd girl that had delivered France—she from her dungeon, she from her baiting at the stake, she from her duel with fire, as she entered her last dream—saw Domrémy, saw the fountain of Domrémy, saw the pomp of forests in which her childhood had wandered. That Easter festival which man had denied to her languishing heart—that resurrection of springtime, which the darkness of dungeons had intercepted from her, hungering after the glorious liberty of forests—were by God given back into her hands, as jewels that had been

[1] *The Confessions of an Opium-Eater.*

stolen from her by robbers. With those, perhaps (for the minutes of dreams can stretch into ages), was given back to her by God the bliss of childhood. By special privilege for her might be created, in this farewell dream, a second childhood, innocent as the first; but not, like *that*, sad with the gloom of a fearful mission in the rear. This mission had now been fulfilled. The storm was weathered: the skirts even of that mighty storm were drawing off. The blood that she was to reckon for had been exacted; the tears that she was to shed in secret had been paid to the last. The hatred to herself in all eyes had been faced steadily, had been suffered, had been survived. And in her last fight upon the scaffold she had triumphed gloriously; victoriously she had tasted the stings of death. For all, except this comfort from her farewell dream, she had died—died, amidst the tears of ten thousand enemies—died, amidst the drums and trumpets of armies—died, amidst peals redoubling upon peals, volleys upon volleys, from the saluting clarions of martyrs.

Bishop of Beauvais! because the guilt-burdened man is in dreams haunted and waylaid by the most frightful of his crimes, and because upon that fluctuating mirror—rising (like the mocking mirrors of *mirage* in Arabian deserts) from the fons of death—most of all are reflected the sweet countenances which the man has laid in ruins: therefore I know, bishop, that you also, entering your final dream, saw Domrémy. That fountain, of which the witnesses spoke so much, showed itself in your eyes in pure morning dews; but neither dews, nor the holy dawn, could cleanse away the bright spots of innocent blood upon its surface. By the fountain, bishop, you saw a woman seated, that hid her face. But, as you draw near, the woman raises her wasted features. Would Domrémy know them again for the features of her child? Ah, but you know them, bishop, well! Oh mercy! what a groan was *that* which the servants, waiting outside the bishop's dream at his bedside, heard from his labouring heart, as at this moment he turned away from the fountain and the woman, seeking rest in the forests afar off. Yet not so to escape the woman, whom once again he must behold before he dies. In the forests to which he prays for pity, will he find respite? What a tumult, what a gathering of feet is there! In glades where only wild deer should run, armies and nations are assembling: towering in the fluctuating crowd are phantoms that belong to departed hours. . . . What building is that which hands so rapid are raising? Is it a martyr's scaffold? Will they burn the child of Domrémy a second time? No: it is a tribunal that rises to the clouds; and two nations stand around it, waiting for a trial. Shall my Lord of Beauvais sit again upon the judgment seat, and again number the hours for the innocent? Ah no! he is the prisoner at the bar. Already all is waiting: the mighty audience is gathered, the Court is hurrying to their seats, the witnesses are sworn, the trumpets are sounding, the judge is taking his place. Oh: but this is sudden. My lord, have you no counsel? "Counsel I have none: in heaven above, or on earth beneath, counsellor there is none now that would take a brief from *me*: all are silent." Is it, indeed, come to this? Alas! the time is short, the tumult is wondrous, the crowd stretches away into infinity: but yet I will search in it for somebody to take your brief: I know of somebody that will be your counsel. Who is this that cometh from Domrémy? Who is she in bloody coronation robes from Rheims? Who is she that cometh with blackened flesh from walking the furnaces of Rouen? This is she, the shepherd girl, counsellor that had none for herself, whom I choose, bishop, for yours. She it is, I engage, that shall take my lord's brief. She it is, bishop, that would plead for you: yes, bishop, SHE,—when heaven and earth are silent.

LEIGH HUNT

The prose of Leigh Hunt synchronises with his verse. It began with his papers in the *Examiner*, and later on in the *Indicator*. His sojourn in Italy found expression in his *Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla* (1848), an agreeable volume warm with the colour and romance of the South. His discursive charm and varied knowledge of London life is exhibited in *The Town*; while in his *Autobiography* we have the fullest expression of the man himself, his innate sweetness and beauty of character and his little weaknesses and prejudices. What the *Essays of Elia* are to Lamb, the *Autobiography* is to Leigh Hunt.

In his literary methods as essayist, he is akin to Lamb; with something of the same sprightliness, intimate ease, and whimsical charm. What he lacks is the deep tenderness and the high flashes of imagination that mark Lamb's best work. Hunt works on a lower level. But there is great attractiveness about his prose, for his taste was fine, his interests many, and his frank enjoyment of things exhilarating and contagious.

In *The Religion of the Heart* he tries to express his general attitude towards life, and if as a philosophical *credo* it seems rather vague and superficial, it at any rate reveals a gracious, kindly, and sunny personality. As a delightful trifler in the byways of letters, and as a fine and catholic taster of what is beautiful both in life and literature, he will always be remembered.

City Trees

There is scarcely a street in the *city* of London, perhaps not one, nor many out of the pale of it, from some part of which the passenger may not discern a *tree*. Most persons to whom this has been mentioned have doubted the accuracy of our information, nor do we profess hitherto to have ascertained it; though, since we heard the assertion, we have made a point of endeavouring to do so whenever we could, and have not been disappointed. The mention of the circumstance generally creates a laughing astonishment, and a cry of "impossible!" Two persons, who successively heard of it the other day, not only thought it incredible as a general fact, but doubted whether half a dozen streets could be found with a twig in them; and they triumphantly instanced "Cheapside," as a place in which it was "out of the question." Yet in Cheapside is an actual, visible, and even ostentatiously visible tree, to all who have eyes to look about them. It stands at the corner of Wood Street, and occupies the space of a house. There was a solitary one the other day in St. Paul's Churchyard, which has now got a multitude of young companions. A little child was shown us a few years back, who was said never to have beheld a tree but that single one in St. Paul's Churchyard. Whenever a tree was mentioned, she thought it was that and no other. She had no conception even of the remote tree in Cheapside! This appears incredible; but there would seem to be no bounds, either to imagination or to the want of it. We were told the other day on good authority, of a man who had resided six-and-thirty years in the square of St. Peter's at Rome, and then for the first time went inside the Cathedral.

There is a little *garden* in *Watling Street!* It lies completely open to the eye, being divided from the footway by a railing only.

In the body of our work will be found notices of other trees and green spots, that surprise the observer in the thick of the noise and smoke. Many of them are in churchyards. Others have disappeared during the progress of building. Many courts and passages are named from trees that once stood in them, as Vine and Elm Court, Fig-tree Court, Green-arbour Court, &c. It is not surprising that *garden-houses*, as they were called,

should have formerly abounded in Holborn, in Bunhill Row, and other (at that time) suburban places. We notice the fact, in order to observe how fond the poets were of occupying houses of this description. Milton seems to have made a point of having one. The only London residence of Chapman which is known, was in Old Street Road; doubtless at that time a rural suburb. Beaumont and Fletcher's house, on the Surrey side of the Thames (for they lived as well as wrote together), most probably had a garden; and Dryden's house in Gerard Street looked into the garden of the mansion built by the Earls of Leicester. A tree, or even a flower, put in the window in the streets of a great city (and the London citizens, to their credit, are fond of flowers), affects the eye something in the same way as the hand-organs, which bring unexpected music to the ear. They refresh the commonplaces of life, shed a harmony through the busy discord, and appeal to those first sources of emotion, which are associated with the remembrance of all that is young and innocent. They seem also to present to us a portion of the tranquillity we think we are labouring for, and the desire of which is felt as an earnest that we shall realise it somewhere, either in this world or in the next. Above all, they render us more cheerful for the performance of present duties; and the smallest seed of this kind, dropt into the heart of man, is worth more, and may terminate in better fruits, than anybody but a great poet could tell us.

II. PROSE: (*c*) THE DEVELOPMENT OF JOURNALISM. Francis Jeffrey—Sydney Smith—Lord Brougham—Francis Horner—Sir James Mackintosh—Macaulay—William Gifford—S. T. Coleridge—J. G. Lockhart—John Wilson Croker—Sir John Barrow—Southey—John Wilson ("Christopher North")—Charles Lamb—De Quincey—Maginn—Francis Mahony ("Father Prout")—Carlyle—Bryan Waller Procter ("Barry Cornwall")—Ainsworth—Hogg—Thackeray.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF JOURNALISM

IN the domain of prose, the first thirty years of the nineteenth century are richer in essayists than in novelists. Beyond Scott and Jane Austen there are no names of the first importance in fiction; but the era abounds in notable critics and essayists, whether of the elder school represented by Jeffrey, or the new school heralded by Coleridge. We have seen that the *Spectator* and the *Tatler* fostered the essay and inaugurated its more intimate and familiar appeal; and while the essay was reared under the protecting wing of Journalism, it still retained its connection with the periodical during the next couple of decades. For a while, however, periodical literature, after the death of Addison and Steele, lost its high distinction. The pay was miserable, and only the hack writer could be relied on to write according to the editor's recipe. But the resuscitation of the Review was at hand, and took place with the launching of the *Edinburgh Review*.

The appearance of this famous organ, in its familiar livery of "saffron and of blue," was due to the efforts of Francis Jeffrey and of Sydney Smith. After the first number in 1802, Jeffrey became the sole editor. Sydney Smith, writing in 1839, thus describes the meeting of the friends that led to its inauguration:

> "One day we happened to meet in the eighth or ninth story or flat in Buccleuch Place, the elevated residence of the then Mr. Jeffrey. I proposed that we should set up a Review; this was acceded to with acclamation. I was appointed Editor, and remained long enough in Edinburgh to edit the first number of the *Edinburgh Review*. The motto I proposed for the Review was
>
> 'Tenui musam meditamur avena.'
> 'We cultivate literature on a little oatmeal.'
>
> But this was too near the truth to be admitted, and so we took our present grave motto from Publius Lyrus, of whom none of us had, I am sure, ever read a single line; and so began what has since turned out to be a very important and able journal. When I left Edinburgh, it fell into the stronger hands of Lord Jeffrey and Lord Brougham, and reached the highest point of popularity and success."

In this retrospect over the thirty-seven years of the *Edinburgh's* existence, Sydney Smith could recount many social evils that had been mitigated or entirely abolished, results that were, in part at any rate, achieved by the fearless honesty with which the cause of reform had been advocated by the promoters of the journal. The Emancipation of the Catholics—the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts—the abolition of Slavery—the modification of the Game Laws and the harsh Penal Code—were a few of the reforms that had been accomplished in 1839.

The main purpose of the earlier reviews was politics. "The *Review*, in short," said Jeffrey to Scott, "has but two legs to stand upon. Literature no doubt is one of them; and its *Right leg* is Politics." The political power wielded by the successful Whig organ provoked the Tories to issue, in 1809, the *Quarterly Review* as a counterblast to the "pernicious" principles of the *Edinburgh*. For a considerable period the rivals exercised a kind of literary dictatorship which, despite its arrogance and narrowness, did most certainly confer very real benefits on literature. Jeffrey himself, notorious as some of his literary judgments have become, was a man of considerable knowledge and of genuine though narrow critical insight. In the early days of the *Review*, when the Whig policy was not insistent, Scott was a frequent contributor. If not very versatile or subtle he was a sound critic, and what was unusual in any Quarterly, an amiable one. He proved, moreover, an agreeable and lively writer.

Almost at the opposite pole as a writer was Lord Brougham, brilliant, superficial, and amazingly versatile. Very different to him is the humorist, Sydney Smith, a critic of high standing, and a jester who could play the fool, without being either spiteful or paltry. After the triumph of the Whigs he became Canon of St. Paul's, and died in February 1845, at the age of seventy-four.

THE "EDINBURGH REVIEW" AND ITS CONTRIBUTORS

SYDNEY SMITH remained long enough in Edinburgh to edit the first number, to which he contributed five

articles, one of which was a "slashing attack" on John Bowles, writer of political pamphlets, 1791–1807—thought by Jeffrey to be "too severe," but it was the "slashing" nature of the attacks on persons and abuses that brought the new journal into prominence and gave it a position apart from its milder contemporaries.

The editorship then passed into the hands of Francis Jeffrey, although Sydney Smith continued to write for the *Review* until 1827, and in the first four numbers no less than eighteen articles were written by him. Ticknor, an American writer, has left on record Sydney Smith's account of the business side of his relations with the *Review*:

"When I wrote an article I used to send it to Jeffrey, and waited till it came out, immediately after which I enclosed to him a bill in these words, or words like them —'Francis Jeffrey, Esq., to Rev. Sydney Smith: To a very wise and witty article on such a subject, so many sheets at forty-five guineas a sheet;' and the money always came."

Some of the most famous of Sydney Smith's articles were collected and reprinted, *Edgeworth on Bulls, Methodism, Indian Missions, Hannah More, Game Laws, Public Schools, Botany Bay*. They afford excellent examples of his method of argument and unrivalled humour.

FRANCIS JEFFREY, the clever, versatile lawyer who controlled the destinies of the *Review* for so many years, was a typical journalist, ready to write about anything and everything at a moment's notice. In addition to performing his duties as editor, duties which in those days involved the revision and alteration of the articles if the views of the authors did not coincide with the principles and avowed policy of the paper, Jeffrey himself wrote two hundred articles, most of which are reviews of books. Jeffrey's name is usually associated with some of his unfortunate judgments in literature: that he disapproved of Wordsworth's poetry—characterised *The Daffodils* as "stuff," said of *The Excursion* "This will never do"—is well known; his positive achievements are frequently ignored. Jeffrey made reviewing an art—even if sometimes the art of the slaughter-house. He did more than cut the pages of a book —he *read* it, gave a clear summary of the contents, and delivered his verdict in accordance with his own honest if somewhat circumscribed convictions.

If Jeffrey did not approve of the Lake poets, or romantic poetry in general, he praises Keats for his real merits, although opposition to the *Quarterly* may have stimulated him in his search for them.

Jeffrey's literary judgments were vitiated by a constitutional pessimism that inclined him to despair of his own times. He considered "the age of original genius was over," and in a paragraph in which he speaks of the rich melodies of Keats and Shelley, "the tuneful quartos of Southey," "the fantastical emphasis of Wordsworth," the "plebeian pathos of Crabbe," and the "splendid strains of Moore," it is to regret that their work is passing into oblivion—while the two poets who show no signs of diminishing popularity are Rogers and Campbell!

A violent Whig in politics, Jeffrey was a conservative in literature, and considered the classical school of poetry, as represented by Pope, the ideal standard. In spite of these defects Jeffrey did much to spread a love of good literature, and to raise the level of public taste. Jeffrey had also a sure instinct for a brilliant passage—and is especially good in giving a general summary of a period.

Scott and Southey both wrote for the *Edinburgh* for a short time, but the extreme political views of Jeffrey alienated the sympathy of the more moderate.

Southey, writing to Scott in 1807, says he has scarcely one opinion in common with the *Edinburgh*. Two years later, Southey became a contributor to the newly established *Quarterly*.

FRANCIS HORNER, the great friend of Sydney Smith, and like Brougham, one of the founders of the *Edinburgh*, wrote on political economy. He preceded Sydney to London, and when the latter arrived he found Horner established very "high up in Garden Court," engaged "in thinking a good deal about mankind."

Horner's abilities and sincerities soon brought him success at the Bar; he entered Parliament, where he speedily became an authority on questions of currency. His early death was a loss both to literature and politics.

With Horner may be associated another writer for the *Edinburgh*, Sir JAMES MACKINTOSH, "a man of vast learning," whom Sydney Smith described as "having waded through morasses of international law where the steps of no living man could follow him." Mackintosh had, like Macaulay, a prodigious memory, and he was noted for his conversational powers. Rogers, the poet, lamented that he sacrificed everything to maintain his reputation in the art. Mackintosh wrote *A History of England*, a *Life of Sir Thomas More*, and a *Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Philosophy*—that received strong criticism at the hands of James Mill—but nothing that he wrote has any permanent interest.

Lord BROUGHAM was one of the most voluminous contributors, and wrote no less than eighty articles in five years, on a variety of topics. Brougham was, however, essentially an orator and politician, and the whole of his writing, like that of Mackintosh, has perished. Indeed, Brougham's political influence waned some years before his death.

Brougham was the author of the attack on Byron's youthful poems *Hours of Idleness*, that provoked the poet to pour forth the vials of his wrath in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. Byron thought the attack had been instigated by Lord Holland, "drank three bottles of claret," and sat down to write his reply.

"As to the Edinburgh Reviewers, it would indeed require a Hercules to crush the Hydra; but if the author succeeds in merely 'bruising one of the heads of the serpent' though his own hand should suffer in the encounter, he will be amply satisfied."

Macaulay made a reputation in the *Edinburgh Review* by his brilliant essays that began to appear about 1825. Macaulay's genius lay in his historical rather than in his critical powers. "I am nothing," he says, "if not historical." His bright, lucid, masterly presentation of facts in order to convey inferences that were acceptable to himself and his age, made him exceedingly popular.

Macaulay's contributions to the *Edinburgh* were

reprinted and published under the title of *Critical and Historical Essays*. They were intended to be reviews of books—in reality the book afforded Macaulay an excuse for delivering his own views on the subject in question. He usually devoted a few lines to the book itself, and then wrote a dissertation on the subject.

The "Quarterly" and its Contributors

The first number of the *Quarterly* was issued in 1809 under the editorship of William Gifford, who with Canning, Frere, and Ellis, had been associated in the production of the *Anti-Jacobin*. Gifford exercised a rigid censorship over the contributors to the *Review* that occasioned some annoyance to Lamb and Southey. These were the days of the unsigned article and the editorial "we." Writers were expected to remain anonymous, although the veil was sometimes very transparent. Gifford objected to Southey's prose as being "too distinctive," and revised his articles.

Much of the bitterness and unfairness that is characteristic of journalistic writing at this period must be assigned to two reasons—the political bias of the early reviews, and the custom of unsigned articles united with editorial autocracy. Attacks that might safely be delivered under cover, and as the settled judgment of a panel of literary dictators could not be carried on in the open, and the advent of the signed article introduced more politeness and a more genial point of view. Up to the advent of Coleridge, it was well called the "hang—draw—and quarterly Review."

In 1824 S. T. Coleridge became editor for a short period, and then the reins passed into the hands of J. G. Lockhart, who devoted the main energies of a lifetime to the task. Lockhart had been educated at Glasgow University, and thence had proceeded to Oxford by means of a scholarship. He was called to the Bar at Edinburgh just at the time the *Edinburgh Magazine* was started. Lockhart was an excellent classical scholar, and also possessed a knowledge of modern languages that was less common at this period. He translated some Spanish ballads, (1823), and was acquainted with German and Italian literature. Lockhart had visited Germany and seen Goethe, and this event laid the foundation of his friendship with Scott, whose son-in-law he became in 1820. In 1825 he came to London as editor of the *Quarterly*. Lockhart's chief title to fame rests upon his biographies of Scott and Burns; as a critic he earned for himself the title of "the scorpion," although he is not responsible for all the attacks that have been laid to his charge. It was indeed an unkind fate that made him for twenty-eight years a critic and reviewer in days when critics possessed a license to abuse not only the work of an author, but even personal character. Lockhart grew older and wiser and did not repeat the sins of his youth—perpetrated in connection with *Blackwood*—but he never learnt to bring to his judgments in literature that "air of detachment" so necessary to forming unbiassed estimates. His own personal predilections counted for much; he could not bear anything suggestive of Keats, and as a rule did not care for new poets.

John Wilson Croker, "a narrow-souled critic" as letters, whose connection with the *Quarterly* lasted forty-five years, wrote no less than two hundred and fifty-eight articles. He was a careful and painstaking investigator, and edited a noteworthy edition of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*—but in common with many other writers for the reviews, his work has not survived in literature.

Sir John Barrow—a traveller, statesman, and Chinese savant—wrote accounts of his voyages and travels. Hallam and Sharon Turner wrote on history. Turner wrote a *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, giving extracts from their literature and accounts of laws that is still of value. Hallam's work as an historian is well known. Malthus and Senior wrote on political economy. Scott contributed about thirty articles (1809–32), on a variety of subjects.

Southey, also a prolific writer for the reviews, wrote a hundred articles. Of all this mass, few are worth reading to-day: Scott on Miss Austen, Ellis on *The Lord of the Isles* and *The Corsair*; others remain as curiosities of literary criticism, and amongst these may be mentioned the review that "snuffed out Keats."

"Blackwood's Magazine"

The dissatisfaction of the Scottish Tories with the extreme Whig views of the *Edinburgh* led to the founding of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1817. It succeeded the short-lived *Edinburgh Monthly*, and made its startling debut under the auspices of Wilson and Lockhart.

John Wilson (1785–1854), had achieved a reputation at Oxford for his intellectual abilities, also for his athletic powers. Leaving the University he settled at Elleray, near Windermere, and devoted himself to authorship, and became intimate with the "Lake Poets." *The Isle of Palms* (1812), his first volume of poems, was succeeded by *The City of the Plague* (1816). The loss of his fortune drew Wilson to Edinburgh, then the literary hub of the country. Wilson found himself unable to agree with Jeffrey and threw in his lot with *Blackwood's Magazine*—"Maga," as it came to be called.

The new *Edinburgh* attained considerable notoriety during the first year of existence for its "rabid performances," the chief and foremost of which was the famous Chaldee MS., that ridiculed in daring and witty fashion the previous editors, Pringle and Cleghorn, besides other writers of greater eminence. Attacks were made on Playfair, Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* (Wilson), *The Cockney School of Poetry* (Lockhart)—Keats. On the other hand, the new journal was much more favourable to the work of the Lake poets, and the first really enthusiastic criticism of Wordsworth appeared in its pages from the pen of Wilson.

Wilson possessed a geniality of temperament entirely foreign to Lockhart, and praised and blamed with equal extravagance. His wealth of expression, abundant ideas, humour and happy irresponsibility, found felicitous outflow in the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, at first the joint production of Lockhart, Hogg, Maginn, and others, but which eventually became exclusively identified with "Christopher North."

The *Noctes* were a mixed medley of prose, verse,

criticism, description; and their quality varies in like manner. Passages of singular beauty and power are mingled with others that are commonplace and highflown. The character of the "Ettrick Shepherd" has been praised by Ferrier, who edited a reprint of the *Noctes*, as "one of the finest and most finished creations which dramatic genius has ever called into existence."

The Recreations of Christopher North (1842) is of the same genus as the *Noctes*. *The Trials of Margaret Lindsay* (1823) and *Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life* (1822) are earlier works that do not reach the level of the *Noctes*.

As a critic, Wilson belongs to an intermediate school; his early association with the Lake poets led him to give them sympathetic appreciation. He proclaimed Wordsworth, Scott, and Byron as the three great master-spirits in our day in the poetical world.

But Wilson, unlike Jeffrey, had no system in his criticism, and frequently awarded praise or censure according to the mood of the moment, hence his criticisms are often contradictory.

The Magazines

A good deal of rivalry existed between Blackwood's *Edinburgh* and the *London Magazine*, established in the South by the more moderate Liberals. The reviews were serious performances, the "heavy cannon" of literature—whereas the magazines may be compared to the "light artillery." Fiction and creative literature, even humour was welcomed by the magazines; the writers were drawn from a younger generation and numbered men who were neutral in politics, and non-partisan methods became more general. A brilliant and versatile band of writers gathered round the new periodicals.

Lamb wrote his *Essays of Elia* for the *London Magazine*; De Quincey his *Confessions of an Opium-Eater*; Hood and Hazlitt and Miss Mitford some of their best prose.

Blackwood's in its earlier years had the services of the extraordinary and erratic Irishman, Maginn. For some years a schoolmaster in Cork, Maginn drifted from Edinburgh to London, where he accomplished the most notable achievement of his life in helping to found, with the assistance of Hugh Fraser, a London Blackwood known as *Fraser's Magazine* (1830). Maginn attracted to the new periodical men of the most varied talent and genius, amongst whom were "Father Prout" (Francis Mahony), Carlyle, whose *Sartor Resartus* threatened to bring financial ruin on the paper, Southey, Coleridge, "Barry Cornwall," Ainsworth, Hogg, and Thackeray. In the hands of such men it is not surprising that literature became the *Right leg* of the Magazines.

On Burns

One other remark is of a more limited application, and is addressed chiefly to the followers and patrons of that new school of poetry against which we have thought it our duty to neglect no opportunity of testifying. These gentlemen are outrageous for simplicity, and we beg leave to recommend to them the simplicity of Burns. He has copied the spoken language of passion and affection with infinitely more fidelity than they have ever done, on all occasions which properly admitted of such adaptation. But he has not rejected the helps of elevated language and habitual associations, nor debased his composition by an affectation of babyish interjections and all the puling expletives of an old nursery maid's vocabulary. They may look long enough among his nervous and manly lines, before they find any 'Good Jacks!' 'Dear hearts!'—or, 'As a body may say,' in them; or any stuff about dancing daffodils and sister Emmelines. Let them think with what infinite contempt the powerful mind of Burns would have perused the story of Alice Fell and her duffle cloak, of Andrew Jones and the half-crown, or of Little Dan without breeches, and his thievish grandfather. Let them contrast their own fantastical personages of hysterical schoolmasters and sententious beadlegatherers, with the authentic rustics of Burns' *Cotter's Saturday Night*, and his inimitable songs, and reflect on the different reception which those personifications have met with from the public. Though they will not be reclaimed from their puny affectations by the example of their learned predecessors, they may, perhaps, submit to be admonished by a self-taught and illiterate poet, who drew from Nature far more correctly than they can do, and produced something so much like the admired copies of the masters whom they have abjured.

On Swift

Of his style, it has been usual to speak with great, and, we think, exaggerated praise. It is less mellow than Dryden's, less elegant than Pope's or Addison's, less noble than Lord Bolingbroke's, and utterly without the glow and loftiness which belonged to our earlier masters. It is radically a low and homely style, without grace and without affectation, and chiefly remarkable for a great choice and profusion of common words and expressions. Other writers who have used a plain and direct style have been for the most part jejune and limited in their diction, and generally give us an impression of the poverty as well as the tameness of their language; but Swift, without ever trespassing into figured or poetical expressions, or ever employing a word that can be called fine or pedantic, has a prodigious variety of good set phrases always at his command, and displays a sort of homely richness, like the plenty of an old English dinner, or the wardrobe of a wealthy burgess. This taste for the plain and substantial was fatal to his poetry, which subsists not on such elements; but was in the highest degree favourable to the effect of his humour, very much of which depends on the imposing gravity with which it is delivered, and on the various turns and heightenings it may receive from a rapidly shifting and always appropriate expression. Almost all his works after the *Tale of a Tub* seem to have been written very fast, and with very little minute care of the diction. For his own ease, therefore, it is probable they were all pitched on a low key, and set about on the ordinary tone of a familiar letter or conversation, as that from which there was little hazard from falling, even in moments of negligence, and from which any rise that could be effected must always be easy and conspicuous. . . . Half of the affectation and offensive pretension we meet with in authors, arises from a want of matter, and the other half from a paltry ambition of being eloquent and ingenious out of place. Swift had complete confidence in himself; and had too much real business on his hands to be at leisure to intrigue for the fame of a fine writer; in consequence of which, his writings are more admired by the judicious than if he had bestowed all his attention on their style. He was so much a man of business, indeed, and so much accustomed to consider his writings merely as means for the attainment of a practical end—whether that end was the strengthening of a party, or the wounding a foe—that he not only disdained the reputation of a composer of pretty sentences, but seems to have been thoroughly indifferent to all sorts of literary fame. He enjoyed the notoriety and influence which he had procured by his writings; but it was the glory of having

carried his point, and not of having written well, that he valued. As soon as his publications had served their turn, they seem to have been entirely forgotten by their author;—and, desirous as he was of being rather, he appears to have thought as little of making money as immortality by means of them.[1]

Noodle's Oration

I ask the honourable gentleman if this is the time for carrying the measure into execution—whether, in fact, is more unfortunate period could have been selected than that which he has chosen? If this were an ordinary measure, I should not oppose it with so much vehemence; but, sir, it calls in question the wisdom of an irrevocable law—of a law passed at the memorable period of the Revolution. What right have we, sir, to break down this firm column on which the great men of that age stamped a character of eternity? Are not all authorities against this measure—Pitt, Fox, Cicero, and the Attorney and Solicitor General? The proposition is new, sir; it is the first time it was ever heard in this house. I am not prepared, sir—this house is not prepared—to receive it. The measure implies a distrust of his Majesty's Government: their disapproval is sufficient to warrant opposition. Precaution only is requisite where danger is apprehended. Here the high character of the individuals in question is a sufficient guarantee against any ground of alarm. Give not, then, your sanction to this measure: for, whatever be its character, if you do give your sanction to it, the same man by whom this is proposed, will propose to you others to which it will be impossible to give your assent. I care very little, sir, for the ostensible measure; but what is there behind? What are the honourable gentleman's future schemes? If we pass this bill, what fresh concessions may he not require? What further degradation is he planning for our country? Talk of evil and inconvenience, sir! look to other countries—study other aggregations and societies of men, and then see whether the laws of this country demand a remedy or deserve a panegyric. Was the honourable gentleman (let me ask him) always of this way of thinking? Do I not remember when he was the advocate in this house of very opposite opinions? I not only quarrel with his present sentiments, sir, but I declare very frankly I do not like the party with which he acts. If his own motives were as pure as possible, they cannot but suffer contamination from those with whom he is politically associated. This measure may be a boon to the constitution, but I will accept no favour to the constitution from such hands. (Loud cries of "Hear, hear.") I profess myself, sir, an honest and upright member of the British Parliament, and I am not afraid to profess myself an enemy to all change and innovation. I am satisfied with things as they are, and it will be my pride and pleasure to hand down this country to my children as I received it from those who preceded me. The honourable gentleman pretends to justify the severity with which he has attacked the noble lord who presides over the Court of Chancery. But I say such attacks are pregnant with mischief to government itself. Oppose ministers, you oppose government: disgrace ministers, you disgrace government; bring ministers into contempt, you bring government into contempt; and anarchy and civil war are the consequences. Besides, sir, the measure is unnecessary. Nobody complains of disorder in that shape in which it is the aim of your measure to propose a remedy to it. The business is one of the greatest importance; there is need of the greatest caution and circumspection. Do not let us be precipitate, sir; it is impossible to foresee all consequences. Everything should be gradual; the example of a neighbouring nation should fill us with alarm? The honourable gentleman has taxed me with illiberality, sir. I deny the charge. I hate innovation, but I love improvement. I am an enemy to the corruption of government, but I defend its influence. I dread reform, but I dread it only when it is intemperate. I consider the liberty of the press as the great palladium of the constitution: but at the same time I hold the licentiousness of the press in the greatest abhorrence. Nobody is more sensitive than I am of the splendid abilities of the honourable mover, but I tell him at once, his scheme is too good to be practicable. It savours of Utopia.[1]

[1] The Essays of Francis Jeffrey.

A Village Episode

There is a village (no matter where) in which the inhabitants, on one day in the year, sit down to a dinner prepared at the common expense; by an extraordinary piece of tyranny (which Lord Hawkesbury would call the wisdom of village ancestors), the inhabitants of three of the streets, about a hundred years ago, seized upon the inhabitants of the fourth street, bound them hand and foot, laid them upon their backs, and compelled them to look on while the rest were stuffing themselves with beef and beer; the next year the inhabitants of the persecuted street (though they contributed an equal quota of the expense) were treated precisely in the same manner. The tyranny grew into a custom; and (as the manner of nature is) it was considered as the most sacred of all duties to keep those poor fellows without their annual dinner; the village was so conscious of this practice, that nothing could induce them to relish it; every enemy to it was looked upon as a disbeliever in Divine Providence, and any nefarious churchwarden who wished to succeed in his election had nothing to do but to represent his antagonist as an abolitionist, in order to frustrate his ambition, endanger his life, and throw the village into a state of the most dreadful commotion. By degrees, however, the obnoxious street grew to be as well peopled, and its inhabitants so firmly united, that their oppressors, more afraid of injustice, were more disposed to be just. At the next dinner, they are ordained, the year after allowed to sit upright, then a bit of bread and a glass of water; till at last, after a long series of concessions, they were emboldened to ask, in pretty plain terms, that they may be allowed to sit down at the bottom of the table, and to fill their bellies as well as the rest. Forthwith a general cry of shame and scandal: "Ten years ago, were you not laid upon your backs? Don't you remember what a great thing you thought it to get a piece of bread? How thankful you were for cheese-parings? Have you forgotten that memorable era, when the lord of the manor interfered to obtain for you a slice of the public pudding? And now, with an audacity only equalled by your ingratitude, you have the impudence to ask for knives and forks, and to request, in terms too plain to be mistaken, that you may sit down to table with the rest, and be indulged even with beef and beer; there are not more than half-a-dozen dishes which we have reserved for ourselves; this not has been thrown open to you in the utmost profusion; you have potatoes, and carrots, and dumplings, sops in the pan, and delicious toast and water, in incredible quantities. Beef, mutton, lamb, pork, and veal, are ours; and if you were not the most restless and dissatisfied of human beings, you would never think of aspiring to enjoy them."[2]

The Character of Walter Scott

No man was a firmer or more indefatigable friend. I know not he ever lost one; and a few with whom, during the energetic middle stage of life, from political differences or other accidental circumstances, he lived less familiarly, had all gathered round him, and renewed the full warmth of early affection in his later days. There was enough to dignify the connection in their eyes; but nothing to chill it on either side. The imagination that so completely mastered him when he chose to give her the rein, was kept under most determined control when any of the positive obligations of active life came into question. A high and pure sense of duty presided over whatever he had to do as a citizen and a magistrate; and as a landlord, he considered his estate as an extension of his hearth.

[1] *Bentham on Fallacies*, by Sydney Smith.
[2] *Peter Plimley's Letters*, by Sydney Smith.

Of his political creed, the many who hold a different one will of course say that it was the natural fruit of his poetical devotion to the mere prejudice of antiquity; and I am quite willing to allow that this must have had a great share in the matter—and that he himself would have been as little ashamed of the word prejudice as of the word antiquity. Whenever Scotland could be considered as standing separate on any question from the rest of the empire, he was not only apt, but eager to embrace the opportunity of again rehoisting, as it were, the old signal of national independence and I sincerely believe that no circumstance in his literary career gave him so much personal satisfaction as the success of Malachi Malagrowther's Epistles. He confesses, however, in his diary, that he was aware how much it became him to summon calm reason to battle imaginative prepossessions on this score; and I am not aware that they ever led him into any serious political error. He delighted in letting his fancy run wild about ghosts and witches and horoscopes—but I venture to say, had he sat on the judicial bench a hundred years before he was born, no man would have been more certain to give juries sound direction in estimating the pretended evidence of supernatural occurrences of any sort, and I believe, in like manner, that had any anti-English faction, civil or religious, sprung up in his own time in Scotland, he would have done more than any other living man could have hoped to do, for putting it down. He was on all practical points a steady, conscientious Tory of the school of William Pitt; who, though an anti-revolutionist, was certainly anything but an anti-reformer. He rejected the innovations, in the midst of which he died, as a revival, under alarmingly authoritative auspices, of the doctrines which had endangered Britain in his youth, and desolated Europe throughout his prime of manhood. May the gloomy anticipations which hung over his closing years be unfulfilled! But should they be so, let posterity remember the warnings and the resistance of his and other powerful intellects, were probably in that event the appointed means for averting a catastrophe in which had England fallen, the whole civilised world must have been involved.

Sir Walter received a strictly religious education under the eye of parents, whose virtuous conduct was in unison with the principles they desired to instil into their children. From the great doctrines thus recommended he appears never to have swerved; but he must be numbered among the many who have incurred considerable risk in doing so, in consequence of the rigidity with which Presbyterian heads of families, in Scotland, were used to enforce compliance with various relics of the puritanical observance. He took up, early in life, a repugnance to the mode in which public worship is conducted in the Scottish Establishment; and adhered to the sister Church, whose system of government and discipline he believed to be the fairest copy of the primitive polity, and whose litanies and collects he reverenced as having been transmitted to us from the age immediately succeeding that of the Apostles. The few passages in his diaries, in which he alludes to his own religious feelings and practices, show clearly the sober, serene, and elevated frame of mind in which he habitually contemplated man's relations with his Maker the modesty with which he shrank from indulging either the presumption of reason, or the extravagance of imagination, in the province of Faith: his humble reliance on the wisdom and mercy of God: and his firm belief that we are placed in this state of existence, not to speculate about another, but to prepare ourselves for it by active exertion of our intellectual faculties, and the constant cultivation of kindness and benevolence towards our fellow-men.[1]

A Fairy's Funeral

There it was, on a little river island, that once, whether sleeping or waking we know not, we saw celebrated a Fairy's Funeral. First we heard small pipes playing as if no bigger than hollow rushes that whisper in the night winds; and more piteous than aught that trills from earthly instrument was the scarce audible dirge! It seemed to float over the stream, every foam-bell emitting a plaintive note, till the airy anthem came floating over our couch, and then alighted without footsteps among the heather. The pattering of little feet was then heard, as if living creatures were arranging themselves in order, and then there was nothing but a more ordered hymn. The harmony was like the melting of musical dewdrops, and sang, without words, of sorrow and death. We opened our eyes, or rather sight came to them when closed, and dream was vision! Hundreds of creatures, no taller than the crest of a lapwing, and all hanging down their veiled heads, stood in a circle on a green plot among the rocks; and in the midst was a bier, framed as it seemed of flowers unknown to the Highland hills; and on the bier a Fairy, lying with uncovered face, pale as the lily and motionless as the snow. The dirge grew fainter and fainter, and then died quite away; when two of the creatures came from the circle, and took their station, one at the head and the other at the foot of the bier. They sang alternate measures, not louder than the twittering of the awakened wood-lark before it goes up the dewy air, but dolorous and full of the desolation of death. The flower-bier stirred; for the spot on which it lay sank slowly down, and in a few moments the greensward was smooth as ever—the very dews glittering above the buried Fairy. A cloud passed over the moon, and, with a choral lament, the funeral troop sailed duskily away, heard afar off, so still was the midnight solitude of the glen. Then the disenthralled Orrby began to rejoice as before through all the streams and falls; and at the sudden leaping of the waters and outbursting of the moon, we awoke.

Age is the season of imagination: youth of passion: and having been long young, shall we repine that we are now old? They alone are rich who are full of years—the Lords of Time's Treasury are all on the staff of Wisdom: their commissions are enclosed in furrows on their foreheads, and secured to them for life. Fearless of fate, and far above fortune, they hold their heritage by the great charter of nature for behoof of all her children, who have not, like impatient heirs, to wait for their deceases; for every hour dispenses their wealth, and their bounty is not a late bequest but a perpetual benefaction. Death but sanctifies their gifts to gratitude and their worth is more clearly seen and profoundly felt within the solemn gloom of the grave.

And said we truly that Age is the season of Imagination? that Youth is the season of Passion your own beating and bounding hearts now tell you—your own boiling blood. Intensity is its characteristic; and it burns like a flame of fire, too often but to consume. Expansion of the soul is ours, with all its feelings and all its "thoughts, that wander through eternity"; nor needeth then the spirit to have wings, for power is given her, beyond the dove's or the eagle's, and no weariness can touch her on that heavenward flight.

Yet we are all of "the earth earthy," and young and old alike, must we love and honour our home. Your eyes are bright—ours are dim, but "it is the soul that sees," and "this diurnal sphere" is visible through the mist of tears. In that light how more than beautiful—how holy—appears even this world! All sadness, save of sin, is then most sacred and sin itself loses its terrors in repentance, which alas! is seldom perfect but in the near prospect of dissolution. For temptation may intercept her within a few feet of her expected rest, nay dash the dust from her hand that she has gathered from the burial-place to strew on her head; but Youth sees flowery fields and shining rivers far-stretching before her path, and cannot imagine for a moment that among life's golden mountains there is many a Place o. Tombs![2]

[1] Lockhart's *Life of Scott.*

[2] *The Recreations of Christopher North.*

II. PROSE: (*d*) HISTORY AND SOCIAL POLITICS. *History*: Mitford—Coxe—Roscoe—Lingard—Hallam—Napier—Milman. *Social Politics*: Godwin—Mary Wollstonecraft—Paine—Cobbett—Bentham—Adam Smith—Ricardo—Malthus.

INTRODUCTORY

An age of romanticism seems at first sight to favour such a study of the past, as would stimulate historical research; and in the long run it certainly does so. Scott did more than actualise and visualise folklore; he popularised history. He had the true historical spirit that seeks to harmonise the present and the past by showing that they are organically connected. Shelley and Landor brought before the modern reader the life and spirit of ancient Greece and Rome; Keats and Coleridge did as much as Scott, though in a different way, to make men understand the Catholic Middle Ages.

Yet the epoch is an arid one in historical literature; the promise of Gibbon's age had not been redeemed; and historical research makes no great move till we come to Macaulay and Carlyle.

How are we to reconcile these comparatively tenuous results, with the historical stimulus, so clearly given by the great romantic writers? The reply is that the best historical work of the time is not to be found in its formal histories but in its romances, its poems, its books of travel. In the African Travels of Mungo Park, and the Arctic Explorations of Parry; the historical novels of Scott and his many followers; the Eastern romances of Maturin; the Spanish verse of Southey, we shall best see the new interest imparted to history by romanticism. Spain, Germany, Italy, Greece, Persia, are no longer merely geographical names to the ordinary reader; they are centres of life, thought, and inspiration. Yet, if compared with other departments of literature, the roll of names in direct historical research is not an imposing one; it is none the less a useful and influential one; if we have no names to compare with Michelet in France and Niebuhr in Germany, yet such men as William Coxe, William Roscoe, John Lingard, and Henry Hallam did useful spade-work, along sounder lines than did the generation preceding.

Some of these men, therefore, claim consideration here, inasmuch as they prepared the soil for the generation that followed.

In Social Politics, there is more to be said. The age is peculiarly rich in speculative thought bearing upon political problems. Godwin and Paine try to impress upon English life the democratic theories of the French Revolution; Cobbett gives articulate expression to the cause of the agricultural poor; Bentham clarifies the confused medley of our jurisprudence; while Ricardo, and his rival Malthus, view economic conditions from a fresh and vigorous standpoint. Incidentally, also, the scholarship of Sir James Mackintosh, and the critical genius of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, add materially to the political theorising of the time, from a more conservative point of view.

HISTORY

WILLIAM MITFORD (1744–1827) has been hailed as a pioneer of Greek studies. He was an uncompromising Tory of the unphilosophic type, and as a narrative writer has some merit. Perhaps his chief claim to remembrance lies in the fact that he provoked Grote to write his big work.

Mitford, the friend of Gibbon, was a Tory Member of Parliament, and a colonel of Hampshire Militia. A certain liveliness of style gives interest of a kind to his work, which served to bridge the span between the great historians of the type of Gibbon, and the Victorian school of history that starts with Macaulay.

WILLIAM COXE (1747–1828) helped, by his ungrudging industry among the archives of Vienna, to provide us with the history of the Hapsburgs. His *History of the House of Austria and Memoirs of the Kings of Spain and the House of Bourbon* is still serviceable as a reference book, though largely superseded as a constructive history.

A more interesting figure is WILLIAM ROSCOE (1753–1831), a wealthy banker in the North of England, a man of artistic tastes and humanitarian sympathies. He made good use of the Italian archives in his *Life of Lorenzo de Medici*; and in so far as he deals with art rather than the social and religious life of the time, he proves a good guide.

JOHN LINGARD (1771–1851) was a devout Catholic, and it says much for his judicial manner that, despite a natural tendency to be one-sided, he succeeded in writing a *History of England* that could only annoy the extremists. It is really an admirable piece of work; not merely fair and generous in temper, but vivid and interesting. He revised his work in three successive editions, and though much of it—the mediæval and Stuart portion especially—gave a point of view that has long since fallen into decrepitude, his Reformation chapters have still a freshness and vitality even to-day. His style is clear and easy, his scholarship careful and judicious, and if he is frankly a man with a special point of view, yet these views are stated with breadth and moderation, and with a real attempt to get at original sources.

HENRY HALLAM (1777–1859) was judicial by nature, as Lingard was by design, and his scholarship was greater than that of the contemporaries of whom we have been speaking. He was a keen student of the politics of his time, though never a politician; and in his clear and cool presentment of history exhibited all the virtues as well as the accompanying defects of the trained lawyer. His *View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages* (1818) is an admirable piece of historical erudition and sobriety; while his *Constitutional History of England* (1827) still remains as a valuable storehouse for the modern historical student. In tone and temper he reminds

one more of the age of "common sense"; but in his study of original documents he shows that curiosity about the past which is one of the characteristics of romanticism.

No record of Hallam's work, however brief, can ignore his *Introduction to the Literature of Europe in the 15th, 16th, and 17th Centuries* (1837–39), a scholarly digest of the thought and culture of the West. The soberness of style and the coolness of manner that offend some full-blooded readers, incline one to do less than justice to a work that has many solid merits. The chief defect of the book lies in its arbitrary arrangement of subject matter, and in a certain dryness of treatment. It lacks perspective, and this in an introduction is a weighty drawback. But it is fair and scholarly, and in the treatment of more purely intellectual matter, valuable and interesting. He is broad and generous too, in many of his estimates, and can admire, genuinely and warmly, writers so diverse as Spenser and Rabelais.

The Literature of Europe

Spenser is naturally compared with Ariosto. "Fierce wars and faithful loves did moralize the song" of both poets. But in the constitution of their minds, in the character of their poetry, they were almost the reverse of each other. The Italian is gay; rapid, ardent; his pictures shift like the hues of heaven; even while diffuse, he seems to leave in an instant what he touches, and is prolix by the number, not the duration of his images. Spenser is habitually serious; his slow stanza seems to suit the temper of his genius; he loves to dwell on the sweetness and beauty which his fancy portrays. The ideal of chivalry, rather derived from its didactic theory than from the precedents of romance, is always before him; his morality is pure and even stern, with nothing of the libertine tone of Ariosto. He worked with far worse tools than the bard of Ferrara, with a language not quite formed, and into which he rather injudiciously poured an unnecessary archaism, while the style of his contemporaries was undergoing a rapid change in the opposite direction. His stanza of nine lines is particularly inconvenient and languid in narrowness, where the Italian octave is sprightly and vigorous; though even this becomes ultimately monotonous by its regularity, a fault from which only the ancient hexameter and our blank verse are exempt.

Spenser may be justly said to excel Ariosto in originality of invention, in force and variety of character, in strength and vividness of conception, in depth of reflection, in fertility of imagination, and above all, in that exclusively poetical cast of feeling which discerns in everything what common minds do not perceive. In the construction and arrangement of their fable neither deserves much praise; but the siege of Paris gives the *Orlando Furioso*, spite of its perpetual shiftings of the scene, rather more unity in the reader's apprehension than belongs to the *Faerie Queene*. Spenser is, no doubt, decidedly inferior in ease and liveliness of narration, as well as clearness and felicity of language. But upon thus comparing the two poets, we have little reason to blush for our countryman. Yet the fame of Ariosto is spread through Europe, while Spenser is almost unknown out of England; and even in this age, when much of our literature is so widely diffused, I have not observed proofs of much acquaintance with him on the Continent.

The language of Spenser, like that of Shakespeare, is an instrument manufactured for the sake of the work it was to perform. No other poet had written like either, though both have had their imitators. It is rather apparently obsolete by his partiality to certain disused forms, such as the *y* before the participle, than from any close resemblance to the diction of Chaucer or Lydgate. The enfeebling expletives *do* and *did*, though certainly very common in our early writers, had never been employed with such an unfortunate predilection as by Spenser. Their everlasting recurrence is among the great blemishes of his style. His versification is in many passages beautifully harmonious; but he has frequently permitted himself, whether for the sake of variety or from some other cause, to break the ear in the conclusion of a stanza.

The State of Europe

So long as the three great nations of Europe were unable to put forth their natural strength through internal separation or foreign war, the Italians had so little to dread for their independence that their policy was altogether directed to regulating the domestic balance of power among themselves. In the latter part of the fifteenth century a more enlarged view of Europe would have manifested the necessity of reconciling petty animosities and sacrificing petty ambition in order to preserve the nationality of their governments; not by attempting to melt down Lombards and Neapolitans, principalities and republics, into a single monarchy, but by the more just and rational scheme of a common federation. The politicians of Italy were abundantly competent, as far as coolness and understanding could render them, to perceive the interests of their country. But it is the will of Providence that the highest and surest wisdom, even in matters of policy, should never be unmingled with virtue. In relieving himself from an immediate danger, Ludovico Sforza overlooked the consideration that the presumptive heir of the king of France claimed by an ancient title that principality of Milan which he was compassing by usurpation and murder. But neither Milan nor Naples was free from other claimants than France, nor was she reserved to enjoy unmolested the spoil of Italy. A louder and louder strain of warlike dissonance will be heard from the banks of the Danube and from the Mediterranean gulf. The dark and wily Ferdinand, the rash and lively Maximilian, are preparing to hasten into the lists; the schemes of ambition are assuming a more comprehensive aspect; and the controversy of Neapolitan succession is to expand into the long rivalry between the houses of France and Austria. But here, while Italy is still untouched, and before as yet the first lances of France gleam along the defiles of the Alps, we close the history of the Middle Ages.

Sir William Napier was born in 1785 and died in 1860. His *History of the Peninsular War* (1828–40) is a brilliant and memorable piece of work.

Battle of Fuentes Onoro

It was Massena's intention to commence the attack at daybreak on the 5th, but a delay of two hours occurred, and all his movements were thwarted. The eighth corps, withdrawn from Almeida, and supported by all the French cavalry, was seen marching above the village of Poço Velho, which, with its swampy wood, was occupied by Houstoun's left, his right being thrown back in the plain towards Nava d'Aver. The sixth corps and Drouet's division took ground to their own left, still keeping a division in front of Fuentes Onoro, menacing that point; at this sight the light division and the English horse hastened to the support of Houstoun, while the first and third divisions made a movement parallel to that of the sixth corps. The latter, however, drove the left wing of the seventh division from the village of Poço Velho, and it was fast gaining ground in the wood also when the riflemen of the light division arriving there restored the fight. The French cavalry then passed Poço Velho and commenced forming in order of battle on the plain, between the wood and hill of Nava d'Aver where Julian Sanchez was posted. He immediately rolled across the Turones, partly in fear, but more in anger, because his lieutenant, having foolishly ridden close up to the enemy making many violent gestures, was mistaken for a French officer and shot by a soldier of the guards before the action commenced.

Montbrun occupied himself with this weak partida for an hour, and when the guerilla chief was gone, turned the

right of the seventh division, and charged the British cavalry, which had moved up to its support; the combat was unequal, for by an abuse too common, so many men had been drawn from the ranks as orderlies to general officers, and for other purposes, that not more than a thousand English troopers were in the field. The French therefore drove in all the cavalry outguards at the first shock, cut off Ramsay's battery of horse artillery, and came sweeping in upon the reserves of cavalry and upon the seventh division. Their leading squadrons, approaching in a disorderly manner, were partially checked by fire, but a great commotion was observed in their main body; men and horses were seen to close with confusion and tumult towards one point, where a thick dust and loud cries, and the sparkling of blades, and flashing of pistols, indicated some extraordinary occurrence. Suddenly the multitude became violently agitated, an English shout pealed high and clear, the mass was rent asunder, and Norman Ramsay burst forth, sword in hand, at the head of his battery. His horses, breathing fire, stretched like greyhounds along the plain, the guns bounded behind them like things of no weight, and the mounted gunners followed close, with heads bent low and pointed weapons in desperate career. Captain Brotherton of the Fourteenth Dragoons, seeing this, instantly rode forth and with his squadron shocked the head of the pursuing troops, and General Charles Stewart, joining in the charge, took the French Colonel Lamotte, fighting hand to hand; but then the main body of the French came on strongly and the British cavalry retired behind the light division, which was immediately thrown into squares. The seventh division, which was more advanced, did the same, but the horsemen were upon them first and some were cut down. The mass however stood firm, and the Chasseurs Britanniques, ranged behind a loose stone wall, poured such a fire that their foes recoiled and seemed bewildered.[1]

HENRY HART MILMAN (1791–1868) in his *History of Latin Christianity* made a notable pioneer attempt to apply historical methods to a subject hitherto ruled overmuch by religious prepossessions.

HISTORY OF LATIN CHRISTIANITY

The history of Christianity cannot be understood without pausing at stated periods to survey the progress and development of Christian mythology, which, gradually growing up and springing as it did from natural and universal instincts, took a more perfect and systematic form, and at length, at the height of the Middle Ages, was as much a part of Latin Christianity as the primal truths of the Gospel. This growth, which had long before begun, had reached a kind of adolescence in the age of Gregory, to expand into full maturity during succeeding ages. Already the creeds of the Church formed but a small portion of Christian belief. The highest and most speculative questions of theology, especially in Alexandria and Constantinople, had become watchwords of strife and faction, had stirred the passions of the lowest orders; the two Natures, or the single or double Will in Christ, had agitated the workshop of the artisan and the seats in the Circus. But when these great questions had sunk into quiescence, or, as in Latin Christianity, had never so fully occupied the general mind; when either the triumph of one party, or the general weariness, had worn out their absorbing interest, the religious mind subsided into its more ordinary occupations, and these bore but remote relation to the sublime truths of the Divine Unity and the revelation of God in Christ. As God the Father had receded, as it were, from the sight of man into a vague and unapproachable sanctity; as the human soul had been entirely centred on the more immediate divine presence in the Saviour; so the Saviour himself might seem to withdraw from the actual, at least the exclusive, devotion of the human heart, which was busied with intermediate objects of worship. Christ assumed gradually more and more of the awfulness, the immateriality, the incomprehensibleness, of the Deity, and men sought out beings more akin to themselves, more open, it might seem, to human sympathies. The Eucharist, in which the Redeemer's spiritual presence, yet undefined and unrecognized, was directly and immediately in communion with the soul, had become more and more wrapped in mystery; though the great crowning act of faith, the interdiction of which was almost tantamount to a sentence of spiritual death, was more rarely approached, except by the clergy. Believers delighted in those ceremonials to which they might have recourse with less timidity; the shrines and the relics of martyrs might deign to receive the homage of those who were too profane to tread the holier ground. Already the worship of these lower objects of homage begins to intercept that of the higher; the popular mind is filling with images either not suggested at all, or suggested but very dimly, by the sacred writings; legends of saints are supplanting, or rivalling at least, in their general respect and attention, the narratives of the Bible.

[1] Napier's *History of the Peninsular War*

SOCIAL POLITICS

WILLIAM GODWIN, the friend and inspirer of Shelley, was born in 1756, and for a few years did work as a Nonconformist minister. His religious interests soon waned, and he turned to literature, where he achieved no insignificant position among the writers of the day as a novelist, and a very high one as a political thinker.

His first important book is the *Enquiry concerning Political Justice*, directly inspired by the French Revolution. Anarchistic in theory, it yet deprecates violence. No revolutionary axiom to do away with existing laws, ever relied more on sweet reasonableness than did Godwin. In his remarkable novel *Caleb Williams* (1794), Godwin pursues his favourite ideas, the tyranny of government and the beneficence of reason, but his story interests far less for its crude philosophy than for the undoubted power he showed in conducting a tale and arresting the reader's imagination by its picturesque appeal and happy inventiveness. The character of Falkland is no lay figure, he is unmistakably alive, despite the author's painstaking attempts to kill him by argument.

Two years later a volume of *Essays on Education, Manners, and Literature* added to his political notoriety if not to his literary reputation. In 1797 he married Mary Wollstonecraft, the legal ceremony being complied with because "of Mary's being in a state of pregnancy." His second novel, *St. Leon*, appeared in 1799, and deals with ordinary human passions in extraordinary situations. A painstaking and, in some ways, useful *Life of Chaucer* followed in 1803; and his third novel, *Fleetwood*, in 1804; of philosophy there is little here, but the story is not so well told as in the case of its predecessors, despite its good scientific touches, and suggestions—never absent from Godwin's fiction—of real psychological insight.

His second experiment in matrimony occurred in 1801, and was led up to by a tactful exhibition of hero-worship when the gushing lady (a next-door neighbour) addressed the widowed philosopher from her balcony thus: "Is it possible that I behold the immortal Godwin?" The "immortal Godwin" responded handsomely by making her the mother of his second child.

In 1805 he started a bookseller's shop under the name of Edward Baldwin; both Charles Lamb and Hazlitt interested themselves in this venture, but nothing that Godwin undertook ever shaped as a commercial success.

None of his later writings, many and diverse as they are, approach the earlier in intellectual vigour or artistic skill. His experiments in the drama were dismal failures, his ambitiously planned *History of the Commonwealth* (1824–28) proved greatly beyond his powers, though the subject interested him intensely, and he spared no trouble over the work. But he lost himself in details, and the work has no perspective.

Cloudesley (1830) is the weakest and poorest of his novels.

Up to the last he interested himself in metaphysics, but his powers were failing, though he produced indefatigably up to the end.

Godwin's personality reminds us of an intellectual Micawber, with much of Micawber's imperturbability and happy-go-luckiness, certainly more brain power and as certainly less geniality.

The impression Godwin's philosophy made upon the youthful student of the age, may be gathered not merely from Shelley's ecstatic letters, but from Hazlitt's racy and vital sketch in *The Spirit of the Age*.

"Tom Paine," exclaims Hazlitt, "was considered for the time a Tom fool to him, Paley an old woman, Edmund Burke a fleshy sophist. Truth, moral truth, it was supposed had here taken up its abode, and these are the oracles of thought."

This glorifier of "abstract reason" for the rule of conduct had certainly many temperamental qualities for his post. The passionate emotions, of which he disapproved as philosopher, were remote from his tranquil jog-trotting disposition. If he was willing to dispense with all the props of social and political convention, he showed not the faintest desire to pursue any course that failed to commend itself to his logical judgment. For the erratic soul he had one infailing recipe: Reason with him, don't punish him. Show him that he is wrong and he will go right, since right-doing is so much more advantageous than wrong-doing. The crucial question in any line of conduct is, what brings about the happiness of the majority? That is the only duty worth considering. Morality therefore is a mere estimate of consequences. You cannot bring about happiness by coercion, for coercion is unreasonable; and since Government can only exist by coercion, Government is unreasonable. So trustful is he in the sweet reasonableness of the most perverse, that he contended you have only to prove to a man that his vices are unreasonable, and he will straightway abandon them.

Godwin's dialectics may seem absurd to us to-day, who have no belief in the manufacture of saints out of syllogisms, but the Idealisation of Reason, the glorification of individual freedom, involved in Godwinism, had its attractive and suggestive side. That it should have appealed to Shelley as strongly as it did is not remarkable, when we recollect the abstract, metaphysical trend of the poet's mind. In Shelley's brain the unimpassioned theories of his friend took fire; and fed by an ardent humanitarian sentiment, and glorified by an exquisite sensitiveness to beauty, the philosophy lost in process of time much of its crudeness. For at bottom it was Love and not Reason that Shelley relied upon as the final test of worth, and as the great uniting bond that is to take the place of external compulsion.

Although Godwin's insistence on the quality of external persuasion was pursued to farcical limits, it was an element that up to a point needed emphasis. There is value also in his substitution of logical persuasion for dictatorial commands in education. In fact, dispassionately considered there are many wholesome truths in Godwin's writings, if we can only disengage them from the really comic extravagances by which he sought to develop them.

Godwin's influence upon his age is undoubtedly a powerful one, and even Wordsworth's later work shows traces of it. To the general reader he will appeal more on account of his fiction; the influence of his doctrinaire romances affected the next generation of story-tellers, notably Bulwer Lytton.

Political Justice

Justice is a rule of conduct originating in the connection of one percipient being with another. A comprehensive maxim which has been laid down upon the subject is, "That we should love our neighbour as ourselves." But this maxim, though possessing considerable merit as a popular principle, is not modelled with the strictness of philosophical accuracy.

In a loose and general view I and my neighbour are both of us men; and of consequence entitled to equal attention. But in reality it is probable that one of us is a being of more worth and importance than the other. A man is of more worth than a beast, because, being possessed of higher faculties, he is capable of a more refined and genuine happiness. In the same manner the illustrious archbishop of Cambray was of more worth than his valet, and there are few of us who would hesitate to pronounce, if his palace were in flames, and the life of only one of them could be preserved, which of the two ought to be preferred.

But there is another ground of preference, besides the private consideration of one of them being farther removed from the state of a mere animal. We are not connected with one or two percipient beings, but with a society, a nation, and in some sense with the whole family of mankind. Of consequence that life ought to be preferred which will be most conducive to the general good. In saving the life of Fenelon, suppose at the moment he conceived the project of his immortal Telemachus, I should have been promoting the benefit of thousands, who have been cured by the perusal of that work of some error, vice and consequent unhappiness. Nay, my benefit would extend farther than this, for every individual, thus cured, has become a better member of society and has contributed in his turn to the happiness and information of others.

Suppose I had been myself the valet; I ought to have chosen to die, rather than Fenelon should have died. The life of Fenelon was really preferable to that of the valet. But understanding is the faculty that perceives the truth of this and similar propositions; and justice is the principle that regulates my conduct accordingly. It would have been just in the valet to have preferred the archbishop to himself. To have done otherwise would have been a breach of justice.

Suppose the valet had been my brother, my father or my benefactor. This would not alter the truth of the proposition. The life of Fenelon would still be more valuable than that of the valet; and justice, pure, unadulterated justice, would still have preferred that which is most valuable. Justice would have taught me to save the life of Fenelon at the expense of

the other. What magic is there in the pronoun "my" to overturn the decisions of impartial truth? My brother or my father may be a fool, or a prodigate, malicious, lying or dishonest. If they be, of what consequence is it that they are mine?

"But to my father I am indebted for existence; he supported me in the helplessness of infancy." When he first subjected himself to the necessity of these cares, he was probably influenced by no particular motives of benevolence to his future offspring. Every voluntary benefit, however, entitles the bestower to some kindness and retribution. Why so? Because a voluntary benefit is an evidence of benevolent intention, real or, in a certain degree, of virtue. It is the disposition of the mind, not the external action separately taken, that entitles to respect. But the merit of this disposition is equal, whether the benefit were conferred upon me or upon another. I and another man cannot both be right in preferring our individual benefactor, for no man can be at the same time both better and worse than his neighbour. My benefactor ought to be esteemed, not because he bestowed it upon a human being. His desert will be in exact proportion to the degree, in which that human being was worthy of the distinction conferred.

Thus every view of the subject brings us back to the consideration of my neighbour's moral worth and his importance to the general weal, as the only standard to determine the treatment to which he is entitled. Gratitude therefore, if by gratitude we understand a sentiment of preference which I entertain towards another, upon the ground of my having been the subject of his benefits, is no part either of justice or virtue.

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT was fully as vigorous and influential a thinker in her way as Godwin, and was certainly a more striking personality. Born in London, in April 1759, Mary's earliest years were spent in the neighbourhood of Epping Forest. Her father was a spendthrift and a drunkard who alternately bullied and neglected his children, and the girls were left to their own devices to grow up as best they might. Happily for them they were sturdy in physique and lived much in the open air. Later on, Mary picked up a fragmentary education at some day school near Beverley in Yorkshire, where the family migrated in 1768—for restlessness was always driving her parent to seek better luck elsewhere.

Mary read eagerly any book that came in her way, and at the age of fifteen met with a cultured and attractive girl, who for several years was an important factor in her life.

She was a girl of ardent temperament, and Frances Blood became the object of enthusiastic admiration and affection. Through Frances Blood Mary learnt to write and spell, and mastered the elements of self-expression. Her strength of character was soon put to the test when the weak-minded mother turned to the neglected daughter for shelter from the violence of her drunken husband. The story of these years has been written in the *Wrongs of Women*, and we can judge from that passionate screed that the worthless father was not the only contemptible male that it was Mary's lot to encounter. The failure of her sister Eliza's marriage, the tragic desolation of her friend Fanny's love episode, and of her own domestic life, made repeated calls on Mary's courage and sympathy.

Later on she started a school, and if her intellectual qualities were not great, what is more important, her power of sympathetic discernment and intelligent guidance was considerable.

An introduction to the gruff golden-hearted Johnson might have been productive had it not taken place during the last few months of his life. As it was, his kindliness and friendly interest served to provide Mary with one of her few gracious memories of our sex. Another Johnson, a publisher, then came into her life. He had been struck by her mental powers, and remarkable personality, and offered her work. Under his auspices she learned French and German, made translations, read and reported on them, and wrote several original works, including her famous *Rights of Women*. Practically all her money was absorbed by her needy relations; had it not been for this constant drain upon her earnings, she would have at least been able to live in comfort. Fuseli, the celebrated Swiss painter, took a great interest in her at one time, and she felt more than a passing interest for him. However, he was already married, so to put him out of her mind she went across to Paris. Here she met Gilbert Imlay, a quondam American captain, and a man of letters in a small way. With him she fell deeper in love, and at the outset the affection seems to have been a mutual one. But Imlay was of the type of man who loves and rides away; he was not only a thoroughly bad lot, but he was a weak and contemptible creature, and nothing but tragedy could have resulted from a woman of Mary's temperament putting all her happiness into this man's hands. She had no belief in marriage as a legal institution, and was content to live with him, though it was quite clear she considered the bond between them as sacred as the marriage bond. After he had left her, as she soon discovered, for another mistress, her agony of spirit was for a time overwhelming. But force of character and her innate vitality carried her through the ordeal, while the story of her courtship and marriage by Godwin, despite its lack of romance, had its agreeable and comforting side. The marriage was somewhat like the marriage of Charlotte Brontë; it brought her into a haven, though not the haven of her dreams, and just as it seemed to assume some measure of happiness, was cut short by death. She died at the age of thirty-eight, after giving birth to a girl, afterwards Mary Shelley; cut off in the maturity of her powers.

Mary's early literary ventures were inspired by Johnsonian tradition; an unhappy one for a woman of her ardent temperament and sensitive feelings; so we need not tremble greatly about *The Education of Daughters*, *Mary*, or the *Stories for Children*. They are burdened with a sententiousness which is assumed, because it is felt to be a proper vehicle for prose. All that is really original in Mary is repressed; and what remains is a residuum of stale commonplace that Harriet More herself could not have worsened.

Mary's real contribution to literature is the *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, and its originality can best be understood when it is read in the light of that time and not in the light of to-day. There is little charm in the writing, but the force and

cogency of much of the reasoning is undeniable; and its courage amazing.

The *Letters to Gilbert Imlay* show the passionate intensity of her nature, and are vastly preferable to the carefully prepared *Letters from Sweden, Norway and Denmark*.

Her two experiments in fiction, *Mary* and *The Wrongs of Woman*, show clearly that she had not the making of a novelist. To say she lacked imagination would be untrue, but it was like a tongue of flame with no subtleties of shade; she had no plasticity of mind, no play of fancy; and her ideal of womanhood, though sound and sensible in substance, would have gained in attraction had it been leavened with some sense of humour and tenderness. It may seem curious to accuse her of this, but, good at heart and kind and unselfish as she was, there exists a certain hard quality in her temperament that makes itself felt in her writings.

The Rights of Woman

I may be told that great as this enormity is, it only affects a devoted part of the sex—devoted for the salvation of the rest. But, false as every assertion might easily be proved, that recommends the sanctioning a small evil to produce a greater good: the mischief does not stop here, for the moral character, and peace of mind of the dissolute part of the sex, is undermined by the conduct of the very women to whom they allow no refuge from guilt: whom they inexorably consign to the exercise of arts that lure their husbands from them, debauch their sons, and force them, let not modest women start, to assume, in some degree, the same character themselves. For I will venture to assert, that all the causes of female weakness, as well as depravity, which I have already enlarged on, branch out of one grand cause—want of chastity in men.

I have before observed, that men ought to maintain the women whom they have seduced: this would be one means of reforming female manners, and stopping an abuse that has an equally fatal effect on population and morals. Another, no less obvious, would be to turn the attention of woman to the real virtue of chastity; for in little respect has that woman a claim, on the score of modesty, though her reputation may be white as the driven snow, who smiles on the libertine whilst she spurns the victims of his lawless appetites and their own folly.

The two sexes mutually corrupt and improve each other. This I believe to be an indisputable truth, extending it to every virtue. Chastity, modesty, public spirit, and all the noble train of virtues, on which social virtue and happiness are built, should be understood and cultivated by all mankind, or they will be cultivated to little effect. And, instead of furnishing the vicious or idle with a pretext for violating some sacred duty, by terming it a sexual one, it would be wiser to show that nature has not made any difference, for that the unchaste man doubly defeats the purpose of nature, by rendering women barren, and destroying his own constitution, though he avoids the shame that pursues the crime in the other sex. These are the physical consequences, the moral are still more alarming; for virtue is only a nominal distinction when the duties of citizens, husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, and directors of families, become merely the selfish ties of convenience.

Extract from Letters to Gilbert Imlay

The melancholy presentiment has for some time hung on my spirits, that we were parted for ever; and the letters I received this day, by Mr. ——, convince me that it was not without foundation. You allude to some other letters, which I suppose have miscarried; for most of those I have got, were only a few hasty lines, calculated to wound the tenderness the sight of the superscriptions excited.

I mean not however to complain; yet so many feelings are struggling for utterance, and agitating a heart almost bursting with anguish, that I find it very difficult to write with any degree of coherence.

You left me indisposed, though you have taken no notice of it; and the most fatiguing journey I ever had, contributed to continue it. However, I recovered my health; but a neglected cold, and continual inquietude during the last two months, have reduced me to a state of weakness I never before experienced. Those who did not know that the canker-worm was at work at the core, cautioned me about suckling my child too long—God preserve the poor child, and render her happier than her mother!

But I am wandering from my subject: indeed my head turns giddy, when I think that all the confidence I have had in the affection of others is come to this—I did not expect this blow from you. I have done my duty to you and my child; and if I am not to have any return of affection to reward me, I have the sad consolation of knowing that I deserved a better fate. My soul is weary—I am sick at heart; and, but for this little darling, I would cease to care about a life, which is now stripped of every charm.

Thomas Paine, born in 1737, was the son of a Quaker staymaker in Norfolk. This Radical firebrand was by turns staymaker, sailor, schoolmaster, exciseman, and tobacconist. It was as exciseman that he first appeared in print, pleading for an increase of wages (1772). In 1774 he went to America, and in his pamphlet, *Common Sense*, published two years later, argues powerfully for absolute independence. He took active part in the revolution, and was rewarded by Congress with the post of Secretary to the Committee of Foreign Affairs. During this strenuous time he did a good deal of pamphleteering with the object of inspiring the rebels, and subsequently went on a mission to France, obtaining, in 1781, a public salary for his political services. In 1787 he came back to England, and a few years later published a spirited reply to Burke's famous *Reflections upon the French Revolution*. This book, *The Rights of Man*, of which a million and a half copies were sold, became one of the most popular works of the day; appealing to the average man much as *Political Justice* appealed to the thinker of the day. It brought trouble among many concerned in its dissemination. Paine himself avoided difficulties by running off to Paris, where he was elected as Deputy of Pas-de-Calais to the National Convention. He angered the Robespierre party, however, by offering "an asylum in America" to King Louis XVI. Paine was thrown into prison, where he remained for nearly a year, being liberated on the request of the American Minister.

Part of Paine's *Age of Reason*, a vigorous plea for Deism as against Christianity, was written at this time, and alienated a good many of his friends. After his release he attacked Washington as a man of affairs, and showed general bitterness towards America for its acquiescence, as he deemed it, in his lengthy imprisonment. On his return to America in 1802, he was welcomed by a few, but shunned and execrated by the many. His combative spirit, sharpened with age and opposition, was constantly involving him in some political or religious wrangle. Recklessness of living led to financial impoverishment, and in 1809 he died at New York.

He had the merits and failings of the sincere demagogue: courage, passion, vanity, a mixture of shrewd insight and amazing ignorance.

RIGHTS OF MAN

To understand the nature and quantity of government proper for man, it is necessary to attend to the character. As nature created him for social life, she fitted him for the station she intended. In all cases she made his natural wants greater than his individual powers. No one man is capable, without the aid of society, of supplying his own wants; and those wants acting upon every individual, impel the whole of them into society, as naturally as gravitation acts on the centre.

But she has gone further. She has not only forced man into society by a diversity of wants which the reciprocal aid of each other can supply, but she has implanted in him a system of social affections, which, though not necessary to his existence, are essential to his happiness. There is no period in life when this love for society ceases to act. It begins and ends with our being.

If we examine with attention into the composition and constitution of man, the diversity of his wants, and diversity of talents in different men for reciprocally accommodating the wants of each other, his propensity to society, and consequently to preserve the advantages resulting from it, we shall easily discover that a great part of what is called government is mere imposition.

Government is no farther necessary than to supply the few cases to which society and civilisation are not conveniently competent; and instances are not wanting to show that everything which government can usefully add thereto has been performed by the common consent of society, without government.

For upwards of two years from the commencement of the American war, and to a longer period in several of the American states, there were no established forms of government. The old governments had been abolished, and the country was too much occupied in defence to employ its attention to establishing new governments; yet during this interval order and harmony were preserved as inviolate as in any country in Europe. There is a natural aptness in man, and more so in society, because it embraces a greater variety of abilities and resource, to accommodate itself to whatever situation it is in. The instant formal government is abolished, society begins to act. A general association takes place, and common interest produces common security.

WILLIAM COBBETT, born at Farnham in 1762, was the son of a farmer and the grandson of a farm labourer. He had a simple, rustic upbringing that left vivid and deep impressions upon his eager and impressionable mind. Here is a little passage of autobiography to show this:

"When I was a little boy I was, in the harley sowing season, going along by the side of a field near Waverley Abbey; the primroses and bluebells bespangling the banks on both sides of me, a thousand linnets singing in a spreading oak over my head, while the jingle of the traces and the whistling of the ploughboys saluted my ear from over the hedge; and, as it were to snatch me from the enchantment, the hounds at that instant having started a hare in the hanger on the other side of the field, came up scampering over it in full cry, taking me after them many a mile. I was not more than eight years old, but this particular scene has presented itself to my mind many times every year from that day to this. I always enjoy it over again."

He grew up a sturdy, honest Saxon yeoman with a passion for adventure that found numerous outlets. As a boy he had run away to Kew with sixpence-halfpenny in his pocket, and been rescued by a Scotchman. It is characteristic of him that half of this capital should have been spent on Swift's *Tale of a Tub*. He tried the Navy, then the lawyer's office, enlisting as a soldier at twenty-three. In this capacity he showed his natural combativeness by attacking the abuses of army administration; then exhibited his thirst for change by going to America, where he married a girl he met in New Brunswick. He was better able there to express his strong Radical views without interference, and this he did for the next eight years, in fine racy English, under the *nom-de-plume* of Peter Porcupine. This name had been flung at him for obvious reasons, and he accepted it without demur. He taught English to French emigrants, and upheld as against the Republican, English political institutions—Kings, Lords, and Commons.

At last, finding himself involved in libel suits, he crossed the water again, and was eagerly sought after by the Tories, who saw in his partisanship and powerful pen a possible source of strength. But he was not to be bought, and when offered the proprietorship of a paper by a Government official said, quoting the fable of the Wolf and Mastiff: "No, if I cannot be fat I will at least be free. No one loves chains, though they be made of gold."

The famous weekly journal, *The Political Register*, was in its inception a Government organ (1802), but Cobbett's independent spirit soon asserted itself. He was free and impressionable, but that did not stay his pen, and after the war he came to the help of the Radicals in his plea for Constitutional Reform. He was now a great political force and a popular personality, especially in the Midlands and North of England.

The Government at this time were taking strong and arbitrary measures to suppress political meetings, and to escape imprisonment without trial he went across to America again, continuing to write from there. On his return to England in 1819, three months after the Peterloo Massacre, he was received with great enthusiasm. Among the measures he advocated were—a free press, right of public meeting, abolition of the game laws, and parliamentary reform. He was returned for Oldham in 1832. To the last he retained his love of the country and country life, and never lost sight of the lot of the agricultural labourer, whose cause he espoused with the same pertinacity as Francis Place did that of the town artisan. In 1835 he fell ill, but despite diminishing strength he wrote and worked to the very last.

A rugged, honest, and upright figure, William Cobbett achieved a splendid work in helping to break down privilege and oppression. Of peasant stock, he understood his people thoroughly, and by his manliness and independence helped to free them from the servility, ignorance, and apathy in which, as a class, he found them.

Cobbett was an extraordinarily voluminous writer, his writings occupying about fifty volumes; and a very versatile one, for he touched on history, politics, economics, religion, grammar, cooking, gardening, and art. Dogmatic and egotistical and insular he may be, but the remarkable thing about his work is not that it is sometimes wrong-headed, that must needs be so considering the variety of subjects he tackled, but that he is so often sugge-

tive and illuminating. For he had a strong and keen intellect, passionate humanitarian sympathy, and a rarely excellent command of fine, racy English.

His writings include thirty volumes of *The Weekly Register*, twelve volumes of "Peter Porcupine's" lucubrations, and two volumes of *Rural Rides*—delightful pictures of rustic life.

In all of his work he is frankly the partisan with grievances to air and wrongs to redress. Many of his papers are nothing more than vigorous tracts with titles that certainly strike the eye—e.g. *A Bone to Gnaw for the Democrats*, *A Kick for a Bite*. His prejudices, if occasionally leading him to such absurd statements as "Lincolnshire alone contains more fine churches than the whole continent of Europe," are most entertaining.

Among his "imperfect sympathies," to borrow Lamb's phrase, are *Poverty*, *Potatoes*, *Scotchmen*, and *Tea*. He sturdily upheld a purely agricultural society, and preached the gospel of work with as much energy as Carlyle. The Utopia he fashions is a homely, domestic one: an early marriage, plenty of beer, good, warm clothes, and a well-furnished house. Add to these advantages an established church that looked after the poor, a militia to defend the country, and uniformity of taxation; and you have Cobbett's ideal of what English life might be.

Here are one or two characteristic flashes:

On the Turnip: "If they really did come from Scotland, there is something good that is Scotch."

"Any beer is better than water: it should have some strength, and some weeks of age, at any rate."

The savour has departed necessarily from much of his political pamphleteering; though it remains to show us how doughtily he could fight. But Cobbett does not depend on these for his posthumous fame, and in his *Rural Rides* and his *Advice to a Young Man*, there are many passages of striking sense and genuine poetic feeling, that may be read with pleasure and profit to-day. Moreover, in these books you have a summing up of Cobbett's philosophy of life—the philosophy of a sound, coarse-fibred, warm-blooded man of the people. The youth, the lover, the husband, the father, the citizen are admonished in turn; and extravagant and absurd as may be the manner in which at times he tenders his advice, it is always the advice of an upright, good-hearted man. Coldness and timidity move him to impatience; the money-making spirit to anger. His attitude towards women is typical of Cobbett. Treat her well, don't run off to clubs, look after baby, at the same time see that she is dutiful. "control if necessary" her tongue: and if she plays you false, bundle her out of the house. His ideal man may strike many as somewhat noisy and overbearing, and too much of a big animal; but if lacking in the graces, and over-fond of beer and bacon, he is at any rate a straight, affectionate fellow, redolent of the earth and the open air; frank, open-hearted and courageous.

The man who wrote *Rural Rides* had a clean, sweet imagination; and the author of the *Advice to Young Men and Women* good common-sense and integrity of purpose.

Rural Rides

At Bower I got instructions to go to Hawkley, but accompanied with most earnest advice not to go that way, for that it was impossible to get along. The roads were represented as so bad, the floods so much out, the hills and bogs so dangerous, that really I began to *doubt*; and if I had not been brought up amongst the clays of the Holt Forest and the bogs of the neighbouring heaths, I should certainly have turned off to my right, to go over Hindhead, great as was my objection to going that way. "Well, then," said my friend at Bower, "if you will go that way, by G—, you must go down '*Hawkley Hanger*'"; of which he then gave me such a description! But even this I found to fall short of the reality. I inquired simply whether *people were in the habit* of going down it; and the answer being in the affirmative, on I went through green lanes and bridle-ways till I came to the turnpike road from Petersfield to Winchester, which I crossed, going into a narrow and almost untrodden green lane, on the side of which I found a cottage. Upon my asking the way to *Hawkley*, the woman at the cottage said, "Right up the lane, sir; you'll come to a *hanger* presently: you must take care, sir: you can't ride down: will your horses *go alone?*"

On we trotted up this pretty green lane; and, indeed, we had been coming gently and gradually uphill for a good while. The lane was between highish banks and pretty high stuff growing on the banks, so that we could see no distance from us, and could receive not the smallest hint of what was so near at hand. The lane had a little turn towards the end; so that out we came, all in a moment, at the very edge of the hanger! And never in all my life was I so surprised and so delighted! I pulled up my horse, and sat and looked; and it was like looking from the top of a castle down into the sea, except that the valley was land and not water. I looked at my servant, to see what *effect* this unexpected sight had upon him. His surprise was as great as mine, though he had been bred amongst the North Hampshire hills. Those who have so strenuously dwelt in the dirt and dangers of this route had not a word about beauties, the matchless beauties of the scenery. These hangers are woods on the sides of very steep hills. The trees and underwood hang, in some sort, to the ground, instead of *standing* on it. Hence these places are called *Hangers*. From the summit of that which I had now to descend, I looked down upon the villages of Hawkley, Greatham, Selborne and some others.

A Year's Residence in America

When I returned to England in 1800, after an absence from the country parts of it, of sixteen years, the trees, the hedges, even the parks and woods, seemed so small! It made me laugh to hear little gutters that I could jump over called rivers! The Thames was but a "creek"! But when, in about a month after my arrival in London, I went to Farnham, the place of my birth, what was my surprise! Everything was become so prettily small! I had to cross, in my post-chaise, the long and dreary heath to Bagshot; then, at the end of it, to mount a hill called Hungry Hill; and from that hill I knew that I should look down into the beautiful and fertile vale of Farnham. My heart fluttered with impatience, mixed with a sort of fear, to see all the scenes of my childhood; for I had learned before of the death of my father and mother. There is a hill not far from the town, called Crooksbury Hill, which rises up out of a flat in the form of a cone, and is planted with Scotch fir-trees. How I used to take the eggs and young nests of rooks and magpies. This hill was a famous object in the neighbourhood. It served as the superlative degree of height. "As high as Crooksbury Hill" meant, with us, the utmost degree of height. Therefore the first object that my eyes sought was this hill. I could not believe my eyes! Literally speaking, I for a moment thought the famous hill removed, and a little heap put in its stead; for I had seen in New Brunswick a single rock, or hill of solid rock, ten times as big,

and four or five times as high! The post-boy going downhill, and on a bad road, whisked me in a few minutes to the Bush Inn, from the garden of which I could see the prodigious sandhill where I had begun my gardening work. What a nothing! But now came rushing into my mind all at once my pretty little garden, my little blue smock-frock, my little nailed shoes, my pretty pigeons that I used to feed out of my hands, the last kind words and tears of my gentle and tender-hearted and affectionate mother! I hastened back into the room. If I had looked a moment longer I should have dropped. When I came to reflect, what a change! I looked down at my dress! What scenes I had gone through! How altered my state! I had dined the day before at a secretary of state's in company with Mr. Pitt, and had been waited upon by men in gaudy liveries! I had had nobody to assist me in the world. No teachers of any sort. Nobody to shelter me from the consequences of bad and no one to counsel me in good behaviour. I felt proud. The distinctions of rank, birth, and wealth all became nothing in my eyes; and from that moment—less than a month after my arrival in England—I resolved never to bend before them.

Jeremy Bentham (1747–8 (?)–1832)

His Life

"Pushing," counselled Bentham senior, "is the one thing needful." "If you mean to rise," said another inspiring mentor to the youthful Jeremy, "catch hold of the skirts of those above you, and care nothing for those beneath you." The advice has the merit of engaging frankness; there is nothing equivocal about it. Neither gentleman wraps up self-seeking in pious ambiguities. Jeremy Bentham himself never stated a case with greater clarity and conciseness, and thus the young philosopher was able to join issue at the very outset with his advisers. Nothing could have been better for a nervous, delicate, and sympathetic lad than to hear the case for success in life formulated with such brutal directness.

Jeremy Bentham was born in February 1747 (or 1748 ?), in Red Lion Square, Houndsditch, and when we realise that the great-grandfather was a successful pawnbroker and both grandfather and father rich attorneys, we shall be at no loss to understand the rule of life that was early dinned into him. As a boy, he was quick at learning, and at the age of six we find him wrestling precociously with Latin, Greek, and French. Much of his time was spent at Bowring Hill, near Reading, and in possible anticipation of future fights with the old House of Commons, he took great delight in brandishing "against the rats an historic and sacred sword used at Oxford against the parliamentary forces."

His parents did their best to keep all amusing books from the boy, and his youthful imagination had to gather what fun and fancy it could from Burnet's *History of the Earth*, Cave's *Lives of the Apostles*, and Stow's *Chronicle*. After this solid fare, no doubt he found *Gil Blas*, Rapin's *History of England*, Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*, and Plutarch's *Lives*, light and frolicsome by comparison.

Gil Blas, with its picturesque humour, must have proved a godsend; even *Clarissa Harlowe*, a copy of which came his way, would have stimulated the sentimental side of his nature. His Oxford days were not noteworthy, and the most exciting event that happened to him seems to have been escaping from a window on one occasion to avoid the importunities of a talkative lady, who had designs for her daughter. From Oxford he went to Lincoln's Inn, but he never took kindly to law, and was horrified at the exorbitant charges to suitors. It was characteristic of him that in his first case he should have advised his client to "put an end to the suit and save the money which would be wasted over it." This is not the stuff of which successful lawyers are made, and it is scarcely necessary to add that he made no mark in his profession.

His first publication was his *Fragment on Government* in 1776, this was followed up in 1783 by a translation of Bergman's *Essay on the Utility of Chemistry*, and in 1787 by his characteristic *Defence of Usury*.

Especially important years were those between 1789 and 1800. During this time he met James Mill and Francis Place, both of whom he inspired with his individualistic views; he published his great work, *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, which made its mark at once on the Continent, and in 1792 was made a French citizen. Most of the famous men of the day became acquainted with him during this period, and his ambition to codify the laws of his country met with many sympathisers.

On the whole, however, he was most honoured as a prophet outside his own country. As illustrations of his varied intellectual activity, we may recall that he planned a building—Panopticon—for the control and inspection of convicts, suggested schemes for cutting through the Isthmus of Suez and the Isthmus of Panama, established the *Westminster Review*, and strenuously advocated humanitarian legislation and Parliamentary Reform. Among his friends may be mentioned: James Mill, Lord Brougham, Daniel O'Connell, Sir Samuel Romilly, Francis Place, and Lord Shelburne. An opportune windfall from the Government in 1813, in compensation for their abandonment of his Panopticon scheme, enabled him to take a spacious country house, Ford Abbey, with a deer park in Dorsetshire; but he returned in 1818 to his old house in Queen Square Place, where he lived till the day of his death, June 6, 1832.

The popular idea that Bentham was a surly-tempered, matter-of-fact doctrinaire, is far removed from the truth. He was a genial, good-humoured, kindly man, with an unfailing flow of spirits. "A boy to the last," said John Stuart Mill. His industry was enormous, and in order to fit in his various labours he would plan out his time with almost comical precision. Thus: 8–12, work; 12–2, music and battledore and shuttlecock; 2–6, work; 6, dinner (no beer or wine); a walk—that consisted of a dignified trot round his garden for a certain number of times; then tea, light reading, and "so to bed."

Of music he was fond, especially Handel's music, and at one time would play the violin to ladies' accompaniments on the harpsichord. He disliked poetry, calling it quaintly "misrepresentation"; was impatient of society people and small talk, but relished a good conversation with a few chosen

friends. His London house was called the Hermitage, and shrouded by trees and ablaze with flowers, presented quite a romantic appearance. He was devoted to animals, loving, as he expressed it, "everything that has four legs." At one time he kept both cats and mice, but found these pets, unfortunately, incompatible. He was an excellent host, and a good, though not a great talker, simple, unaffected, and direct—unlike the tortuous literary style of his later years. As a boy he had been weak and stunted, but he grew into a strong and robust man. A pen portrait of Bentham in his old age thus describes him:

"His apparel hung loosely about him, and consisted chiefly of grey coat, light breeches, white woollen stockings hanging loosely about his legs; whilst his venerable locks were surmounted by a straw hat of most grotesque and indescribable shape; a strong contrast to the quietude and sobriety of his general aspect."

His limitations of temperament were obvious. But if neither deeply emotional, nor highly imaginative; if over fond of what was cut and dried and too devoted to reducing everything in life to tabular form; there was considerable charm and gentleness about his personality, and a shrewd wisdom in his outlook. "A moralist," he would say, "like a surgeon, should never wound but to heal." His life and doctrine harmonise in a way that is often far from the case with philosophers.

His Work

To the student of philosophy the name of Bentham is associated with utilitarian ethics; to the student of social politics he is, above other things, a great legal reformer. Nor need we separate the two aspects of the man, for his legal reforms give us his utilitarian philosophy expressed in concrete terms.

Brougham's weighty tribute to him in 1838 is worth recalling, for it sums up the man's work so compendiously:

"No one before him had ever seriously thought of exposing the defects in our English system of Jurisprudence. All former students had confined themselves to learn its principles; to make themselves masters of its eminently technical and artificial rule: and all former writers had but expounded the doctrines handed down from age to age. He it was who first made the mighty step of trying the whole provisions of our Jurisprudence by the test of expediency, and fearlessly examining how far each part was connected with the rest; and with a yet more undaunted courage, inquiring how far its most consistent and symbolical arrangements were framed according to the principles which should pervade a code of laws; their adaptation to the circumstances of society, to the wants of men, and to the promotion of happiness. Not only was he thus eminently original among the lawyers of his own country, he might be said to be the first legal philosopher that had appeared in the world."

Bentham was essentially a middle-class type, not merely in upbringing but in outlook, and his conception of the greatest happiness was the conception of a strenuous, active, benevolent mind that saw in a reasonable, genial standard of material comfort a suitable reward of individual exertion. How did he propose to bring this about?

Looking at the body of existing laws, Bentham realised its heterogeneous character. It had grown up out of temporary emergencies, was the outcome of widely differing and often conflicting interests, and presented a confused illogical appearance, that irritated his orderly mind as much as it troubled his sense of justice. He sought, therefore, in the first place for some principle, some generalisation, that should characterise lawmaking as a whole and be its sole justification. This is found in Priestley's formula of the "greatest happiness of the greatest number."[1]

Bentham proclaimed this doctrine of utility. He knew well enough that no law could make a man happy, but he saw clearly that it was quite possible to encourage the existence of conditions favourable to material happiness.

Unlike the French doctrinaires, he did not talk about laws of Nature, and make declarations about Equality, Liberty, and Fraternity. His practical and concrete mind looked at once to the *consequences* of any proposed enactment; and if the consequences seemed promising, to the simplest and most effective means of bringing them about.

What more precisely did Bentham connote by material happiness? Legal protection against violence and fraud, and freedom to develop such individual propensities as were compatible with a like development by our neighbours; these are the main things.

As regards the methods Bentham adopted for carrying out his ideal, there are two special characteristics to be noted: (1) The extension of individual liberty; (2) the equalisation of political power. With the first of these went the doctrine of "*Laissez-Faire*," of which so much was made by Bentham's followers. With Bentham himself perhaps it meant merely resistance to manifest oppression; his disciple, John Stuart Mill, turned it into a militant battle-cry. He denounced not merely legal restriction on the liberty of the individual, but the restriction imposed by (as he esteemed) foolish social conventions.

In Bentham's view many unnecessary restraints were imposed on individuals that did not benefit the community. He objected to the usury laws, and favoured a policy involving freedom of trade in money, goods, and labour.

In the anxiety of Bentham not to fetter the individual he failed to see how that individualism, if pushed to an extreme, militates against the very liberty of those on whose behalf he is so zealous.

The force of this difficulty is seen in the problem of trade combination, and in the right of association. This was not foreseen by Bentham. His dislike, again, of State interference led to the Benthamite reluctance to support factory legislation. Yet if ever there was a case of one man's liberty making another man's slavery, it was here. But if the defects of Benthamite thought are to be found here, it must not be forgotten that, broadly speaking, the whole trend of Bentham's reforms were humanitarian. The mitigation of the cruelties in the criminal law were due to his initiation, the abolition of the gallows, of hanging in

[1] Priestley had found the phrase in Beccaria's *Crimes and Punishments*. It was first used by Hutcheson in 1726.

chains, the curtailing of capital punishment, the better protection of animals. Cruelty he opposed, not merely because it was morally reprehensible, but because it was, he urged, useless. He saw clearly enough that what was required from the law was certainty in its effects, not savagery in its methods; and that cruelty is at bottom a sign of weakness.

The second point mentioned that every man was to count for one, and no man for more than one, gave Benthamism its democratic leaven, and placed him among those advocating Parliamentary reform, since it was quite obvious that Parliament as it then existed, teeming with vested interests, would not prove advantageous to such codification of the laws as he demanded. It was felt on all hands at the time, that reform of the political fabric of society was needed; but the violence of the French Revolution offended Englishmen, and they were instinctivelyopposed, with their passion for expediency and concrete things, to the broad generalities that deemed Liberty and Equality to be natural rights; but as Bentham said: "It is little use affirming a right if you haven't the proper machinery for enforcing it." In place, therefore, of declaring every man has right to unfettered action, he set about to abolish every shackle that served to fetter unnecessarily men's actions, paving the way for freedom of discussion, and freedom of religious and even non-religious belief, without State interference.

Bentham's habit of mind suited his generation; he was averse to rhetoric and not given to generalities; and his contemporaries liked his prescription for the "rottenness" in the State—the endeavouring to secure the rights of property and safeguarding individual liberty. On its philosophic side, therefore, Bentham's work was intensely individualistic, with all the drawbacks as well as the advantages of this "systematised individualism," as Professor Dicey calls it.

"Let us seek only what is attainable; it presents a career sufficiently vast for genius," said Bentham. This saying lies at the root of his concrete genius; and clearly foreshadows the political programme of the Liberals for the next fifty years. Indeed, only the other day one of the measures for which he pleaded—payment of members—was carried into effect. So, contrasting him with Godwin and Paine, we see in them stimulating theorists, and in Bentham the practical man who tries above all things to put his ideas into practice. He is far less satisfactory as a philosopher than as a jurist, for his utilitarian test, effective enough in a rough and general way in the realm of politics, is open to grave psychological criticism. His most important work is *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, published in 1789, where the kernel of his thought is contained. After defining good as a balance struck between pain and pleasure, on "two sovereign masters," he identifies the good of each man with the "greatest happiness of the greatest number." Having applied this to morals he passes to legislation, and the practical value of his theory is better seen there. Indeed, his conception of punishment harmonises with that of the modern reformers. He would have it not vindictive but preventive. The old idea of "an eye for an eye" is to be abolished.

In the form of his writings Bentham is unattractive. Occasionally he can be plain and direct, but more often he is technical in phraseology, and devoid of any literary grace. His passion for classification, though it led occasionally to desirable simplicities, involves the writer in an excessive terminology, and if the French theorists were too ready to generalise, Bentham is too ready to reduce everything to tabular form, as, for instance, in his *Table of the Springs of Human Action*. Yet he is rarely unsuggestive, and where jurisprudence rather than ethics is concerned, highly illuminating. But he seldom did himself justice as a writer, and was too content to leave his manuscripts chaotic in form, in order to provide work for his friends. Yet he is well acquainted with the requirements of the literary craftsman, and could, when he wished, be as plain, terse, and clear in writing as he was in speech.

Many of his phrases have become incorporated into our language; as for instance, "international," "utilitarian," "codification." He was uninterested in history, and had little respect for the past, chiefly looking upon it as an object-lesson for the legislator in what to avoid. To use his own dictum, "It is from the folly not the wisdom of our ancestors that we have so much to learn." In fact, he is above all a logician, and used his logical power to re-shape the entire administrative machinery of Government. Indeed, we may regard him as the pioneer of the great legal revolution that even to-day is only partially accomplished.

Adam Smith (1723–1790)

His Life

The scene of Adam Smith's birth and boyhood was laid at Kirkcaldy, "the lang toon," in Fifeshire. His father, who had formerly belonged to the legal profession, never lived to see the delicate child born in the June of 1723, and Smith's upbringing was accomplished by a devoted, if perhaps over-indulgent mother. Saved at the age of four from some gipsies, the boy in course of time was sent to the University of Glasgow. Here he came under the influence of the "never-to-be-forgotten Dr. Hutcheson," whose optimistic philosophy insisted upon goodness and wisdom displayed in nature. Three years later Smith became an inmate of Balliol College, Oxford, where apparently he was not allowed to forget the disadvantages attaching to his nationality. On the very first occasion of his dining in Hall the student was informed that "he had never seen such a piece of beef in Scotland as the piece then before him." But though his country may possibly have denied him this remarkable experience, it had certainly taught him how to live economically, and perhaps the laugh was on Smith's side when his first quarter's expenses came to no more than £7, 5*s.* 0*d.*! Having contrived to make good use of his time so far as the study of general literature was concerned, he quitted the university in 1746.

For a while the prospects of the future Economist

were not particularly encouraging, but in 1751 he gained the Chair of Logic at Glasgow, which was afterwards exchanged for the Professorship of Moral Philosophy. His undoubted success in this post was facilitated, so it seems, by the "plain but expressive countenance" of a particular student, which, according to Smith, registered the feelings of his class. The ethical branch of his subject was the first to emerge in book form. In 1759 he published the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, a work little studied to-day, but which at the time created considerable attention, and led to his obtaining the tutorship of the Duke of Buccleuch. Resigning his professorial duties, Smith departed with his pupil to France early in 1764. At first the Continental visit did not promise much interest to the philosopher, and he informs his friend and correspondent, Hume, that he has "begun to write a book in order to pass away the time." One can hazard a good guess as to what this book was! Subsequently, however, the tour proved of great value to Smith, for whilst in Paris he was brought into contact with the shining lights of the Physiocratic School. Returning from abroad, Smith devoted all his energies to the preparation of his great work which, under the title of *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, appeared in 1776; of its reception all notice may be deferred until dealing with the work itself. The closing years of Adam Smith's life were spent in Edinburgh. A conspicuous figure he must have been perambulating to and from the Custom House, where he had been given an official post; for not only did he walk with a peculiar swaying motion of the body, but he held a bunch of flowers in his left hand whilst his cane was carried in a military fashion over his shoulder. "Often, moreover, his lips would be moving all the while and smiling in rapt conversation with invisible friends." Of his absent-mindedness more than one amusing account has been given, but a single instance must suffice:

The scholar had received an invitation to Dalkeith Palace to meet a distinguished political personage; becoming, however, oblivious of his surroundings, Smith began to indulge in remarks about the individual in question which were more candid than complimentary. Nor were matters greatly improved when, on being recalled from his reverie, he murmured, "Deil care, deil care; it's all true." He died in 1790, having just completed his sixty-seventh year.

His Work

The term "epoch-making" is sometimes rather loosely applied, but if any book ever deserved this distinction it is the *Wealth of Nations*. In England during the seventeenth century, writers on economic subjects were inclined to believe that the advantages of trade were one-sided rather than mutual, and that State interference was desirable for securing the benefits to this country. Towards the close of this period the germs of a new economic philosophy are discernible, but they had to await development until about the middle of the eighteenth century, when there appeared in France a group of thinkers who became known as the "Physiocrates." This school, of which Quesnay was the founder, maintained the principles of economic liberty and endeavoured to emancipate industry from governmental control, just as some of their distinguished countrymen were striving to emancipate thought.

In our own island, too, Hume and Dean Tucker were sounding a progressive note. "Not only as a man," says the former writer, "but as a British subject, I pray for the flourishing commerce of Germany, Spain, Italy, and even France itself."

Adam Smith's work came at an auspicious moment, and succeeded in arousing an almost immediate interest. Within fifteen years of its publication the *Wealth of Nations* passed through six editions, five of which were called for during the author's lifetime—no light testimony, considering the character of the book. The impression which it made on William Pitt is well known, and Smith is said to have declared that the statesman's comprehension of its arguments equalled his own.

What is the basic idea of Adam Smith's philosophy?

It may be fairly said to be a confidence in the beneficence of nature. The author of the *Wealth of Nations* believed in a natural order of things which works for the happiness of mankind. To secure the advantages of this arrangement, liberty is an essential condition. Artificial devices restricting the play of certain natural instincts are consequently to be regarded as harmful; they hinder the increase of wealth. The true method of promoting material welfare is to leave "every man free so long as he does not violate the laws of justice, to pursue his own interest in his own way. . . ." This implies that the interest of the individual harmonises with that of the community; the coincidence is not, it would seem, invariable. Trade, he affirms, when rightly understood is "a bond of union and friendship"; its benefits are reciprocal. "The modern maxims of foreign commerce, by aiming at the impoverishment of all our neighbours," tend to defeat their own ends. For "as a rich man is likely to be a better customer to the industrious people in his neighbourhood than a poor, so is likewise a rich nation." In the light of past history, it is interesting to note Smith's opinion concerning the possibilities of Free Trade in this country. To anticipate its entire restoration, he says, "is as absurd as to expect that an Oceana or Utopia should ever be established in it. Not only the prejudice of the public, but that which is much more unconquerable, the private interests of many individuals irresistibly oppose it." His own work was to prove a great factor in falsifying this prophecy.

Though Smith was not original in advocating commercial freedom, he does seem to have been unique in the extensive and detailed knowledge that he brought to the discussion of the subject. This fact no doubt affords some explanation of his influence. "Men," it has been remarked, "who were indifferent to general demonstrations of the futility of commercial restrictions . . . were forced to listen respectfully to a man who had all

the available statistics at his fingers' ends and was able to show them in black and white the mode in which the English commercial system had generated certain definite and assignable evils." Few writers have received more extravagant eulogies than Adam Smith. Buckle, in his enthusiasm, declared that "this solitary Scotchman . . . contributed more towards the happiness of man than has been effected by the united abilities of all the statesmen and legislators of whom history has presented an authentic account." After such excessive admiration all other appreciations must of necessity appear lukewarm, even the belief that in the history of Political Economy the importance of Adam Smith is second to none.

The economic world of Smith's day was, as it has been observed, "a comparatively narrow one," but even whilst he lived the way was being prepared for a vast expansion of its boundaries. Indeed the *Wealth of Nations* had not yet made its appearance when there started that remarkable series of mechanical discoveries which was to revolutionise the methods of production. Within a quarter of a century of its publication the darker side of the industrial revolution was already becoming apparent. Social reform was in the air; Godwin had propounded the theory that communism would bring happiness. His optimistic predictions were challenged by an anonymous writer in an *Essay on the Principle of Population*; the author was a clergyman of the Church of England, ROBERT MALTHUS (1766–1834). Five years later the polemical effort of 1798 was succeeded by an elaborate treatise on the same question. The proposition around which the arguments of Malthus centre is that "population has a tendency to increase faster than food." Now what is to hinder this tendency from producing disastrous results? He points out that there are various counteracting agencies. These checks are differentiated as positive and preventive; and amongst those enumerated are famine, war, disease, &c. But there is one check which does something to relieve the gloom of this depressing catalogue: this he terms the "moral restraint." By moral restraint Malthus did not imply the idea with which we are familiar, namely, that of post-nuptial prudence, he meant rather an abstinence from marriage which was dictated by foresight and accompanied by moral behaviour. In other words, one should consider the means of providing for children before having them. For every child after the sixth he suggests an allowance from the public funds. Thus all Malthus' teaching may be said to converge upon this practical point. "Add to the ten commandments the new law, 'Thou shalt not marry until there is a fair prospect of supporting six children.'" The welfare, then, of the working classes, according to his view, rests mainly in their own hands; it is to the cultivation of moral restraint that we must look for the means of permanently improving their condition.

The work of Malthus was certainly of great value in drawing attention to an important and hitherto insufficiently studied question; apart from this merit, moreover, the *Essay* deserves our gratitude for its stimulating effect upon the thought of both Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace.

During the early part of the nineteenth century the social problem was becoming increasingly prominent. The price of wheat was high, wages were low, and there was in addition a heavy taxation owing to the war. Under such conditions the question of distribution of wealth could scarcely be devoid of interest. The writer who attacked this difficult problem was a man of Jewish parentage and business experience—DAVID RICARDO (1772–1823), the friend of James Mill. From the latter's illustrious son he received the high tribute of being compared favourably with Adam Smith; and amongst others who waxed enthusiastic over his abilities were to be numbered Thomas de Quincey and Lord Brougham. The book upon which his fame rested was the *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, published in 1817.

To give any connected account of this work would of course carry us too far afield. All that need concern us here is the fact that his theories point to a clash of economic interests. In the first place, the interest of the landowners is opposed to the rest of the community. He gains by the difficulties in the way of increasing the food supply. It is to his advantage that men should be obliged to bring inferior soils under cultivation—for this raises the rent of the more fertile land—than that trade should be liberated and corn obtained in greater quantity from other countries. Again, capital and labour, it would seem, are also in opposition, for he says "it has been my constant endeavour to show throughout this work that the ratio of profits can never be increased but by a fall of wages."

Political Economy was becoming an influential science. "Up to the year 1818," it has been said, "the science was scarcely known or talked of beyond a small circle of philosophers." To its rapid emergence from this obscurity John Stuart Mill has testified, and it is evident that in no small degree he attributed the change to the writings and "noble exertions" of David Ricardo.

PART VI

THE VICTORIAN ERA

(1830–1890)

INTRODUCTION

"It is not by the monk in his cell or the saint in his closet, but by the valiant worker in humble sphere and in dangerous days, that the landmarks of liberty are pushed forward." These words by that vigorous social critic, William Rathbone Greg, apply with special force to the first half of the nineteenth century.

Two names especially stand out in these years of social unrest and political fermentation: William Cobbett, the champion of the agricultural poor; and Francis Place, tailor and democrat, who did an equally valiant work for the industrial population of the city. Cobbett's work synchronises with the period of the Romantic Revival, and has already been noted. Place, born in 1771, lived until 1854, his activities covering the most urgent period of the industrial revolution, and the scarcely less momentous political revolution initiated in 1832.

The era of the Renascence of English Song had been also an era of reform. John Howard had inaugurated the work of prison reform, Bentham and Romilly had purified the criminal laws, Cobbett and Place had fought in the cause of political readjustment, while men like the Wesleys had done much to stir the moral susceptibilities of Englishmen.

But the two great revolutions that had come in with the new century proved to be reactionary forces in English life, from the reformer's point of view. The industrial revolution, while aggravating the symptoms of distress, had appealed strongly to the baser instincts of the commercial classes. The French Revolution had created a distaste for progressive measures in the minds of timid statesmen.

At the close of the Napoleonic wars in 1815, what was the condition of social England?

The middle-class citizen groaned under the burden of heavy taxation; but, after all, it was he who had already begun to reap some of the advantages of the industrial revolution. To the wage-earning classes the new wealth accruing from the vast increase of manufactures meant little. On the whole, the one best off at the close of the war was the country gentleman; for every manufacturing improvement had tended to raise rents.

The cessation of the war brought little alleviation, and the industrial population was in a worse position even than before. Why was this? Because the war had drawn upon the labour market, and although the demand for soldiers and sailors makes for unproductive labour, yet the sums of this would affect only immediately the more prosperous citizens. At the close of the war these men got thrown back on the labour market at a time when capital was very scarce. The result of this is obvious.

The years from 1815 to 1832 were very bleak years in the annals of the London poor. During this time Francis Place, by his extraordinary capacity for work and self-improvement, had amassed not only a fair fortune but qualified himself for the task of educating his fellow-workers and giving practical assistance to the reforming zeal of Jeremy Bentham and James Mill. And if we look round London during this time, we shall note how many progressive agencies are at work.

At Charing Cross Francis Place had his famous library—a library of pamphlets, journals, books, Parliamentary reports, memoranda on every kind of political and social subject—all tucked away at the back of his shop. It is hard to overestimate the influence of this library in the political life of the time: "My library," says Place, "was a sort of gossiping shop for such persons as were in any way engaged in public matters having the benefit of the people for their object. No one who knew me would hesitate to consult with me on any subject on which I could either give or procure information." To this shop came the leading politicians of the time, ready to avail themselves of Place's industry and method, and not merely to consult his books but to confer with the man; for Place knew better than any other the character and spirit of the men for whom the Radical politicians of the time wished to legislate. The shop and library was a centre for gossip and consultation much as the coffee-house of Queen Anne's reign had been for the politicians of that time.

The cause of Prison Reform had been taken up by Mrs. Fry, and much of her work was done during these years. She had first visited a prisoner in Newgate in 1813, and found all the general prisoners, young and old, experienced criminals and first offenders, crowded together indiscriminately. She found the place an inferno—tenanted by a mob of howling, swearing, fighting creatures. To tame such savages, to educe any order out of the chaos, seemed hopeless. She did a little to alleviate their woes, but it was not till three years later that she started resolutely the work of cleansing these Augean stables. "Within a month," it is

said, "the place was transformed . . . the wild beasts were tamed." Finally, Robert Owen brought to London, about 1813, the end of the "New View of Society," which we may regard as the starting-point of modern Socialism. He and Place were great friends.

While Place, Cobbett, Owen, and Elizabeth Fry were working in their various ways, Dickens, born in one of the stormiest of years (1812), was spending his unhappy boyhood in London (1822–24), and passing through experiences which were to inspire him throughout his life, in the cause of suffering and privation wherever he might find it.

Charles Kingsley, a schoolboy at Bristol, had his first taste of the social unrest of the time when he witnessed the fierce riots in that city (1831–32) at the time of the Reform Bill.

There is no need to retell here the familiar old story of the Reform Bill and of the uncompromising attitude of the House of Lords. The Lords realised reluctantly the temper of the nation. The Duke of Wellington and his friends retired sullenly, and the Bill became the law of the land on January 7, 1832. Viewed from the standpoint of to-day it seems to us a very mildly progressive measure. Certainly the Radical democrats of the day were frankly disappointed with it. But it was progressive—that was the great thing. The middle classes at last were fairly represented; those less fortunately placed had yet to wait for recognition.

None saw this more clearly than Francis Place. He was not enamoured of Parliamentary legislation at any time, and had the strong, individualistic dislike of Government interference peculiar to the Benthamite school of politicians. He continually urged upon his comrades the primary necessity for educating themselves for political work. He wished the poor to contribute to the education of their children as best they could. Above all, he desired to see them self-respecting. To help to effect this he established a London Mechanics' Institute in 1823, which at a later time came under the superintendence of Dr. Birkbeck, and is to-day a flourishing educational agency.

There was nothing of the demagogue Hunt about Place. Claptrap and rhetorical generalities he abominated. He found his neighbours not "too clamorous," he says, but "too tame and quiescent. Fear, the child of ignorance, creates bugbears, our business should be to dispel fear and put reason in its place."

Francis Place and other Benthamite Radicals joined hands with working-man democrats in protesting against the inefficiency of the Reform Act, and demanding universal suffrage, vote by ballot, and other points which formed the staple of the Chartist's cry in the forties. Yet it was clearly seen by all but the dullest, that unsatisfactory as Russell's measure might seem, yet it signalised the turn of the tide. The House of Commons was no longer an oligarchy.

More important even than his share in the Reform movement and in educational matters, were the valiant and successful efforts of Place in 1824 to secure the repeal of the iniquitous Combination Laws. A series of measures had been enacted between 1761 and 1799, with the object of regulating wages, which forbade combination in any trade whatever. These laws, by the exertions of Place, aided by Hume, Burdett, and Hobhouse, were swept away despite the rigorous opposition of Huskisson and Peel.

After the Reform Act, Place parted company with the Whigs, and devoted his energies mainly to the working-class movement, which led to the Chartist movement, and along with Lovett and others he formulated the People's Charter.

When Charles Dickens began to write, the humanitarian reforms urged by Bentham and his friends had done something to mitigate the savagery of the late century. In 1832, sheep-stealing and forgery were no longer visited with the death penalty. Hanging in chains was abolished in 1834, the pillory, the stocks, the ducking-stool, symbols of a brutal age, vanished shortly afterwards. And in 1841 capital punishment was reserved for murder only. The new Gaol Acts of 1844, largely inspired by John Howard and Elizabeth Fry, transformed the condition of the prisons. But there was a great deal yet to be accomplished; and much of what remained is faithfully mirrored in the stories of Dickens—the deplorable state of the Debtors' Prison, the Fleet, and the Marshalsea; the dismal abysses of elementary education; the sorry type of nurses available in sickness; the oppression of little children; the prevalence of religious hypocrisy—these, and many other dark corners in the life of London, were illuminated by the searchlight of his genius.

"He who aspires to be a hero," says Johnson, "must drink brandy."

"Sots are excluded from the best company," wrote Sir Walter Scott, in 1825.

These dicta sufficiently indicate public sentiment in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

Despite the fact that there is so much hard drinking mentioned in Dickens, public opinion had veered round considerably in his day from what it had been under the Georges. Then the legislators of the country would often end the day in inglorious carousals; and in the best clubs, scenes of intoxication were not only common, but thought nothing of.

Fielding's Squire Western had his City counterpart, who considered no day well rounded off unless he and his guests finished their festivities on the floor. Dickens did not live in the "three-bottle days," and although there was undoubtedly a good deal of drinking in his day as in ours, I suspect that some of his fictional "alarums and excursions" were merely literary exuberances on the part of the genial chronicler, who knew so well his Fielding and Smollett.

Assuredly public opinion was different. The condition of the clubs is a case in point; the drunkard there was the exception, not the rule; and if tolerated for social qualities, was certainly not taken for granted by his fellow-clubmen.

The reader of Dickens will have noted how that the jovial, humorous treatment of intemperance, so marked in his earlier books, suffers a change in course of years. Not only does it figure less frequently

in the novels, but its appearance is less frequently accompanied by the stage direction—laughter. The earlier hypocrites are chronic drunkards—Stiggins and Pecksniff, for instance; but Mr. Chadband grows notoriously didactic over tea, and Mr. Pumblechook, if not a pattern of sobriety, is certainly not especially intemperate. And in his last book, the scene, where the two young rivals meet and the limits of temperance are passed, is conceived in quite a serious vein.

Indeed, there is no better guide to early Victorian London than Charles Dickens. Clubland and the upper stratum of London society are more faithfully pictured by Thackeray, by reason of his better knowledge. But for the motley multitude that pour through the streets, for the hole-and-corner places of the City, for London as an incomprehensible, horrifying, fascinating, delightful personality—every brick and stone alive with tragic humour—Dickens remains unrivalled.

With the change of manners that was becoming appreciable, it was to be expected that duelling, so long recognised as the legitimate end of a quarrel, should be discouraged. It had already become ridiculous in Dickens' day, and is tantamount to a breach of the peace. But the Mr. Nupkinses of the eighteenth century would not have concerned themselves in the matter. Then, the most ridiculous quarrels ended tragically. Colonel Montgomery fell by the bullet of a friend with whom he had squabbled about the respective merits of their pet dogs. Finally, after being discouraged for many years among civilians, the War Office set its seal upon public sentiment by declaring that it was suitable to the character of honourable men to offer and accept explanations and apologies for wrong committed.

The closer approximation of literature to social life is very marked in the Victorian era. Kingsley writes passionate social tracts in the guise of a story; cheap bread inspires the muse of Ebenezer Elliott; Elizabeth Barrett voices *The Cry of the Children*, and Thomas Hood immortalises the weary sempstress and the despairing unfortunate. Carlyle, after excursions into German literature and European history, plunges into the political problems of the day. Ruskin, starting as critic of the art of painting, turns in the new century to the more complex art of life, and no man of letters has tackled industrial problems with greater insight and more brilliant suggestiveness.

Meanwhile the cry of the Chartists—"Give us not protection but political rights"—had in part been realised. The agitation which had died down since the passing of the first Reform Act, had increased in volume and urgency, and it was clear that the claim of the working classes could no longer be neglected. In the summer of 1867 the working men in the towns of England for the first time had a voice in the management of national affairs.

A great power was now in their hands; the next important step was the securing that the power should be rightly used, and in 1870 we have the famous Education Act—that system of National Education of which Arnold so warmly approved.

In 1859 a new influence came into the literary and social life of the day. Social politics had impressed themselves on early Victorian literature. Natural science was to influence the literature of the mid-century.

The publication of *The Origin of Species* started a new era. Poetry and fiction are infected by the new spirit—the spirit of scientific observation and philosophic analysis. We move in the atmosphere of George Eliot, Matthew Arnold, Clough, Huxley, Browning.

In so far as this new departure affected social life, it may be noted in the systematising of popular education, the increasing desire for culture. The literary and scientific institute takes a more prominent place in the life of the day; and science, once a sealed book save to an elect few, has become democratised. The man of science is no longer an academic recluse—he is, in the person of Huxley, a man of more influence as a social and educational force.

Amidst the multifarious activities of the mid-century, what is it that impresses us the most strongly? It is this. The old militant individualism which animated Place entirely, and Dickens very largely, is disappearing. The earlier years saw the awakening of democratic London; in later years the people are learning to make use of the powers they have acquired. And in doing this, even in Dickens' day, a change in the political atmosphere is noticeable. This individualism was the mainspring of the elder Radicalism and the earlier democratic movements; but even so staunch an Individualist as John Stuart Mill soon grew conscious of the limitations of the Benthamite creed. When intolerance of interference with the individual went to the point of resisting the Factory Acts, it was clear that "something was rotten" in the state of Radicalism.

The Benthamites had done a great and good work with their doctrine of utility, for they purged the English Constitution of anomalies and absurdities, and reshaped on sound and orderly lines our jurisprudence. But they underrated the anarchic tendencies of unrestrained competition, and in their distaste for State interference they rendered largely nugatory the very freedom whose banner they were ever waving. John Stuart Mill illustrates the two streams of thought—Collectivism and Individualism—crossing and recrossing one another in his writings. Kingsley and the Christian Social movement break with the older Individualistic Radicalism; and the Collectivist Ideal, after the death of Dickens, claims more and more adherents.

Thus far we have sketched in its rough outlines the social history of the Victorian era, especially as it is reflected in the literature of the time. From this chronicle two factors stand out prominently: (1) The steady advance of democratic ideals; (2) The progress of scientific thought. Both of these powerfully affected and were affected in their turn by the literature of the age. The democratic movement involved not only the extension of political privileges, but a levelling up of educational advantages. Together with the Reform Acts and factory legislation, we had the rapid development of journalism and periodical literature. The year that saw the passing of the Reform Act witnessed also the establishment of the *Penny Magazine* by Charles Knight, and *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* by the brothers

William and Robert Chambers, and the former, before many months had passed, reached a circulation of 200,000. The condition of our schools, so deplorable at the beginning of the era, improved steadily, until the urgency of a sound popular education, long before insisted upon by Carlyle and Matthew Arnold, was recognised in Forster's Act of 1870. Literature therefore, appealing to a much vaster audience than heretofore, has become a more active power, both for good and evil. The change in the audience, from a more leisured and better cultured one, to one that is more strenuous in its activities and has comparatively less culture and less money, has had its effect upon our poets, novelists, and essayists.

But if the advance of democratic ideals has not been inimical to literature—for so far from chilling its vitality it has given it a greater energy and driving power, and prevented it from becoming merely the special product of a clique—yet it has often proved inimical to men of letters. This, obviously, must be conceded. Material rewards fall to the lot more often than not of the less worthy, while the more worthy, if without financial resources of their own, languish in poverty. In any case, it is unhappily found that genius must fight harder for its bread and butter than mediocrity has need to. But is this to be laid at the door only of the reading democracy of to-day? Has it not unhappily been always the case? In the older days of "patronage," when no large plebiscite existed, did not genius, unless willing to prostitute itself, often go down before the mere opportunist? The grim and tragic history of Grub Street will assure us on this point. We have always stoned our prophets, and starved our saints; and the posthumous halo and tawdry crown of laurel do nothing to mitigate the material neglect accorded while living.

Perhaps some day we shall recognise, as a community, that great power of mind and imagination need more material recognition than we have accorded them. Man does not live by bread alone; but being mortal, he cannot do without it.

No less marked than the democratic note of the Victorian age is the scientific note. The effect of the development of physical sciences upon social life does not fall within the scope of our inquiry. We are concerned here with its effect upon the literature of the age, while taking for granted that it has revolutionised the physical environment. The advance of science has transformed man's outlook upon life and has affected every channel of intellectual activity. And it has done this in two ways: First, it has fostered a spirit of restlessness; for by increasing man's material resources, it has commercialised modern life. Wordsworth lamented its tendencies at the outset when he cried out:

> "The world is too much with us late and soon;
> Getting and spending we lay waste our powers";

while Ruskin at a later date flung out his sarcastic dictum that the compelling desire of the day was, "Wherever we are, to go somewhere else; whatever we have, to get something more." But both Wordsworth and Ruskin looked too exclusively upon what was incidental to, rather than essential in, the scientific movement. Every fresh accession of human knowledge has a destructive as well as a constructive side. The new tributary, surging up into the main stream, obliterates the old landmarks, and agitates the placid waters; the immediate effect is disturbing, but after a while fresh landmarks emerge, the river resumes its normal rate, and its vivifying and dynamic power is greatly augmented. The effects of geological and biological discovery shook to its depths the old cosmogony; and the general spiritual unrest is reflected most remarkably in Mid-Victorian poetry.

The questioning note in Clough, the pessimism of James Thomson, the wistful melancholy of Matthew Arnold, the fatalism of Fitzgerald, all testify to the sceptical tendencies evoked by scientific research. It did not kill poetry, but it stifled for a while the lyric impulse and overweighted verse with speculative thought.

On the other hand, if scientific discoveries intruded themselves too insistently upon the poetical imagination, they exerted an influence upon poets like Tennyson and Browning, that if occasionally inimical to art, on the whole evoked very markedly some of the most remarkable qualities in these great Victorians.

In Memoriam and *Christmas Eve and Easter Day*, published about the same time, are something much more than expressions of the troubled thought of the time; they give us, the one in a setting of exquisite and delicate workmanship, the other with dramatic vigour and imaginative insight, a point of view of eternal freshness and interest.

More important even than the matter of science is the scientific method that invades the art of the age.

In accuracy of detail it would be impossible to rival the scenic descriptions of Tennyson, whose Nature poetry is like the work of an inspired scientist; and if we pass from poetry to history and fiction, we can see the dominance of the scientific method more clearly

The principle of induction, involving as a primary process the patient accumulation of facts, may be seen in the work of Carlyle, bitterly opposed as he was in many ways to the scientific attitude of mind; the same principle is at once the strength and weakness of the modern school of history. The modern historian, like the scientist, loves to trace things to a beginning, to mark the gradual development of an institution; he is also beginning to generalise from the data collected, and like Buckle, to try and understand the psychology of race, to give unity to the mass of data before him.

In fiction, the scientific spirit is no less discernible; the problems of heredity and environment preoccupying the attention of the novelist. The social problem of the earlier Victorians, of Charlotte Brontë, Dickens, Kingsley, and Reade, give place to points in biology, psychology, pathology. The influence of Herbert Spencer and of Comte meets us in the pages of George Eliot; while the analytical methods of science are even more subtly followed in the fiction of George Eliot, the early writings of Mrs. Humphry Ward, and the intimate Wessex studies of Mr. Thomas Hardy.

The Pre-Raphaelite movement seems at first sight something apart from the main stream in Victorian literature. It is concerned primarily with neither democratic ideals, nor with scientific and philosophic problems; its chief concern is with art, and it emphasizes especially the connection between poetry, painting, and the plastic arts. As soon as we consider this movement in its broader aspects, we find in it the logical development of the Romantic Revival. The great outbreak of romanticism that ushered in the century was marked, as we have said, by the study of mediævalism, and by Hellenic sympathies. The torch lit by poetry was passed on to theology, and the Tractarian movement is in reality romanticism seen through a stained glass window. Mediæval art, that had fascinated Walpole and Scott, inspires the ecclesiastical revival; Rossetti delves in the folklore and diablerie of the Middle Ages; Morris busies himself in its legends and sagas; while both men revere the old religious painters and the beauty of Gothic. Holman Hunt and Burne-Jones are on one side the direct successors to Newman and Keble; on the poetical side the Pre-Raphaelites derive from Keats even more than from Scott, in their idealism and devotion to beauty. But Swinburne approximates rather to the Hellenic and Shelley; while his art is nearer akin to music than painting.

Pre-Raphaelitism owes something of its emphasis also to the fact that it is a recoil from the philosophic and scientific preoccupation of many Victorian poets. The polemical note that had threatened to drown the art of poesy and had already marred some of Tennyson's later work and much of Browning's rhythmic analysis, was hateful to passionate worshippers of beauty like Rossetti and Morris. Poetry for them was not concerned with dialectics but with æsthetics. Yet Pre-Raphaelitism, for all its fastidious beauty, cannot compare on its literary side with the art of such great Victorians as Tennyson and Browning. Victorian literature at its greatest is intensely humanistic and vital.

The most representative Victorian makers of verse, Tennyson, Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and George Meredith, while lacking the fire and air of the Romantics, and less careful than they not to overstep the border-line between rhythmic beauty and rhythmic argument, excel them in breadth of outlook and variety of method. If in keeping close to the earth, their Muses occasionally soil their wings, they do not at any rate lose themselves in the sky; while in prose, the Victorian age is second to none in its rich complexity and "veined humanity."

I. POETRY: Alfred, Lord Tennyson

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809–1892)

His Life

A curate arriving at a certain house in London, was awaiting his host in an apparently empty drawing-room, when a big, swarthy man in evening dress rose suddenly from the rug in front of the fire and growled out in a melancholy voice, "I must introduce myself: I am Septimus, the most morbid of the Tennysons."

Such was the amusing tale that Dante Gabriel Rossetti—lover of legends, past and present—used to relate with great enjoyment. Yet for all its absurdity it goes to the very root of Tennyson's personality; for the morbid strain of melancholy in the Tennyson family must be thoroughly reckoned with before we can understand the man. It lies at the heart of his strength and weakness as a poet. It explains the strange querulousness that marks many of his poems dealing with religious subjects; explains the constant harping on theological difficulties, the pessimistic note that, the first *Locksley Hall* notwithstanding, rings through most of his social utterances; it explains also the very large proportion of poems expressing yet varying shades of wistful meditation and regret. Along with this strain of melancholy was a strain of elemental vigour, inherent also in the rural stock from which he sprung. This characteristic, though familiar enough to Tennyson's friends, is less discernible in his writings, since, for reasons that will appear later, he was chary of giving it expression. But unless we remember it we shall not find it easy to understand how the man who wrote the sentimental *Idylls*, and chiselled with such laborious cunning and severe restraint the verse of *In Memoriam*, wrote also *The Northern Farmer, The Cobbler*, and *Rizpah*.

No better all-round picture of Tennyson has ever been drawn than by Carlyle, whose genius for literary portrait-painting, despite humorous exaggerations, was unsurpassed.

"A man solitary and sad, as certain men are, dwelling in an element of gloom, carrying a bit of Chaos about him, in short, which he is manufacturing into Cosmos. . . . One of the finest-looking men in the world—a great shock of rough dusky dark hair; bright, laughing, hazel eyes; massive aquiline face, most massive yet most delicate; of sallow, brown complexion, almost Indian looking; clothes cynically loose, free-and-easy, smokes infinite tobacco. His voice is musical, metallic, fit for loud laughter and piercing wail, and all that may lie between; speech and speculation free and plenteous; I do not meet in these late decades such company over a pipe! We shall see what he shall grow to."

Again, to his brother John, Carlyle sent the following:

"A fine, large-featured, dim-eyed, bronze-coloured, shaggy-headed man is Alfred; dusky, smoky, free-and-easy; who swims outwardly and inwardly, with great composure, in an articulate element as of tranquil chaos and tobacco-smoke; great now and then when he does emerge; a most restful, brotherly, solid-hearted man."

Born August 6, 1809, at Somersby Rectory, Lincolnshire, Alfred Tennyson was cradled in the heart of the Fen Country, and the spirit of the landscape invaded some of his happiest scenic descriptions. Rolling pastures, low sand dunes, broad sea marshes,

mile upon mile of flat level country, broken here and there by undulating hills—such were the physical features of Tennyson's native soil. It was an open-air life that the youth led, the life of a meditative observer rather than that of an active athletic youth. From early days he loved to play with the magic of words, striving to record his impressions of Nature with that exactitude of detail in which he afterwards excelled, delighting especially in the waterscape so abundantly diversified from the dark stagnant water pools and purling streams, to the swell and thunder of the sea upon the sandy coast.

From the first also, a gift for melody seemed to be his, and ambitious dreams filled his mind.

In 1828 he went up, with Charles, to Trinity College, Cambridge, where his brother Frederick had preceded him. His physical appearance impressed everyone, and a charm of personality attracted to him a host of friends. Shy, humorous, with fits of despondency, he displayed a certain vigour and common sense that pleased his seniors. Although a member of a vigorous debating society called "The Apostles," he took no very active part in the proceedings, but seemed to have impressed his friends more by his oracular silences, and occasional flashes of speech, than if he had been a glib and ready speaker.

In 1829 he won the Chancellor's English medal, with his poem, *Timbuctoo*, and in 1831 left Cambridge, which he never regarded with any special affection, to resume his quiet family life. His father had just died, but the family still lived on at Somersby, and Tennyson shared his literary enthusiasm with his gentle mother, to whom he had been always devoted. Meanwhile he had published his first volume of verse, but showed no desire to take up any profession, and was content to live the life of a somewhat reclusive country gentleman. His friendship with Arthur Hallam was one of the most precious things to him during these years. With Hallam he had gone to Spain in 1832, to show his sympathies with some Spanish revolutionaries; Hallam had become engaged to his sister Emily, and was now reading for the Bar. Tennyson's occasional visits to London were made to see his friend, who lived in the "long, unlovely street"—Wimpole Street, Cavendish Square, no less unlovely to-day.

But the sedentary life, combined with indiscretions of diet and excessive devotion to tobacco, played havoc with his health, and while still in a state of dyspeptic hypochondria, the news of his friend's death came to him in September 1833.

Tennyson seemed stunned by the shock for a while, then, as an outlet for his grief, he began writing *In Memoriam*. Starting as an elegy for his friend, the work soon became a long philosophic poem dealing with universal questions of life, death, and the hereafter.

Tennyson had always been interested in these problems, and had written of them in some of his early poems; but the treatment had been more or less academic. Now, shaken to his depths by grief, the poet writes with an intensity and glow hitherto scarcely suspected. One of his most interesting friendships during these years was with Edward Fitzgerald, to whom Tennyson read many of his poems out of a "little red book." Fitzgerald's admiration for the early work of the poet is well known; another friendship was with Carlyle, who liked the man, but had no patience with his versifying.

Meanwhile Tennyson continued to write a great deal, and to live a Bohemian existence that suited his temperament better than it did his constitution. With the publication of the two volumes of 1842, where much of his earlier work was revised, he established his reputation with a tolerably large circle of readers.

He had moved from Lincolnshire to Tunbridge Wells, which did not suit him; thence to Bexley near Maidstone. About this time he lost most of his money in an unfortunate investment, and was glad to accept a Civil List pension of £200 a year, in 1845.

Carlyle had originated the idea of the pension and pressed it upon Richard Milnes. Milnes objected first of all; asking, "What will my constituents say?"

"Richard Milnes," said Carlyle, "on the day of Judgment, when the Lord asks you why you didn't get that pension for Alfred Tennyson, it will not do to lay the blame on your constituents; it is you that will be damned."

Tennyson's health was still indifferent, and for some years between 1845 and 1850 he lived with his family at Cheltenham, where he met one of his fervent admirers, F. W. Robertson of Brighton. 1850 proved a memorable year; in this year he made his happy marriage, published *In Memoriam*, and on Wordsworth's death accepted the Laureateship offered to him. His wife was Emily Sarah Sellwood, whose sister had already been married to his brother Charles. His own comment on his marriage was, "The peace of God came into my life before the Altar when I married her." From this time his life ran smoothly and tranquilly to the end.

Everything that Tennyson now wrote commanded an audience growing in numbers; worldly honours poured in steadily upon him, starting with an honorary D.C.L. from Oxford in 1855, culminating in the peerage offered by Gladstone, 1883. The only serious grief of his later years was the death of his gifted son, Lionel, in 1886.

His friendships, many and memorable, included Gladstone, Tyndall, Huxley, F. D. Maurice, Jowett, Max Müller, Henry Irving, and Theodore Watts-Dunton.

He lived during later life in Surrey and the Isle of Wight. His tastes had always been rural, and he was never better than when living a simple, healthy, country life. At the same time it put him out of touch with many of the problems of the hour, and his later work suffers from this withdrawal from the life of his day. Especially did it hamper him in his playwriting, for which he thought he had a special vocation. But his meditative and reflective cast of mind, exaggerated by the existence he led, ill-fitted him for the urgent and immediate appeal of the drama. The most ineffective of these, *The Promise of May*, was produced at the Globe Theatre and gave rise to the saying that the Laureate, "after filling the world with his verse, was now emptying the Globe with his prose."

Tennyson's commanding appearance, and great intellectual powers, made him easily dominate his company; although he was at heart a simple and modest and affectionate man, yet little infirmities of temperament made him seem not unfrequently self-opinionated and ungracious. His natural reserve and abnormal sensitiveness made him inaccessible to certain people who were themselves sensitive, and his manner was unnecessarily boorish at times. But he had a genuine horror of gush, and it was a characteristic of him to have delighted in the story of Wellington, whom a sentimental admirer had pilored across a crowded way. Wellington wished to reward the kindly stranger, who exclaimed the only reward he desired was "to be allowed to shake the hand of the great conqueror." To which the Duke replied, "Don't be a d—d fool!"

Some of his *mots* are excellent in their directness. Once after talking to the historian, John Richard Green, the poet said, "You're a jolly, vivid man—and I'm glad to have known you; you're as vivid as lightning."

Of the famous metaphysical society to which he belonged (a society numbering nearly all the great men of the day), that had perished after ten years' existence, he said it died because "after ten years of strenuous effort no one had succeeded in even defining the term—Metaphysics."

A typical example of his humour is afforded by the comment he made at Lyme Regis (the scene of Jane Austen's *Persuasion*). Some lady, anxious to air her erudition, referred to the Duke of Monmouth. "Don't talk to me of Monmouth," broke in the poet sternly, "but show me the *exact spot* where Louisa Musgrove fell."

His old age was a singularly even and tranquil one, and his vitality was only surpassed by his contemporary, James Martineau, of whose physical feats in the late 'seventies Tennyson was no little jealous.

Tennyson's picturesque and impressive death in 1892, and burial in Westminster Abbey, is too well known to demand repetition here. It rounds off admirably a picturesque and impressive life.

It is significant that the first characteristic to strike the personal friends of Tennyson should have been his scientific perception rather than his poetic imagination. Browning often wrote like a poet with strong scientific predilections; Tennyson like a scientist with a marked aptitude for poetry. There is no poet who was more jealous of the form of a poem than he. Just as he would stop a story if there was the least inaccuracy of detail; so he would revise and revise a stanza, to rectify the least ambiguity or statement. This scientific perception is indeed the source alike of his strength and weakness as a poet. It gave exquisite accuracy to his scenic pictures; form and balance to his craftsmanship; clarity to his utterance. On the other hand, its insistent presence clashed often with the poet's intuition and troubled his muse. Especially is this true of some of his later work. The scientist in him vexed the seer and visionary; the poet in him broke away with fierce impatience from the obstinate questioning of the mind.

His Work

Bearing in mind this psychological characteristic of the writer, let us examine his work, first as a literary artist, then as a thinker in verse.

The Development of his Art

The poetry of the Romantic Revival, with one exception, had little influence on the poetic development of Tennyson. Byron's influence may be traced in the volume of *Poems by Two Brothers*; but it is only a trace. Of Shelley, there is nothing; with Wordsworth he had a certain spiritual affinity, but as artists they have scarcely anything in common. No doubt he owed a technical debt to the supreme skill of Coleridge as a metrist; but save in the imitative period of the early volume just referred to, Coleridge did nothing to shape Tennyson's art. Keats alone, whom the poet admired and revered above all his immediate predecessors, affected his poetic development. The sensuousness of Keats, the delicate sensitiveness to external impressions, the atmosphere of pensive beauty that hung over his scenic pictures, these matters appealed intensely to young Tennyson.

Yet we must not exaggerate this influence. The visual clarity and love of detail, present even in the *Juvenilia*, owe nothing to Keats. The minuteness of observation probably owed something to Crabbe, with whose natural descriptions Tennyson's pictures of the fen country are curiously alike in their love of microscopic effects. The merits of Tennyson's first volume, *Poems, chiefly Lyrical*, lie in their grace and melody. Many of them were revised by the poet later almost out of recognition, but *The Recollection of the Arabian Nights*, *Mariana in the Moated Grange*, and the pretty vignettes of girlhood, remain to testify to the delicate artistry of the new writer.

The chief defect of this early work is a thinness of inspiration. There is too much sugar, and too little flour in these literary confections. The volume of 1833 strikes at once a stronger and more varied note: *Fatima* has a fire about it that is lacking not merely in his earlier efforts, but in a good deal of his later verse; we have *The Lady of Shalott*, not so lovely a piece of mediæval magic as she appeared after his final revision, but beautiful none the less; above all there is *The Lotos-Eaters*, a tone picture of exceeding charm, that was to shape as one of Tennyson's most enchanting poems. The popular note of sentiment is struck successfully in *The Miller's Daughter* and *The May Queen*, though their poetical merit is on a distinctly lower level.

The volumes were freely, frankly, and even brutally attacked. Much of the criticism was salutary, and for the next ten years Tennyson, though he wrote plentifully, published nothing and revised with great care what he had written.

In 1842 he published two slight volumes largely consisting of winnowings from the earlier volumes, made with scrupulous care, and some new *English Idylls*. The nature of the revision showed how keen a self-critic the poet was, and how wisely he had taken to heart the bitter wisdom of his reviewers. Of the twenty-four pieces selected from

the first volumes, not one is appreciably revised; of the sixteen pieces taken from the volume of 1833, seven were materially altered. This does not imply that the second volume was in the poet's opinion inferior to the first, but that he is more ambitious there and tried to soar above his range. Undoubtedly there is stronger work in the second volume, but it taxed more severely the power of the young literary artist. In the opinion of some critics, Edward Fitzgerald for instance, Tennyson never reached so high a standard again as was achieved in this volume of 1842. Certainly a volume that gave us the revised *Lotos-Eaters* and *Lady of Shalott*, the exquisite *Day Dream*, such perfect essays in classic art as *Ulysses* and *Morte D'Arthur*, such lovely songs as *Break, Break, Break*, and *Come not, when I am Dead*, is one that exhibits some of the best representative work of Tennyson. In some respects he never bettered it. Not even in the nature pictures of *In Memoriam* and *Maud* did he excel the scenic beauty and atmospheric charm of *The Lotos-Eaters*. Of its kind he never equalled the haunting music of *The Lady of Shalott*; while for strength and dignity and noble phrasing, *Œnone* (revised), *Ulysses* and *Tithonus*, were never excelled later, though *Lucretius* (included in the *Enoch Arden* volume) well deserves a place alongside of them. But rich as this volume is in those characteristics that individualise his best work, clarity, melody, dignity, one cannot accept it as representing the high-water mark of the poet's genius. His lyric note is ampler and more varied in the lovely songs that decorate *The Princess*; and more passionate and more ecstatic in *Maud*. Conceding that none of the *Idylls of the King* rival the earlier *Morte D'Arthur*, we have to reckon with *In Memoriam*, and however little we may care for its philosophy, its technical workmanship can well hold its own with the very choicest of his earlier work. If not in the highest flight as poems, the *Dramatic Monologues* exhibit so fresh and delightful an aspect of the poet's gifts, that we cannot think of his poetry as complete without them.

It is an arguable point whether he ever did anything *better* than the work contained in the volume of 1842; but he certainly did some things as well, and as certainly increased the variety and plasticity of his art.

Thus far, Tennyson's work has been touched only slightly by the thought of his day. Much of it reflected the artistic ideals of Keats, and led the reader into an enchanted land of beauty, off the dusty highway of human existence. But in *Locksley Hall* were indications that social problems had begun to stir him, and in 1847 he published his first long poem, *The Princess*, which deals frankly with a problem of the day, the Woman's Question. This "Medley" showed a fine command of blank verse, and contains passages of great beauty. Yet the most attractive part of the poem lay in Tennyson's afterthought, of inserting "short swallow flights of song" between the various parts.

Regarded as a whole, the poems suffer from lack of organic unity, and from the somewhat uneasy wavering between jest and earnest in the matter of treatment; but it is significant of the trend of the poet's mind in the direction of current thought.

Meanwhile Tennyson had been working at what one of his friends called "the Memorial poems," carefully revising and elaborating them; though few realised that the monumental elegy, *In Memoriam*, published in 1850, was the outcome of nearly twenty years' thought and craftsmanship. As an elegy, its length militates against its effectiveness; but after all it is much more than an elegy; it is a deliberate statement of Tennyson's religious philosophy, and incidentally presents those vexed questions inter-relating religion and science that were beginning to trouble the poet's generation. It exhibits more fully than any poem of his hitherto had done, his knowledge of science and his power to actualise in exquisite phrase the latest discoveries of science; it illustrates afresh his visualising gift of pictorial description, and the vignettes of typical English scenery in this poem can rank with his best descriptive work. As a work of art, indeed, it is worthy of the highest praise. Not only is it a metrical masterpiece, for the movement of the verse suits to perfection the brooding and contemplative manner; but it is rich to overflowing in rhythmic felicities, and many of its lines have passed into our language and become common property. Perhaps, here and there, the highly-wrought craftsmanship obtrudes a shade too much and passes the borderline between art and artificiality; but the lapses are few, and the inevitable expressions many.

The quatrain stanza had been used by Lord Herbert of Cherbury and by Ben Jonson; and Tennyson's consummate skill in manipulating it is best realised by comparing their treatment of it with his own.

Here is Ben Jonson:

> "Though beauty be the mark of praise
> And yours of whom I sing be such
> As not the world can praise too much,
> Yet 'tis your virtue now I raise."

Here is Tennyson:

> "I sing to him that rests below
> And, since the grasses round me wave
> I take the grasses of the grave,
> And make them pipes whereon to blow."

In the same year as saw the publication of *In Memoriam*, the poet wrote his great *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*. As a poet of domestic politics he was never inspiring, but as a writer of patriotic verse, he is among the most distinguished of our poets, and this poem is among the best of its kind. Then a few years later, in 1855, came *Maud*. Regarding it as an organic whole, *Maud* is even less satisfactory than *The Princess*, and is decidedly inferior to *In Memoriam*. The neurotic hero is so morbid and hysterical from the outset that his final lapse into madness fails to affect the reader with the dramatic intensity that was needed. A noble mind o'erthrown, is matter for the greatest poetry; but it is impossible to feel any thrill from the disaster to so poor a creature as Tennyson has given us.

Looked at not as the study of a diseased soul,

but as a collection of fragmentary lyrics, our feelings are very different. In lyric splendour, Tennyson had never done and never did finer work. As a love poem, *Maud* is a triumph, not merely for the satisfying beauty of its phrasing, but as a glorious expression of the sheer ecstasy and rapture of passion. When reading such lyrics as the garden invocation, or the even lovelier "O that 'twere possible, after long grief and pain," we are ready to forget the confused and patchy treatment of the psychological connecting links, and the hysterical eulogy of war with which the monodrama starts.

Following *Maud*, came the *Idylls of the King* (1859). Here he treated of the Arthurian Legend, in four episodes,—the Welsh story of Geraint and Enid, the tale of Merlin and Vivien, one of Lancelot's adventures, and the parting of Arthur and Guenevere. Gradually the other stories were added until the Arthurian story had grown into matter for twelve books. Tennyson's interest in the old mediæval cycle dated from the thirties. *The Lady of Shalott* testifies to that; while in *The Passing of Arthur* he struck a stronger and more vibrant note than he succeeds in doing with any of the subsequent *Idylls*. Tennyson's re-shaping and modernising (for so it was in essence) of the legends were started in 1859 and concluded in 1885. Technically, the *Idylls* are a great achievement. Tennyson's blank verse is inexpressibly finer in quality than any attempted by the poets of the Romantic Revival; and to rival it one must go back to Milton. Previous to these Arthurian stories he made various essays into blank verse with notable results—e.g. *Ulysses*, *Lucretius*, *Aylmer's Field*—but he had never tried on so large a scale as in the *Idylls*; and if he cannot match the majestic organ notes of Milton, his verse has a grace, a flexibility, a noble cadence, and what is peculiarly Tennyson's, a delicate and caressing tenderness.

The fresh developments we have to note in Tennyson's later years are in the direction of drama. Hitherto his work has no dramatic tendency, it had been for the most part descriptive and panoramic in quality. It had shown a great power of observing *things*, and an active interest in the simple, general attributes of men and women but with rare exceptions it had shown little interest in concrete individuals. He was a great student of character, not of characters; and his poetic method, with its detailed elaboration, did not seem suited to the swift, decisive way of the dramatist. Yet in the dialect poems which he began to write after the earlier *Idylls*, he exhibited an imaginative power of painting individuals, and a rich vein of humour utterly alien to his poetry as a whole. We know that there was a rough elemental side to Tennyson's nature and it comes out in these poems, where he identifies himself with such dramatic gusto with his Farmers and Cobblers and Grandmothers. What Edwin Waugh did for Lancashire, and Barnes for Dorset, Tennyson did for Lincolnshire. Perhaps indeed the dialect vein of Waugh and Barnes had turned our poet's mind to that direction. However that may be, his success was unmistakable. The vitality of these studies is triumphant. How admirably he differentiates the *Northern Farmer* (old style) with his colossal vanity, yet not unattractive nature, with the smaller, harder, money-making *Northern Farmer* (new style). What grim humour there is in the *Northern Cobbler*; what crisp satire in *The Churchwarden and the Curate*:

"But Parson 'a will speak out, saw, now 'e be sixty-seven,
He'll niver swap Owlby an' Scratby fur owt but the Kingdom o' Heaven;
An' thou'll be 'is Curate 'ere, but, if iver tha means to git 'igher,
Tha mun tackle the sins o' the Wo'ld, an' not the faults o' the Squire.

* * * * *

Naay, but tha *mun* speak hout to the Baptises here i' the town.
Fur moast on 'em talks agean tithe, an' I'd like tha to preach 'em down.
Fur *they've* bin a-preachin' *mea* down, they have, and I hates 'em now.
Fur they boäved their nasty sins i' *my* pond, an' it poisoned the cow."

Behind the roughness and eccentricities of the old Farmer, the poet detects a piece of sturdy human nature; there is a primal strength about the man that attracts us, and in this primal strength there is, as there is in all the elemental things in life, that savour of the brown earth, the stuff of real poetry:

"Git me my aäle I tell tha', an' if I mun doy, I mun doy."

Scarcely less inferior to these studies in humour and shrewd observation, is *The Village Wife on the Entail*:

"Sit thyson down for a bit: hev a glass o' cowslip wine!
I liked the owd Squire an' 'is gells an' hiv they wore gells o' mine.
Fur theu we was all as one, the Squire an' 'is darters an' me.
Dull but Miss Annie, the boldest, I niver not took to she:
But Nelly, the last o' the clutch, I liked 'er the first on 'em all.
Fur hoffens we talked o' my darter as died o' the fever ut fall:
An' I thowt 'twas the will o' the Lord, but Miss Annie she said it wur dreädful;
Fur she hedn't naw coomfort in 'er, an' an'd naw thanks fur 'er pains.
Eh! thaädie all wi' the Lord my childer, I hon't gotten none!
Se new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in 'is 'and, an' owd Squire's gone."

Most of these drawings are from life, and are based on some fragment of speech attributed to the particular character: from the bone, the poet, like Professor Owen, re-constructs the animal. The dramatic power shown in these poems is further displayed when the poet drops dialect as in *Rizpah*, *Sir John Oldcastle*, and *Romney's Remorse*; they are truly individualised as the earlier poems are not, and exhibit the passionate underside to Tennyson's nature. But when Tennyson turned, as he did during the 'seventies, to the domain of conventional poetic drama, we realise that it takes more than flashes of dramatic power to make a dramatist. Of his three best plays, *Queen Mary* (1875), *Harold* (1876), and *Becket* (1884), none of them show that instinct for presenting character

in action that lies at the root of drama. Nor can he vitalise the more complex types of character as he can his rough, simple folk. His brooding, reflective mind can focus a single character, until he has visualised it clearly and distinctly; but a crowded stage confuses him; he cannot paint in a few, vivid strokes, and loses grip of his material. There is good literary work in his plays, especially in *Harold* and *Becket*; and in the latter play, which in its subject matter suited his cast of mind best of all, passages of fine poetic beauty and situations of genuine power are displayed. But on the whole the dramatic form proved alien to his genius; he grows curiously still and formal when writing them, and carefully and thoughtfully as they are written, they lack life. Perhaps the secret of his failure as a dramatist lies in the fact that he started too late in life; his powers were set and fixed when he essayed them. He found himself wrestling with an unfamiliar technique. That he did not succeed is scarcely surprising; that he achieved even so moderate success as he did in *Becket* (thanks chiefly to Henry Irving's genius), is a testimony to his perseverance, and to his general gifts as a literary artist.

In Tennyson's later work there is naturally some decline of power, due to advancing age. Neither the *Death of Œnone*, or *Demeter*, did the poet's powers real justice; and *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, though not without a certain rugged force, has a querulous and senile flavour that leaves us criticising the man when we ought to be thinking of the poet.

Yet there is no serious decay of artistry, for even in the later work, at times in certain passages of *The Foresters*, and in *Crossing the Bar*, the craftsman's ancient cunning asserts itself.

In reviewing the whole body of Tennyson's work we cannot but feel that he is at his happiest and best when actualising for us the beauty of the visible world. It is here that his dominant characteristics—clarity, melody, and dignity—are exhibited in their amplest power. None could excel him in lines of limpid lucidity such as these:

"The league of grass wash'd by a slow, broad stream."

"... Many a rose carnation feed
With Summer spice the humming air."

. . . . . .

"The little speedwell's darling blue."

. . . . . .

"A light blue haze of early dawn."

. . . . . .

"Now rings the woodland loud and long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drown'd in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song."

Or in haunting music:

"The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees."

. . . . . .

"Night slid down one long stream of sighing wind
And in her bosom bore the baby Sleep."

. . . . . .

"O hark! O hear! How thin and clear
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar,
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glen replying.
Blow bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying."

. . . . . .

"None like her, none.
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering talk
Stirr'd her light foot among the garden walk,
And shook my heart to think she comes once more;
But even then I heard her close the door,
The gates of Heaven are closed, and she is gone.

There is none like her, none,
Nor will be when our summers have deceased.
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon
In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious East,
Sighing for Lebanon,
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here increased,
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,
And looking to the South, and fed
With honey'd rain and delicate air,
And haunted by the starry head
Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate,
And made my life a perfumed altar-flame."

Or for noble dignity:

"The long day wanes, the slow moon climbs, the deep
Moans with many voices."

. . . . . .

"It may be that the gulf will wash us down,
It may be we shall touch the happy Isles
And see the great Achilles whom we knew."

. . . . . .

"Poor little life that toddles for an hour
Crown'd with a flower or two, and there an end."

. . . . . .

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways."

His Attitude towards Nature

In considering the body of his work, some estimate of his treatment of Nature should precede that dealing with his outlook on men and women.

Nowhere is the scientific perception to which I have alluded, more clearly shown than here. No poet has ever been more sensitive to the varied loveliness of Nature; to the sensuous glory of things. Nature's more austere moods are better interpreted by Wordsworth; her ecstasies more subtly felt by Shelley; but the varying and complex spell of her multitudinous moods as a whole has found no finer artistic expression than is given us in the verse of Tennyson. Accurate observation and delicate poetic feeling are happily blended. He can give us large effects, as in this epitome of an autumn storm:

"The last red leaf is whirled away,
The rooks are blown about the sky";

and the superb image of

"Such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam";

or this, expressive of desolation:

"He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain,
On the bald street breaks the blank day."

And he can impress us also with microscopic effects. Indeed, excepting Crabbe, no poet ever dealt with the *minutiæ* of Nature so well as Tennyson. Could anything be more apt for combined accuracy of perception and beauty of delineation than touches such as these:

Of the dragon-fly:

"A living flash of light he flew";

of the sunflower, that

"Rays round with flames her disc of seed";

of the blasts

"That blow the poplars white";

of dark hair

"More black than ash buds in the front of March":

He reminds with delicate emphasis, how that with the coming of spring, "rosy plumelets tuft the larch"; how autumn lays "a fiery finger on the leaves"; speaks of the dandelion as "the flower, that blows a globe of after arrowlets"; and notes with the eye of a naturalist, "the primrose of the later year."

Never does the fancy of the poet carry him into a realm of unreal imagery. The beautiful little touch bearing on the clouds of pollen that float from the staminal flower of the yew, exhibits yet again the exactitude of the botanist, as well as the vision of the poet:

"Beneath a world-old yew, darkening half
The cloisters, on a gusteful April morn,
That puff'd the swaying branches into smoke,"

a touch that reminds us of one not dissimilar in *Enoch Arden*, where he likens Philip to

"The working bee in blossom-dust
Bleach'd with his mill."

Everywhere indeed the observation of the scientist is glorified by the sensibility of the artist, the stark fact is clad in lovely imagery. Thus, Tennyson's landscapes are never vague, they are visualised with an almost preternatural clarity. And if the objective scientific touch is one feature of his Nature poetry, another feature lies in its atmospheric subjectivity. Tennyson never paints Nature with Wordsworth, or even Byron, as something outside of Man, with a life-spirit purpose of its own. Nature for him is always a background for reflecting some human emotion; it carries no message or heniaon of its own, but harmonises with delicate adaptability to the mood of man.

Thus in depicting moods of indolence, of sorrow, of love, he chooses such scenic accessories as may best accentuate these moods.

In *The Lotos-Eaters*, the narcotised companions of Ulysses read their own feelings into the surroundings; while the poet suggests by many subtle touches how well the dreamy, languid atmosphere of the place chimes in with their feelings.

They have eaten of the indolence-giving fruit, and break into song:

"There is sweet music here that softer falls,
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass:
Music that gentler on the spirit lies,
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes:
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And through the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy hollo the poppy hangs in sleep."

Why should they trouble themselves, think the singers, with the distresses of life? Why not be as the flower that ripens in its place, ripens and fades, and falls:

"What pleasure can we have,
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest and ripen towards the grave
In silence; ripen, fall, and cease;
Give us long rest or death, dark death or dreamful ease."

"'Tis hard to settle order once again,
There is confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labour unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars,
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot stars."

No less effective is the vignette expressing the sleepy grace of the little cathedral town:

"... between it and the garden lies
A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad stream,
That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the oar,
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge
Crown'd with the minster-towers."

Mark again how admirably the desolate background of Mariana suits the mood of despondent isolation; the melancholy autumnal touch in *Tithonus*, the tranquil charm of the sea-coast village in *Enoch Arden*. Sorrow in varying degrees of poignancy serves the poet as the inspiration of some of the loveliest pictures in *In Memoriam*. Here is the mood of the mourner after the first sharp agonies have passed away, and calm resignation has stolen over his senses:

"Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground:

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold."

Summer days, summer nights harmonise with this mood of visual regret:

"By night we linger'd on the lawn,
For under foot the herb was dry;
And genial warmth; and o'er the sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn;
. . . . . .

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd
The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field;

And suck'd from out the distant gloom,
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms and swung
The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said:

"The dawn, the dawn," and died away;
And east and west, without a breath,
Mixed their dim lights, like life and death,
To broaden into boundless day."

A more poignant mood is reflected in *Tears, Idle Tears*:

"Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns,
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the Days that are no more."

To Wordsworth, the coming of spring meant fresh joy and hope. It cheers Tennyson only when his spirit is attuned to its dawn of new life; and when his assertive vitality responds to the beauty of the visible world:

"Now rings the woodland loud and long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drown'd in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the dale,
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea.

Where now the seamew pipes or dives
In yonder greening gleam, and fly
The happy birds that change their sky
To build and brood; that live their lives

From land to land; and in my breast
Spring wakens too; and my regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest."

His Attitude towards Human Life

Tennyson's attitude towards men and women is that of a quiet, deliberate, steady, self-restrained nature; one keenly alive to the slightest fluctuations of mood, yet averse from tidal impulses, and the insurgent aspects of human life. He presents here a striking contrast with his great contemporary, Browning, who was always stirred to his depths by the high impossible things of life—and who thrilled to passions from which Tennyson shrunk away in alarm.

With whom does Tennyson chiefly treat? With princes, princesses, men and women of intellectual power and delicate refinement. He has no flunkey regard for rank as rank, but, like Thackeray he is drawn to an environment of culture and good lineage. King Arthur is obviously his ideal of manhood, strong, calm, and self-contained; while the women he loves best are gentle, patient, enduring souls. When he touches the lives of the poor there is just a suspicion of the average well-meaning district visitor about his tone. He is gracious and kindly, and gently patronising.

His rich sense of humour (would that he had exercised it more) enables him to laugh with discerning sympathy over the Northern Farmer, and the Cobbler and the old Grandmother, but the characters must be quaint and well crusted with age before they attract him. Eccentric age he can tolerate, eccentric youth moves him only to impatience. If he treats of the youthful idealist as in *Locksley Hall*, he makes him a prig. The visionary, the hot-blood revolutionary, attract him in no degree, as a poet. Yet it would be a mistake to regard Tennyson as temperamentally blind to, or as too superfine to understand, the elemental emotions. He was by nature intensely virile, with a rough, primal side in his nature that came uppermost at times in the presence of his friends. But in his general outlook on life, he grew to distrust more and more, passion as an elemental force, and strove to idealise and spiritualise it, whether as a force in political society or in sexual relationships. This again is quite alien to Browning's method and outlook; and the effect upon his poetry of this fear of excess, horror of extravagance, is not altogether happy.

His Treatment of Passion

But the prudential note in Tennyson is assuredly not due, as some critics have thought, to any flabbiness of texture or insensibility to passion; and at times, passion leaps out despite the poet's precautions. Among the pretty, yet artificial sentimentality of his youthful work there is a little poem called *Fatima*, which is frankly and warmly passionate:

"O Love, Love, Love! O withering might!
O sun, that from thy noonday height
Shudderest when I strain my sight,
Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light,
Lo, falling from my constant mind,
Lo, parch'd and wither'd, deaf and blind,
I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours
Below the city's eastern towers:
I thirsted for the brooks, the showers:
I roll'd among the tender flowers:
I crush'd them on my breast, my mouth:
I look'd athwart the burning drouth
Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke his name,
From my swift blood that went and came
A thousand little shafts of flame
Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.
O Love, O fire! once he drew
With one long kiss my whole soul thro
My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

. . . . . .

My whole soul waiting silently,
All naked in a sultry sky,
Droops blinded with his shining eye:
I will possess him or will die.
I will grow round him in his place,
Grow, live, die looking on his face,
Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace."

The sheer ecstasy of passion, despite an occasional shrillness of the note, has never been expressed better in our poetry than in *Maud*; and although the *Idylls* refines almost to vanishing point the hot tumult of passion that surges through Malory's story, there is one passage where the poet shows how finely he could have painted this, had he so wished:

"Passion pale they met
And greeted. Hands in hands and eye to eye,
Low on the border of her couch they sat,
Stammering and silent. It was their last hour,
A madness of farewells."

But we must take our poets as we find them, and Tennyson elected to treat of love, not as with Byron an elemental force, or with Shelley and Browning as a transcendental passion, or with

Rossetti as a mystic mingling of sense and spirit, but as a domestic sentiment. And to the majority of English people, this is clearly the favourite point of view. To them Love is essentially a domestic sentiment. It suggests primarily courting, Mendelssohn's Wedding March, and the cheerful preoccupation of family life. For this reason, Tennyson's love poetry, however much it may chill or vex certain temperaments, carries with it a wider appeal than the love poetry of more impulsive poets. There are no great heights or depths about it, but it has a tender reserve, a graciousness, a homeliness that explains its popularity.

Nor can we deny to it a persuasive charm and grace peculiarly its own, for instance, as in *The Day Dream*, an exquisite little love poem, delicate and fanciful as befits its setting, but with the warm pulsation of happy youth glowing through the lines:

"'I'd sleep another hundred years,
O love, for such another kiss;'
'O wake for ever, love,' she hears.
'O love, 'twas such as this and this.'
And o'er them many a sliding star,
And many a merry wind was borne,
And, streamed thro' many a golden bar,
The twilight melted into morn.

'O eyes long laid in happy sleep!'
'O happy sleep, that lightly fled!'
'O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep!'
'O love, thy kiss would wake the dead!'
And o'er them many a flowing range
Of vapour buoy'd the crescent-bark,
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,
The twilight died into the dark.

'A hundred summers! can it be?
And whither goest thou, tell me where?'
'O seek my father's court with me,
For there are greater wonders there.'
And o'er the hills and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
Beyond the night, across the day,
Thro' all the world she follow'd him."

His Character Drawing

Turning from his treatment of passion to his method of drawing men and women, it will be seen that, as a rule, Tennyson deals with types rather than with individuals; with the characteristics of average humanity rather than with the idiosyncrasies of particular personalities. This, again, explains the popularity of his appeal. His Miller's daughter, and Gardener's daughter, are like hundreds of charming girls; his May Queen is no individual child, merely a personification of the grace of childhood. Thus many a young man can refer to his sweetheart the attractions of these rustic maidens, and many a mother see in her own offspring the juvenile sweetness of the May Queen. So also may the more thoughtful mind identify himself with the common, idealising self in *Ulysses*, *Tithonus*, or *Lucretius*; while the appeal of the *Idylls* to so wide a circle is largely accounted for by the fact that the characters are not living individuals, but incarnate qualities; Merlin stands for wisdom, Vivien for the deceitful woman, Sir Galahad for chastity, Arthur for the ideal of manly virtue. Thus the very feature that weakens the poem dramatically, intensifies its appeal to the general reader.

This, I say, is the favourite method of Tennyson as a poet; but there are notable exceptions to the general rule, and these may be found in his dialect poems, and the rich humour and splendid vitality of these poems show that Tennyson's preference for dealing with types, as a rule, was due to no lack of insight into character, or any inability to individualise; but a deliberate act on his part just as his abstention from painting the passionate aspects of life was deliberate.

An interesting parallel of the artistic difference in dealing with a similar problem may be seen in comparing a passage from *Ulysses* with *The Northern Farmer* (old style). In both cases the character is confronted with Death; but whereas Ulysses generalises, as a certain type of man might do, the old Farmer commonts on the situation in a manner peculiarly individualistic and idiosyncratic.

Says Ulysses:

"How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains."

Here is the old Farmer:

"Do Godamoighty knaw what a's doing a-talkin o' mes?
I beant wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yonder a pes
An' Squoire 'ull be as mad an' all—a' dear a' dear!
An' I 'a moneged for Squoire come Michaelmas thirty year."

These dramatic monologues are no *tours de force* on Tennyson's part. They are as natural to him, as much part of him as his polished classical musings or his cultured sentimentalities. He was, as we have seen, by no means the drawing-room exquisite that some of his verse might lead us to expect, and the rugged strain in the man's nature is well exhibited in these rural studies.

Nor are these dialect poems any real exception to the psychological method he elected to use; the form is different, and the characters are vividly individualised; but there is no subtlety, no curious, out-of-the-way points of human nature. Here as elsewhere he deals with broad simple issues; treats of primal joys and sorrows, and the everyday aspects of ordinary men and women.

His Political and Social Outlook

Tennyson's development coincided with the expansion of the democratic ideal and the growth and diffusion of modern scientific ideas, and both of these matters impressed his work, though in somewhat different degrees. His political sympathies had a tinge of revolutionary enthusiasm when he was quite a youth and still to an extent under the influence of the great romantic poets. But his poem on *Poland* is his one solitary poem on liberty, while his own political faith is well expressed in the following familiar lines:

BRITAIN

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
The land, where girt with friends or foes
A man may speak the thing he will;

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom slowly broadens down
From precedent to precedent.

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But by degrees to fullness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive thought
Hath time and space to work and spread.

This is typically English, and a better expression of the old Whig ideal it would be hard to find. He understood excellently well the calibre of the English spirit; and the methods especially suited to our insular genius. He understood it as well as Bentham did, and there is no slight similarity between the outlook of the two men on the problem of social politics. To Tennyson as to Bentham, the democratic ideal was a middle-class ideal; it was, moreover, a strongly individualistic ideal. Orderly development was dear to both men; and the notion of "a land of settled government" and of "freedom slowly broadening down" was conceived in the true Benthamite spirit. The radical democratic passion of Shelley, that sought to obliterate class divisions in the main, found no response in Tennyson's breast. He was an aristocrat in feeling, and though quick enough to resent the abuse of class privileges, had no more confidence in the voice of the people than Carlyle himself. Tennyson believed in the Great Man theory, though he never confounded Might with Right to the same extent as did the author of the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*. On the other hand, he lacked Carlyle's flashes of insight into the crucial problems of social democracy.

What Tennyson did try to do as a poet was to draw people of all ranks together into a kindlier sympathy and to link them together by the masonic bond of a common humanity, but, unhappily, he did not see that to bring about this state of things radical changes must be wrought in the artificial hierarchy of our social system, and points of view that could only see in the fierce Revolutionary spirit "the blind hysterics of the Celt," showed a grave narrowness of vision and limitation of sympathy.

Yet if Tennyson showed the defects of the English temperament, he showed also its greatness. Putting aside the cheap swagger that pervades such things as the Forester's song in the Robin Hood play:

"There is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be;
There are no hearts like English hearts,
Such hearts of oak as they be.
There is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be;
There are no men like Englishmen,
So tall and bold as they be."

or such youthful absurdities like:

"Shout for England!
Ho for England!"

there is a fine and noble substratum to the patriotic spirit of Tennyson; and few of our poets have embodied that spirit in more dignified verse. A good example of this is his stirring *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*:

"O Statesman, guard us, guard the eye, the soul
Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
And save the one true seed of freedom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
That sober freedom out of which there springs
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings;
For, saving that, ye help to save mankind
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
And drill the raw world for the march of mind,
Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be just.
But wink no more in slothful overtrust.
Remember him who led your hosts;
He bids you guard the sacred coasts;
Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall!"

Which in its sane Imperialistic teaching is worth a dozen *Locksley Halls* and such rhetorical generalities as:

"Forward, forward let us range.
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.
Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day:
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as when life begun;
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the Sun."

Now the sentiment of patriotism flourishes best in minds charged with historical associations, and imbued strongly with the continuity of the present with the past; especially if we add to this the passion for locality. The exigencies of verse that demand a picturesque background, are responsible probably for the predominating militant note, e.g. *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, *A Ballad of the Fleet*, *The Defence of Lucknow*, *The Revenge*; though it is a pity that patriotism, as a literary *motif*, should subserve so exclusively the trumpet and battle-axe and neglect the triumphs won outside of the battlefield. Yet, taking the War poetry on its own merits, it exhibits a genuine love of the bulldog qualities of our race.

In this patriotic verse dealing with the glories of the "storied past," we always see Tennyson as

"Leather of the lawless crown,
As of the lawless crowd."

declaiming fiercely against "the falsehood of extremes," and extolling, with unwearying zeal, law and order.

Tennyson's ideal statesman may be gathered from his verses *To the Duke of Argyll*:

"O Patriot Statesman, be thou wise to know
The limits of resistance, and the bounds
Determining concession; still be bold
Not only to slight praise but suffer scorn;
And be thy heart the moment, and the year
Against the day; thy voice, a music heard
Thro' all the yells and counter-yells of feud
And faction, and thy will, a power to make
This ever-changing world of circumstance,
In changing, chime with never-changing Law."

In the first *Locksley Hall*, he reflects the current enthusiasm of the era of the Great Exhibition of 1851, when dreams of a universal brotherhood were in the air, and a kind of commercial Millennium

occupied men's minds. On the whole, Tennyson's influence in national politics was a wholesome and tonic one. He helped to foster that love of country that should animate a people, by dwelling on the finer qualities of national character, and insisting on the value of ancient forms and traditions. A proper reverence for the past is a vital condition of a sane aspiration for the future.

It would have been the better and the sweeter, if Tennyson had understood other nationalities as well as he did his own race, since cosmopolitan sympathies strengthen, in place of weakening—as some imagine—the spirit of patriotism. But, despite this limitation, Tennyson's influence in the main is a valuable and salutary one.

When we turn to Tennyson's views on domestic politics, we find the trumpet sounding a far less certain note. He saw, as indeed he could not help seeing, a vast amount of social misery, and there is a good deal in his poetry about the sorrows and hardships of the poor.

But genuine as his sympathies may have been, there is an air of unreality about their expression. This is due partly to the fact that they are put usually into the mouths of his weaker characters; the dismal young prig in *Locksley Hall*, or the neurotic hero of *Maud*. They do not seem to spring direct and spontaneous from the poet's heart. The unreality of these tirades is partly due also to the fact that they are couched in vague rhetorical generalities, and exhibit no realisation on Tennyson's part that anything is wrong with our present social organism. The one remedy that he harps upon for the evils of commercialism, is war. Could any more hopeless panacea for social distress be formulated than this?

Tennyson's exclusion from the world during the later years of his life, put him more and more out of touch with concrete realities. This, added to the natural conservatism of age, make his utterances on social subjects practically negligible.

In one direction alone did Tennyson really contribute suggestive ideas, and that was when dealing with the Woman's Movement. In *The Princess* he was for the first and last time really in advance of his age. There is a healthy progressive note in this poem, and reactionary as it may seem to many modern minds, it seems to me on the whole a just and sympathetic presentment in poetic form of the problem connected with woman's place in society.

The line, "Woman is not undeveloped man but diverse," goes to the root of the Sex question, and might well be pondered over by certain extremists to-day. The Emancipation of Woman has passed through many phases since Tennyson's day; yet can we better Tennyson's general estimate:

> "The Woman's cause is Man's;
> They rise and sink together"?

Tennyson sees in marriage and home life the best outlet for woman's energies, but he certainly does not restrict her to these:

> "And so these twain upon the skirts of Time,
> Sit side by side, full-summed in all their powers."

It is true Tennyson does not dwell upon the outlets for women who are not mothers and who have no homes to look after, but these scarcely come within the range of the poem, and at any rate are implied in the educational training laid down by Ida. A poem is not a handbook; but the prescriptions laid down by Tennyson, if we allow a certain latitude for the poetical air of the poet at times, are both clearly stated and reasonably put.

His Religious Outlook

So far we have been considering Tennyson's views on political and social matters; we may turn now to watch the trend of his thought on religious, and in so doing shall see how the scientific ideas of the age affected him. How far science influenced him as a poet of Nature we have seen. But the accuracy and precision that it gave to his scenic pieces, did not extend to his general outlook on life. We expect to find a logician, an argumentative disputant, who will take up definitely one side, perhaps to the disadvantage of his art—for dialectics and poetry make a mechanical not a chemical mixture—but certainly without equivocation. And this, of course, was not the case. No poet was more exercised by religious problems than he; and no poet was more sensitive to scientific thought than he. But his attitude is an attitude of compromise; he propounds a *via media* between the materialistic science of his day and dogmatic Christianity. His solution for the heart-searching and uncertitudes of the time was an undogmatic religion, that was at bottom intuitional. Historic Christianity scarcely weighed with him at all. "There's something that watches over us, and our individuality endures; that's my faith, and that's all my faith," he is reported to have said on one occasion to a friend. And this is the sum and substance of his faith as expressed in his poetry.

Tennyson has been called a mystic; it would be more correct to say he was mystical. He was not a mystic in the sense that Vaughan and George Herbert were mystics, or that Coleridge and Blake were mystics; may one not call him a rationalist with a tenacious strain of mysticism in his nature? No thorough-going mystic would have dealt at such length, and with such significant emphasis, upon the difficulties of religious faith; no thorough-going rationalist would have tried to solve the difficulties by claiming for the intuition of the heart, a way out of the morass of scepticism. The philosophy of *In Memoriam* sums up Tennyson's religious position. It is not a philosophy of faith so much as a philosophy of hope; after all he can only trust that "somehow good will be the final goal of ill." Yet the faint-hearted certitude of the poet, though it has repelled some and disgusted others, assuredly made for its immense popularity, and there are many to-day, to whom Tennyson's solution seems the only satisfactory one.

His concession to science, and his careful and concise statement of the purely scientific position, interested and attracted the scientist; his sympathetic presentment of the doubter's position, especially his line, "There lives more faith in honest doubt, believe me, than in half the creeds," capti-

vated the religious waverer; while the theologian was delighted by the triumph of faith at the close of the poem.

Tennyson's ethical thought inspires him more happily as a poet than does his metaphysics; for it takes him into a clearer and saner atmosphere; and his insistence on self-control, formulated in his beautiful poem *Œnone*, recurs again and again in his serious poetry. The categorical imperative in the soul of man, meant for him precisely what natural laws meant for phenomena in the world of Nature. Law and order are for him rules of conduct: disorder is the antithesis of rational existence. He saw it disturbing the life around him, and loathed it. And so, he also held fast to those elements in life that made for stability. A quiet, dignified, orderly existence—such was Tennyson's ideal, and he used all the resources of his gracious art to impress its value on men's minds.

He is the poet of discipline, not the poet of freedom. This fact impresses us in all his work, whether dealing with religion or with politics. It inspires his classical poems, and animates the Idylls and Dramas. Arthur is a great man because he stands for law, and Harold is great because he strove to make "jarring seldoms" move "to music and order"; while in *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After* he becomes almost hysterical in his horror of lawlessness and licence. Tennyson's point of view is certainly valuable as a corrective to the anarchic tendencies in life and literature; but it is not productive of the greatest poetry. Compromise may be an excellent rule of conduct, but it does not thrill the imagination. It is a pleasant thing to sail in peaceful waters and hug the sheltering coast; but life after all is a great adventure, and little would be accomplished were there no intrepid idealists, willing to stake their all on a forlorn hope, or a wild peradventure. It is good to cry out for more reverence; it is better to strive for ampler progress. Temporary harm, momentary disorder must be incurred by the social reformers who would renovate society. The very sanity and vigour of life depend on the men who dare the splendid, impossible things, for as Browning said, "A man's reach should exceed his grasp—or what's a heaven for?"

Yet, it is ungracious to leave Tennyson on this note of criticism. If his philosophy of life is not a great and inspiring one, yet it has its place in the scheme of things; and we may supplement its message by the more tonic teaching of Browning and Meredith; while of Tennyson's work as a literary artist, and as a painter of English life, no lover of beautiful verse could speak too highly. As a word painter of typical English scenery, as the exponent of the simple emotions of everyday life, he holds a treasured and honourable place. His delicacy and crystalline charm, his dignified and melodious utterance, will always endear him to English men and women.

I. POETRY: THE MINOR POETS OF THE EARLIER VICTORIAN ERA. John Clare—Ebenezer Elliott—Capel Lofft—Ebenezer Jones—Hartley Coleridge—Sara Coleridge—Thomas Hood—Henry Taylor—P. J. Bailey—R. H. Horne—J. Sheridan Knowles—J. R. Planché—C. Tennyson Turner—Frederick Tennyson—Bulwer Lytton—Aubrey de Vere—Henry Hart Milman. *Religious Verse:* John Keble—J. H. Newman—F. W. Faber—J. Mason Neale—Reginald Heber—R. S. Hawker. *Irish Verse:* James Clarence Mangan. *Ballad Verse:* Macaulay—Aytoun—Percy.

THE MINOR POETS OF THE EARLIER VICTORIAN ERA

In the group of minor poets considered dealing with the early years of the century, the influence of the Elizabethan writers was strongly marked; while we noted in certain directions a revival of the classical spirit in reaction to the prevalent romanticism of the age. As regards the group now under consideration, we shall find the influence of romanticism much weaker than before, the classical spirit more marked, but especially notable is the strong humanitarianism of many of the ablest writers.

The first to concern us is JOHN CLARE (1793–1864), a writer of considerable power and charm, too little appreciated. The son of a broken-down labourer, he was compelled from very early years to work in the fields for a living. Yet despite the physical exactions of his work he saved enough to pay for the privileges of an evening school in order to gain some kind of education. Happening to chance upon a verse-loving old woman, who could quote poetry for hours together, he got some introduction to literature; though his own observations of rural life and his genuine love of rustic scenes, served as his main inspiration.

Little encouragement came from his ignorant companions, but at last, through the instrumentality of some people of culture, he managed to get his first volume, *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life*, published in 1820. The book attracted notice. Southey spoke kindly of it in the *Quarterly Review*, and the youth was brought to London.

Sufficient money was raised to keep him from want; and when he returned to the country which he loved, this sum, together with what he might have saved, should have proved sufficient to enable him to develop his powers. Unhappily, the quality of brain that gave this unusual sensibility to verse, fostered also grave mental instability. Drink, that hastened the tragic end of Burns, hurried Clare to a disastrous breakdown; yet, as in Burns' case, it did not kill his power of verse. Indeed, when in the County Asylum of Northamptonshire, where he lived for over twenty years, he did some of his best work.

His early work was written in dialect; his later in classical English: and in each class he did excellently well. He had the lyric faculty, and

the temper of his mind is more nearly allied to Blake's than to any other contemporary. But he was a disciple in no school; his imagination if circumscribed was fresh and original, and his limited reading had only served to elicit his innate powers.

"I am! yet what I am who cares or knows?
My friends forsake me like a memory lost;
I am the self-consumer of my woes,
They rise and vanish, an oblivious host,
Like shades in love and death's oblivion lost;
And yet I am! and live with shadows tost.

Into the nothingness of scorn and noise,
Into the living sea of waking dreams,
Where there is neither sense of life nor joys,
But the vast shipwreck of my life's esteems;
And e'en the dearest—that I loved the best—
Are strange—nay, rather stranger than the rest.

I long for scenes where man has never trod;
For scenes where woman never smil'd or wept;
There to abide with my creator, God,
And sleep as I in childhood sweetly slept:
Untroubling and untroubled where I lie:
The grass below—above, the vaulted sky."

In addition to the earlier volume he published *The Village Minstrel* (1821) and *The Shepherd's Calendar* (1827).

Another uncultured poet was EBENEZER ELLIOTT (1781–1849), the "Corn Law Rhymer." His life was spent in the neighbourhood of Sheffield, and his verse reflects alike the grinding lives of the industrial poor and the rich beauty of the moorland. He had a warm appreciation of scenic beauty, and a sympathy no less warm for the lot of the toiler. Thomson's *Seasons* impressed him much as they had impressed Clare, but like Clare, the merit of his work is independent of any strong literary inspiration. In the same year as saw the *Lyrical Ballads*, Elliott wrote his first piece, *A Vernal Walk*. Then came silence for twenty years while Elliott strove with the workers in the town; and when next he wrote, having attained some worldly competence, the human predominates in his writing. Poems come now in quick succession: *Love* (1823), *The Ranter* (1827), *Corn Law Rhymes* (1828), *The Village Patriarch* (1829). The factory victims found their champion in view; though his name is more generally associated with the demand for "bread for the worker," in the *Corn Law Rhymes*.

Elliott's long struggle with poverty, his intimate acquaintance with the pitiful tragedies of starved and stunted lives, his own natural sensitiveness and warmth of heart, inspired him with fierce anger against the "rich who take from plunder'd labour's store," and this feeling finds a concrete expression in his furious attacks on the "bread tax." It fired him to write his splendid battle-cry:

"Day, like our souls, is fiercely dark;
What then? 'Tis day!
We sleep no more; the cock crows—hark!
To arms! away!

They come! they come! the knell is rung
Of us or them;
Wide o'er their march the pomp is flung
Of gold and gem.

What collar'd hound of lawless sway,
To famine dear—
What pension'd slave of Attila
Leads in the rear?

Come they from Scythian wilds afar,
Our blood to spill?
Wear they the livery of the Czar?
They do his will.

Nor tassell'd silk, nor epaulet,
Nor plume, nor torse—
No splendour gilds, all sternly met,
Our foot and horse.

But, dark and still, we inly glow,
Condens'd in ire!
Strike, tawdry slaves, and ye shall know
Our gloom is fire.

In vain your pomp, ye evil powers,
Insults the land;
Wrongs, vengeance, and *the cause* are ours,
And God's right hand!

Madmen! they trample into snakes
The wormy clod!
Like fire, beneath their feet awakes
The sword of God!

Behind, before, above, below,
They rouse the brave;
Woe'er they go, they make a foe,
Or find a grave."

For Elliott it was not capitalism but landlordism, that was the bane of modern life. He did not see—being a kind-hearted and sympathetic capitalist himself—that capitalism would need its revolutionary singers, even more than the cause which he had espoused with such fine abandon. But we must not look to Elliott for a prophetic vision that was denied to all but our greatest; and the very narrowness of his outlook gave force and intensity to his song.

Elliott's art, if rough and unequal, was unquestionably genuine, and served its propagandist purpose more effectively than a finer and more fastidious art would have done. Comparing him with Clare, we see greater passion and a somewhat blunter imagination. His love of the country is indeed more akin to that of Cobbett than of Clare. A tramp over the hills would clear his brain and put him to rights, when weary at heart, and there is the freshness and keenness of the moorland in his verse. In his rustic scenes and his rural characters, he reminds us often of Wordsworth. Lacking his spiritual intensity and supreme poetic grandeur, he has in no small measure his power, as in *Enoch Wray*, of depicting grand and simple characters. He is a poet of the people; and Carlyle, who never missed a genuine man, likened his work to "hues of joy and harmony, painted out of troublous tears."

"Flowers peep, trees bud, boughs tremble, rivers run;
The red-wing says it is a glorious morn.
Who are the Heavens, thou Highest, and thy Sun
Shine without cloud, all fire. How sweetly, borne
O'er wings of morning, o'er the leafless thorn."

There are a few verse writers who, though of less account than Ebenezer Elliott, belong to his school, and derived their inspiration from the industrial unrest of the day. Of these the best were CAREL LOFFT (1806–1873), the social reformer, whose father had been a friend of Godwin's, and EBENEZER JONES (1820–1860), another of the toilers, who devoted his scanty leisure to the cause he held so dear—Chartism. Lofft's rural epic, *Ernest, or Political Regeneration* (1839), is a frank bid for direct democratic government and for the nationalisation of the land,

with just enough compensation to keep the landlords from starvation.

Jones wrote some stirring songs, such as the *Song of the Kings of Gold*, the *Song of the Gold Getters*, and their crude violence may be condoned by reason of his youthful years when they were written. Their indifferent reception led Jones to turn his attention to journalistic prose, by means of which he sought to further political schemes more effectively.

"I never wholly feel that summer is high,
However green the trees or loud the birds,
However movelessly cyo-winking herds
Stand in cold pools, or under large trees lie,
Till I do climb all cultured pastures by,
That, hedged by hedgerows studiously trim,
Smile like a lady's face with lace laced prim,
And on some moor or hill that seeks the sky
Lonely and nakedly,—utterly lie down,
And feel the sunshine throbbing on body and limb,
My drowsy brain in pleasant drunkenness swim,
Each rising thought sink back and dreamily drown,
Smiles creep o'er my lips, and smother my lips,
and slay,
Each muscle sink to itself, and separately enjoy."

The name of HARTLEY COLERIDGE (1796–1849) links us again with the great poets of the early century. Brought up in an atmosphere of noble verse, and with the protecting kindness and sympathy of Wordsworth about him, the boy suffered from the desultory education he received from his father, who accounted it the best thing for him "to wander like a breeze by lakes and sandy shores." Lack of discipline and a fatherly encouragement to "mouch about" generally might not have harmed some natures, but Hartley had too much of his father's mental infirmities in him. He was, as a youth, richly endowed with intellectual and artistic gifts, with something of his father's fine ghostly imagination and a very large measure of his metaphysical powers, but intemperance spoilt a brilliant prospect at Oxford, and he became a genial and irresponsible wanderer in the Lake District. Tennyson called him "a sun-loved little man"; certainly he had a sunny friendliness of manner and a touch of the Coleridge charm, that endeared him to the simple country folk. Indeed they loved him more than they did his great neighbour; for his erratic habits seemed to them more in harmony with what a poet should be, than the sobriety and steadiness of the less accessible William Wordsworth.

Hartley Coleridge is at his best in sonnet writing. This is rather curious, as one would have expected him to excel rather in lyric verse. But the conventions of the sonnet form, and the concentration necessary, seemed to have stimulated his best powers, and his delicate sense of beauty, and his friendly nature, are admirably expressed in these.

A few of his songs are excellent, notably *She is not fair to outward view*; but the sonnets are nearly all admirable, and a few really great. The following exemplify Hartley Coleridge at his best:

NOT IN VAIN

Let me not deem that I was made in vain,
Or that my being was an accident
Which fate, in working its sublime intent,
Nor wished to be, to hinder would not deign.
Each drop uncounted in a storm of rain
Hath its own mission, and is duly sent
To its own leaf or blade, not idly spent
'Mid myriad dimples on the shipless main.
The very shadow of an insect's wing,
For which the violet mural nut while it stays
Yet felt too lightly for its vanishing,
Proved that the sun was shining by its shade.
Then can a drop of the eternal spring,
Shadow of living light, in vain be made?

NOVEMBER

The mellow year is hastening to its close;
The little birds have almost sung their last,
Their small notes twitter in the dreary blast—
That shrill-piped harbinger of early snows;
The patient beauty of the scentless rose,
Oft with the morn's hoar crystal quaintly glassed,
Hangs, a pale mourner for the summer past,
And makes a little summer where it grows:
In the chill sunbeam of the faint brief day
The dusky waters shudder as they shine.
The russet leaves obstruct the struggling way
Of sere brooks, which no deep banks confine,
And the gaunt woods, in ragged scant array,
Wrap their old limbs with sombre ivy-twine.

Along with Hartley may be mentioned his gifted sister, Sara. She married another brilliant member of the family, a cousin, Henry Nelson, who was preparing his father's literary remains for publication. His early death threw upon his wife the labours of an editress and distracted her from original work on her own account. Despite this, her fairy story *Phantasmion* (1837), with its delightful songs, serves to show what imaginative power she possessed. Given ampler opportunity, she might have accomplished much.

Phantasmion's Quest of Iarine gives us a taste of her gifts:

"Yon changeful cloud will soon thy aspect wear,
So bright it grows;—and now, by light winds shaken,—
O ever seen yet ne'er to be o'ertaken!—
Those waving branches seem thy billowy hair.
The cypress glades recall thy pensive air;
Slow rills that wind like snakes amid the grass,
Thine eyes mild sparkle fling me as they pass
Yet murmuring coy, *This frontless Quest forbear!*
Nay, e'en amid the cataract's loud storm,
Where foamy torrents from the crags are leaping,
Methinks I catch swift glimpses of thy form.
Thy robe's light folds in airy tumult sweeping;
Then silent are the falls: 'mid colours warm
Gleams the bright maze beneath their splendour sweeping."

THOMAS HOOD (1799–1845) is one of the most considerable and original influences among the minor poets of the age. A delicate and ailing boy, he was brought up as an engraver, but the work told severely upon his inherited delicacy, and we find him at twenty-one sub-editor of the famous *London Magazine*. His earlier literary work included *Lycus the Centaur* (1822), a striking piece of imaginative writing, the *Plea of the Midsummer Fairies*, a graceful and charming work, and the grimly powerful *Dream of Eugene Aram*. Hood is at bottom a serious writer, with a vivid sense of the seamy side of life and the power to present this with simple and homely power. Such poems as *The Song of the Shirt* and *The Bridge of Sighs* exhibit a gift of dealing with human problems in a popular manner, shorn of that facile sentimentality, too often associated with

popular verse of this type. *The Haunted House* shows, moreover, that Hood had a really high order of imagination: and it is a pity that the necessities of bread and butter compelled him to work too diligently in his lighter vein. He was a genuine humorist, with a pleasant fancy and an amiable weakness for puns; but much of his trifling as a jester could well have been spared to afford better opportunity for the deeper springs in his nature. Sometimes, as in *Miss Kilmansegg*, he could jest with an underlying yet easily discernible vein of serious purpose; but as a rule his whims and oddities are merely cracklings of the pot. We may regret this, but cannot blame the man who realised that clever puns are better marketable commodities than good poetry. Hood's was a fine nature, sweet and wholesome, devoid of bitterness and cynicism. Happily for us, his struggle with adverse fortunes met with success before he died, thus enabling the writer to work for a while in his serious vein. Some of his strongest work belongs to his later years. Starting as a poet in the classical vein, popular at the time, his verse soon catches the humanitarian fire that marks the poetry of the earlier Victorian era. He is a poet of the new democracy.

Song of the Shirt

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch! stitch! stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
She sang the "Song of the Shirt."

"Work! work! work!
While the cock is crowing aloof!
And work—work—work,
Till the stars shine through the roof!
It's O! to be a slave
Along with the barbarous Turk,
Where woman has never a soul to save,
If this is Christian work!

"Work—work—work
Till the brain begins to swim;
Work—work—work
Till the eyes are heavy and dim!
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
And sew them on in a dream!

"O, Men, with Sisters dear!
O, Men, with Mothers and Wives!
It is not linen you're wearing out,
But human creatures' lives!"
Stitch—stitch—stitch,
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
Sewing at once, with a double thread,
A Shroud as well as a Shirt.

"But why do I talk of Death?
That Phantom of grisly bone,
I hardly fear its terrible shape,—
It seems so like my own—
It seems so like my own,
Because of the fasts I keep;
O, God! that bread should be so dear,
And flesh and blood so cheap!

"Work—work—work!
My labour never flags;
And what are its wages? A bed of straw,
A crust of bread—and rags.
That shatter'd roof—and this naked floor—
A table—a broken chair—
And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank
For sometimes falling there!

"Work—work—work!
From weary chime to chime,
Work—work—work—
As prisoners work for crime!
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Till the heart is sick, and the brain benumb'd,
As well as the weary hand.

"Work—work—work,
In the dull December light,
And work, work, work,
When the weather is warm and bright—
While underneath the eaves
The brooding swallows cling,
As if to show me their sunny backs,
And twit me with the spring.

"O! but to breathe the breath
Of the cowslip and primrose sweet—
With the sky above my head,
And the grass beneath my feet;
For only one short hour
To feel as I used to feel,
Before I knew the woes of want
And the walk that costs a meal!

"O! but for one short hour!
A respite however brief!
No blessed leisure for Love or Hope,
But only time for Grief!
A little weeping would ease my heart,
But in their briny bed
My tears must stop, for every drop
Hinders needle and thread!"

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch! stitch! stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch,—
Would that its tone could reach the Rich!—
She sang this "Song of the Shirt!"

The Bridge of Sighs

One more Unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death!

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;
Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Look at her garments
Clinging like cerements;
Whilst the wave constantly
Drips from her clothing;
Take her up instantly,
Loving, not loathing.

Touch her not scornfully;
Think of her mournfully,
Gently and humanly;
Not of the stains of her,
All that remains of her
Now is pure womanly.

Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny
Rash and undutiful;
Past all dishonour,
Death has left on her
Only the beautiful.

Still for all slips of hers,
One of Eve's family—
Wipe those poor lips of hers
Oozing so clammily.

Loop up her tresses
Escaped from the comb,
Her fair auburn tresses;
Whilst wonderment guesses
Where was her home?

Who was her father?
Who was her mother?
Had she a sister?
Had she a brother?
Or was there a dearer one
Still, and a nearer one
Yet, than all other?

Alas! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun!
Oh! it was pitiful!
Near a whole city full,
Home she had none.

Sisterly, brotherly,
Fatherly, motherly
Feelings had changed:
Love, by harsh evidence,
Thrown from its eminence;
Even God's providence
Seeming estranged.

Where the lamps quiver
So far in the river,
With many a light
From window and casement,
From garret to basement,
She stood, with amazement,
Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver;
But not the dark arch,
Or the black, flowing river:
Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery
Swift to be hurl'd—
Anywhere, anywhere
Out of the world!

In she plunged boldly,
No matter how coldly
The rough river ran,—
Over the brink of it,
Picture it, think of it,
Dissolute Man!
Lave in it, drink of it,
Then, if you can!

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care:
Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!
Ere her limbs frigidly
Stiffen too rigidly,
Decently,—kindly,—
Smooth, and compose them,
And her eyes, close them
Staring so blindly!

Dreadfully staring
Thro' muddy impurity,
As when with the daring
Last look of despairing
Fix'd on futurity.

Perishing gloomily,
Spurr'd by contumely,
Cold inhumanity,
Burning insanity,
Into her rest.—
Cross her hands humbly,
As if praying dumbly,
Over her breast!

Owning her weakness,
Her evil behaviour,
And leaving, with meekness,
Her sins to her Saviour!

THE HAUNTED HOUSE

O'er all there hung a shadow and a fear;
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted!

Unhinged the iron gates half open hung,
Jarr'd by the rusty gales of many winters,
That from its crumpled pedestal had flung
One marble globe in splinters.

No dog was at the threshold, great or small;
No pigeon on the roof—no household creature—
No cat demurely dozing on the wall—
Not one domestic feature.

No human figure stirred, to go or come,
No face looked forth from shut or open casement;
No chimney smoked—there was no sign of Home
From parapet to basement.

With shatter'd panes the grassy court was starr'd;
The time-worn coping-stone had tumbled after!
And through the ragged roof the sky shone, barr'd
With naked beam and rafter."

Thus far, the poets mentioned have been essentially poets of the people; even more than Coleridge they dealt with the simple joys and beauties of the country, and primal things, while the majority reflected the problems of the poor, and not a few wrote out of the bitter wisdom of personal experience.

There is a little group of writers, consisting of men of culture and refinement, whose work is comparatively untouched by this democratic note. Chief of these were, Sir Henry Taylor, Philip James Bailey, Richard Hengist Horne, and the brothers of Tennyson, Charles and Frederick.

HENRY TAYLOR (1800–1886) was an accomplished man of letters who led a quiet and easy life, that revolved agreeably around a comfortable Government appointment at the Colonial Office. By temperament alien to the fervour and rapture of the romantic school, by circumstances outside the range of those forces that made for democratic enthusiasm, he illustrates in his work the recoil from the Romantic Revival, and the attraction towards classicism that was taking a hold upon a few writers in Early Victorian times. The greater men, either with Tennyson sought for a middle way between romanticism and classicism, or with Browning developed romanticism in fresh, unexplored directions. Taylor strove for lucidity and restraint and for a greater body of thought than he found in the current verse of his day. His views are formulated in his best piece of work—his drama, *Philip Van Artevelde* (1834). He wrote a number of other dramas and a prose volume, *The Statesman* (1836), but never reached the level of excellence attained in *Philip*.

As a protest against the facile sentimentality, the formless tendencies of romanticism, Taylor's work was useful. He is a cultured and thoughtful writer, and the instant success of *Philip* showed clearly that there was a demand for restrained and intellectual verse. His limitations are obvious. Lacking the imaginative power and beauty of the classic Landor, on the one side, and the splendid vitality

and melodious charm of the great romantics on the other, his verse too often reminds one of the taunt flung by her lover at Maud: it is "faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null."

Festus's Song

Quoth tongue of neither maid nor wife
To heart of neither wife nor maid—
Lead we not here a jolly life
Betwixt the shine and shade?

Quoth heart of neither maid nor wife
To tongue of neither wife nor maid—
Thou wagg'st, but I am worn with strife,
And feel like flowers that fade.

Philip James Bailey (1816–1902) is another poet to prefer the claims of the intellect in verse; without clearly realising that in all great poetry intellectual matters must be expressed in terms of rhythmic beauty, and that a poet may exhibit a philosophy without explicitly philosophising. Bailey's work, *Festus*, was a lifelong labour and proved extremely popular in its day. Portentous in length, too often entirely lacking in poetic inspiration, it attracted probably because it attempted to deal in a vigorous and direct way with all the big problems of philosophy, without making too great a strain on the reader's power of thought. Profound it certainly is not, any more than it is beautiful, but Bailey stands to philosophic poetry what Eliza Cook did to the poetry of sentiment; and of the two, we would rather be in the company of the unpretentious Eliza.

Yet *Festus* is not utterly negligible. Around the dreary tracts of barren verse there are flashes of beauty, and many places where one more sensitive to self-criticism could easily have wrought some fine redactions into noble and impressive poetry.

If only Bailey had possessed the critical faculty and a sense of style, *Festus* might have been an important philosophical poem. Great it could never have been, for there is no freshness and depth in Bailey's thought, but the writer trembles often enough on the verge of poetic distinction, to make us regret the faulty artistry that never carried him over.

Festus (Book X)

My gipsy maid! my gipsy maid!
I bless and curse the day
I lost the light of life, and caught
The grief which maketh grey.
Would that the light which blinded me
Had saved me on my way!

My night-haired love! so sweet she was,
So fair and blithe was she;
Her smile was brighter than the moon's,
Her eyes the stars might see.

I met her by her lane-spread tent,
Beside a moss-green stone,
And bade her make, not mock, my fate,
My fortune was her own.
Thou art but yet a boy, she said,
And I a woman grown.

I am a man in love, I cried;
My heart was early matured;
She smiled, and only dropped her eyes
And then let go my hand.
We stood a minute; neither spake
What each must understand.

I told her, so she would be mine,
And follow where I went,
She straight should have a bridal bower
Instead of gipsy tent.

Or would she have me wend with her,
The world between should fall;
For her I would fling up faith and friends,
And name, and fame, and all.

Her smile so bright froze while I spake,
And ice was in her eye;
So near, it seemed ere touch her heart
I might have kissed the sky.

I said that if she loved to rule,
Or if she longed to reign,
I would make her Queen of every race
Which tearlike trod the world's sad face,
Or bleed at every vein.

She laid her finger on her lip,
And pointed to the sky:
There is an God to some, she said:
Dost thou not fear to die?

And what is God, I said, to thee?
Thy people worship not.
The good, the happy, and the free,
She said, they need no God.

I looked until I lost mine eyes;
I felt as though I were
In a dark cave, with one weak light—
The light of life—with her;
And that was wasting fast away;
I watched, but would not stir.

Again she took my hand in hers,
And read it o'er and o'er;
Ah! eyes so young, so sweet, I said,
Make as they read love's lore.

She held my hand—I trembled whilst—
For surely soon I felt
She made the love-cross she foretold,
And all the woe she dealt.

Unhappy I should be, she said,
And young to death be given:
I told her I believed in her,
Not in the stars of heaven.

Hush—we breathe heaven, she said, and bowed
And the stars speak through me.
Let heaven, I cried, take care of heaven!
I only care for thee.

She shrank; I looked, and begged a kiss
I knew she had one for me;
She would deny me not, she said,
But give me none would she.

My gipsy maid! my gipsy maid!
'Tis three long years like this,
Since there I gave and got from thee
That meeting, parting kiss.

I saw the tears start in her eye,
And trickle down her cheek;
Like falling stars across the sky,
Escaping from their Maker's eye:
I saw, but spared to speak.

Go, and forget! she said, and slid
Below her lowly tent;
I will not, cannot;—hear me, girl!
She heard not, and I went.

At eve, by sunset, I was there,
The tent was there no more;
The fire which warmed her flickered still—
The fire she sat before.

I stood by it, till through the dark
I saw not where it lay;
And then like that my heart went out
In ashy grief and grey.

My gipsy maid! my gipsy maid!
Oh! let me bless this day;
This day it was, I met thee first,
And yet it shall be and is cursed,
For thou hast gone away.

Certainly more interesting in his work than Bailey, is RICHARD HENGIST HORNE (1803–1884). His life was a varied one. He had passed through vicissitudes in America, seen something of the battle-field, and tasted adventure in the Australian bush, before he settled down to a life of letters. His early tragic dramas *Cosmo de Medici* and the *Death of Marlowe* were published in 1837, but he is best known for his epic *Orion*, "intended . . . to work out a special design" (the contrast between the intellect and the senses) "by means of antique or classical imagery and associations."

Horne's thought is fresh and vigorous, and his discipleship to Keats as a model served him in good stead. Undoubtedly he is at his best in epic verse, for though there is power and feeling in his drama, he had little visualising faculty. A big canvas, where thought rather than action is to be expressed, suited him best.

Among his other writings perhaps the most interesting is *The New Spirit of the Age* (1844), where he collaborated with Elizabeth Barrett.

THE PLOUGH

Above yon sombre swell of land
Thou see'st the dawn's grave orange hue,
With one pale streak like yellow sand,
And over that a vein of blue.

The air is cold above the woods;
All silent is the earth and sky,
Except with his own lonely moods
The blackbird holds a colloquy.

Over the broad hill creeps a beam,
Like hope that gilds a good man's brow;
And now ascends the nostril-steam
Of stalwart horses come to plough.

Ye rigid Ploughmen, bear in mind
Your labour is for future hours,
Advance—pause not—nor look behind—
Plough deep and straight with all your powers!

Unlike Horne and other literary dramatists of the day, JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES (1784–1862) had considerable knowledge of stage technique; and if he had only been blessed with Horne's intellect and vigour, or even with the polished culture of Taylor, his dramas might have had a high place. But his imagination is poor, and excepting some scenes in *Virginius* (1820), he is woefully deficient in passion. The inspiration of the Elizabethan drama that gave power and beauty to the work of men like Wells, passed him by. In method and intention he belonged to the eighteenth-century school, and it is scarcely surprising that he should have done better in comedy than in tragedy. But it was not until his career was half-way accomplished that he essayed comedy. His most successful experiment in this direction was *The Hunchback* (1832); there is merit also in *The Love Chase* (1837) and *Old Maids* (1841). None of his plays read well, despite their acting qualities; and Knowles, therefore, though he occupies a respectable if not high place in the history of the drama, has little vitality to interest the student of letters.

JAMES ROBINSON PLANCHÉ (1796–1880), with more modest ambition than Knowles, deserves a passing tribute, not for his amusing extravaganza, quite devoid of literary flavour, nor for his imitations of Aristophanes, but for an important stage reform that he was instrumental in bringing about. Planché was an archæologist, and in 1823, when *King John* was revived, he designed the costumes with a view to historical accuracy; and this led to the abolition of those grotesque anachronisms that marked the Shakespearean revivals of the eighteenth century.

CHARLES TENNYSON TURNER (1808–1879), the elder brother of Alfred Tennyson, was not only a man of ripe culture but a fine literary artist. He excelled as a writer of sonnets, notable for delicacy of perception and refinement of feeling rather than for strength or passion. Limited in his range, the form of the sonnet suited admirably well his artistic power, and he is at his best when dealing with the homely and tranquil aspects of those rural scenes where he spent the greater portion of his life, as Vicar of Grasby, Lincolnshire.

LETTY'S GLOBE

When Letty had scarce pass'd her third glad year,
And her young artless words began to flow,
One day we gave the child a colour'd sphere
Of the wide earth, that she might mark and know,
By tint and outline, all its sea and land.
She patted all the world; old empires peep'd
Between her baby fingers; her soft hand
Was welcome at all frontiers. How she leap'd,
And laugh'd and prattled in her world-wide bliss;
But when we turn'd her sweet unlearned eye
On our own isle, she raised a joyous cry
"Oh! yes, I see it. Letty's home is there!"
And while she hid all England with a kiss,
Bright over Europe fell her golden hair.

The work of FREDERICK TENNYSON (1807–1898) belongs strictly to the later years of the Victorian era, for his first volume was not published until 1854. Yet we have learned lately that he had a share in the *Poems by Two Brothers*, where Alfred found expression, and in its content and inspiration Frederick's work is of the early Victorian age. Probably the fame of his brother, and the fact that his own gifts as a poet were akin, account for the delay in publication. Much of the work certainly was written during the earlier period. It exhibits less force and originality than that of Charles, with something of the same gentleness and delicacy. It is unlikely, however, that even without the obscuring shadow of Alfred, Frederick would ever have made much of a name as a poet. He is too ready and facile, too diffuse; and when we have called his verse accomplished and graceful, we have said practically all that can be said for it.

THE HOLY TIDE

The days are sad, it is the Holy tide:
The Winter morn is short, the Night is long;
So let the lifeless Hours be glorified
With deathless thoughts and echo'd in sweet song:
And through the sunset of this purple cup
They will resume the roses of their prime,
And the old Dead will hear us and wake up,
Pass with dim smiles and make our hearts sublime

The days are sad, it is the Holy tide:
Be dusky mistletoes and hollies strown,
Sharp as the spear that pierced His sacred side,
Red as the drops upon His thorny crown;
No haggard Passion and no lawless Mirth
Fright off the solemn Muse,—tell sweet old tales,
Sing songs as we sit brooding o'er the hearth,
Till the lamp flickers, and the memory fails.

Bulwer, Lord Lytton (1803–1873) achieved more distinction as a novelist than as a poet or dramatist. But his earliest literary efforts were in the direction of verse; *Ismael and other Poems* (1820), where he showed some skill as a lyric poet; while his dramas, belonging to a later period, are certainly clever, and showed marked aptitude in stage effects. *The Lady of Lyons*, fustian though much of it is, has shown extraordinary vitality; so also has *Richelieu* (1838) and *Money* (1840). These plays have been revived repeatedly, sometimes with remarkable success. Lytton's reputation as a dramatist is not therefore like that of Knowles, a passing whim of the moment. The literary critic finds little to admire in his work, he finds him inferior to Wells in dramatic intensity, to Beddoes in poetic beauty. Indeed it is easy work noting the defects of Lytton; his high-flown absurdities, his crude melodramatic tricks, his inability to create a strong character. Yet there is life about his work—life under cartloads of false sentiment, and dismal banalities. He has the power of actualising his characters, and if they are never profound and often ridiculous, they are certainly not puppets. They are real people truly observed, and high-coloured for stage purposes. So in his verse, much of it is poor enough, much of it is fully as over-accentuated, but there is sufficient genuine sensibility and imagination, to give the author of *The First Violets* and *Absent yet Present*, a niche among the minor poets of the era.

Two other poets in the domain of dramatic verse deserve mention. Sir Aubrey de Vere (1788–1841) started his literary career with *Julian the Apostate* (1822) and *The Duke of Mercia* (1823).

After these plays he practically ceased writing until the very close of his life, when he composed *Mary Tudor*, intended as part of a trilogy—*The Daughters of Tudor*. This drama is remarkable for its force and passion, and compares favourably with Tennyson's play on the same subject. The character of Mary is finely delineated; she is shown as a woman of splendid instinct and with great possibilities of good at the outset, but gradually degenerating under the influence of religious fanaticism, and of unrequited love for her husband Philip.

Henry Hart Milman (1791–1868) is better known as an historian than as a poet; but his prize poem *Apollo Belvedere* (1812) is greatly above the level of official productions, so often tedious and unprofitable, while he was an excellent hymn writer. Among his plays were his first very successful *Fazio* (1815) and *The Fall of Jerusalem* (1820), rich in effective verse, though weak in dramatic power. In his later plays, the dramatic weakness is even more conspicuous, but there is good rhetorical matter even in these, notably *Belshazzar* (1822) and *Anne Boleyn* (1826).

RELIGIOUS VERSE

Milman's verse has been mentioned in connection with the dramatic writers of the age; but in his sympathetic outlook he belongs to a little group of religious poets that played no small part in the awakening of the English Church during the earlier years of the century. Of these, the most notable were Milman, John Keble, John Henry Newman, John Mason Neale, and Robert Stephen Hawker.

The earlier impulse to religious verse had come from the leaders of the Evangelical Movement, and the individualistic note that characterises Protestant theology penetrated the work, as we have seen, of the Presbyterian Pollok, and the Moravian James Montgomery. The Evangelical note dies down with them, and in Heber's somewhat flamboyant muse, there is certainly a change in the religious atmosphere. The "Church" is more insistent than personal experiences, and the way is thus prepared for the poetry of the Oxford Movement and the Catholic Revival. There is no better representative of the delicate piety of the Oxford Movement than Keble. We miss the passionate intensity that thrills us in Charles Wesley, and the simple poignancy of Cowper. But there are compensations. The graciousness and sweetness of the poet's nature permeate *The Christian Year*, and despite a monotony largely inherent in the very design of the volume, there is much artistic sensibility and imaginative beauty about the verse.

Keble was not merely a hymn writer, he was also a poet. History reminds us the terms are not synonymous. Newman assures us it was *The Christian Year* that first convinced him of "the sacramental character of natural phenomena."

The Nightingale

Lessons sweet of spring returning,
Welcome to the thoughtful heart!
May I call ye sense or learning,
Instinct pure, or Heaven-taught art?
Be your title what it may,
Sweet the lengthening April day,
While with you the soul is free,
Ranging wild o'er hill and lea.

Soft as Memnon's harp at morning,
To the inward ear devout,
Touched by light, with heavenly warning
Your transporting chords ring out.
Every leaf in every nook,
Every wave in every brook,
Chanting with a solemn voice,
Minds us of our better choice.

Needs no show of mountain hoary,
Winding shore or deepening glen,
Where the landscape in its glory
Teaches truth to wandering men:
Give true hearts but earth and sky,
And some flowers to bloom and die,—
Homely scenes and simple views
Lowly thoughts may best infuse.

See the soft green willow springing
Where the waters gently pass,
Every way her free arms flinging
O'er the moist and reedy grass.
Long ere winter blasts are fled,
See her tipped with vernal red,
And her kindly flower displayed,
Ere her leaf can cast a shade.

Though the rudest hand assail her,
Patiently she droops awhile,
But when showers and breezes hail her,
Wears again her willing smile.
Thus I learn Contentment's power
From the slighted willow bower,
Ready to give thanks and live
On the least that Heaven may give.

If, the quiet brooklet leaving,
Up the stony vale I wind,
Hardly half in fancy grieving
For the shades I leave behind,
By the dusky wayside drear,
Nightingales with joyous cheer
Sing, my sadness to relieve,
Gladlier than in cultured grove.

Where the thickest boughs are twining
Of the greenest, darkest tree,
There they plunge, the light declining—
All may hear, but none may see.
Fearless of the passing heel,
Hardly will they fleet aloof;
So they live in modest ways,
Trust entire, and ceaseless praise.

Greater in imaginative endowment than Keble, JOHN HENRY NEWMAN (1801–1890) might, had he elected, taken Keble's place as the poet of Neo-Catholicism. But he had other interests and indeed thought little of poetry as an art, saying contemptuously that poetry was "the refuge of those who have not the Catholic Church to flee to and repose upon."

Newman's poetical output consequently is slight and belongs chiefly to his earlier years. But the quality is high, and there is distinction and power in all that he wrote. His most considerable poem, *The Dream of Gerontius*, was written many years before its publication in 1866, but was thrown aside for a while and forgotten. The blank verse is forceful and impressive, and the entire poem exhibits a mysticism as sensitive as Keble's, with a bolder range of imagination.

SOUL OF GERONTIUS

I went to sleep; and now I am refreshed.
A strange refreshment: for I feel in me
An inexpressive lightness, and a sense
Of freedom, as I were at length myself,
And ne'er had been before. How still it is!
I hear no more the busy beat of time,
No, nor my fluttering breath, nor struggling pulse;
Nor does one moment differ from the next.
I had a dream; yes:—someone softly said
"He's gone"; and then a sigh went round the room.

And then I surely heard a priestly voice
Cry "Subvenite"; and they knelt in prayer.
I seem to hear him still; but thin and low,
And faint and more faint the accents come.
As in an ever-widening interval.
Ah! whence is this? What is this severance?
This silence round a solitariness
Into the very essence of my soul;
And the deep rest, so soothing and so sweet,
Hush succeeding too of sternness and of pain.
For it drives back my thoughts upon their spring
By a strange introversion, and perforce
I now begin to feed upon myself,
Because I have nought else to feed upon.

Am I alive or dead? I am not dead,
But in the body still; for I possess
A sort of consciousness which clings to me,
That each particular organ holds its place
As heretofore, combining with the rest
Into one symmetry, that wraps me round,
And makes me man; and surely I could move,
Did I but will it, every part of me.
And yet I cannot to my sense bring home,
By very trial, that I have the power.
'Tis strange: I cannot stir a hand or foot,
I cannot make my fingers or my lips
By mutual pressure witness each to each,
Nor by the eyelid's instantaneous stroke
Assure myself I have a body still.
Nor do I know my very attitude,
Nor if I stand, or lie, or sit, or kneel.

So much I know, not knowing how I know,
That the vast universe, where I have dwelt,
Is quitting me, or I am quitting it.
Or I or it is rushing on the wings
Of light or lightning on an onward course,
And we e'en now are million miles apart.
Yet . . . is this peremptory severance
Wrought out in lengthening measurements of space
Which grow and multiply by speed and me?
Or am I traversing infinity
By endless subdivision, hurrying back
From finite towards infinitesimal,
Thus dying out of the expansive world?

Another marvel: someone has me fast
Within his ample palm: 'tis not a grasp
Such as they use on earth, but all around
Over the surface of my subtle being,
As though I were a sphere, and capable
To be accosted thus, a uniform
And gentle pressure tells me I am not
Self-moving, but borne forward on my way.
And hark! I hear a singing: yet in sooth
I cannot of that music rightly say
Whether I hear or touch or taste the tones.
Oh what a heart-subduing melody!

FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER (1814–1863) is greatly inferior, as a religious poet, to his great contemporary, though some of his hymns are extremely popular. He lacks the restraint of Newman and the simplicity of Keble, and his gushing propensities certainly do not make for good poetry.

JOHN MASON NEALE (1818–1866), a tolerable historian and a good though variable writer of hymns, has greater claim upon our attention. He achieved some excellent translations, and occasionally, as in *Art thou weary, art thou languid*, sounded a really high note of devotional beauty.

REGINALD HEBER (1783–1826), a devoted Churchman, was also a scholar and wit: while Bishop of Calcutta he wrote the well-known *From Greenland's icy mountains*, and is also the author of a *Life of Jeremy Taylor* and an Eastern romance based on the story of *Bluebeard*.

Last of this band is the ballad writer, ROBERT STEPHEN HAWKER (1804–1875). For forty years he lived and worked in a lonely Cornish parish, and his humanising influence bore valuable fruit. His ballad poetry bears the impress of the rugged scenery of the west, and is infused with old Celtic legends and superstitions. In *The Quest of the Sangreal* (1863), his brooding mind found congenial material, and the mystical side of legendary lore attracted him irresistibly. He was a remarkable man and a poet of considerable vigour and originality.

SCORNER

Our bark is on the waters wide around
The wandering wave; above, the lonely sky:
Hush! a young sea-bird floats, and that quick cry
Shrieks to the levelled weapon's echoing sound:

Grasp its lank wing, and on, with reckless bound!
Yet, creatures of the surf, a sheltering breast
To-night shall haunt in vain thy far-off nest,
A cull unanswered search the rocky ground,
Lord of Leviathan—when Ocean heard
Thy gathering voice, and sought his native breeze:
When whales first plunged with life, and the proud deep
Felt unborn tempests heave its troubled sleep,
Then didst provide, even for this nameless bird,
Home and a natural love amid the surging seas.

MINISTERING SPIRITS

We see them not—we cannot hear
The music of their wing—
Yet know we that they sojourn near,
The Angels of the spring!

They glide along this lovely ground
When the first violet grows;
Their graceful hands have just unbound
The zone of yonder rose.

I gather it for thy dear breast,
From stain and shadow free:
That which an Angel's touch hath blest
Is meet, my love, for thee!

Ireland, hitherto represented in our verse by the facile melodies of Moore, and the passion of George Darley, finds expression during this era in the romantic fervour of JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN (1803–1849).

Mangan was one of those highly sensitive and imaginative temperaments that seem predetermined for tragedy. His life was a constant struggle against poverty, and to blunt the scourgings of circumstance he had recourse to opium and alcohol. His early death therefore was not to be wondered at. He was a man with great charm of personality, and a fine instinct for rhythm. He translated and freely adapted Irish poetry, one of his best known pieces being *My Dark Rosaleen*; while he wrote patriotic songs for the Young Ireland Party. If he is associated more especially with Celtic verse, Celtic song serves by no means as his only inspiration; for he was fully alive to the romantic treasures of German literature, and to the glamour of the East. In short, romance, wherever it might be found, gained a response from his mobile and fevered imagination.

It is interesting to note that one of Mangan's Oriental songs, *The Karamanian Exile*, suggested to the American writer, J. R. Randall, the better known lyric *Maryland, my Maryland*. This is Mangan:

"I see thee ever in my dreams,
Karaman!
Thy hundred hills, thy thousand streams,
Karaman, O Karaman!
As when the gold-bright morning gleams,
As when the deepening sunset seams
With lines of light thy hills and streams,
Karaman! . . ."

BALLAD VERSE

This account of earlier Victorian verse may fittingly conclude with mention of three volumes of ballad verse by writers who will be dealt with at greater length in other sections—Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842) and *English Ballads*; and Aytoun's *Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers* (1848). These volumes are in direct descent from Scott and from Percy's *Reliques*, and while they lack the poignancy and warmth of imagination that fire the best of these, are of their kind admirable. The historical spirit, expressed in clear, vigorous, spirited verse, may serve as a summing up of Macaulay's work, whether as a singer of English glory or of Roman renown. Aytoun's verses lack, perhaps, the sparkle of Macaulay, but are rich in national sentiment, and are worthy contributions to the poetry of chivalry.

I. POETRY: ROBERT BROWNING. His Life—His Work—The Development of his Art: (*a*) His earlier Poems; (*b*) His Dramas; (*c*) His later Poems. The Singer of Love—The Psychologist.

ROBERT BROWNING (1812–1889)

His Life

BORN at Camberwell on May 7, 1812, Robert Browning was the son of a clerk in the Bank of England, a highly gifted, intellectual man of fine character; his mother, "a divine woman," as he called her, was of mixed German and Scotch descent, from whom the poet inherited his musical and artistic tastes.

Unlike most boys of his class, he was nurtured on the classics. His cradle had been rocked to the rhythm of Greek poetry; at five years old "he piled up chairs and tables for a town," and sat "a-top as Priam"—even the domestic animals were identified by classical names. Keen, precocious, and highly imaginative, the child was "a wonder at drawing," and showed promise at three years old when he began to work with a brush and black currant juice; while it is said that he was "studying the grammar of music when most children are learning the multiplication table."

His knowledge of and love for music remained with him throughout life. He was an admirable musician, and numbered among his friends many distinguished members of the profession.

After a brief and not very satisfactory experience of private schools, he continued his education at home, tutorial supervision being supplemented by lectures at University College. Meanwhile he became proficient in many physical accomplishments, and could ride, fence, box, and dance.

Destined for the medical profession, he entered Guy's Hospital, but this was not his vocation: at one time he had a passion for the stage and wanted to be an actor; finally he decided on following his long-cherished idea of becoming a poet. Before he was twelve he had written a small volume of verse, but failing to find a publisher he threw it on the fire in disgust.

The first literary influence was Byron. "I would at any time have gone to Finchley," he wrote in the forties, "to see a curl of his hair or one of his gloves. . . . While heaven knows that I could not get up enthusiasm enough to cross the room if at the other end Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey were condensed into the little china bottle yonder."

From Byron he turned to Shelley. He had purchased a second-hand copy of *Queen Mab*, and was so much moved by the poem that at sixteen he boldly declared himself an atheist and vegetarian; but this form of discipleship did not last long.

Keats proved almost as great an influence as Shelley; and in his earliest work, *Pauline*, it is not hard to discern the strong influence of these poets and after them of Byron.

After publishing *Pauline*, written when he was twenty, Browning went to Russia (1834), riding some fifteen hundred miles during his tour, an experience that germinated later on into that breathless lyric *How they brought the Good News*. In Russia he met a Frenchman who interested him in the philosopher and scientist destined to become the subject of his next poem, *Paracelsus*. Shortly after its publication his parents removed from Camberwell to Hatcham, and the young poet made many new friends, including John Forster, whom he afterwards assisted to complete his *Life of Strafford*; and Macready the actor, for whose little son Browning wrote *The Pied Piper* to while away a weary convalescence.

His first experience of Italy came in 1838, and the spell of Venice then felt never left him. Indeed, much of his best work was done under Italian skies. On his return from Italy he became very interested in the poems of Elizabeth Barrett, and on May 21, 1845, made the acquaintance of the author, the friendship ripening into one of the most romantic of literary love stories. An unreasonable and selfish father refused his permission to their marriage. She was an invalid, it is true—but Mr. Barrett proved just as obdurate when the doctor suggested a winter abroad; having made up his mind that his daughter was fated to be an invalid recluse all her days. Browning was thirty-four, Miss Barrett six years older; so they did what many a younger couple have done in the same circumstances—decided to dispense with the parental consent.

On September 12, 1846, they were quietly married at Marylebone Church—the marriage being thus recorded with amusing brevity in Robert Browning's diary: "An appointment between 10.45 and 11.15." A week later she left her father's house never to return, and the determined runaways started at once for Italy, where their home was to be for many years. With happiness and Italian sunshine came renewed health. Two years later we find her riding five miles on what she calls "an inaccessible volcanic ground not far from the skies."

Joy at the birth of a son in 1849 was saddened by the news of the sudden death of his mother, to whom Browning was devotedly attached, and he dreaded the return to England.

During the following years Browning published much of his poetry, but the lack of appreciation in England affected him greatly. "Nobody there," wrote his wife, "except a small knot of pre-Raphaelite men, pretend to do him justice . . . while in America he is a power—he is read—he lives in the hearts of the people."

Mrs. Browning, whose health began to fail in 1860, died the following year: "God took her to himself," said her husband, "as you would lift a sleeping child from a dark uneasy bed into your arms and the light." With a manly sense of responsibility but with a sore heart, Browning returned to London with his son and devoted himself to the boy's education; his only sister, who had been the stay of her parents till their death, now came to live with him and make the home less lonely.

In 1860 not a single copy of the poems was sold by Browning's publisher in six months; in 1871, fourteen hundred copies of *Prince Hohenstiel Schwangau* were sold on the first five days of publication.

Time had somewhat softened the bitterness of grief at the loss of his wife, and with increasing reputation as a poet, the shrewd, kindly face became ubiquitous in London society; so much, indeed, that Tennyson laughingly remarked, "Browning will die in a white tie."

Since the death of his wife Browning had not seen Italy; now that his son had married and settled there as an artist, he made the first of a series of annual visits, and with them the old charm of Venice returned. In 1889, after an unsuccessful negotiation for the purchase of the old Manzoni Palace, he went on a visit to his son in November, caught cold and developed bronchitis; and the aged poet passed away as the clock of San Marco was striking ten on December 12—the day of the publication of *Asolando*.

A wish to be buried beside his wife at Florence was found to be impracticable, so Westminster Abbey claimed him for the Poets' Corner.

His Work

Browning's development as a writer may be divided into four periods:

(1) From 1832–1846. This is the experimental period, when he is seeking for his true medium as an artist. He essays various forms, then finds in the dramatic lyric his most satisfying expression. He had tried the monologue and the narrative drama, and the lyric pure and simple; but in the dramatic lyric he merges some characteristics from those other forms and welds them into an artistic whole.

(2) From 1846–1869. This is the period of his best and most varied work. Yet the dramatic note runs throughout the multiform expressions. Sometimes the intellectual side predominates; sometimes the emotional. He is at his happiest when they blend, and at the close of the period we have the noblest blend in *The Ring and the Book*.

(3) From 1869–1876. After *The Ring and the Book*, the intellectual side of Browning gets the upper hand. This period is rich in casuistic and dialectic verse; but is lacking in imaginative beauty. We admire Browning the thinker; but lament the decline of the artist. Much, indeed, during this period might have been written with greater advantage in prose.

(4) From 1876–1889. Once again the artist in Browning awakens; not perhaps with the same force and fresh beauty of earlier years, but sufficiently to delight us with some measure of the old magic; sufficiently to soften and mellow the untiring intellectual vagaries of the thinker. Finally we have the swan song of *Asolando*.

The Development of his Art

(a) His Earlier Poems

Pauline (1833) was written when the poet was twenty. It is essentially a young man's poem; young in its susceptibility to the influences of other poets; young in its undoubted idealism; young in its egotism. As a work of art it compares with Browning's later work, much as *Sketches by Boz* compares with *David Copperfield*. It interests us mainly as a human document, from the light it throws on Browning himself. Many of the familiar traits are traits that were to develop later into fine maturity: the religious idealism, "I saw God everywhere"; the individualistic note, "I am made up of intensest life"; the lifelong enthusiasm for Shelley here called "the Sun-treader." But if Browning, the man and the thinker, is here veiled in embryo, Browning the artist is but faintly suggested. The poem is an agreeable one to read, but the influence of Shelley and of Keats broods over its form and texture.

In *Paracelsus* (1835) the poet begins to find his own speech. The subject is one dear to Browning's heart; the development of a soul thirsting for knowledge. Paracelsus fails in his search because he ignores love. How often was that to be the burden of Browning's verse.

To win knowledge the alchemist has flung away the joys of youth, the joy of social service, the consolation of love. Then when the girl who loved him dies, he realises all he has lost. He has been seeking an abstraction and thrown away the substance. It is an inspiring theme, and in handling it Browning's vital delight in the energy of Nature finds noble expression.

> "Earth is a wintry clod;
> But spring-wind, like a dancing prodigal,
> Over its breast to waken it, rare verdure
> Buds tenderly upon rough banks, between
> The withered tree-roots and the cracks of frost,
> Like a smile striving with a wrinkled face;
> . . . the lark
> Soars up and up, shivering for very joy;
> . . . and God renews
> His ancient rapture."

The writing is not quite free of imitativeness as yet—the pretty songs are obviously reminiscent of Keats—but there is much that is individual, especially the passage just quoted.

Sordello (1840) makes no advance from the artistic point of view; in fact it is as a work of art distinctly inferior to *Paracelsus*—"A derelict in the ocean of poetry" it has been, not unhappily, called. But the derelict is certainly worth a visit if you can get near her. There is an immense amount of fundamental brain-work in the poem; indeed it has become a derelict because overweighted with ballast. The theme is much the same as in *Paracelsus*; and the Italian background has given the poet the opportunity for some of the most striking pen pictures he has yet given us.

> "The woods were long austere with snow; at last
> Pink leaflets budded on the beech, and first
> Larches, scattered through plumeless solitudes,
> Brightened, as in the slumbrous heart of the woods
> Our buried year, a witch, crew young again
> To placid incantations, and that stain
> About were from her cauldron, green smoke blent
> With those black pines."
>
> "Day by day,
> New pollen on the lily petal grows,
> And still more labyrinthine hails the rose."

The poem bristles with archæological and historic scholarship; but a fraction of it would have sufficed for the poet's purpose. As it is, we are dazed by the wealth of learning. Small wonder that Tennyson said about the poem that he only understood two lines—the first line:

> "Who will, may hear Sordello's story told,"

and the last line:

> "Who would, has heard Sordello's story told,"

and that neither was true.

Yet the theme of all these early poems is a fascinating one, symbolising as it does the spirit of the Renascence, with its restless quest for knowledge and power; and the literary student will find an interesting analogy between these poems and Marlowe's *Faustus*. When the lover in *Pauline* cries, "I will make every Joy my own," we think of Faustus; while the line in *Tamburlaine*, "still climbing after Knowledge infinite," might well have come from *Paracelsus* or *Sordello*.

But in his next venture Browning finds himself completely. Heretofore the thinker and the moralist have outpaced the artist. Now the artist takes his triumph. The *Dramatic Lyrics*, covering a period of ten years (1836–1846), exhibit every side of Browning's genius: tenderness in *Evelyn Hope*; passion in *In a Gondola*; subtlety in *Porphyria's Lovers*; intellectual brilliance in *My Last Duchess*; quaint kindliness in *Waring*; genial extravaganza in *The Pied Piper*; humour, satire, keen observation, joy in life, joy in thought, joy in passion. Here is the Browning we know and love. And, above all, the volume contains those two perfect little pieces of poetic impressionism, *Meeting at Night* and *Parting at Morning*, where, with a few superb touches, Browning flashes upon our imagination a picture of love and life that for comprehensive sympathy and imaginative beauty are among the choicest and truest things he ever wrote.

Meeting at Night

I

> The grey sea and the long black land;
> And the yellow half-moon large and low;
> And the startled little waves that leap
> In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
> As I gain the cove with pushing prow
> And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

II

> Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
> Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
> A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
> And blue spurt of a lighted match,
> And a voice less loud, thro' its joys and fears,
> Than the two hearts beating each to each!

Parting at Morning

> Round the cape of a sudden came the sea,
> And the sun looked over the mountain's rim—
> And straight was a path of gold for him,
> And the need of a world of men for me.

And the method is as fresh and attractive as are the themes. There is a note of realism new to English verse and destined to play an important part in the poetry of the late Victorian era and in the verse of to-day. The explosive violence of *The Soliloquy in a Spanish Cloister*, and the rough vigour of *Count Gismond*, serve as a prelude to the colloquial realism of Mr. Rudyard Kipling and Mr. John Masefield.

Good as are the *Dramatic Lyrics*, the *Dramatic Romances* (1848) are, on the whole, even better. The method is similar, the material is much the same; but the scope is wider and the treatment exhibits an added ease as well as a deeper power.

In lyrical sweetness and fire the volume holds its own with its predecessor—in quality if not in quantity. Have we not *The Lost Leader* and *How they brought the Good News*?—but the superiority is shown especially in the psychological insight and dramatic strength of such pieces as that masterly study of the decadent Renascence, *The Bishop orders his Tomb at St. Praxed's*. Ruskin praised it for its historical accuracy; its vital accuracy is even more remarkable. Add to this *The Flight of the Duchess*, Meredithian in its romantic realism; *The Boy and the Angel*, with its simple humanity; and the power and beauty of *Saul*.

THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB AT ST. PRAXED'S CHURCH

Vanity, saith the preacher, vanity!
Draw round my bed: is Anselm keeping back?
Nephews—sons mine . . . ah God, I know not! Well—
She, men would have to be your mother once.
Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she was!
What's done is done, and she is dead beside,
Dead long ago, and I am bishop since,
And as she died so must we die ourselves,
And thence ye may perceive the world's a dream.
Life, how and what is it? As here I lie
In this state chamber, dying by degrees,
Hours and long hours in the dead night, I ask
"Do I live, am I dead?" Peace, peace seems all.
St. Praxed's ever was the church for peace!
And so, about this tomb of mine, I fought
With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know:
—Old Gandolf cozened me, despite my care;
Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner South
He graced his carrion with, God curse the same!
Yet still my niche is not so cramped but thence
One sees the pulpit o' the epistle-side,
And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats,
And up into the aery dome where live
The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to lurk;
And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,
And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,
With those nine columns round me, two and two,
The odd one at my feet where Anselm stands:
Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the ripe,
As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse.
—Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone,
Put me where I may look at him! True peach,
Rosy and flawless: how I earned the prize!
Draw close: that conflagration of my church
—What then? So much was saved if aught were missed!
My sons, ye would not be my death? Go dig
The white-grape vineyard where the oil-press stood,
Drop water gently till the surface sink,
And if ye find . . . Ah God, I know not, I! . . .
Bedded in store of rotten fig-leaves soft,
And corded up in a tight olive-frail,
Some lump, ah God, of *lapis lazuli*,
Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape,
Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast . . .
Sons, all have I bequeathed you, villas, all,
That brave Frascati villa with its bath,
So, let the blue lump poise between my knees,
Like God the Father's globe on both his hands
Ye worship in the Jesu Church so gay,
For Gandolf shall not choose but see and burst!
Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our years:
Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?
Did I say basalt for my slab, sons? Black—
'Twas ever antique-black I meant! How else
Shall ye contrast my frieze to come beneath?
The bas-relief in bronze ye promised me,
Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of, and perchance
Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so,
The Saviour at his sermon on the mount,
Saint Praxed in a glory, and one Pan
Ready to twitch the Nymph's last garment off,
And Moses with the tables . . but I know
Ye mark me not! What do they whisper thee,
Child of my bowels, Anselm? Ah, ye hope
To revel down my villas while I gasp
Bricked o'er with beggar's mouldy travertine
Which Gandolf from his tomb-top chuckles at!
Nay, boys, ye love me—all of jasper, then!
'Tis jasper ye stand pledged to, lest I grieve
My bath must needs be left behind, alas!
One block, pure green as a pistachio-nut,
There's plenty jasper somewhere in the world—
And have I not Saint Praxed's ear to pray
Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts,
And mistresses with great smooth marbly limbs?
—That's if ye carve my epitaph aright,
Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's every word,
No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line—
Tully, my masters? Ulpian serves his need!
And then how I shall lie through centuries,
And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,
And see God made and eaten all day long,
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste
Good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke!
For as I lie here, hours of the dead night,
Dying in state and by such slow degrees,
I fold my arms as if they clasped a crook,
And stretch my feet forth straight as stone can point,
And let the bedclothes, for a mortcloth, drop
Into great laps and folds of sculptor's-work:
And as you tapers dwindle, and strange thoughts
Grow, with a certain humming in my ears,
About the life before I lived this life,
And this life too, popes, cardinals and priests,
Saint Praxed at his sermon on the mount,
Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes,
And new-found agate urns as fresh as day,
And marble's language, Latin pure, discreet,
—Aha, ELUCESCEBAT quoth our friend?
No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best!
Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage.
All *lapis*, all, sons! Else I give the Pope
My villas! Will ye ever eat my heart?
Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick,
They glitter like your mother's for my soul,
Or ye could heighten my impoverished frieze,
Piece out its starved design, and fill my vase
With grapes, and add a vizor and a Term,
And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx
That in his struggle throws the thyrsus down,
To comfort me on my entablature
Whereon I am to lie till I must ask
"Do I live, am I dead?" There, leave me, there!
For ye have stabbed me with ingratitude
To death—ye wish it—God, ye wish it! Stone—
Gritstone, a-crumble! Clammy squares which sweat
As if the corpse they keep were oozing through—
And no more *lapis* to delight the world!
Well, go! I bless ye. Fewer tapers there,
But in a row: and, going, turn your backs
—Ay, like departing altar-ministrants,
And leave me in my church, the church for peace,
That I may watch at leisure if he leers—
Old Gandolf, at me, from his onion stone,
As still he envied me, so fair she was!

Following this volume came *Christmas Eve and Easter Day* (1850), where, if we mark no fresh advance, we see the poet applying his previously developed faculties to the problem of Religion.

Of wider interest and more varied charm is the volume entitled *Men and Women* (1855); on the same lines as the *Dramatic Lyrics* and *Romances*. The volume is a worthy pendant to those earlier volumes: some may prefer the rarefier music, the simpler themes that we find there; to others the greater unconventionality, the subtler flavour that characterises this volume as a whole may prove more attractive; for here we have those memorable poems on Art, *Fra Lippo Lippi* and *Andrea del Sarto*; the sublime apologia of Bishop Blougram, and the delicately passionate *One Word More*; to mention a few out of a score of well-known poems.

There is more emphasis in this volume than in its predecessors on the ironies of life. The splendour of passion, the heroism of sympathy; the stimulus of a courageous front in life; these have been illustrated fully as well before, but now for the first time we see Browning dealing with the obverse side; with vacillating wills, with flabby sympathies, with the shallows and shoals of human nature. These are exemplified in such poems as *Popularity*, *A Pretty Woman*, *Respectability*, and *The Statue and the Bust*.

FRA LIPPO LIPPI

How? what's here?
Quite from the mark of painting, bless us all!
Faces, arms, legs and bodies like the true
As much as pea and pea! it's devil's game!
Your business is not to catch men with show,
With homage to the popinjay elay,
But lift them over it, ignore it all,
Make them forget there's such a thing as flesh.
Your business is to paint the souls of men—
Man's soul, and it's a fire, smoke . . . no it's not . . .
It's vapour done up like a new-born babe
(In that shape when you die it leaves your mouth)
It's . . . well, what matter talking, it's the soul!
Give us no more of body than shows soul.
Here's Giotto, with his Saint a-praising God!
That sets you praising,—why not stop with him?
Why put all thoughts of praise out of our heads
With wonder at lines, colours, and what not?
Paint the soul, never mind the legs and arms!
Rub all out, try at it a second time.
Oh, that white smallish female with the breasts,
She's just my maid . . . Herodias, I would say,—
Who went and danced and got men's heads cut off—
Have it all out!

Now, is this sense, I ask?
A fine way to paint soul by painting body
So ill, the eye can't stop there, must go further
And can't fare worse: Thus, yellow does for white
When what you put for yellow's simply black,
And any sort of meaning looks intense
When all beside itself means and looks nought.
Why can't a painter lift each foot in turn,
Left foot and right foot, go a double step,
Make his flesh liker and his soul more like,
Both in their order? Take the prettiest face,
The Prior's niece . . . patron-saint—is it so pretty
You can't discover if it means hope, fear,
Sorrow or joy? won't beauty go with these?
Suppose I've made her eyes all right and blue,
Can't I take breath and try to add life's flush,
And then add soul and heighten them threefold?
Or say there's beauty with no soul at all—
(I never saw it—put the case the same—)
If you get simple beauty and nought else,
You get about the best thing God invents.—
That's somewhat. And you'll find the soul you have missed,
Within yourself when you return him thanks!
"Rub all out!" well, well, there's my life, in short,
And so the thing has gone on ever since.

(b) *His Dramas*

So far I have dealt with his development as a poet, passing on one side the dramas. These are, in order: *Strafford* (1837), *Pippa Passes* (1841), *King Victor and King Charles* (1842), *The Return of the Druses* (1843), *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* (1843), *Colombe's Birthday* (1844), *A Soul's Tragedy* (1846), *Luria* (1846), *In a Balcony* (1853).

The extraordinary insight into character, the power of actualising the fleeting moods, is so marked in Browning, that it may be wondered how it is that he has not fared better as a dramatist. But an effective dramatist he assuredly is not; and this one may feel without seeing the plays acted; it is borne in upon us as we read them. Why?

Drama may be defined as an articulate story presented in action. The story we have; it is articulate also; but it is not given—or given only spasmodically—in *action*. Browning is far too interested in the effect of the drama on the character. In his lyrics and romances he begins after the event. He is retrospective; reminiscent; analytical. Psychologically all this is interesting enough. In a poem it is of little moment, though even there a greater simplicity might have been welcomed. But in a play which is to be seen, and where the *doing* has to affect us, not the *thinking*, it is a serious drawback. Browning is not a dramatist but a dramatic philosopher. Accept this standpoint and his plays are interesting enough—some intensely interesting; but it is at its best the interest of the study rather than of the theatre.

Directly he throws away his plot he is far more at ease; the conflict within; the complexities of a Strafford; the shrewdness of a Guendolen; the ingenuous sweetness of a Pippa; such things he can realise for us, and can do with rare art and conviction. But this is drama in samples; the force is intermittent; it is not continuous and cumulative.

The best test of such criticism lies in the superexcellence of *Pippa Passes*, that none would dispute, and which is the most workable of Browning's plays. Yet it would be hard to find a play more charming for its lyric beauty, insight, and passion.

It is New Year's Day at Asolo, and Pippa, the little factory girl from the silk mills, is full of the possibilities of holiday-making. What shall she do with her holiday and herself? She will be gloriously happy. She thinks of all the folk in Asolo and wonders whom she shall be. Surely it would be fine to be loved by a gallant man. She will be Ottima. No, that love is disturbing and base; it has brought misery to others. Ah! why not be charming Phene married to the brilliant young sculptor? But is she happy? Is she sure of his love? Why not be the mother of Luigi: or, better still, why not be a Bishop. . . .? Yet, after all, why change places at all?—God loves her as she is.

The song of Pippa permeates the play; it runs through the drama like a rift of sunshine through a storm-cloud; across the hot and turbid passion of Ottima and Sebald; across the idle chatter of the market-place; across the musings of Luigi, reft between love and patriotism; across the meditation and temptation of the ecclesiastic. Every life is touched by the song; thrilled by the singer. And the crowning charm of the play is, that the little factory girl never knows her influence, nor how she has shaped their lives.

Certainly *Pippa Passes* is one of the freshest, sweetest things the dramatic poet has given us.

I do not think that *Strafford* or its successor *King Victor and King Charles* are among the happiest; they are clever and scholarly, yet the historical background is not alive. Browning can write spirited Cavalier songs. He can give us a mood—not a character. Browning's introspective nature is not congenial to the seventeenth century, and the absence of strong emotional interest weakens *Strafford*.

The Return of the Druses suits the poet's taste for the by-ways of history much more. The idea is a striking one, and its Eastern atmosphere, with its mysticism and tense feeling, is thoroughly attuned to Browning's nature. Djabal the impostor, who is only half insincere and who is deeply attached to his nation, wishing to snatch it back from bondage, is well conceived. It is a fine piece of imaginative work, slightly marred by a somewhat too diffusive treatment. The Druse's belief in divine incarnation is historical, but the rest is an ingenious figment of Browning's opulent imagination.

A Blot in the 'Scutcheon is a simpler affair, and lends itself more easily to modern acting conditions. In fact it is on the whole the best, theatrically, of his plays. The scene is English and the period the eighteenth century; it is a tragedy of love in essence; and the *motif* of family honour is one of general appeal. The irony of fate is suggested here as in *Romeo and Juliet*, and the characterisation is mostly clear, distinct, and impressive. The women are better drawn than the men: but that is usual with Browning; particularly good is the hapless girl Mildred Tresham; a study that greatly affected Dickens. "I know nothing," he wrote, "that is so affecting, nothing in any book I have ever read, as Mildred's recurrence to that 'I was so young, I had no mother'—I know no love like it, no passion like it."

Colombe's Birthday is in quite another vein than those preceding. The swift action and passion of *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* is absent here; and the play is deficient, on the whole, in dramatic interest, though the study of Colombe, Duchess of Juliers and Cleves (seventeenth century) is of considerable interest from a character point of view. Her lover, Valence, a poverty-stricken lawyer, the "pale grey man," is etched admirably, and his final scene with Colombe is the one really gripping dramatic situation of the play.

It is clear, however, that Browning's real interest is in the development of character. Plot and intrigue he can deal with, but rarely does justice to. Admirable in conception, he leaves them too much to themselves; and in *Colombe's Birthday* we feel he is interested in the spiritual action alone. This is especially so in his two later plays, *A Soul's Tragedy* and *Luria*. Chiappino, like Djabal, is a deceiver, but more deliberately so, and on a much lower moral level. He poses as the revolutionary, and is hailed as saviour of the people, but finds it to his interest to disown, and in reward for his docility is made Provost of the City. There is some good talk and much excellent satire; but it is ineffective as a play.

Luria is the last of his dramas. One other dramatic poem there is in one scene: *In a Balcony* (1853). The action of this takes place within a few hours; on a balcony at night. The limelight is thrown around two lovers, Constance and Norbert, but the real interest lies in the presentation of the thwarted maternal instinct given in the character of the Queen, who mistakes Norbert's protestation of love for Constance as a declaration to herself. Here is the real tragic figure of the scene. The lovers are far less interesting; and the picture of Constance, willing to surrender her lover to please the Queen, is neither very pleasing nor convincing.

(c) *His Later Poems*

In the *Dramatis Personæ* (1864) Browning continues those studies of men and women that he had first started in the *Dramatic Lyrics*. The volume came nine years after *Men and Women*, and his dramatic experiments are reflected here. Having surrendered the drama, he throws much of his dramatic material into monologue form. It may be conceded, I think, that the charm, the strong human appeal of the earlier volume is less conspicuous. The lyric sweetness which he could, an' he would, give us so generously, has less place than we could wish. Against these drawbacks we may put a finer subtlety, an even wider outlook upon life, and a stronger intellectual power. Italy is the background no longer; the elemental side of love proves less attractive. More curious by-paths are investigated; yet love dominates when love is the theme. Otherwise the intellectual side is more apparent.

It would be hard to overpraise the ironic pathos of that masterly poem *Confessions*: it is one of the finest Browning ever wrote. There is satiric strength in *Caliban upon Setebos*, and the humour and dialectical skill of *Bishop Blougram* is undeniable. The lyric part of the volume is, as I have said, rather deficient in the beauty and tenderness of some of his previous work; but there is a haunting minor in such pieces as *Gold Hair*, and all are arresting.

But side by side with the observer is the critic of life devoid of conceits, and along with these little "human documents" come *Abt Vogler* and *Rabbi Ben Ezra*. To those eager for Browning's message, *Rabbi Ben Ezra* is a storehouse of wise and tender sayings, and when coupled with the swifter force and intensity of *Prospice*, gives us, along with *Ferishtah's Fancies*, the most intelligible expression of Browning's moral outlook on life that we possess.

With this volume the first period of Browning's

work as a poet may be said to close. We know the quality of his genius, but have not yet gauged its depth.

The Ring and the Book (1869) shows Browning at once as an observer and a critic of life; in his earlier work he had alternately given us the observer and the critic; had presented himself primarily as a thinker, or primarily as a singer. Here, the thinker and the poet join hands in a work of lengthy and sustained importance. It is psychological, pictorial, analytical, dramatic, satiric, tragic; and the only side of Browning that finds no expression is the purely lyrical side. But to compensate for this there is the superb apostrophe to "Lyric Love, half angel and half bird, and all a wonder and a wild desire"; a passionate recollection of the wife he had lost.

The story—a Roman murder case—is told in twelve books and from nine points of view. It was found on one stormy night in Florence (1865) in "a square old yellow book," and was picked up for eightpence from a bookstall. And from this rough ore he wrought a ring of pure gold.

In its externals this powerful dramatic study is as unlike *Pippa Passes*, with its lyrical graces, as is a rose from a bluebell; but its central motive has remarkable points of similarity. In each case youth and innocence are the mainspring of the action. The very goodness of Pompilia incenses Guido and drives him to the murder. Her goodness transforms Caponsacchi, shaming the weaker side and bringing uppermost his essential nobility; it gained the sympathy of the populace, and wins over at last the genial onlooker. Pompilia, like Pippa, by her very helplessness and transparent candour, puts to rout the evil forces brought to bear upon her. As with Pippa also, it is an unconscious influence; it symbolises triumphant purity against base passion. The hideousness of Guido's conduct is finely suggested by the Pope in his analysis of the crime:

> "For the main criminal I have no hope
> Except in such a suddenness of fate
> I stood at Naples once, a night so dark,
> I could have scarce conjectured there was earth
> Anywhere, sky or sea or world at all:
> But the night's black was burst through by a blaze—
> Thunder struck blow on blow, earth groaned and bore,
> Through her whole length of mountain visible:
> There lay the city thick and plain with spires,
> And, like a ghost disshrouded, white the sea.
> So may the truth be flashed out by one blow,
> And Guido see; one instant, and be saved."

In Browning's next work, *Balaustion's Adventure* (1871), there is less dramatic interest and passion, less fine poetry also. None the less it is memorable for its vital and appealing figure of the Greek girl with her quick prehensile intelligence and strength of character.

Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau (1871), on the other hand, has little claim to be ranked as poetry at all. It is a picture of Napoleon III, whom Browning did not admire, from the standpoint of the special pleader. If worth doing at all, which is debatable, it had been better done in prose.

Fifine at the Fair (1872) is a very different piece of work, despite the fact that here too there is over-much special pleading. But there is fantasy and pathos in it, as well as satiric and ingenious quibbling. It is by no means easy to construe, and as it has proved a stumbling-block to many Browning lovers, some detailed consideration of it may prove interesting. It has been called by many able critics a defence of inconstancy, and such a description can be defended on plausible grounds. But is this really the crux of the poem? Let us see.

The man in the story presented is unquestionably attached to his wife Elvire, and has no wish to surrender her for any other woman. But he is attracted by other women, and is frankly unwilling to have only *one* feminine influence in his life. He is quite willing for his wife to be the chief influence. She may reign as queen, yet he sees no reason why, quite openly and without underhand scheming, he may not smile at and wile away an hour or so amusingly with other women.

Strolling through the Fair he has noticed a handsome, vivacious rope-dancer, Fifine. He admires her, though he is by no means swept off his feet. He can criticise her acutely enough, but wishes to talk to her. His wife, not unnaturally, is jealous. Only five minutes, pleads the man, so "threaten no farewell." Five minutes does not exhaust the interest, so husband and wife drift apart.

The motto from *Don Juan* used by the poet is misleading. The husband is not a Don Juan, he is merely a man of no deep-rooted feelings who loves change. The poem therefore is a plea for variety rather than inconstancy, for amorous dalliance rather than for deliberate unfaithfulness. He is not a bad man, but a weak man, and despite his clever defence, somewhat of a trifler. Yet the arguments he uses are in themselves not only ingenious but of some challenging significance. To put it brutally, he is a more satisfactory amorist than husband. Is it not wise to extend our emotional experience of life? May not love and admiration for one woman be intensified by a circle of lesser and inferior likings? Is a man to have no other feminine influences in his life save that of his wife? His wife sees the weak spot in his armoury of logic. Would you be talking like this, she says in effect, if Fifine had not been a pretty girl? And we know that he would not.

Red Cotton Night-Cap Country; or, Turf and Towers (1873), is a story thrown into monologue with Normandy as a background. The tale, founded on fact, is in essence a study in sensuality, and though related with power and psychological insight, has little poetic beauty to relieve its fundamental squalor.

In *Aristophanes' Apology* (1875), Browning returns to Balaustion after her marriage and incidentally gives us a spirited and vigorous (though not flattering) picture of Aristophanes.

The poem illustrates the poet's scholarship rather than his power as a literary artist. Indeed for a while he seems to have deliberately neglected the standpoint of the artist.

The Inn Album (1875) is little more than a realistic study of the uglier aspects of life; abundantly clever, but roughly and grotesquely handled.

In *Pacchiarotto* (1876) he defends his method.

Fidelity to life he pleads. The human note above everything. The human note counts for a great deal certainly, but if beauty of treatment be excluded we travel outside the range of art, and poetry loses its justification.

"Mine be Man's thoughts, loves, hates."

Thus does he fling down his challenge. Certainly virility and sincerity are to be heartily desired, and much Victorian literature suffers from its absence. But does this debar the touch of beauty and transfiguring passion? His best work shows that it does not. Sweetness and light are not mutually antagonistic. It is quite possible to deal frankly and fearlessly with life's actualities as an artist without descending to the methods of the stump orator or the pamphleteer.

This aspect of Browning's work, then, is negligible, says the impatient student. Not so. Nothing with force, originality, and thought in it is negligible. It is good to read for its searching analysis—only read it as you read prose, not poetry; it is good to read for its light on the strength and weaknesses of Browning's genius; it is good to read as showing the pitfalls of the poetic observer. Finally, it is good to read because, by force of contrast, you enjoy the greater moments of Browning the more intensely.

In this very volume, *Pacchiarotto*, there are a handful of lyrics, not of the best, but with something of the old magic, and certainly delightful.

La Saisiaz: The Two Poets of Croisic (1878), is a bright and amusing piece of work in the Byronic vein, but without Byron's ease and clarity—and details a hoax played on Voltaire by an unsuccessful poet. Perhaps the best stanza in the poem is the one on Sorrow:

"So, farewell sorrow, and each sorrow, farewell."

In the *Dramatic Idyls* (1879–80) there is once again the lack of beauty that spoils so much of Browning's later work. The most interesting of these is *Muléykeh*, an Arabian tale.

In *Jocoseria* (1883) there are reminders once again of the author of the *Dramatic Lyrics* and *Romances*, notably the lovely song, "Never the time and the place," which is redolent of the old magic.

Browning's turbid period is now practically at an end.

In *Ferishtah's Fancies* (1884) we pass with relief into the clear sunshine, and although the allegories of Ferishtah the Dervish are over dialectical for verse, they are interesting contributions to his religious philosophy, and are agreeably lightened by the graceful and melodious snatches of song.

Parleyings with Certain People (1887) has a forbidding title, but, if less poetical than *Ferishtah*, has a certain freshness and rhythmic swing that give it a greater attractiveness than such things as *The Inn Album* and its contemporaries.

There are no such lines as when

"Morning's laugh sets all the crags alight
Above the baffled tempest. . . ."

Then with *Asolando* (1889) the youth and age of Browning meet. The philosopher is forgotten, the dialectics put aside; we have once again, and for the last time, the passionate singer and the poet of human hopes, fears, loves, and sorrows. It would be idle to pretend that there is all the old charm about it, but it is a fine volume with which to round off the poet's life, with a note of confident courage that gives us the dominant note of Browning at his best.

Browning's Threefold Appeal

There are three Brownings: Browning the passionate singer of love and youth and the world of sense; Browning the curious investigator of the devious by-ways of human experience; Browning the intrepid fighter and valiant believer in the imperishable greatness of the soul of man.

Each has attracted its little coterie of admirers—and, in his own day at any rate, the last aspect of Browning proved arresting.

I cannot help feeling that Browning has suffered by the over-insistence of many critics on the ethical and religious aspects of his work. Not that it is negligible, nor that he does not give us that side of a poet's nature, but it has not the tremendous importance arrogated to it by a number of his admirers. We have hurried the poor man into cassocks, and regarded his work as a series of texts for reverent exegesis, thereby losing sight of the indubitably greater side of Browning's genius, the rich concrete humanity. Of the three Brownings, as revealed in his poetry, the first seems to me not merely of the greatest artistic value but of the greatest human value; the other sides of him are interesting in a subsidiary sense, as giving body and subtlety to his superior gift of dramatic song, and informing his lyric passion with virile courage and sunny radiance. But when he leans exclusively on his psychological power it often leads him into subtleties and complexities that mar his poetic art, and into subjects that are better treated in prose than in verse.

Similarly, when he is drawn into religious dialectics, he may prove suggestive as a theologian and philosopher, but not with the imaginative suggestion of the poet. And, while fully alive to the vigour and acuteness of his thought on the fundamental problems of life, I do not find in them that illuminating power which so many admirers of Browning as a teacher discover in them. But on this point something more will be said later.

Let me emphasize here once again (as it appears to me) the most vital and compelling side of Browning's genius—Browning the *dramatic singer* of Love and Life.

The Singer of Love

We shall find a more delicate grace in Tennyson, a more voluptuous intensity in Rossetti, an easier sweep in Byron, a more ideal beauty in Shelley, but in no one poet is there a more complete fusion of all these qualities than in Browning. The mystic side of passion is suggested tenderly and wistfully in *Evelyn Hope*, more fully in *Two in the Campagna*. In both, love is an ideal as well as a present actuality, and being an ideal its satisfaction is ever in-

complete—"infinite passion and the pain of finite hearts that yearn"—hence the divine restlessness of the human heart. The elusiveness of love is more fancifully dealt with in *Love in a Life* and *Life in a Love*.

"Escape me?
Never—
Beloved!
While I am I, and you are you,
So long as the world contains us both,
Me the loving and you the loth,
While the one eludes, must the other pursue."

LOVE IN A LIFE

I

Room after room,
I hunt the house through
We inhabit together.
Heart, fear nothing, for, heart, thou shalt find her—
Next time, herself!—not the trouble behind her
Left in the curtain, the cornice's carving!
As she brushed it, the cornice-wreath blossomed anew:
You looking-glass gleamed at the wave of her feather.

II

Yet the day wears,
And door succeeds door:
I try the fresh fortune—
Range the wide house from the wing to the centre.
Still the same chance! she goes out as I enter.
Spend my whole day in the quest,—who cares?
But 'tis twilight, you see,—with such suites to explore,
Such closets to search, such alcoves to importune!

The lover is always seeking for the loved one throughout the rooms of the house, never finding, yet the pursuit itself gives a meaning and purpose to life.

Again, in *Rudel to the Lady of Tripoli*: the troubadour never sees the lady. Is she not a beautiful dream of his own making? But the dream encompasses his life and art none the less. Love for love's sake.

Love is so compelling, so transforming that no quarrel can withstand it! That is the burden of *A Lover's Quarrel*. A chance word, an idle exclamation, has caused a separation.

"Woman, and will you cast
For a word, quite off at last
Me, your own, your You,—
Since, as truth is true,
I was You all the happy past—
Me do you leave aghast
With the memories We amassed?"

But it will come right. She must return. Of that he is confident:

"So, she'd efface the scar,
And forgive me as before.
Just at twelve o'clock
I shall hear her knock
In the worst of a storm's uproar,
I shall pull her through the door,
I shall have her for evermore."

For, as he tells us in *Natural Magic*, Love is the great magician, clothing the bareness of earth with the glory of summer:

"All I can sing is—I feel it!
This life was as blank as that room:
I let you pass in here. Precaution, indeed!
Walls, ceiling and floor—not a chance for a weed!
Wide opens the entrance: where's cold now, where's gloom?
No May to sow seed here, no June to reveal it.
Behold you enshrined in these blooms of your bringing,
These fruits of your bearing—nay, birds of your winging!
A fairy tale. Only—I feel it!"

In a Gondola and *The Last Ride* have the same tragic note, the same complete surrender to love that we find in *Romeo and Juliet*. So in *Too Late* and kindred poems we are made to feel the loss that comes of spurned and neglected love.

"But, dead! All's done with wait who may,
Watch and wear and wonder who will,
Oh, my whole life that ends to-day!
Oh, my soul's sentence, sounding still,
'The woman is dead that was none of his,
And the man that was none of hers may go!'
There's only the past left worry that!
Wreak fire on the empty coat,
Rage, its late wearer is laughing at!
Tear the collar to rags, having missed his throat,
Strike stupidly on—'This, this and this,
Where I would that a bosom received the blow!'

. . . . . .

If it would only come over again!
—Time to be patient with me, and probe
This heart till you punctured the proper vein,
Just to learn what blood is—twitch the robe
From that blank lay-figure your fancy draped,
Prick the leathern heart till the—verses spirt!
And late it was easy; late, you walked
Where a friend might meet you, Edith's name
Arose to one's lip if one laughed or talked;
If I heard good news, you heard the same;
When I woke, I knew that your breath escaped;
I could bide my time, keep alive, abet."

This is the subject not only of lyric treatment, as in *My Star*, but is painted strongly and brilliantly in *The Inn Album*. Rhapsodical love is expressed in *The Flower's Name* and *Women and Roses*, though Tennyson's greater melodic beauty gives more charm to this particular phase of love. There is a certain virile impatience about Browning's love-making that ill accords with those elemental embroideries of speech with which Tennyson was so adept. His lovers do not invest with adorning sensibilities the flowers in the garden, as did Maud's lover. To Browning's lovers the flowers are just pretty things to catch the approving eye of the mistress; while he is musing over them he remarks:

"Here's the garden she walked across,
Arm in my arm, such a short while since."

To Browning's lover the lady is not desirable because she is the incarnation of feminine loveliness, as in *The Day Dream* or *The Miller's Daughter*; she is desirable because she is *the* woman—her very imperfections only endear her the more:

"And your mouth—there was never, in my mind,
Such a funny mouth, for it would not shut.
And the dented chin too—what a chin!
There were certain ways when you spoke, some words
That you knew you never could pronounce."

How few poets have written thus?—so superficially unromantic, so deeply tender and vital!

In *James Lee's Wife* we have a study in the caprices of love. This is really a novel in verse. He is handsome and stolid, she is plain and imaginative. She calls them ideals; he would call

them whims. She wants to convert him to her view of life; he is satisfied to be as he is. So in disappointment she leaves him. She still loves him, but feels that life together as things stand would be intolerable. He is quite willing to be left. With the ethics of the case Browning does not deal. He is merely the poet, the psychologist. It would have been interesting to have heard the husband's point of view also.

Some have been surprised that one whose own love story was so complete and satisfying should dwell in his poetry so often on thwarted and imperfect love. Why? Surely it was the consciousness of the dynamic splendour of love on life and character that gave him that keen perception of what is lost by debasing or trifling with love. And a motto for his love poetry might be found in the beautiful stanza from *By the Fireside*—one of the noblest and truest he ever wrote:

"Oh, the little more and how much it is!
And the little less, and what worlds away!
How a sound shall quicken content to bliss,
Or a breath suspend the blood's best play,
And life be a proof of this!"

Sometimes it is the man who fails, as in *Dis Aliter Visum*:

". . . You fool, for all
Your love! Who made things plain in vain?
What was the sea for? What, the grey
Sad church, that solitary day,
Crosses and graves and swallows' call?"

Sometimes the woman, as in *The Worst of It*, where the tender tolerance and forgiveness of outraged love is brought out with fine clarity:

"Would it were I had been false, not you!
I that am nothing, not you that are all:
I, never the worse for a touch or two
On my speckled hide; not you, the pride
Of the day, my swan, that a first fleck's fall
On her wonder of white must unswan, undo!"

So we return to our early postulate.

Certain aspects of love have been more finely rendered by other poets; but in range of matter Browning has no superior. There are abysses of tragic horror, agonies of sense and spirit, at which he took no more than a glimpse. It was not in his nature to dwell on them. His splendid vitality and buoyant hopefulness recoiled from them. His art as a poet of love suffers limitations to that extent, but the underlying inspiration is the greater. For his outlook on love is the outlook of a man who puts it in front of any other thing in life, as a force for sanctifying and strengthening the soul.

The Psychologist

As the psychological critic of the complexities of experience, let it frankly be conceded that here he has not always chosen the best means of expression, that the verse hampers the exposition and obscures the criticism; yet the matter is strong and stimulating enough—if we care to get at it.

Sometimes, as in a *Blougram* or *St. Praxed's*, the art is not neglected. Putting these aside as presenting little difficulty to the ordinary intellectual reader, we may note *Caliban*, a peculiarly interesting poem, for it shows the affinity between Browning and the great Elizabethans. Shakespeare gave us the problem in his own direct, vivid way. Browning lets his modern analytic mind play over it, and we have the "inside" of the subject. The thoughts of primitive man about the universe—compare with *Sludge*—primitive man in another aspect. Browning is scarcely fair to Spiritualism, but he certainly exposes with fine acumen a good deal of the trickery and confusion of thought that is accepted as gospel by credulous natures, and shows how little is the care for veracity of which Huxley made so much.

It is impossible in this brief retrospect to deal adequately with the great wealth of Browning's pictures of human nature; but in the four poems just alluded to his powers are employed to the fullest extent: and the key to all may be found in *How it Strikes a Contemporary*; where the poet—the only poet the speaker ever knew—"took such cognizance of men and things"—"scenting the world looking it full in face." This is the secret of the poet's insight; he does not merely glance at the life about him, he "takes cognizance." The psychologist is at work in the early poems, not with complete success; in the dramas with finer insight and mastery; in *The Ring and the Book* his power as psychologist is supreme. What gives him this insight? Observation—patient, critical, thoughtful observation? To a great extent yes; not entirely. Once again, it is his belief in love that gives the touch of greatness to these studies. When passion is absent, or is put aside, the insight into character is less profound, less illuminating. This may be seen by glancing at his poems on art. Their importance does not lie in the poet's sensibility to beauty. Response as to what is beautiful in life is the guerdon of every poet worth his salt. Some, like Spenser and Keats and Rossetti, made it their creed, their religion.

Browning ignored the senses no more than did Keats. He gloried in the form of things: he revelled in the delights of sound, sight, and touch—but he went further.

We approach the truth of things by way of enjoyment; and having gained insight by sheer enjoyment of the outward show we intensify our vision by relating enjoyment to character; by relating the beautiful thing with the soul of the man who made it a beautiful thing. It is no slight testimony to the range of Browning's powers that the man who so often ignored beauty of form himself should know so much about it; but we shall cease to be surprised when we remember that the analyst of modern ethical and religious problems is also the poet of the Renascence and its glories, and the critical interpreter of Greek life and thought.

I say the critical interpreter, because Browning's sympathies with Greek art are limited. The Greek succeeded, he thought, up to a point splendidly. But the success was limited because it was so perfect. What is perfect dies. The painters of the Renascence aspired beyond painting man as he is; and though in their technique they lacked the perfection and harmony of Greek art, they were

greater because of their very imperfection and crudeness.

I do not defend this view. I think it arguable: but this is not the place to discuss it. It is Browning's view, and presented with great charm in *Andrea del Sarto*. Art is no abstraction—thin, arid, and theoretic. It must be warmed by life; that is the burden of *Fra Lippo Lippi*. Clearly, there is no art for art's sake with Browning but art for life's sake; and in art as elsewhere, love and self-surrender are essentials for success; there alone can the individual find the highest expression of love, can make even the Grammarian's specialised task something other than a mere by-way of scholarship, make of it a great adventure.

In each of the full-length studies of artists he has made he hints at something lacking. Pietor Ignotus needed human affection; Lippo needed life and experience to give fulness to his work; Andrea, some great impulse of generous emotion. In art as elsewhere Browning is jealous of the individual, and the art is judged for its reaction on the character of the artist as well as for its expression of his nature. Honourable failure Browning treats lightly. Life is meant for venture. We must dare the open seas, not hug the land. The great thing is aspiration. Aspiration is fed by love. In *Youth and Art* you have the link that binds the lyrist of passion with the critic of art in the story of the sculptor and the singer, who, caring more for their art than for love, injured both.

Especially interesting in a personal way are the poems where Browning defends his own methods as an artist;—in the later portion of *Pacchiarotto*, where he genially replies to critics of his "harsh analytics," and declines to cut down poetry to the quality of a "Banjo-Byron"; however, if they merely want a tune—give it them! Elsewhere, in the Epilogue, he warns readers his brew is stiff, strong rather than sweet; but if strong it grows mellow with age. Anyhow he gives of his best; his vineyard is "Man's thoughts, loves, hates!"

No consideration of Browning's psychology of art can neglect the poems relating to music. They are not so obviously attractive as those on painting, but in several cases are subtler and more convincing. Browning was a musician, and had therefore the advantage of thoroughly understanding the technique of the art, as well as valuing its emotional content. Music more than painting appeals to the emotions. It is the most potent, direct, and popular of all the arts.

To take two of the most important: *Master Hugues of Saxe Gotha* and *Abt Vogler*. In the first, dealing with a fugue, life itself is criticised from the standpoint of the fugue. Now the fugue is a form of music constructed on logical lines; the various parts are elaborated from a simple theme, where they answer one another, pursue one another, contrast with one another. Arabesques in sound in place of patterns. A seeming confusion of sounds with a definite theme running through.

Such a type of music is music on its least emotional side. It is the only side where intellectual content seems to dominate purely emotional values. It is the mathematics of the art, rather than its poetry. What relation has the great fugue to life? What does it answer? Well, take it as a symbol of life.

The simple, elemental start, the growing variations, the clashing implications, the bewildering convolutions, and the finis—death. It suggests life has no meaning. Give us then less technical cleverness, more passion, says the poet, read some meaning into life. Life is no more game of calisthenics. Take it as a poet's mood rather than a serious criticism of the fugue. Yet it has its value, and there are touches of grotesque humour in the poem that are highly amusing.

Abt Vogler is a greater work; it is Browning's fullest exposition of music in its relation to life; and it has a musical cadence lacking in its fellow. The Alexandrines, with their rich swell, suggest the organ.

Vogler was born at Würzburg about 1750. He was a brilliant musician and a thinker also; becoming a priest in 1775, he travelled widely, did much to improve the organ, and was a splendid executant—especially as extemporiser. Weber and Meyerbeer were his pupils.

In the poem he is extemporising and is carried away by his ecstasy: can he not bring down heaven to earth, and suffuse the soul with the glow of high ideals. In the spell of music the spirit ceases to be bound to a particular environment, to be "cribbed, cabined, and confined," to earthly conditions, it is lost in the universal.

Yet how simple are the elements of music: this he shows us by taking the simple chord, adding certain notes, and you get, what—a harmony, that is in itself a mystery . . . "a star of the eternal sky."

But the music dies away; so too its momentary thrill. Everything is for a moment, then fades—but does it fade? No, nothing good really passes away; it leaves behind it the message of what might and will be. The music made by our lives is never wasted. The thinker despairs; but the musician knows that even discords are wanted to make full harmony. So let us get back from the heights of emotion to sober common-sense, and experience blended with warm confidence in the future—with "the C major of this life."

I have dwelt purposely on the matter rather than the manner of Browning, as singer and psychologist, because it is always the *matter* that he puts first and foremost. But it will be found on examination that although he is a *poetic artist only by accident*—because he could not help himself—he is at his best when he is faithful to the art of poetry; at his best when he is the singer of love and life; at his worst when he is concerned with the intellectual and ethical aspects of his subject, and roughly neglects the artistic shaping.

In his great poems, Browning the singer, the thinker, and the fighter join hands. We touch each side of him; each three personalities. As a fighter and a moralist then we may leave him; that is his last word as a poet. And he is best appreciated here, when we do not divorce the teacher from the singer and the psychologist. His message is part of his song; the burden of his insight. He has no

formal message—"no church, no philosophy"—in the technical sense; how far the religious trend of his work conforms to the theology of any particular church or sect, may well be left outside this brief discussion. It is a more complicated question than many think, especially with a dramatic poet like Browning, who revels in putting all conceivable positions; and as a proof of the debatable character of this problem it may be said that even among his friends there was great difference on this subject. Whatever view we take here, there is no question as to the fundamental attitude of his mind. Making all allowances for his dramatic exposition of other people's points of view, there can be little question, from what we know of the man, that in *Rabbi Ben Ezra* we have the most explicit statement of Browning's philosophy of life.

Rabbi Ben Ezra is an epitome of many poems: it is life from the standpoint of age. In youth we gain experience; in age we use it to control our nature. What use has youth been—with its heats, its mistakes, its strivings? It has helped us to forge our spiritual weapons. It has shown us that not accomplishment but intention, not the outward result but the inward aim is the real test of worth. The pitcher is now shaped on the wheel—and is ready for what? For a future—that is beyond this life. For can death waste all our experience? This leads to a discussion of immortality, beyond our scope here.

Briefly, his position is this: Nature offers no solution; she is both good and bad. She is unmoral. Destiny gives no help; for goodness suffers neglect and the evil are often rewarded. Look outside and see only the great enigmas. There is no certainty anywhere. Revelation provides no passport—for religions are various, and there are more discords than harmonies in the Church.

No: for a reading of life go to your own soul. Your faith, if it is to be worth anything, must be your own intuition, it must be the voice of your own soul speaking. Distrust your own soul—and you are on a rudderless boat, drifting out to sea. Trust, if it does not tell you where you are going, it will at any rate tell you *how*. It may not give the meaning of life, but it affords a meaning to life. For the test of life is spiritual development. Whatever enriches the experience, favours aspiration, gives strength to the heart and mind, is good and to be used by us whether conventionally sanctioned or no. That which enervates, paralyses, deadens, is bad—and must be put aside.

For all his writings are experimental studies in spiritual experience: whether he deals with love, or patriotism, or intellectual ambition, or artistic passion, or religious aspiration, it is all brought to one common denominator—its effect upon character, its value in the making of the soul. This is his aim, as the *method* and *form* which he adopted to formulate his aim. He deals with spiritual experience in two ways: as a dramatic apologist, and as a dramatic singer. He will flame out in a single mood, and throw all his imaginative power and beauty into that mood; or he will disentangle for you half a dozen moods, and put them before you, for your intellectual appreciation. But whatever method he adopts, he supplies the key, lest you be deafened by the babel of tongues.

Confusing as life may be, bewildering in its mingling of good and evil, the lovely and the ugly, of despair and hopefulness, it must be fought through; we must not pick and choose, nor elect merely the sunny side of the road, but take *everything*. Work . . . yes; and work means *work out*. Only by testing and using errors can you realise they are errors. If they are errors, they will crumble of themselves. Only by experience can we wring knowledge from ignorance.

A sound workaday criterion, and assuredly a buoyant and virile one:

> "Man—escape ever on from fancies to the fact,
> And in this striving . . .
> Finds progress . . .
> Man's distinctive mark alone."

Browning's philosophy of life is essentially what we should call to-day pragmatic. Is your view a sound one? Act as if it were: put it to the test of practical experience: that is the only reliable criterion. This roughly is what he says in effect. For the rest, Browning's sanguine temperament led him naturally to look at the brighter side of things; while his splendid vitality made of him a spiritual knight-errant, delighting in the possibilities of conflict, and never so happy as when engaged in some moral or intellectual "scrap." This is the secret of his optimism: a remarkably good blood supply and a natural taste for essaying the high impossible things of life. Unlike some spiritual voyagers in our literature, he never hugged the shore, but sailed for the open, loving the salt sting of the buffeting waves. A courageous soul, and a vigorous and vital comrade for those suffering from spiritual anæmia.

Confessions

What is he buzzing in my ears?
"Now that I come to die,
Do I view the world as a vale of tears?"
Ah, reverend sir, not I!

What I viewed there once, what I view again
Where the physic bottles stand
On the table's edge,—is a suburb lane,
With a wall to my bedside hand.

That lane sloped, much as the bottles do,
From a house you could descry
O'er the garden-wall: is the curtain blue
Or green to a healthy eye?

To mine, it serves for the old June weather
Blue above lane and wall;
And that farthest bottle labelled "Ether"
Is the house o'erstopping all.

And there's a girl in the house at play
Maybe she is singing so.
But now it is settled past dismay,
I shall nevermore know.

Only, there was a way . . . you crept
Close by the side, to dodge
Eyes in the house, two eyes except:
They styled their house "The Lodge."

What right had a lounger up their lane?
But, by creeping very near,
With the good wall's help,—their eyes might strain
And stretch themselves to Oes,

Yet never catch her and me together,
As she left the attic, there,
By the rim of the bottle labelled "Ether,"
And stole from stair to stair.

And stood by the rose-wreathed gate. Alas,
We loved, sir—used to meet:
How sad and bad and mad it was—
But then, how it was sweet!

The Confessional

It is a lie—their Priests, their Pope,
Their Saints, their . . . all they fear or hope
Are lies, and liars—there! through my door
And ceiling, there! and walls and floor,
There, lies, they lie—she's still to be hurled
Till spite of them I reach the world!

You think Priests just and holy men!
Before they put me in this den
I was a human creature too,
With flesh and blood like one of you,
A girl that laughed in beauty's pride
Like lilies in your world outside.

I had a lover—shame enough!
This poor wrenched body, grim and gaunt,
Was kissed all over till it burned,
By lips the truest, love e'er turned
His heart's own tint; and night they kissed
My soul out in a burning mist.

So, next day when the accustomed train
Of things grew round my sense again,
"That is a sin," I said: and slow
With downcast eyes to church I go,
And pass to the confession-chair,
And tell the old mild father there.

But when I name Beltran's name,
"His!" quoth the father: "much I blame
The sin; yet wherefore idly grieve?
Despair not—strenuously retrieve!
Nay, I will turn this love of thine
To lawful love, almost divine;

"For he is young, and led astray.
This Beltran, and he schemes, men say,
To change the laws of church and state;
So, thine shall be an angel's fate.
Who, ere the thunder breaks, should roll
His cloud away and save his soul.

"For, when he lies upon thy breast,
Thou mayest demand and be possessed
Of all his plans, and next day steal
To me, and all those plans reveal,
That I and every priest, to purge
His soul, may fast and use the scourge."

That father's beard was long and white,
With love and truth his brow seemed bright;
I went back, all on fire with joy,
And, that same evening, bade the boy
Tell me, as lovers should, hand-in-fee,
Something to prove his love of me.

He told me what he would not tell
For hope of heaven or fear of hell;
And I lay listening in such pride!
And, soon as he had left my side,
Tripped to the church by morning-light
To save his soul in his despite.

I told the father all his schemes,
Who were his comrades, what their dreams;
"And now make haste," I said, "to pray
The one spot from his soul away:
To-night he comes, but not the same
Will look!" An night he never came.

Nor next night: on the after-morn,
I went forth with a strength new-born.
The church was empty; something drew
My steps into the street; I knew
It led me to the market-place:
There, lo, on high, the father's face!

That horrible scaffold dressed,
That sawdust block . . . God sink the rest!
That head strapped back, that blinding vest,
Those knotted hands and naked breast,
Till near one busy hangman pressed,
And, on the neck these arms caressed . . .

No part in aught they hope or fear!
No heaven with them, no hell!—and here,
No earth, not so much space as prints
My body in their worse of dents
But shall bear God and man my cry,
Lies—lies, again—and still, they lie!

A Grammarian's Funeral

Let us begin and carry up this corpse,
Singing together.
Leave we the common crofts, the vulgar thorpes
Each in his narrow cell
Sleeping safe on the bosom of the plain,
Cared-for till cock-crow:
Look out if yonder be not day again
Rimming the rock-row!
That's the appropriate country; there, man's thought,
Rarer, intenser,
Self-gathered for an outburst, as it ought,
Chafes in the censer.
Leave we the unlettered plain its herd and crop;
Seek we sepulture
On a tall mountain, citied to the top,
Crowded with culture!
All the peaks soar, but one the rest excels;
Clouds overcome it;
No! yonder sparkle is the citadel's
Circling its summit.
Thither our path lies; wind we up the heights:
Wait ye the warning?
Our low life was the level's and the night's;
He's for the morning.
Step to a tune, square chests, erect the head,
'Ware the beholders!
This is our master, famous calm and dead,
Borne on our shoulders.

Sleep, crop and herd! sleep, darkling thorpe and croft,
Safe from the weather!
He, whom we convoy to his grave aloft,
Singing together,
He was a man born with thy face and throat,
Lyric Apollo!
Long he lived nameless: how should spring take note
Winter would follow?
Till lo, the little touch, and youth was gone!
Cramped and diminished,
Moaned he, "New measures, other feet anon!
My dance is finished?"
No, that's the world's way: (keep the mountain-side,
Make for the city!)
He knew the signal, and stepped on with pride
Over men's pity;
Left play for work, and grappled with the world
Bent on escaping:

"What's in the scroll," quoth he, "thou keepest furled?
Show me their shaping,
Theirs who most studied man, the bard and sage,—
Give!"—So, he gowned him,
Straight got by heart that book to its last page:
Learned, we found him.

Yes, but we found him bald too, eyes like lead,
Accents uncertain:
"Time to taste life," another would have said,
"Up with the curtain!"
This man said rather, "Actual life comes next?
Patience a moment!
Grant I have mastered learning's crabbed text,
Still there's the comment.
Let me know all! Prate not of most or least,
Painful or easy!
Even to the crumbs I'd fain eat up the feast,
Ay, nor feel queasy."
Oh, such a life as he resolved to live,
When he had learned it,
When he had gathered all books had to give!
Sooner, he spurned it.
Image the whole, then execute the parts—
Fancy the fabric
Quite, ere you build, ere steel strike fire from quartz,
Ere mortar dab brick!

(Here's the town-gate reached; there's the market-place
Gaping before us.)
Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace
(Hearten our chorus!)
Still before living he'd learn how to live—
No end to learning:
Earn the means first—God surely will contrive
Use for our earning.
Others mistrust and say, "But time escapes;
Live now or never!"
He said, "What's time? Leave Now for dogs and apes!
Man has Forever."
Back to his book then: deeper dropped his head:
Calculus racked him:
Leaden before, his eyes grew dross of lead:
Tussis attacked him.
"Now, master, take a little rest!"—not he!
(Caution redoubled,
Step two abreast, the way winds narrowly!)
Not a whit troubled
Back to his studies, fresher than at first,
Fierce as a dragon
He (soul-hydroptic with a sacred thirst)
Sucked at the flagon.
Oh, if we draw a circle premature,
Heedless of far gain,
Greedy for quick returns of profit, sure
Bad is our bargain!
Was it not great? did not he throw on God,
(He loves the burthen)—
God's task to make the heavenly period
Perfect the earthen?
Did not he magnify the mind, show clear
Just what it all meant?
He would not discount life, as fools do here,
Paid by instalment.
He ventured neck or nothing—heaven's success
Found, or earth's failure:
"Wilt thou trust death or not?" He answered "Yes:
Hence with life's pain, lure!"

That low man seeks a little thing to do,
Sees it and does it:
This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
Dies ere he knows it.
That low man goes on adding one to one,
His hundred's soon hit:
This high man, aiming at a million,
Misses an unit.
That, has the world here—should he need the next,
Let the world mind him:
This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed
Seeking shall find him.
So, with the throttling hands of death at strife,
Ground he at grammar;
Still, thro' the rattle, parts of speech were rife:
While he could stammer
He settled *Hoti's* business—let it be!—
Properly based *Oun*—
Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic *De*,
Dead from the waist down.
Well, here's the platform, here's the proper place:
Hail to your purlieus,
All ye highfliers of the feathered race,
Swallows and curlews!
Here's the top-peak, the multitude below
Live, for they can, there:
This man decided not to Live but Know—
Bury this man there?
Here—here's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds form,
Lightnings are loosened,
Stars come and go! Let joy break with the storm,
Peace let the dew send!
Lofty designs must close in like effects:
Loftily lying,
Leave him—still loftier than the world suspects,
Living and dying.

A Face

If one could have that little head of hers
Painted upon a background of pale gold,
Such as the Tuscan's early art prefers!
No shade encroaching on the matchless mould
Of those two lips, which should be opening soft
In the pure profile; not as when she laughs,
For that spoils all: but rather as if aloft
You hyacinth, she loves so, leaned its staff's
Burthen of honey-coloured buds to kiss
And capture 'twixt the lips apart for this.
Then her lithe neck, three fingers might surround,
How it should waver on the pale gold ground
Up to the fruit-shaped, perfect chin it lifts!
I know, Correggio loves to mass, in rifts
Of heaven, his angel faces, orb on orb
Breaking its outline, burning shades absorb:
But these are only massed there, I should think,
Waiting to see some wonder momently
Grow out, stand full, fade slow against the sky
(That's the pale ground you'd see this sweet face by),
All heaven, meanwhile, condensed into one eye
Which fears to lose the wonder, should it wink.

I. POETRY: Dante Gabriel Rossetti. His Life—His Work.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI (1828–1882)

His Life

Gabriel Charles Dante Rossetti was born in Portland Place, London, on May 12, 1828. Gabriele was his father's name, Charles his godfather's (Charles Lyell, father of the great geologist, Sir Charles Lyell); Dante was given him after Gabriele Rossetti's favourite poet. To avoid confusion with his father's name, Rossetti transposed his Christian names, dropping the appellation of Charles. Dante Gabriel was three-quarters Italian, his father coming from the Adriatic coasts, his mother from Tuscany. The father was a sensitive, amiable, and richly cultured man, and "a high-principled patriot," who was proscribed by the Bourbon king, Ferdinand I, in 1821, escaped to England, and obtained an appointment as Professor of Italian in King's College, London, 1831. The mother was fond of literature, deeply religious, and a gentle and devoted

wife and mother. Many years later she would say that her wish had been for an intellectual husband and family. The wish had been granted, "and I now wish there was a little less intellect in the family, so as to allow for a little more common sense."

The son at no time shared his father's political enthusiasm; indeed, he showed a marked distaste for political problems. "He heard so much in his youth of . . . Luigi Filippo that he seems to have registered a vow to leave Luigi Filippo and the other potentates of Europe and their ministers to take care of themselves." But when about fifteen he yielded to the fascination of Dante, and read eagerly all he found of the great Florentine.

In 1836 he went to a day school in Portland Place, and to King's College from 1837 till 1842.

The first distinct picture of Rossetti that presents itself is that of an affectionate, generous lad, with a partiality for rough simple folk and a dreamy, somewhat indolent nature; but at no period in his life was there anything effeminate about him. Nothing is further from the truth than the old popular notion of Rossetti and Keats, as men given up to the sensuous impressions of life. Both poets suffered from ill-health, and disease sapped their powers of volition; but each had virility, grit, and splendid capacity for work. The vapid emotionalism of the æsthetic school received no encouragement from their master Rossetti, who always insisted on the necessity for fundamental brainwork in poetry.

Before chloral had shadowed his life, Rossetti was a breezy, genial, and delightful companion, as simple and unaffected as William Morris, and with a strain of rich humour in his nature that Morris never possessed. No man was more generous in his appreciation of others, the main question he asked of a man being, Is he interesting? If so, his scholarly attainments influenced Rossetti scarcely at all, and his social position not in the least.

Bent on becoming an artist, he was sent in 1842 to a drawing academy in Bloomsbury; afterwards to the Antique School of the Royal Academy, in 1846.

The second picture that detaches itself from Rossetti's biography is that of the earnest young art student with masses of brown hair, a fine forehead, deep-set blue flashing eyes, and an imperious chin. This is the young enthusiast who wrote in 1848 to that queer-tempered man of genius, Ford Madox Brown, begging to be a pupil. Brown accepted him with a few laconic words, but damped his ardour by setting him to paint pickle jars. It was characteristic of Rossetti that he should have worked hard during three years, but was impatient of instruction, following out his own methods.

Open-hearted and genial as a rule, he was subject, as men of his temperament are, to fits of abstraction and social aloofness. The one constant quality in these years is the insatiable love of romantic literature. He was always a great, not a wide, reader. Science, history, philosophy attracted him little; but legendary romance, whether in prose or verse, appealed to him profoundly, and thus mediæval literature generally held him in thrall. He loved Shelley and Keats, especially Keats, and in 1847 took to his heart the Browning of *Pauline*, *Paracelsus*, and *Bells and Pomegranates*.

The "pickle jar" episode had damped slightly Rossetti's artistic ardour, and it was doubtful for a time whether he should definitely take up art or literature. During the year 1848, however, he became acquainted with two academy students, Holman Hunt and John Everett Millais, and this acquaintanceship proved the starting-point of the famous Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

In 1848 an association was established by three young painters—Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John Everett Millais, and William Holman Hunt—called the "Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood." As the name suggests, this brotherhood identified themselves artistically with the painters before Raphael, the early Florentines—*e.g.* Giotto, Bellini, Fra Angelico—for they found in the work of these artists an individuality and sincerity alien to the art of Raphael's successors. Even the faults of this earlier school had for the brotherhood a special charm, and the crude drawing and faulty perspective enchanted them just as the naïveté and roughness of the old ballads enchant the scholar.

But it must not be thought that the school aimed entirely at reproducing all the characteristics of their work. It was the spirit rather than the letter at which they were aiming, although undoubtedly in some there was a tendency to reproduce the defects as well as the merits.

The occasion of the founding of the brotherhood was a book of engravings which Hunt and Rossetti saw at Millais' house, of certain Italian frescoes—the same frescoes as had impressed Keats and Leigh Hunt.

About this time Ruskin in his *Modern Painters* had protested against the academic traditions which kept young artists making school copies of Raphael. Pre-Raphaelitism put this protest into a practical form. Madox Brown, who was not in the movement, none the less was of it, and worked according to its principles.

The art side of the movement has no immediate concern for us, since it belongs to the history of painting, not of literature; but one or two characteristics common to both the pictorial and literary side of their work may be commented upon. The first is the extreme attention to realistic detail.

The Pre-Raphaelites painted their pictures as in frescoes or mosaic work, finishing each portion with elaborate care. "Every Pre-Raphaelite landscape background," declared Ruskin, "is painted to the last touch in the open air from the thing itself. Every Pre-Raphaelite figure, however studied in expression, is a true portrait of some living person. Every minute accessory is painted in the same manner." This unflinching realism characterises the earlier work of Rossetti, but later on he gave fuller scope to his imagination.

Millais soon broke away from Pre-Raphaelite orthodoxy. Though inferior to Hunt in elaboration of detail, and to Rossetti in imaginative power, he became the most popular of them all through sheer cleverness.

Another characteristic of the movement was its love of symbolism. This is a mediæval note, and Rossetti learnt its secret from Dante. In *Dante's Dream* the screwn poppies are emblematic of sleep and death; an expiring lamp symbolises the extinction of life, while a white cloud borne away by angels—the departing soul of Beatrice.

While, however, Rossetti, the master and mind of the movement, was challenging public criticism by his novel methods, he was at the same time writing a good deal of his best poetry, notably *The Bride's Prelude*, *Sister Helen*, *A Last Confession*, *Jenny*, and *The Burden of Nineveh*. This divided interest, however interesting artistically, has serious practical drawbacks, for it encumbered Rossetti in his professional work as a painter, and in 1862 we find him declaring that he had abandoned poetry. Some of his verse was published in the Magazine of the Brotherhood—another of Rossetti's ideas. This was called *The Germ*; it was published monthly, contained contributions from Coventry Patmore, Christina Rossetti, and others; and in its columns Rossetti's *Blessed Damozel* first saw the light.

In 1854 Ruskin's warm encouragement of the Pre-Raphaelites had led to a friendship between him and the founder, but both men were too strongly individualistic for any considerable companionship. Ruskin was Rossetti's senior by nine years, and the young man resented the authoritative manner of the art critic. As he preferred to follow his own lines, Ruskin called him "a conceited monkey," and told him he did whatever he liked, "just as puppies and tom-tits did." Rossetti took these railings good-humouredly, but went his own way.

At this moment, when the obscure artist was becoming a well-known personality, the figure of Elizabeth Siddall struck across his path. Few famous attachments are better known than that of the tall, beautiful shop-girl, with pale blue eyes and coppery golden hair, and the ardent young painter.

She was barely seventeen when a mutual friend, Deverell, was captivated by her beauty, seen by chance in a bonnet shop in London. He arranged, through her mother, for the girl to have sittings for a picture he was painting, "The Duke with Viola." In that picture Rossetti appears as the Jester; the girl herself as Viola.

Quiet, even reserved in manner, dignified in bearing, and singularly sweet in disposition, she attracted young Rossetti, who had hitherto owned no mistress but his art. In 1851 they became engaged, and the importance of this attachment upon his work, both as a painter and poet, cannot well be over-estimated.

Herself no mean artist, she displayed a remarkable measure of poetical invention in her drawings; and it is said that her methods even affected Rossetti's own work. Unhappily she was frail in constitution, and in 1853 a consumptive tendency showed itself. Her lover thus wrote to her in 1854: "It seems hard to me when I look at her sometimes, working, or too ill to work, and think how many without one tithe of her genius or greatness of spirit have granted to them abundant health and opportunity to labour through the little they can do or will do."

Rossetti was in no position to marry her at the time, and the engagement dragged on in a somewhat unsatisfactory way. In 1860, his circumstances improving, he married her at Hastings, but she steadily declined in health, and her death, owing to an overdose of laudanum, probably only anticipated by a few months what must have happened.

Keenly affected by his wife's tragic death, the burial of his manuscript poems in his wife's grave was an act sufficiently significant of Rossetti's state of mind. The poems, he told his friends, had often been written when she was suffering and when he might have been attending to her; and he felt, what was certainly true, that his artistic preoccupation had taken him away from his home far more than was right or necessary. As a matter of fact, Rossetti was never framed for domesticity, and the union was fated to be a failure from the first. Men of his type make satisfying lovers but poor husbands. There was something peculiarly fitting in this passionate act of self-abnegation, when he placed the work of his imagination between the cheek and the hair of his dead wife.

Love had come and gone; sorrow had entered Rossetti's soul and clouded his naturally happy disposition. But the vitality of the man was so great that its shadow soon faded to a mere speck, and the years that followed saw Rossetti at the height of his power as an artist and of his attractive magnetism as a man.

Between 1860 and 1870 he was at his prime. He took 16 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, and had first for his tenants—for the house was a large, old-fashioned one—Swinburne, George Meredith, and Mr. William Rossetti. This remarkable partnership soon came to an end, for, however delightful as a companion, Rossetti's Bohemian habits were trying as a housemate. Among his friends were Burne-Jones, who regarded him with affection and awe, and William Morris, whose strong personality was for a time almost obsessed by Rossetti. There could be no better tribute to his personal charm and influence than the attitude of a vigorous, independent soul such as that of Morris.

Rossetti popularised at this period the collecting of china and bric-à-brac and old furniture. Another taste, too eclectic to become popular, was his passion for curious animals. A wombat slept over the dinner-table; a zebu in the garden proved too exciting an acquisition and was sent away; but visitors could cheer themselves with watching the respective habits of a kangaroo, a deer, and a chameleon. Among his amusing letters at this time the wombat occupies an important place. For instance, after casually referring to *Troy Town* as his "best thing," he refers to the wombat as "a joy, a triumph, a delight, a madness." On one occasion Rossetti told Browning that he wanted an elephant. "What on earth would you do with it?" inquired Browning. "Teach him to clean the windows," retorted Rossetti blithely, "and people will say, 'Who lives there?'—'Oh! a painter, Rossetti'—then they will come in and buy my pictures."

In 1870 the famous painter becomes the famous poet. To many his poems had been familiar for many years, and men like Swinburne and Morris had been impressed by their distinctive individuality. During the late 'sixties the poetic impulse came strongly upon him, and although his health was beginning to fail at this time, his imagination had never been more active. He wrote *The Stream's Secret*, a haunting piece of melody, re-wrote from memory some of his earlier poems, and, at the urgent request of his friends, gave permission for the MS. poems to be exhumed, since much of his verse was forgotten beyond recall. The temptation to yield to solicitations, in these circumstances, was great; but one would have respected the man more had he left alone the grave and its secrets.

Be that as it may, the poems were transcribed and published, and received with a chorus of enthusiastic praise, led by his friends Swinburne and Morris.

The second and grimmer shadow that fell across his life at this time is the more to be deplored, inasmuch as few men of letters had reached so high a position, in the opinion of those best qualified to judge, as had Rossetti. Both as a poet and painter he had claim upon the affectionate admiration of his contemporaries. Then came ill-health and the curse of the chloral habit, and the kindly, humorous, and brilliant companion becomes gradually a moody neurotic. Harassed by sleeplessness, he had taken chloral, quite ignorant of the seductive and baneful character of the drug indiscriminately used; and his intolerance of advice made it quite clear that from the outset this experiment would prove disastrous, especially to a man of his nervous organisation. Yet, though his vitality was impaired and his mental and physical sufferings considerable, his imagination as a creative artist remained practically undisturbed to the very last. The very tenacity of the man's constitution merely increased his sufferings, and in 1882 he died in the presence of his mother, sister, and two friends, one of them being his intimate companion, Watts-Dunton, whose tender care and unfailing sympathy had proved the one real gleam of light for Rossetti during his last few years. He was buried at Birchington on April 14, where a cross has been erected over his grave.

No one knew Rossetti more intimately than did Watts-Dunton; his tribute, therefore, to the man's genius and personality carries especial significance. Let it be given in the author's own words.

"As to his personal fascination, among all the poets of England we have no record of anything equal to it. It asserted itself not only in relation to the Pre-Raphaelite group, but in relation to all other members of society with whom he was brought into contact. To describe the magnetism of such a man is, of course, impossible. Much has been written upon what is called the *demonic* power in certain individuals—the power of casting one's own influence over all others. Napoleon's case is generally instanced as a typical one. But Napoleon's demonic power was of a self-conscious kind. It would seem, however, that there is another kind of demonic power—the power of shedding quite unconsciously one's personality upon all brought into contact with it. The demonic power of Rossetti, like that of *D'Arcy* in this story, was quite unconscious. In Rossetti's presence as in *D'Arcy's* it was impossible not to yield to this strange, mysterious power. At the time when he was not so entirely reclusive as he afterwards became, when he used to meet all sorts of people, the author had many opportunities of noticing its effect upon others. He has seen them try to resist it, and in vain. On a certain occasion a very eminent man, much used to society, and much used to the brilliant literary clubs of London, was quite cowed and silenced before Rossetti. It is necessary to dwell upon these subtle distinctions, because this is the D'Arcy who, as a critic has remarked, 'is the real protagonist of *Aylwin*—although the reader does not discover it until the very end of the story where D'Arcy is the character who unravels and explains all.' Without D'Arcy, indeed, and the demonic power possessed by him, the story would have no existence."

Perhaps there is only one other figure in modern English letters with whom Rossetti may be compared as a compelling personal influence: that man is Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

His Work

Milton's postulate that poetry should be simple, sensuous, and passionate has never been bettered. All the greatest poetry is simple, because the elemental things of life are simple; it is sensuous, because its appeal must needs be made through the senses, how else can rhythmic beauty be realised? It is passionate, because it deals with the primal instincts.

In two of these requisites Rossetti's verse is assuredly not lacking. He is both sensuous and passionate; indeed superbly so, though the elaborate craftsmanship somewhat distracts us at times and obscures the real emotional quality that lies behind. In the exquisite intensity of his sense-impressions he reminds us of Keats; and like Keats, he is carried away at times by this into an ultra-opulence of illustration that weakens his work as an artist. Not that much of this opulent colouring is not effective, as for instance such lines as these:

"Gloom girt 'mid Spring-flushed apple growths she stands."

"Deep in the sun-searched growths, the dragon fly
Hangs like a blue thread loosened from the sky."

Yet how much more compelling in its simple strength are these lines, from which luxuriant fancies have been ruthlessly pruned:

"Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even."

"Thy soul I know not from thy body, nor
Thee from myself, neither our love from God."

Although not a painter himself, the pictorial suggestiveness of Keats' poetry proved a fruitful inspiration to the Pre-Raphaelite group of which Rossetti was the most distinguished representative. The extreme fondness for elaboration of detail, and the outlook upon nature, not as a rhythmic pageant of colour, but as a study in still life, is especially noticeable in the paintings of this school. It has been well said that the Pre-Raphaelites arranged "images and impressions as

the Japanese arrange flowers, so that each may keep its perfect independence and colour."

That the pictorial element is more insistent in Rossetti than in Keats is obviously due to the fact that Rossetti's outlook on the world is essentially that of the painter. He thinks and feels in pigments. Who but a painter would have given us lines like these:

"The blessed damozel leaned out
From the *gold bar* of heaven
. . . . .
She had *three lilies* in her hand
And the stars in her hair were seven."

"And the souls mounting up to God
Went by her *like thin flames*."

"Where the long cloud the long wood's counterpart
Sheds doubled darkness up the labouring hill."

"Thine eyes gray lit in shadowing hair above."

This is not merely the verse of a pictorial artist, but of a Pre-Raphaelite artist. In the words italicised above the familiar symbolism of the mediæval colourist is clearly discerned. Even in so modern a poem as *Jenny* the poet cannot resist recalling a picture by the Florentine painters. Indeed Rossetti's verse, when not written for pictures, almost invariably suggests pictures.

In that splendid poem, *A Last Confession*, perhaps the only one that shows the direct influence of a contemporary, the painter-poet is unmistakable. Browning's method may have suggested the general scheme of the poem, but Rossetti has stamped his own genius upon the tale. It is the story of a murder, and the colour red gleams through the verse from the very opening, where the man finds the child on the hills and she tells him her parents had left her and walked into "the great red light," down to the catastrophe when "sea and sky were blood and fire and all the day was one red blindness."

But the sensuousness of Rossetti's verse travels beyond the mere expression of emotion in terms of sense. After all, Shelley and Browning also were colourists, and the difference between them and Rossetti is in this respect one of degree, not of kind. But in their sensuousness as poets they exhibit divergences which may be explained by saying that while all these give sensuous expression to *feeling*, Rossetti also gives sensuous expression to *thought*. It is here that we light upon that quality in Rossetti's verse that has given offence to some, and is responsible for the criticism that there is a voluptuous "hot-house" atmosphere about it.

Rossetti was three-quarters Italian, and he treats passion from the Southern and not from the Northern point of view. "Rossetti," wrote Ruskin in *Præterita*, "was really not an Englishman but a great Italian tormented in the inferno of London." The Italian side of Rossetti's temperament certainly impresses most of his work. The frank voluptuousness of his wonderful sonnet sequence, *The House of Life*, is the reverse of English. The Northern temperament, naturally reserved and secretive where the emotions of love and religion are concerned, shrinks from dwelling on the sensuous manifestations of passion. And one may add that if it is betrayed into doing so an aggressive coarseness displays itself at once.

This is not so with the Southern temperament; fevered and morbid as their erotic and devotional literature may seem, it is never coarse. The reverential devotion to the beauty of the body, which strikes most Englishmen as mawkish and unwholesome, and not a few as immoral, is far removed in spirit from mere eroticism. The senses were for Rossetti sacramental emblems of the spirit. In every department of thought and emotion, not in love only, Rossetti sought for the outward manifestations. Where Tennyson sentimentalises and Browning intellectualises, Rossetti read off the physical expression of certain sides of life. But he valued the physical expression, the outward manifestation, not as does the mere sensualist as something disconnected from the inner life, but as the visible sign of the invisible power that moulds life and character into beauty and nobility. He worshipped beauty

"Whose speech Truth knows not from her thought,
Nor love her body from her soul."

Robert Buchanan's attack on Rossetti in *The Fleshly School of Poetry* is wide of the mark, because Rossetti's sensuousness is something other than sensuality. Indeed Buchanan came to realise he had condemned without justice, and years afterwards made a frank and unreserved retraction. Yet, if the heavy perfumed atmosphere of Rossetti's love poetry will always strike English readers as enervating, and if his outspokenness offends our constitutional reserve in matters of sexual love, let us at any rate recognise that the question is not one of morality but merely one of taste. Its real weakness lies not in its sensuousness but in its frequent lack of simplicity. Its rich ornamentation, its meticulous elaboration fatigues the eye; and to this extent it fails to appeal to us so potently as do Burns and Browning as poets of passion. In its own circumscribed sphere of sexual ecstasy transfigured by spiritual rapture, it is rarely beautiful and indeed unique in English poetry. But the virile breadth of Browning and the poignant pathos of Burns touch us more intimately by reason not only of their more welcome reticence but by their larger and fresher simplicity of treatment.

The limitations of Rossetti's sensuous complexity have been noted; let us not overlook, however, the peculiar grace and fascination it carries with it; for at its worst it is but the defect of his artistic virtue—a marvellously subtle imagination. This subtle imagination could spin the gossamer web of glamour and fantasy over the simplest themes, as in *My Sister's Sleep*, as well as revel in the rich storehouse of mediæval romance.

MY SISTER'S SLEEP

She fell asleep on Christmas Eve:
At length the long-ungranted shade
Of weary eyelids overweigh'd
The pain nought else might yet relieve.

Our mother, who had leaned all day
Over the bed from chime to chime,
Then raised herself for the first time,
And as she sat her down, did pray.

Her little work-table was spread
With work to finish. For the glare
Made by her candle, she had care
To work some distance from the bed.

Without, there was a cold moon up,
Of winter radiance sheer and thin;
The hollow halo it was in
Was like an icy crystal cup.

Through the small room, with subtle sound
Of flame, by vents the fireshine drove
And reddened. In its dim alcove
The mirror shed a clearness round.

I had been sitting up some nights,
And my tired mind felt weak and blank;
Like a sharp strengthening wine it drank
The stillness and the broken lights.

Twelve struck. That sound, by dwindling years
Heard in each hour, crept off; and then
The ruffled silence spread again,
Like water that a pebble stirs.

Our mother rose from where she sat:
Her needles, as she laid them down,
Met lightly, and her silken gown
Settled; no other noise than that.

"Glory unto the Newly Born!"
So, as said angels, she did say;
Because we were in Christmas Day,
Though it would still be long till morn.

Just then in the room over us
There was a pushing back of chairs,
As some who had sat unawares
So late, now heard the hour, and rose.

With anxious softly-stepping haste
Our mother went where Margaret lay,
Fearing the sounds o'erhead—should they
Have broken her long watched-for rest!

She stooped an instant, calm, and turned;
But suddenly turned back again
And all her features seemed in pain
With woe, and her eyes gazed and yearned.

For my part, I but hid my face,
And held my breath, and spoke no word:
There was none spoken; but I heard
The silence for a little space.

Our mother bowed herself and wept:
And both my arms fell, and I said,
"God knows I knew that she was dead."
And there, all white, my sister slept.

Then kneeling, upon Christmas morn
A little after twelve o'clock,
We said, ere the first quarter struck
"Christ's blessing on the newly born!"

As a mediævalist Rossetti is obviously in congenial surroundings, for the mingled warp of sensuousness and supersensuousness, so characteristic of the Middle Ages, suited to a nicety his peculiar genius.

The human elements of old romance were finely apprehended by Scott and William Morris; the sensuous elements attracted Keats; the mystic elements inspired Coleridge. But no one poet has gathered up all these diverse elements in the way that Rossetti has done. In such poems as *Stratton Water*, *The King's Tragedy*, and *The White Ship*, he touches the popular ballad with all its rough simplicity and naïveté; and if he fails to realise the hearty humanity that touches Scott's best work, he is more faithful to the conventions of the old ballad form. Again, he has essayed in poems like *The Bride's Prelude* and *Rose Mary* to reproduce that sensuous atmosphere which gave such richness of effect to *The Eve of St. Agnes* and *Lamia*; and his success here is unquestioned. Keats himself never excelled the pictorial splendour of *The Bride's Prelude* or the opulent imagery of *Rose Mary*; and in sheer intellectual grasp of old superstitions and ancient customs he is distinctly inferior to Rossetti. The opening of *The Bride's Prelude* is perfect in its way, where the air is languorous and redolent with musk, myrrh, and the noonday sun, while ever and anon the sounds float in through the casement of murmuring water and the melody of the lute:

"Amelotte laughed into the air
With eyes that sought the sun:
But where the walls in long brocade
Were screened, as one who is afraid
Sat Aloyse within the shade.

And even in shade was gleam enough
To shut out full repose
From the bride's 'tiring-chamber, which
Was like the inner altar-niche
Whose dimness worship has made rich.

Within the window's heaped recess
The light was counterchanged
In blent reflexes manifold
From perfume-caskets of wrought gold
And gems the bride's hair could not hold.

All thrust together: and with these
A slim-curved lute, which now,
At Amelotte's sudden passing there,
Was swept in somewise unaware,
And shook to music the close air.

Against the haloed lattice-panes
The bridesmaid turned her breast;
Then to the glass turned tall and free,
And braced and shifted daintily
Her loin-belt through her côte-hardie.

The belt was silver, and the clasp
Of lozenged arm-bearings;
A world of mirrored tints minute
The rippling sunshine wrought into't,
That flushed her hand and warmed her foot.

At least an hour had Aloyse,—
Her jewels in her hair,—
Her white gown, as became a bride,
Quartered in silver at each side,—
Sat thus aloof, as if to hide.

Over her bosom, that lay still,
The vest was rich in grain,
With close pearls wholly overset:
Around her throat the fastenings met
Of chevesayle and mantelet.

Her arms were laid along her lap
With the hands open: life
Itself did seem at fault with her:
Beneath the drooping brows, the stir
Of thought made noonday heavier."

Rossetti's power of mystic suggestion has no peer save in Coleridge. What Coleridge did for the earlier years of the century Rossetti did for the later years. After the rush of poetry, charged

and often heavily weighted with practical problems of the hour, he brought back the mystic spirit to our verse. Not the religious mysticism of his sister and of Tennyson and Browning, but the mysticism of the artist with its fascination for the half-lights, for the undiscovered countries of thought and feeling. He had the power of impressing the imagination with splendid lines that suggested some half-expressed thought, some dimly-shadowed emotion, such lines as:

"Girt in dark growths, yet glimmering with one star."

"The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of Hope."

"Words, whose silence wastes and kills."

"The spacious vigil of the stars."

That wonderful poem, *The Blessed Damozel*—wonderful had it been the mature work of the writer, more wonderful considering he was quite a youth when he wrote it—is full of fine, subtle touches. It has a freshness and spaciousness of imagination that is lacking in some of his more ornate later pictures.

The Blessed Damozel leaning out from the gold bar of Heaven:

"From the fixed place of Heaven she saw
Time like a pulse shake fierce
Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove
Within the gulf to pierce
Its path; and now she spoke as when
The stars sang in their spheres."

The sense of vastness is splendidly conveyed in these lines.

Then follows a stanza worthy of Coleridge, perhaps not uninspired by his magic:

"The sun was gone now; the curled moon
Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
Had when they sang together."

In contrast with this sense of immensity, where in a bold line the earth is described as spinning in the void like a fretful midge, comes the wistful longing of the maiden for her lover still on earth, and her passionate prayers for him to come to her soon.

Coleridge alone could match the haunting mystery of lines like these:

"Herc high up in the balcony,
Sister Helen,
The moon flies fast to fade with me,
Outside it's merry in the wind's wake,
Sister Helen,
In the shaken trees the chill stars shake.
Hush, heard you a horse tread, as you spoke,
Little brother?"

All the witchery of twilight is here:

"When the leaf shadows at a breath,
Shrinks in the road, and all the heath,
Forest and water far and wide
Lie with the mystery of death."

Sometimes, like Keats, he can suggest in a single superb line:

"And her fair eyes moan as a single shell."

What poet has more exquisitely caught the spirit of the dream world, as seen through a lover's eye, as in *Love's Nocturn*:

"Master of the murmuring courts
Where the shapes of sleep convene!—
Lo! my spirit here exhorts
All the powers of the demesne,
For their aid to woo my queen.
What reports
Yield thy jealous courts unseen?

Vaporous, unaccountable,
Dream-world lies forlorn of light,
Hollow like a breaking shell.
Ah! that from all dreams I might
Choose one dream and guide its flight!
I know well
What her sleep should tell to-night."

Here a common psychical experience is wrought into a thing of beauty by subtlety of treatment:

"I have been here before,
But when or how I cannot tell:
I know the grass beyond the door,
The sweet keen smell,
The sighing sound, the lights around the shore."

While the sensuous beauty of Rossetti's verse is fully recognised, the intellectual power and the moral force of his genius have had far less than its due. It is as if Englishmen could not appreciate the spiritual power of a writer unless he ascended the pulpit. The moral must be thrust before their eyes: the religion must be crystallised into a creed, or they suspect a moral flabbiness.

And yet the moral beauty of his work is clear enough, and ought never to have been called in question.

There is no finer treatment of the social problem in poetry than may be found in *Jenny*—a poem refreshingly free from the mawkish sentiment that so often spoils verse dealing with this subject. Then again, mark the lofty imagination of *The Burden of Nineveh*. The huge winged stone bulls of Nineveh stare a reverie in the poet's mind in which he thinks with misgiving on the civilisation of our own day. He reflects how smugly we talk of the lessons of the elder civilisations, and shake our heads at mention of Babylon and Nineveh. Yet may it not be that this *bas-relief*, dug out from the ruins of Nineveh and now looking down from the walls of the British Museum, will be discovered years hence in the ruins of London, and the discoverers imagine it to be our God?

"Who finding in this desert place
His form, shall hold us for some race
That walked not in Christ's lowly ways,
But bowed the pride and vowed the praise
Unto the God of Nineveh."

A vein of delicate and austere satire runs throughout the poem, giving its impressive rhythm all possible effect.

How admirable is the idealism in those beautiful sonnets, *Lost Days* and *A Superscription*:

"The lost days of my life until to-day,
What were they could I see them on the street
Lie as they fell? Would they be sure of wheat
Sown once for food but trodden into clay?

Or golden coins squandered and still to pay?
Or drops of blood dabbling the guilty feet?
Or such spilt water as in dreams must cheat
The undying throat of Hell, athirst alway?"

But one day he will hear those wasted hours accusing him of self-murder, muttering

"I am thyself—what hast thou done to me?"

The mystery of life is hinted at with exquisite delicacy in *The Sea Limits*:

"Listen alone beside the sea,
Listen alone among the woods;
Those voices of twin solitudes
Shall have one sound alike to thee:
Hark where the murmurs of thronged men
Surge and sink back and surge again,—
Still the one voice of wave and tree.

Gather a shell from the strown beach
And listen at its lips: they sigh
The same desire and mystery,
The echo of the whole sea's speech.
And all mankind is thus at heart
Not anything but what thou art:
And Earth, Sea, Man, are all in each."

Profounder thinkers, and more varied singers the last century has given us, but Rossetti has expressed, in a way no other poet has done, the hunger of the human heart for love and beauty, the hunger of the human soul for those impalpable mysteries that touch the horizon of human thought.

JENNY

Lazy laughing languid Jenny,
Fond of a kiss and fond of a guinea,
Whose head upon my knee to-night
Rests for a while, as if grown light
With all our dances and the sound
To which the wild tunes spun you round.
Fair Jenny mine, the thoughtless queen
Of kisses which the blush between
Could hardly make more daintier;
Whose eyes are as blue skies, whose hair
Is countless gold incomparable:
Fresh flowers, scarce touched with signs that tell
Of Love's exuberant hotbed:—Nay,
Poor flower left torn since yesterday
Until to-morrow leave you bare;
Poor handful of bright spring-water
Flung in the whirlpool's shrieking face;
Poor shameful Jenny, full of grace
Thus with your head upon my knee;—
Whose person or whose purse may be
The lodestar of your reveries?

This room of yours, my Jenny, looks
A change from mine so full of books,
Whose serried ranks hold fast, forsooth,
So many captive hours of youth,—
The hours they thieve from day and night
To make one's cherished work come right,
And leave it wrong for all their theft,
Even as to-night my work was left:
Until I vowed that since my brain
And eyes of dancing seemed so fain,
My feet should have some dancing too:—
And thus it was I met with you.
Well, I suppose 'twas hard to part,
For here I am. And now, sweetheart,
You seem too tired to get to bed.

It was a careless life I led
When rooms like this were scarce so strange
Not long ago. What breeds the change,—
The many aims or the few years?
Because to-night it all appears
Something I do not know again.

The cloud's not danced out of my brain,—
The cloud that made it turn and swim
While hour by hour the books grew dim.
Why, Jenny, as I watch you there,—
For all your wealth of loosened hair,
Your silk ungirdled and unlaced
And warm sweets open to the waist,
All golden in the lamplight's gleam,—
You know not what a book you seem,
Half-read by lightning in a dream!
How should you know, my Jenny? Nay,
And I should be ashamed to say:—
Poor beauty, so well worth a kiss!
But while my thought runs on like this
With wasteful whims more than enough,
I wonder what you're thinking of.

If of myself you think at all,
What is the thought?—conjectural
On sorry matters best unsolved?—
Or inly is each grace resolved
To tit me with a lure?—or (sad
To think!) perhaps you're merely glad
That I'm not drunk or ruffianly
And let you rest upon my knee.

For sometimes, were the truth confess'd,
You're thankful for a little rest,—
Glad from the crush to rest within,
From the heart-sickness and the din
Where envy's voice at virtue's pitch
Mocks you because your gown is rich;
And from the pale girl's dumb rebuke,
Whose ill-clad grace and toil-worn look
Proclaim the strength that keeps her weak,
And other nights than yours bespeak;
And from the wise unchildish ell,
To schoolmate lesser than himself
Pointing you out, what thing you are:—
Yes, from the daily jeer and jar,
From shame and shame's outbraving too,
Is rest not sometimes sweet to you?—
But most from the hatefulness of man
Who spares not to end what he began,
Whose acts are ill and his speech ill,
Who, having used you at his will,
Thrusts you aside, as when I dine
I serve the dishes and the wine.

Well, handsome Jenny mine, sit up;
I've filled our glasses, let us sup,
And do not let me think of you,
Lest shame of yours suffice for two.
What, still so tired? Well, well then, keep
Your head there, so you do not sleep;
But that the weariness may pass
And leave you merry, take this glass.
Ah! lazy lily hand, more bless'd
If ne'er in rings it had been dress'd
Nor ever by a glove conceal'd!

Behold the lilies of the field,
They toil not neither do they spin;
(So doth the ancient text begin,—
Not of such rest as one of those
Can share.) Another rest and ease
Along each summer-sated path
From its new lord the garden hath,
Than that whose spring in blessings ran
Which praised the bounteous husbandman,
Ere yet, in days of hankering breath,
The lilies sickened unto death.

What, Jenny, are your lilies dead?
Aye, and the snow-white leaves are spread
Like winter on the garden-bed.
But you had roses left in May,—
They were not gone too. Jenny, nay
But must your roses die, and those
Their purfled buds that should unclose
Even so: the leaves are culled apart,
Still red as from the broken heart,
And here's the naked stem of thorns.

Nay, nay, mere words. Here nothing warns
As yet of winter. Sickness here
Or wrack alone could wakon fear,—
Nothing but passion wrings a tear.
Except when there may rise unsought
Haply at times a passing thought
Of the old days which seem to be
Much older than any history
That is written in any book;
When she would lie in fields and look
Along the ground through the blown grass,
And wonder where the city was,
Far out of sight, whose broil and bale
They told her then for a child's tale.

Jenny, you know the city now.
A child can tell the tale there, how
Some things that are not yet enroll'd
In market-lists are bought and sold
Even till the early Sunday light,
When Saturday night is market-night
Everywhere, be it dry or wet,
And market-night in the Haymarket.
Our learned London children know,
Poor Jenny, all your pride and woe;
Have seen your lifted silken skirt
Advertise daintier through the dirt;
Have seen your coach-wheels splash rebuke
On virtue; and have learned your look
When, wealth and health slipped past, you stare
Along the streets alone, and there,
Round the long park, across the bridge,
The cold lamps at the pavement's edge
Wind on together and apart,
A fiery serpent for your heart.

Let the thoughts pass, an empty cloud!
Suppose I were to think aloud,—
What if to her all this were said?
Why, as a volume seldom read
Being opened halfway shuts again,
So might the pages of her brain
Be parted at such words, and thence
Close back upon the dusty sense.
For is there hue or shape defined
In Jenny's desecrated mind,
Where all contagious currents meet,
A Lethe of the middle street?
Nay, it reflects not any face,
Nor sound is in its sluggish pace,
But as they coil those eddies clot,
And night and day remember not.

Why, Jenny, you're asleep at last!—
Asleep, poor Jenny, hard and fast,—
So young and soft and tired; so fair,
With chin thus nestled in your hair,
Mouth quiet, eyelids almost blue
As if some sky of dreams shone through!

Just as another woman sleeps!
Enough to throw one's thoughts in heaps
Of doubt and horror,—what to say
Or think,—this awful secret sway,
The potter's power over the clay!
Of the same lump (it has been said)
For honour and dishonour made,
Two sister vessels. Here is one.

My cousin Nell is fond of fun,
And fond of dress, and change, and praise,
So mere a woman in her ways:
And if her sweet eyes rich in youth
Are like her lips that tell the truth,
My cousin Nell is fond of love,
And she's the girl I'm proudest of.
Who does not prize her, guard her well?
The love of change, in cousin Nell,
Shall find the flesh and hold it dear:
The unconquered mirth turn quieter
Not through her own, through others' woe:
The conscious pride of beauty glow
Beside another's pride in her,
One little part of all they share.
For love himself shall ripen those
In a kind soil to just increase
Through years of fertilising peace.

Of the same lump (as it is said)
For honour and dishonour made,
Two sister vessels. Here is one.

It makes a goblin of the sun.

So pure,—so fall'n! How dare to think
Of the first common kindred link?
Yet, Jenny, till the world shall burn
It seems that all things take their turn;
And who shall say but this fair tree
May need, in changes that may be,
Your children's children's charity?
Scorned then, no doubt, as you are scorn'd!
Shall no man hold his pride forewarn'd
Till in the end, the Day of Days,
At Judgment, one of his own race,
As frail and lost as you, shall rise,—
His daughter, with his mother's eyes?

How Jenny's clock ticks on the shelf!
Might not the dial scorn itself
That has such hours to register?
Yet as to me, even so to her
Are golden sun and silver moon,
In daily largesse of earth's boon,
Counted for life-coins to one tune.
And if, as blindfold fates are toss'd,
Through some one man this life be lost,
Shall soul not somehow pay for soul?

Fair shines the gilded aureole
In which our highest painters place
Some living woman's simple face.
And the stilled features thus described
As Jenny's long throat droops aside,—
The shadows where the cheeks are thin,
And pure wide curve from ear to chin,—
With Raffael's, Leonardo's hand
To show them to men's souls, might stand,
Whole ages long, the whole world through,
For preachings of what God can do.
What has man done here? How atone,
Great God, for this which man has done?
And for the body and soul which by
Man's pitiless doom must now comply
With lifelong hell, what lullaby
Of sweet forgetful second birth
Remains? All dark. No sign on earth.
What measure of God's rest endows
The many mansions of his house.

If but a woman's heart might see
Such erring heart unerringly
For once! But that can never be.

Like a rose shut in a book
In which pure women may not look,
For its base pages claim control
To crush the flower within the soul;
Where through each dead rose-leaf that clings,
Pale as transparent Psyche-wings,
To the vile text, are traced such things
As might make lady's cheek indeed
More than a living rose to read;
So nought save foolish foulness may
Watch with hard eyes the sure decay;
And so the life-blood of this rose,
Puddled with shameful knowledge, flows
Through leaves no chaste hand may unclose:
Yet still it keeps such faded show
Of when 'twas gathered long ago,
That the crushed petals' lovely grain,
The sweetness of the sanguine stain,

Seen of a woman's eyes, must make
Her pitiful heart, so prone to ache,
Love roses bolder for its sake:—
Only that this can never be—
Even so unto her sex is she.

Yet, Jenny, looking long at you,
The woman almost fades from view.
A cipher of man's changeless sum
Of lust, past, present, and to come,
Is left. A riddle that one shrinks
To challenge from the scornful sphinx.

Like a trod within a mine
Sentry while Time crumbles on;
Which sits there since the earth was curs'd
For Man's transgression at the first;
Which, living through all centuries,
Not once has seen the sun arise;
Whose life, to its cold circle charmed,
The earth's whole summers have not warmed;
Which always—whithersoe the stone
Be flung—sits there, deaf, blind, alone;—
Aye, and shall not be driven out
Till that which shuts him round about
Break at the very Master's stroke.
And the dust thereof vanish as smoke,
And the seed of Man vanish as dust:—
Even so within this world is Lust.

Come, come, what use in thoughts like this?
Poor little Jenny, good to kiss,—
You'd not believe by what strange roads
Thought travels, when your beauty goads
A man to-night to think of trades!
Jenny, wake up. . . . Why, there's the dawn!

And there's an early waggon drawn
To market, and some sheep that jog
Bleating before a barking dog;
And the old streets come peeping through
Another night that London knew;
And all as ghostlike as the lamps.

So on the wings of day decamps
My last night's frolic. Glooms begin
To shiver off as light creeps in
Past the gauze curtains half drawn-to,
And the lamp's doubled shade grows blue,—
Your lamp, my Jenny, kept alight,
Like a wise virgin's, all one night!
And in the alcove coolly spread
Glimmers with dawn your empty bed;
And yonder your fair face I see
Reflected lying on my knee,
Where leaves with first breshadowings
Your pier-glass scrawled with diamond rings:
And on your bosom all night worn
Yesterday's rose now droops forlorn,
But dies not yet this summer morn.

And now without, as if some word
Had gotten upon them that they heard,
The London sparrows far and nigh
Clamour together suddenly;
And Jenny's cage-bird grown awake
Here in their song his part must take,
Because here, too, the day doth break.

And somehow in myself the dawn
Among marred clouds and veils withdrawn
Strikes greyly on her. Let her sleep.
But will it wake her if I heap
Those cushions that beneath her head
Where my kiss was? No,—there's your bed,
My Jenny, while you dream. And there
I lay among your golden hair,
Perhaps the subject of your dreams,
These golden coins.

For still one deems
That Jenny's flattering sleep confers
New magic on the magic purse—
Grim web, how clogged with shrivelled flies!
Between the threads the fumes arise
And shape their pictures in the brain.
There roll no streets in glare and rain
Nor flagrant man-swine whets his tusk;
But delicately sighs in musk
The homage of the dim boudoir;
Or like a palpitating star
Thrilled into song, the opera-night
Breathes faint in the quick pulse of light;
Or at the marriage-window shine
Rich wares for choice; or, free to dine,
Whirls through its hour of health (divine
For her) the concourse of the Park.
And though in the discounted dark
Her functions there and hers are one,
Beneath the lamps and in the sun
There reigns at least the acknowledged belle
Apparelled beyond parallel.
Ah Jenny, yes, we know your dreams.

For even the Paphian Venus seems
A goddess o'er the realms of love,
When silver-shrined in shadowy grove;
Aye, or let offerings nicely plat'd
But hide Priapus to the waist,
And whoso looks on him shall see
An eligible deity.

Why, Jenny, waking here alone
May help you to remember one,
Though all the memory's long outworn
Of many a double pillowed morn,
I think I see you when you wake,
And rub your eyes for me, and shake
My gold, in rising, from your hair,
A Danaë for a moment there.

Jenny, my love rang true! for still
Love at first sight is vague, until
That tinkling makes him audible.

And must I mock you to the last,
Ashamed of my own shame,—aghast
Because some thoughts not born anew
Rose at a poor fair face like this?
Well, of such thoughts so much I know
In my life, as in hers, they show,
By a far gleam which I may wear,
A dark path I can strive to clear.

Only one kiss. Good-bye, my dear.

I. POETRY: WILLIAM MORRIS. His Life—His Work—The Poet—The Craftsman—The Social Reformer

WILLIAM MORRIS (1834–1896)

His Life

Born on 24th March 1834, at Elm House, Walthamstow, William Morris was the third child in a family of nine, and came of good middle-class stock, rich in sound, strong physique, with no remarkable gifts of intellect or imagination. In 1840 his parents moved to Woodford Hall in Essex. At this time there is a characteristic picture of the small boy, dressed in a suit of toy armour, riding a Shetland pony through flapping Forest, with his abundant curly hair flying in the breeze, and looking like some mediæval knight out hunting imaginary dragons.

He was an eager reader, and at seven years old

had devoured most of Murryat's and many of Scott's novels; and his sister relates how, after reading *The Old English Baron* in the rabbit warren at Woodford Hall, they were wrought up to such a state of mind as to make them afraid to cross the park to reach home.

In 1843 he was sent to a private school at Walthamstow. For neither writing nor spelling had he a natural gift: his writing, however, became beautiful in later years; "but I remember having to stand on a chair with my shoes off," he has told us, "because I made so many mistakes in my spelling"—and spelling remained with Morris a lifelong failure.

At Marlborough College, from 1848–1851, we see a "thick-set, strong-looking boy—good-natured and kind, but with a fearful temper"; we also see the studious, restless enthusiast for art and architecture and old church music, with no love for games, but, like Dickens and Charlotte Brontë, in great request as a story-teller.

After reading for a year with a private tutor, Morris matriculated at Oxford in 1852, and first met with Edward Burne-Jones. The spell of Newman and the Anglo-Catholic revival still lingered in Oxford, and considerably influenced this serious and artistic youth—a pronounced High Churchman desirous of taking Orders. Then came his majority in 1855, and with it an income of £900 a year.

Having taken his degree in 1856, he might have settled down to a life of pleasure and idle comfort, but it was not in Morris' nature to do this. While on a holiday in France he and Burne-Jones had definitely given up the idea of the Church as a profession. Art was to be their mistress: for Burne-Jones, painting; for Morris, the career of an architect. So, on leaving the university, he became an articled pupil in the office of George Edmund Street, the diocesan architect, Philip Webb being then senior clerk. When the office was moved to London Morris was soon happily sharing rooms with his friend Burne-Jones, while much of their spare time was spent with the poet-painter, Rossetti.

The influence of Rossetti was soon evident. Morris had already written several poems, collected in the little volume *The Defence of Guenevere*—and now "Rossetti says I ought to paint. I *must* try," and he made such rapid progress that when Burne-Jones and Rossetti were commissioned to execute the frescoes at the Union Debating Hall in 1857, Morris was invited to assist them.

With this visit to Oxford yet another interest entered his life. At the theatre he met Miss Jane Burden, whose beautiful face has been limned for us in so many of Rossetti's pictures. The friendship soon ripened into affection, and they were married at Oxford in 1859. On their return from a tour abroad Morris set to work on his new home, the famous Red House at Bexley Heath; in this undertaking he was assisted in various ways by Philip Webb the architect, Burne-Jones, Rossetti, and other friends.

The year 1861 saw the foundation of the firm of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co.; this partnership was dissolved in 1875 and Morris became sole proprietor. In consequence of the rapid development of his business, Morris decided to sell the Red House in 1865 and move with his family to London. He had been ill with rheumatic fever, and the constant journeys to and from the city were beginning to be somewhat of a strain.

He was now planning *The Earthly Paradise*, and also writing *Jason*; after its publication he began to study Icelandic with Mr. Magnússon. Within a short time he was able to put this new venture to practical use in a series of Icelandic Sagas, the translation of which, with a tour in Iceland, occupied most of his spare time for the next few years.

Morris was not happy away from the country, so in 1871 he and Rossetti became joint-tenants of Kelmscott Manor, a charming old house on the banks of the Thames. The arrangement was more or less happy until 1874, when, after an illness, Rossetti departed.

It was in 1876 that the Eastern Question Association was founded with Morris as secretary—to protest against the lukewarm policy of the Conservative Government with reference to the atrocities in Bulgaria. Morris, as may be expected, was also on the side of the anti-war party regarding the troubles in Afghanistan. Having organised a gigantic meeting in 1878 on their behalf at which Gladstone had promised to speak, "The Parliamentarians," he said, "began to quake," the meeting was abandoned, and for a while Morris threw up politics in disgust. "I shall give up reading the papers," he remarked, "and stick to my work." But in 1881 we find him acting as treasurer of the National Liberal League, and on 17th January 1883 he joined the Democratic Federation; the next few years being given up to lecturing throughout the country on both Art and Socialism. On one occasion Morris asked a lady how she liked his lecture: "Not at all!" was the unexpected reply. "But I thought the colour of your blue shirt charming."

Overwork was largely responsible for a serious illness in 1885, but the next year he was again working, if possible, harder than ever. *The Dream of John Ball* was appearing in *The Commonweal*, the organ of the Socialist League—Morris having started and financed both paper and League; and much of his best literary work made its first appearance in its columns.

The House of the Wolfings, published in 1888, was the first of his books to be printed from specially selected type. His next romance, *The Roots of the Mountains*, was bound in one of his own chintzes. "I am so pleased with my book," he wrote to a friend, "typography, binding, and, must I say it, literary matter." This peculiar interest in the production of books led to his founding the Kelmscott Press, set up in the Upper Mall, Hammersmith—and *News from Nowhere* was the first of his volumes to be issued from it.

So attractive were the volumes issued by Morris that the University of Cambridge, in 1891, lent him Caxton's copy of *The Golden Legend*, from which he printed the Kelmscott edition of 1892.

After a few more years of literary work, numerous activities and lectures on behalf of the Social Democratic Federation, Morris' health gave way under the strain. A sea trip was advised, and he started for Norway, but he only longed for the time to come when he might return to Kelmscott, and no benefit resulted. When he arrived in England he was too ill to be taken beyond London. Yet he worked to the end. Early in September he dictated the last chapter of *The Sundering Flood*, and on 3rd October 1896 died at Hammersmith, and three days later, at Kelmscott, was laid to rest, in a storm of wind and rain.

His Work

A story is told of Morris that a man stopped him in the street one day with "Beg pardon, sir, were you ever captain of the *Sea Swallow?*" Into this random query is condensed the whole problem of Morris' personality. The inquirer may have been thinking of the sailor-like appearance of the man, with his rolling gait and vital, weather-beaten face. But to his friends there is more in the inquiry than lies here.

The look of rugged strength, the pleasant, hearty manner, and the suggestion of an underlying reserve force, all these things make us think of Morris as a master of men. A traveller on the high seas? Perhaps: but a captain, a leader assuredly. And no ordinary one either. Not a captain of some miserable craft, but a captain of the *Sea Swallow*—happy symbol of the dreamer element in Morris' nature.

The savour of the man's personality lay in the juxtaposition of these two divergent qualities, poetic imagination and practical sagacity. On the one side an artist, a lover of the beautiful, a Utopian visionary; on the other a man of shrewd common sense, direct, blunt, and downright. His dreams were no castles in the air, they had a definite ground plan. The dreamer devised beautiful things, beautiful poems, beautiful prose, beautiful handicrafts; the practical man expressed them in terms of utility. He loved beauty so well that he turned it into a limited company.

At first he sought relief from the ugliness of modern life by fashioning a secluded realm of beauty, remote from the noisy highway. But as he grew older this did not satisfy him. "Those who joy would win must share it," said Byron. "Happiness is born a twin." So Morris resolved to share it, and he could only hope to do this by trying to beautify the life about him. It was a lifelong task.

Ruskin's inspiration was of course of immense value here, and no literary utterance ever moved him more profoundly than the famous chapter "On the Nature of Gothic," that he took later as the text for all his social sermons.

Here is the passage:

"In the make and nature of every man, however rude or simple, whom we employ in manual labour, there are some powers for better things; some tardy imagination, torpid capacity of emotion, tottering steps of thought, there are, even at the worst; and in most cases it is all our own fault that they are tardy or torpid. But they cannot be strengthened, unless we are content to take them in their feebleness, unless we prize and honour them in their imperfection above the best and most perfect manual skill. And this is what we have to do with all our labourers; to look for the thoughtful part of them, and get that out of them, whatever we lose for it, whatever faults and errors we are obliged to take with it. For the best that is in them cannot manifest itself but in company with much error. Understand this clearly: you can teach a man to draw a straight line, and to cut one; to strike a curved line, and to carve it; and to copy and carve any number of given lines or forms with admirable speed and perfect precision; and you find his work perfect of its kind; but if you ask him to think about any of these forms, to consider if he cannot find any better in his own head, he stops; his execution becomes hesitating; he thinks; and ten to one he thinks wrong; ten to one he makes a mistake in the first touch he gives to his work as a thinking being. But you have made a man of him for all that. He was only a machine before—an animated tool.

"And observe, you are put to stern choice in this matter. You must either make a tool of the creature or a man of him. You cannot make both. Men were not intended to work with the accuracy of tools, to be precise and perfect in all their actions. If you will have that precision out of them, and make their fingers measure degrees like cog-wheels, and their arms strike curves like compasses, you must unhumanise them. All the energy of their spirits must be given to make cogs and compasses of themselves. The eye of the soul must be bent upon the finger-point, and the soul's force must fill all the invisible nerves that guide it, ten hours a day, that it may not err from its steely precision, and so soul and sight be worn away, and the whole human being be lost at last—a heap of sawdust so far as its intellectual work in this world is concerned, save only by its heart, which cannot go into the form of cogs and compasses, but expands, after the ten hours are over, into fireside humanity. On the other hand, if you will make a man of the working creature, you cannot make a tool. Let him but begin to imagine, to think, to try to do anything worth doing, and the engine-turned precision is lost at once. Out come all his roughness, all his dulness, all his incapability; shame upon shame, failure upon failure, pause upon pause; but out comes the whole majesty of him also, and we know the height of it only when we see the clouds settling upon him. And, whether the clouds be bright or dark, there will be transfiguration behind and within them." . . . For individuals "to feel their souls withering within them, unthanked, to find their whole being sunk into an unrecognised abyss, to be counted off into a heap of mechanism, numbered with its wheels and weighed with its hammer-strokes—this nature bade not—this God blesses not—this humanity for no long time is able to endure."

The compelling interest of Morris' work lies in its amazing many-sidedness. Nor was it the many-sidedness of the merely clever, versatile man. It was the many-sidedness of a naturally vital nature that sought to absorb as many forms of human activity as were possible. Even as a lad his restless hands were ever weaving imaginary designs, and he never knew what rest was save in the few brief hours when the tired body sought sleep. His real recreation was change of work. And what enabled him to do so vast an amount was the superb detachment by which he could free himself from all the worries and preoccupations of the task he had been essaying, and project his whole undivided energies into something entirely fresh. Roughly speaking, we may divide his activities into those of the poet, the craftsman, and the social reformer.

The Poet

Morris was not a great poet in the sense that we call Milton and Shelley great poets, for rhythmic beauty was not the inevitable expression of his creative imagination. His well-known saying that a man who was unable to turn from an epic to a tapestry had better leave both alone, is finely significant of the man. He could do either with such admirable ease that it was often a moot point whether the outcome of his inspiration would take the form of words or fabric. Supreme art is subject to no such chance incarnation: it can only express itself in one way. But if we deny Morris a seat on Parnassus as a supreme poet, he would claim supremacy, assuredly, as a great artist who wrote verse as one of many media for expressing his innate sense of beauty. And if not one of the topmost peaks he certainly belongs to the heights. There is no poet whose work is so uniformly fine in quality, so happy in its level excellence.

His first volume of verse, *The Defence of Guenevere and other Poems*, was necessarily experimental; it is psychological, fantastic, dramatic, lyrical, narrative. He is feeling his way, and has not yet realised how that his best strength lay in the narrative direction. But all of it is the work of an artist who uses words as if he loved them. Even such verses as *The Blue Closet*, *The Wind*, *The Tune of Seven Towers*, though little more than pretty fancies, musical toys, are well done, and delightful in their slight, unpretentious way.

The chief interest of the volume lies in the vigour and insight with which he treats some old-world story, whether one of Arthurian inspiration, in *The Defence of Guenevere*, or some other tale of mediæval passion, as in *The Haystack in the Floods* with its poignant horrors, or *Rapunzel* with its pictorial beauty. Admirably did he serve his poetic apprenticeship in this volume before he passed on to the mode in which he was a master—the narrative method.

Both *Jason* and *The Earthly Paradise* are narrative poems, and while he excelled them in emotional fire when he wrote *Sigurd*, he never surpassed these poems in fluent sweetness and gracious charm. The familiarity of the Jason story accounts for its greater popularity; but there is necessarily more variety in that garment of divers colours—*The Earthly Paradise*—a lovely fabric of verse into which he has woven some of the most enchanting stories in the world; graceful fancies from Greece, gay romances of French origin, passionate legends from the North. The matter is diverse, but Morris has made it his own by treating one and all as pigments of rich colouring for his mediæval screen. Mediæval, assuredly, the poet always is in his outlook. "Troy," as Mr. Mackail says, "is to his imagination a town exactly like Bruges, spired and gabled, red-roofed, filled with towers and swinging bells. The Trojan princes go out like the knights in Froissart, and tilt at the barriers."

The poem is of extraordinary length, yet it never drags. No heights or depths of passion are sounded, humour is rigorously excluded, yet the pensive dreamy atmosphere, the easy discursiveness of the writer preclude any sense of boredom. It does not grip the imagination, but it lures the fancy, and we are carried along, willing captives on the smooth, mellifluous cadence of verse. "There was little wind," he adds after one of his pleasant voyages. The phrase is significant of the entire poem. Little wind—too little indeed to disperse the haze that softens the harsh outlines of the poet's world.

Following *The Earthly Paradise* came *Love is Enough* (1871), a clever, technical experiment—a modernised edition of the old morality play; yet curiously ineffective because of its deliberately undramatic treatment. The real attraction in the book lies in its charming lyrics.

After an interesting interval of translation work, *Sigurd the Volsung* was published in 1876. The translation of the *Æneids* of Virgil in 1875 is an agreeable production—nothing that Morris attempted was negligible. But it does not exhibit the poet at his best. The one English poet to interpret Virgil was Tennyson; it needs rhythmic distinction and nicely chiselled phrase, not the ambling grace of Morris. *Sigurd* is quite another matter. Here Morris hews a piece of pristine savagery from the quarry of the old Sagas, and dropping for a while his gracious moods, enters with fine spirit into the elemental grandeur of the epic. Gone is the old dreamer; the gently flowing cadence. The verse thrills with virile power. The sweeping rhythm breaks over the story like big Atlantic breakers on a rocky shore. There is a note of passion here not discernible hitherto in Morris' work save, perhaps, in the *Lovers of Gudrun*. It symbolises, moreover, the growing spiritual dissatisfaction of Morris with his age. It is more than a metrical experiment, it is a spiritual challenge.

As a poet he never excelled *Sigurd* for grandeur, nor for grace *The Earthly Paradise*.

His next work on a big scale was the translation of the *Odyssey*, a vigorous and admirable piece of work. Certainly Morris was spiritually more akin to Homer than to Virgil.

The period of verse writing was now drawing to a close. No work in verse of any importance marks his later years. The *Chants for Socialists*, useful and spirited in their way, are necessarily on a lower level of art; delightful as are many of the songs that light up his prose romances, these are subordinate of course to the prose romances, and in any case mark no fresh departure.

These romances, written in prose, are essentially poetical in conception and treatment, and are in reality a fresh illustration of Morris' poetic powers, and, as Mr. Watts-Dunton has acutely observed, exemplifying the distinction between real and poetical prose and the rhetorical prose of such writers as Ruskin and De Quincey.

In other words rhythmic beauty is an integral part of Morris' prose style in these romances, whilst humour and elaborate characterisation is as carefully excluded here as in the narrative verse. Artistically speaking, there is a mellower beauty about these romances in prose than about

the verse romances, but they suffer from one drawback alien to *The Earthly Paradise* and *Sigurd*. The style is more involved, more self-conscious and more archaic. This comparative lack of simplicity somewhat limits their appeal, and it is to be regretted that Morris had been less generous with terms derived from the Saxon and Danish elements in our language.

The romances are nine in number: of these two are communistic in conception—*The Dream of John Ball* and *News from Nowhere*, the one a hark back to the past, the other a look forward to the future. The remaining tales are rank fantasies with flavours of German and Scandinavian sagas, with that peculiar Morris atmosphere in which dreamy melancholy and joyous vitality are piquantly blended, and where the author's passionate love of beauty breaks in every line even in the musical titles—i.e. *The Water of the Wondrous Isles*, *The Wood beyond the World*, *The Well at the World's End*, *The Land of the Glittering Plain*.

The Craftsman

Morris' craftsmanship is in reality only another aspect of his work as a poet. Superficially there may seem a good deal of difference between a tapestry, a stained-glass window, and an epic: fundamentally there is no distinction. The divergence is one of technique, not of art. Throughout his life his poetic imagination inspired his craftsmanship and his craftsmanship materially affected his poetry. It has been said that Rossetti wrote his pictures and painted his poems. In a sense this is a perfectly just criticism, and it is equally just to say that Morris wove his epics, and, if we cannot add that he wrote his tapestries, this is because his craftsmanship affected far more materially his verse than did his metrical skill as a poet affect his craftsmanship. He thought in arabesques and curves rather than in metre and rhythm. Even when talking to friends in casual conversation his hands would be unconsciously mapping out some design. His earliest activities were in an ecclesiastical direction, and here he had the co-operation of his lifelong friend Sir Edward Burne-Jones. The scope and extent of his work may be judged from glancing at the circular issued by Morris and Company:

"The growth of Decorative Art in this country," says the circular, "owing to the efforts of English Architects, has now reached a point at which it seems desirable that Artists of reputation should devote their time to it. Although, no doubt, particular instances of success may be cited, still it must be generally felt that attempts of this kind hitherto have been crude and fragmentary. Up to this time, the want of that artistic supervision, which can alone bring about harmony between the various parts of a successful work, has been increased by the necessarily excessive outlay, consequent on taking one individual artist from his pictorial labours.

"The Artists whose names appear, hope by association to do away with this difficulty. Having among their number men of varied qualifications, they will be able to undertake any species of decoration, mural or otherwise, from pictures, properly so called, down to the consideration of the smallest work susceptible of art beauty. It is anticipated that by such co-operation, the largest amount of what is essentially the artist's work, along with his constant supervision, will be secured at the smallest possible expense, while the work done must necessarily be of a much more complete order, than if any single artist were incidentally employed in the usual manner.

"These Artists having for many years been deeply attached to the study of the Decorative Arts of all times and countries, have felt more than most people the want of some one place, where they could either obtain or get produced work of a genuine and beautiful character. They have, therefore, now established themselves as a firm, for the production, by themselves and under their supervision, of:

"I. Mural Decoration, either in Pictures or in Pattern work, or merely in the arrangement of Colours, as applied to dwelling-houses, churches, or public buildings.

"II. Carving generally, as applied to Architecture.

"III. Stained Glass, especially with reference to its harmony with Mural Decoration.

"IV. Metal Work in all its branches, including Jewellery.

"V. Furniture, either depending for its beauty on its own design, on the application of materials hitherto overlooked, or on its conjunction with Figure and Pattern Painting. Under this head is included Embroidery of all kinds. Stamped Leather, and ornamental work in other such materials, besides every article necessary for domestic use.

"It is only requisite to state further that work of all the above classes will be estimated for, and executed in a business-like manner; and it is believed that good decoration, involving rather the luxury of taste than the luxury of costliness, will be found to be much less expensive than is generally supposed."

From the church to the home was to Morris a natural transition. Here the work was more uphill, for Victorian England had claimed as an essential of decoration a style of ponderous ugliness, which Morris found it a hard matter to change.

It is impossible to over-emphasize the metamorphosis he managed to accomplish, and to appreciate its magnitude we have but to compare the picturesque gabled country house of to-day, and the now familiar scheme of decoration in which graceful Eastern rugs, neat Indian matting, and cheerful Axminster carpets play their part with the stiff dinginess of the old mid-Victorian house. Having purged our houses both outwardly and inwardly of the evil spirits of drabness and ugliness, Morris turned to book illuminating; after which he went thoroughly into the whole matter of dyeing, which lay necessarily at the back of all forms of craftsmanship.

This is a significant illustration of the man's extraordinary thoroughness, and explains the secret of the distinctive glory that lay in his Hammersmith carpets and Merton tapestries. For abjuring modern methods and the favourite aniline dyes of the day, he restored the method of a bygone age, set up his own dye-house, and triumphantly proved the superiority of the old vegetable dyes.

His latest experiment in craftsmanship was in the art of printing as exemplified by the beautiful publications of the Kelmscott Press. A glance at any of these will convince the observer that Morris had thoroughly tackled the paper problem and had availed himself of the best varieties of type.

He had an unrivalled instinct in assessing the aptitude of other craftsmen. On one occasion he said of a man who had brought some decorative

work to him: "That man hasn't an equal in Europe for drapery; but he's no good at faces."

His memory was phenomenally retentive. A thing once seen he never forgot. "On one occasion," Mr. Thackeray Turner says, "he had just returned from surveying an old church; Morris recalled everything about that church, the disposition and character of the ornaments, and could tell exactly at what point in the church these were situated. Yet his only visit to this church had been made about twenty years previously."[1]

On another occasion, his friend Mr. Philip Webb showed him a design. Morris made little comment and seemed to be engrossed in other matters. But a long time afterwards he referred to the design, only seen for a moment or so, and recalled every detail about it. The secret of this lay, no doubt, in the fact that Morris gave his undivided attention to the matter in hand, whether a poem, a point in political economy, or a design. He took it in completely; and although he had the faculty of putting everything away from him when he turned to fresh matters, he always retained a clear and trustworthy recollection of the thing noted.

Throughout these various forms of craftsmanship there ran a common purpose and a common aim. All the decorative arts were made subordinate to architecture; and every manifestation of applied art was so framed as to serve the community. Its beauty and social utility were always kept in view.

The Social Reformer

Morris was first and foremost an artist, and it is pertinent therefore to inquire how it was he left the pursuit of art during later years in order to preach social reform. The more we study Morris' life-work, the more are we convinced that all his activities, whether artistic or social, form a homogeneous whole. He loved beauty as passionately as did Rossetti; but feeling with Ruskin that the majority of his fellow-men would never care for beauty until the ugliness of their lives and environment were changed, he set about to try and effect this. Carlyle had first touched his social sympathies, but undoubtedly the most powerful stimulus came from Ruskin in his famous chapter "On the Nature of Gothic" in *The Stones of Venice*.

Here is the interconnection between art and life clearly formulated. Like Ruskin, Morris entered social politics through the gateway of Æstheticism. He became a Socialist because, in his lifelong tirade against the ugliness of modern life, he felt that unless conditions of labour were changed, his extension of art into every side of life would be an impossibility. He opposed capitalism in the same spirit as he opposed aniline dye; not primarily because it made for cruelty, but because it made for ugliness. Morris had as little patience with the "Art for Art's sake" of the esthete as he had for the "Art for Ethics' sake" of the moralist. For him it was "Art for Life's sake."

Morris' social ideal differed from that pictured by Bellamy in his *Looking Backward*—an ideal termed by Morris "a Cockney Paradise." Socialism for him meant a communistic society with its implication of voluntary co-operation for common ends. Yet here again, as always, he was no mere visionary. He had no belief in catastrophic communism; he did not imagine that we could go asleep "on a Saturday in a capitalistic society and wake on Monday in a communistic society." He repudiated the idea of open war as a means towards the end desired. The change would, he knew, be a gradual one; and the best means of bringing it about was constant education, and the continual making of Socialists. A transitional period between the present capitalistic system and that of communism he knew to be inevitable. "Democracy said and says,"[1] he wrote, "men shall not be the masters of others because hereditary privilege has made a race or a family or so, and they happen to belong to such race; they shall individually grow into being the master of others by the development of certain qualities under a system of another which artificially protects the wealth of every man, if he has acquired it in accordance with this artificial system, from the interference of every other, and from all others combined. The new order of things says, on the contrary, Why have masters at all? Let us be fellows working in the harmony of association for the common good, that is, for the greatest happiness and completest development of every human being in the community."

Morris' socialism differed from that of Ruskin in being democratic in basis rather than aristocratic. The dominant note in Morris' message is liberty and equality. Ruskin's instincts were against trusting the people to manage their own affairs. Morris found the modern exponents of Liberalism too weak-kneed, and passed them by. But he started on the Liberal platform; and it was not because he disliked Liberalism but because he was impatient of Liberals that he left them.

For Ruskin, on the other hand, Liberalism was always anathema. He called himself an *Illiberal*, denounced Liberalism as tending towards anarchy, and pointed to the stock example of Liberal principles—America!

Morris' value as a social reformer must not be estimated merely by his lectures and propaganda work, nor even by his communistic romances, but by the whole effect of his work as an artist-craftsman.

Herbert Spencer has said, "You cannot get golden conduct out of leaden instincts." Morris agreed; but he did not leave the instincts alone as Spencer did to work out their own salvation through the slow process of evolution. He did his best to change them. Art for him was never a luxurious toy but an ethic, a creed for the betterment of the whole community.

THE HAYSTACK IN THE FLOODS

Had she come all the way for this,
To part at last without a kiss?
Yes, had she borne the dirt and rain
That her own eyes might see him slain
Beside the haystack in the floods?

[1] *Signs of Change.*

[1] *William Morris: A Study in Personality*, by Arthur Compton-Rickett (Herbert Jenkins).

Along the dripping leafless woods,
The stirrup touching either shoe,
She rode astride as troopers do;
With kirtle kilted to her knee,
To which the mud splash'd wretchedly;
And the wet dripp'd from every tree
Upon her head and heavy hair,
And on her eyelids broad and fair;
The tears and rain ran down her face.

By fits and starts they rode apace,
And very often was his place
Far off from her; he had to ride
Ahead, to see what might betide
When the roads cross'd; and sometimes, when
There rose a murmuring from his men,
Had to turn back with promises;
Ah me! she had but little ease:
And often for pure doubt and dread
She sobb'd, made giddy in the head
By the swift riding; while, for cold,
Her slender fingers scarce could hold
The wet reins; yea, and scarcely, too,
She felt the foot within her shoe
Against the stirrup: all for this
To part at last without a kiss
Beside the haystack in the floods.

For when they near'd that old soak'd hay,
They saw across the only way
That Judas, Godmar, and the three
Red running lions dismally
Grinn'd from his pennon, under which,
In one straight line along the ditch,
They counted thirty heads.

So then,
While Robert turn'd round to his men,
She saw at once the wretched end,
And stooping down, tried hard to rend
Her coif the wrong way from her head,
And hid her eyes: while Robert said:
"Nay, love, 'tis scarcely two to one,
At Poictiers where we made them run
So fast—why, sweet my love, good cheer,
The Gascon frontier is so near,
Nought after this."

But, "O," she said,
"My God! my God! I have to tread
The long way back without you; then
The court at Paris; those six men;
The gratings of the Châtelet;
The swift Seine on some rainy day
Like this, and people standing by,
And laughing, while my weak hands try
To recollect how strong men swim.
All this, or else a life with him,
For which I should be damned at last,
Would God that this next hour was past!"

He answer'd not, but cried his cry,
"St. George for Marny!" cheerily;
And laid his hand upon her rein.
Alas! no man of all his train
Gave back that cheery cry again;
And, while for rage his thumb beat fast
Upon his sword-hilt, some one cast
About his neck a kerchief long,
And bound him.

Then they went along
To Godmar; who said: "Now, Jehane,
Your lover's life is on the wane
So fast, that, if this very hour
You yield not as my paramour,
He will not see the rain leave off—
Nay, keep your tongue from gibe and scoff,
Sir Robert, or I slay you now."

She laid her hand upon her brow,
Then gazed upon the palm, as though
She thought her forehead bled, and—"No,"
She said, and turn'd her head away,
As there were nothing else to say,
And everything were settled: red
Grew Godmar's face from chin to head
"Jehane, on yonder hill there stands
My castle, guarding well my lands:
What hinders me from taking you,
And doing that I list to do
To your fair wilful body, while
Your knight lies dead?"

A wicked smile
Wrinkled her face, her lips grew thin,
A long way out she thrust her chin:
"You know that I should strangle you
While you were sleeping; or bite through
Your throat, by God's help—ah!" she said,
"Lord Jesus, pity your poor maid!
For in such wise they hem me in,
I cannot choose but sin and sin,
Whatever happens: yet I think
They could not make me eat or drink,
And so should I just reach my rest."
"Nay, if you do not my behest,
O Jehane! though I love you well,"
Said Godmar, "would I fail to tell
All that I know." "Foul lies," she said.
"Eh? lies my Jehane? by God's head,
At Paris folks would deem them true!

Do you know, Jehane, they cry for you,
'Jehane the brown! Jehane the brown!
Give us Jehane to burn or drown!'—
Eh—gag me, Robert!—sweet my friend,
This were indeed a piteous end
For those long fingers, and long feet,
And long neck, and smooth shoulders sweet;
An end that few men would forget
That saw it—So, an hour yet:
Consider, Jehane, which to take
Of life or death!"

So, scarce awake,
Dismounting, did she leave that place,
And totter some yards: with her face
Turn'd upward to the sky she lay,
Her head on a wet heap of hay,
And fell asleep: and while she slept,
And did not dream, the minutes crept
Round to the twelve again; but she,
Being waked at last, sigh'd quietly,
And strangely childlike came, and said:
"I will not." Straightway Godmar's head,
As though it hung on strong wires, turn'd
Most sharply round, and his face burn'd.

For Robert—both his eyes were dry,
He could not weep, but gloomily
He seem'd to watch the rain; yea, too,
His lips were firm; he tried once more
To touch her lips; she reach'd out, sore
And vain desire so tortured them,
The poor grey lips, and now the hem
Of his sleeve brush'd them.

With a start
Up Godmar rose, thrust them apart;
From Robert's throat he loosed the bands
Of silk and mail; with empty hands
Held out, she stood and gazed, and saw
The long bright blade without a flaw
Glide out from Godmar's sheath, his hand
In Robert's hair; she saw him bend
Back Robert's head; she saw him send
The thin steel down; the blow told well,
Right backward the knight Robert fell,
And moan'd as dogs do, being half dead,
Unwitting, as I deem: so then
Godmar turn'd grinning to his men,
Who ran, some five or six, and beat
His head to pieces at their feet.

Then Godmar turn'd again and said:
"So, Jehane, the first fitte is read!
Take note, my lady, that your way
Lies backward to the Châtelet!"

She shook her head and gazed awhile
At her cold hands with a rueful smile,
As though this thing had made her mad

This was the parting that they had
Beside the haystack in the floods.

Now they Come to a New Land

Three days they drave before the wind, and on the fourth the clouds lifted, the sun shone out and the offing was clear; the wind had much abated, though it still blew a breeze, and was a head wind for sailing toward the country of Langton. So then the master said that since they were bewildered, and the wind so ill to deal with, it were best to go still before the wind that they might make some land and get knowledge of their whereabouts from the folk thereof. Withal he said that he deemed the land not to be very far distant.

So did they, and sailed on pleasantly enough, for the weather kept on mending, and the wind fell till it was but a light breeze, yet still foul for Langton.

So were three days, and on the eve of the third, the man from the topmast cried out that he saw land ahead; and so did they all before the sun was quite set, though it were but a cloud no bigger than a man's hand.

When night fell they struck not sail, but went forth toward the land fair and softly; for it was early summer, so that the nights were neither long nor dark.

But when it was broad daylight, they opened a land, a long shore of rocks and mountains, and nought else that they could see at first. Nevertheless as day wore and they drew nigher, first they saw how the mountains fell away from the sea, and were behind a long wall of sheer cliff; and coming nigher yet, they beheld a green plain going up after a little in green heats and slopes to the feet of the said cliff-wall.

No city nor haven did they see there, not even when they were far nigher to the land; nevertheless, whereas they hankered for the peace of the green earth after all the tossing and unrest of the sea, and whereas also they doubted not to find at the least good and fresh water, and belike other bait in the plain under the mountains, they still sailed on not unmerrily; so that by nightfall they cast anchor in five-fathom water hard by the shore.

Next morning they found that they were lying a little way off the mouth of a river not right great; so they put out their boats and towed the ship up into the said river, and when they had gone up for a mile or thereabouts they found the sea-water failed, for little was the ebb and flow of the tide on that coast. Then was the river deep and clear, running between smooth grassy land like to meadows. Also on their left board they saw presently three head of neat cattle going, as if in a meadow of a homestead in their own land, and a few sheep; and thereafter, about a bow-draught from the river, they saw a little house of wood and straw-thatch under a wooded mound, and with orchard trees about it. They wondered little thereat, for they knew no cause why that land should not be builded, though it were in the far outlands. However, they drew their ship up to the bank, thinking that they would at least abide awhile and ask tidings and have some refreshing of the green plain, which was so lovely and pleasant.

But while they were busied herein they saw a man come out of the house, and down to the river to meet them; and they soon saw that he was tall and old, long-hoary of hair and beard, and clad mostly in the skins of beasts.

He drew nigh without any fear or mistrust, and coming close to them gave them the sele of the day in a kindly and pleasant voice. The shipmaster greeted him in his turn, and said withal: Old man, art thou the king of this country?

The elder laughed: It hath had none other a long while, said he; and at least there is no other son of Adam here to gainsay.

Thou art alone here then? said the master.

Yea, said the old man, save for the beasts of the field and the wood, and the creeping things, and fowl. Wherefore it is sweet to me to hear your voices.

Said the master: Where be the other houses of the town?

The old man laughed. Said he: When I said that I was alone, I meant that I was alone in the land and not only alone in this stead. There is no house save this betwixt the sea and the dwellings of the Bears, over the cliff-wall yonder, yea and a long way over it.

Yea, quoth the shipmaster grinning, and be the bears of thy country so manlike, that they dwell in builded houses?

The old man shook his head. Sir, said he, as to their bodily fashion, it is altogether manlike, save that they be one and all higher and bigger than most. For they be bears only in name; they be a nation of half wild men; for I have been told by them that there be many more than that tribe whose folk I have seen, and that they spread wide about behind these mountains from east to west. Now, sir, as to their souls and understandings I warrant them not; for miscreants they be, trowing neither in God nor his hallows.

Said the master: Trow they in Mahound then?

Nay, said the elder, I wot not for sure that they have so much as a false god; though I have it from them that they worship a certain woman with mickle worship.

Then spake Walter: Yea, good sir, and how knowest thou that? dost thou deal with them at all?

Said the old man: Whiles some of that folk come hither and have of me what I can spare; a calf or two, or half-dozen of lambs or hoggets; or a skin of wine or cyder of mine own making: and they give me in return such things as I can use, as skins of hart and bear and other peltries; for now I am old, I can but little of the hunting hereabout. Whiles, also, they bring little lumps of pure copper, and would give me gold also, but it is of little use in this lonely land. Sooth to say, to me they are not masterful or rough-handed; but glad am I that they have been here but of late, and are not like to come again this while; for terrible they are of aspect, and whereas ye be aliens, belike they would not hold their hands from off you; and moreover ye have weapons and other matters which they would covet sorely.

Quoth the master: Since thou dealest with these wild men, will ye not deal with us in chaffer? For whereas we are come from long travel, we hanker after fresh victual, and here abroad are many things which were for thine avail.

Said the old man: All that I have is yours, so that ye do but leave me enough till my next ingathering: of wine and cyder, such as it is, I have plenty for your service; ye may drink it till it is all gone, if ye will: a little corn and meal I have, but not much; yet are ye welcome thereto, since the standing corn in my garth is done blossoming, and I have other meat. Cheese have I and dried fish; take what ye will thereof. But as to my neat and sheep, if ye have sore need of any, and will have there, I may not say you nay: but I pray you if ye may do without them, not to take my milch-beasts or their engenderers; for, as ye have heard me say, the Bear-folk have been here but of late, and they have had of me all I might spare: but now let me tell you, if ye long after flesh-meat, that there is venison of hart and hind, yea, and of buck and doe, to be had on this plain, and about the little woods at the foot of the rock-wall yonder: neither are they exceeding wild; for since I may not take them, I scare them not, and no other man do they see to hurt them; for the Bear-folk come straight to my house, and fare straight home thence. But I will lead you the nighest way to where the venison is easiest to be gotten. As to the wares in your ship, if ye will give me aught I will take it with a good will; and chiefly if ye have a fair knife or two and a roll of linen cloth, that were a good refreshment to me. But in any case what I have to give is free to you and welcome.

The shipmaster laughed: Friend, said he, we give thee mickle thanks for all that thou biddest us. And wot well that we be no lifters or sea-thieves to take thy livelihood from thee. So to-morrow, if thou wilt, we

will go with thee and uproise the hurn, and meanwhile we will come aland, and walk on the green grass, and water our ship with thy good fresh water.

So the old carle went back to his house to make them ready what cheer he might, and the shipmen, who were twenty and nine, all told, what with the mariners and Arnold and Walter's servants, went ashore, all but two who watched the ship and abode their turn. They went well-weaponed, for both the master and Walter deemed wariness wisdom, lest all might not be so good as it seemed. They took of their sail-cloths ashore, and tilted them in on the meadow betwixt the house and the ship, and the carle brought them what he had for their avail, of fresh fruits, and cheeses, and milk, and wine, and cyder, and honey, and there they feasted nowise ill, and were right fain.[1]

I. POETRY. Algernon Charles Swinburne: His Life—His Work.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE
(1837–1909)

His Life

"Who gave thee words more golden than fine gold
To carve in shapes more glorious than of old,
And build thy songs up in the sight of time
As statues set in godhead manifold. . . .
. . . . . .
The music of thy living mouth lives."

These felicitous words, written in 1879 on the death of his friend, Théophile Gautier, the French poet, apply with equal happiness to our English poet, Algernon Charles Swinburne.

Born in London on 5th April 1837, he was the eldest child of Admiral Charles Henry Swinburne (of an old Northumbrian family), who died in 1877, and Lady Jane Henrietta, daughter of the third Earl of Ashburnham, whose love for Italy and knowledge of Italian she imparted to her small son.

After an early education at home from tutors, Swinburne entered Eton in 1849; a small boy of twelve with a flowing mass of bright auburn hair, a highbred, intellectual face, and great brow—"nothing else big or strong about him," says Mrs. Warre Cornish, "except his huge literary tastes for obscure dramatists and Scotch reviewers"—and he might frequently be seen perched on a ladder in the Fellows' Library, hungrily devouring the writings of some beloved Elizabethan author.

Having won the Prince Consort's Prize for French, he was presented with a beautifully illustrated copy of Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris*. With this his delight was unbounded: on arriving home he came "hopping on one foot into the room, hugging the book," and could hardly bear it out of his sight. Thirty years later his joy was as great on meeting the famous author when, in November 1882, *Le Roi s'Amuse* was revived in Paris.

At Eton Swinburne was not always the good, studious little boy: "Here comes little Swinburne, face again," was the invariable greeting, and on one occasion he was ironically hailed by his tutor as "the rising sun." There is also a story told of him that when recovering from an attack of measles, a maid-attendant was asked to continue reading while he took his tea—she did so; but he, with the spirit of mischievous boyhood, took the opportunity to turn a pot of jam upside down on her head. Those with a taste for symbolism may construe this early escapade as an illustration of his later attitude towards the reading public.

A remarkably good swimmer, he was equally at home in the river as in the sea. "I can remember no earlier enjoyment," he once wrote, "than being held up naked in my father's arms and brandished between his hands, then shot like a stone from a sling through the air, shouting and laughing with delight, head foremost into the coming wave—which could only have been the pleasure of a very little fellow. I remember being afraid of other things, but never of the sea." This passion for the sea, however, nearly cost the poet his life at Etretat, but for the timely aid of some fishermen.

On leaving Eton in 1854, Swinburne read for two years with Dr. Woodford, and in 1856 went up to Balliol College, Oxford, his scholarly habits attracting the attention of the Master, Benjamin Jowett, who became his lifelong friend.

A literary set, presided over by John Nichol, of which the leading spirits were T. H. Green, A. V. Dicey, Birkbeck Hill, and Swinburne, founded the "Old Mortality" reading society; the members met once a week during term for reading and discussion. Differences of opinion inevitably arose between them, but as Swinburne had "the great power of loving his friends and bearing with them," this in no way marred their gatherings. Other friendships were also formed at this time. Dante Gabriel Rossetti was at work on the frescoes of the new building of the Oxford Union, William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones were also there, and Swinburne was soon drawn into that little circle of Pre-Raphaelites which included other intimate friends whom death alone claimed from him one by one.

Though he left Oxford in 1860 without a degree, it was admitted that Swinburne had a fine knowledge of Greek, in 1858 he had taken the Taylorian Prize for French and Italian, and in other subjects far exceeded the knowledge of his fellow-students, but failing to satisfy the examiners in Scripture he was "ploughed."

Of Swinburne's literary labours we hear of "four studies," as he called them, contributed in 1858 to the short-lived *Undergraduate Papers* edited by John Nichol: the author criticises his papers as "showing a youngster's honest impulses, and sympathies, and antipathies." His third contribution, *Church Imperialism*, was, he tells us, "a terrific onslaught on the French Empire and its clerical supporters—which must, no doubt, have contributed to its (the *Undergraduate Papers*) ultimate collapse. . . . When I think of the marvellous work that

[1] *The Wood beyond the World.*

Rossetti had done at the same age, I am abashed at the recollection of my own rubbish."

On leaving Oxford, Swinburne spent some weeks in Italy, where he met "the most ancient of the demi-gods," as he was pleased to style Walter Savage Landor. Returning to London, where he might easily have led a life of leisure, he preferred to work, and threw in his lot with the Bohemian life of his friends. In 1862 he joined the Rossettis and George Meredith at 16 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea; it was their intention to live a kind of collegiate life, each to have his own sitting-room, but with a dining-room in common. This arrangement was not successful; first Meredith departed, then Swinburne left to roam from one set of rooms to another until 1872, when the supreme friendship of his life began in the meeting with Theodore Watts-Dunton. From that time the two became inseparable. This friendship of nigh forty years is one of the most memorable in the history of our literature, and Watts-Dunton's devoted care proved the physical salvation of Swinburne, who at one time seemed marked out for an early death.

Few men have been more steadfast in their friendships than was Swinburne. In 1862, on the outburst against Meredith's *Modern Love*, he paid full homage to his friend's work in the columns of the *Spectator*; and in 1870, in dealing with Rossetti's *Poems*, that Buchanan attacked so venomously as *The Fleshly School of Poetry*,—Swinburne's generous tribute in the *Fortnightly* is noteworthy: "The subject-matter of Rossetti's work," said his brother poet, "is always great and fit; nothing trivial, nothing illicit, nothing unworthy the workmanship of a master-hand. . . . What he would do is always what a poet should, and what he would do is always done." *Tristram of Lyonesse* was thus inscribed in 1882: "To my best friend, Theodore Watts, I dedicate in this book the best I have to give him."

With fine physical energy, a lover of the open air and the simplicities of life, he might be seen almost any morning about midday leaving The Pines, Putney Hill, in sunshine or rain, despising overcoat or umbrella, for his walk across Wimbledon Common. The children were on the look-out for their friend, for they knew he was quite ready to play with them, and that his pockets were filled with sweets and biscuits.

"Two years and a half before Rossetti's death," writes Mr. Watts-Dunton,[1] "Swinburne and I became housemates at The Pines, Putney Hill. From this moment his connection with bohemian London ceased entirely.

"He was now living *en famille* with me and my two sisters and a child, and then, after my marriage, with me and my wife. He always spoke of this change as the happiest event that had occurred in his life since his childish days in the bosom of his own family. . . . Here we received, besides the members of his own family, and his cousin Mrs. Disney Leith and her youngest daughter, very many friends. For he was fond of society, but it had to be what he called 'society of the right sort'—men and women of intellect and culture. Some of these have already recorded what they then saw of him. And many more will undoubtedly do so in the future. Gradually death removed many 'old familiar faces': these were replaced by new and younger ones. When we lost the most loyal of all, Jowett, I remember our serious talk—I remember showing Swinburne a few words of mine which I hope I shall be pardoned for recalling here, for they affected him deeply:

"'One after one they go; and glade and heath,
Where once we walked with them, and garden bowers
They made so dear, are haunted by the hours
Once musical of those who sleep beneath;
One after one does Sorrow's every wreath
Bind closer you and me with funeral flowers,
And Love and Memory from each loss of ours
Forge conquering glaives to quell the conqueror Death.'"

Thus, the later years of Swinburne's life moved tranquilly on. The fevers of youth were over; the stimulus at once intellectually provocative and emotionally disturbing of active participation in the social life of the day gave place to the healing balm and quieter joys of life at The Pines. There was no radical change in Swinburne's attitude towards men and things; his verse still retained its old trumpet note of exultation, but the note is deeper and mellower, and the raptures circle more and more around the large simplicities of nature. But if he withdrew from active participation in the life of the day, he never lost interest in affairs. What is more important, he never lost the power of eager enthusiasm that had marked his earlier years. Alas! that youthfulness of spirit should not keep pace with youthfulness of physique. Reckless of the failing faculty of physical recuperation, he defied the uncertainties of our climate, as had always been his wont, and paid the inevitable penalty. That attractive but trying jade, the English Spring—whom Robert Browning had wisely complimented from the warmth of Italy—turned and slew her intrepid admirer; and in 1909 "Keen April's clarion sound" proved the poet's death-knell.

He was buried in Bonchurch graveyard in the Isle of Wight.

"That enthusiastic, high-souled, and courageous man," wrote the Danish critic, George Brandes, at the time of his death—"I do not think that the English public venerated him as he deserved, and it is a disgrace to the Scandinavian North that he did not receive the Nobel Prize."

His Work

The striking appearance and arresting personality of Swinburne have given rise to a legion of stories and pen portraits, many of which are entirely apocryphal, and not a few absurdly misleading.

Immediately after his death some descriptions of the man were given that are best epitomised as inspired by Pellegrini's famous caricature, and by the outrageous stories told about him by De Maupassant, whom Swinburne once designated as "a liar of the first magnitude." In these notices, Swinburne is seriously described as a sort of freak with an enormous head set upon a very slender neck with extremely sloping shoulders. As a matter of fact, every photograph of him entirely contradicts this. Swinburne's height was five feet four and a

[1] Supplemental Note to *Selections from Swinburne's Poems* (Chatto & Windus, 1914).

half inches, and his limbs were quite unusually strong and muscular. His head, as a whole, was but very little bigger than that of most men of his size, but it was his enormous dome of forehead which made it seem so big. As to his abnormally thin neck, the Rossetti portrait of him—by far the best of any—shows that his neck was, if anything, decidedly too thick.

Rossetti, like Ruskin and Burne-Jones, considered him very handsome, although rather too juvenile-looking for his age. Rossetti, indeed, proposed to him to sit for Sir Galahad. This proposition came to nothing, but he did succeed in securing him to sit for St. George in the St. George and Dragon cartoons for the Morris firm, and very beautiful cartoons they are. Rossetti frequently used Swinburne as a model.

As a young man, his splendid hair, intensely blue eyes, and lyrical utterance, marked him out especially. The beauty of his voice and the rapt unconcern with which he would descant on something that had stirred his enthusiasm, were characteristics that were as noticeable during his last days as they had been in his exuberant youth. Vehement and passionate as he could be when roused, bitingly satirical on matters that had stirred his contempt, there was a childlike trustfulness and a singular sweetness of disposition that made of him the most delightful of friends. Lyrical and sensitive natures such as his, are prone to be swept by storms of extravagant feeling from time to time; but beneath the easily ruffled surfaces, were depths of tranquil affection: "too full for sound and foam."

It is a safe thing to judge a man's character finally, by his friends and personal enthusiasms. The assertive virility of Landor, the noble humanitarianism of Mazzini, the superb passion of Victor Hugo, the enduring tenderness of Watts-Dunton,—such were the forces that counted most in Swinburne's life. Some of his "imperfect sympathies" (to use Lamb's expressive phrase) may have been due to little infirmities of temperament from which the best men are not free; but his sympathies were never misplaced. If there were great men whom he underrated; he never overrated little men. His heroes were real Olympians.

In an age of cultured poets, Swinburne was easily first. Even as a lad his range of reading was extraordinary; and his scholarship as a man gave him a distinctive place among our poets. His facility of expression was a natural endowment, but along with this was the fine self-criticism of the great literary artist, and no one could accuse him of premature publication. Much of his earliest work was relentlessly destroyed, and it was not till his twenty-fourth year that he published his first volume, *The Queen Mother* and *Rosamond* (1860).

The volume attracted little attention, but its successor, *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865) triumphantly vindicated Swinburne's place to a foremost position among the poets of his time. As a lyrical drama it is a superb piece of work, which marks out as clearly his kinship with Shelley as did Rossetti's poems his affinity with Keats. Then came *Poems and Ballads* in 1866, rich in music and colour, and vibrant with the pagan inspiration of Swinburne's earlier years. Rossetti's influence is more marked here than in *Atalanta*, and many of the poems indeed were written before *Atalanta*; but if influenced by Rossetti the individuality of the poet is clear and unequivocal enough, as the *Hymn to Proserpine*, with its metrical glory, would alone have attested. For the future Swinburne's work was divided between the dramatic and lyrical form; but even in the dramas the lyrical note is uppermost; and it is rather as a singer than as a teller of stories in action that Swinburne appeals to us. Yet he has produced, like Browning, a considerable body of dramatic work; and cherished, as Browning did, the ambition of achieving success in this direction. Each failed for opposite reasons; Browning because he was too much of the psychologist; Swinburne because he was too little. Browning analysed his creations, when he should have illustrated their characters in action—synthetically; Swinburne rhapsodised about his characters in place of letting them speak for themselves. But in neither case can the literary student afford to neglect the dramas. If Browning's are the more interesting intellectually, Swinburne's are richer in fine poetry. His unequalled knowledge of the Elizabethan dramatists proved a plenary poetic inspiration to lyric and drama alike, and *Bothwell* (1874), *Mary Stuart* (1881), *Locrine* (1887), to mention a few of the happiest, are delightful companions in the study.

In *Songs before Sunrise* (1871), the revolutionary note in Swinburne's work is uppermost. Already in *A Song of Italy* (1867), afterwards merged into *Songs of Two Nations* (1875)), the love of liberty and hatred of tyranny had proclaimed itself, and another link with Shelley been revealed. But in his *Songs before Sunrise*, the note is fuller and more challenging than before. Mazzini's influence has swept away those elements in his work that bound him to Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites. He is never more eloquent in his passion, more orchestral in his music, than when singing of Italy and of her struggle for freedom.

The Republican ideal that glows through all the earlier political verse of the poet, contrasts strangely with his bitter attack on the Boers in later years, and warm admirers of the youthful Swinburne have shrunk repelled from the Swinburne of later years. Certainly he exhibited, more prominently than do many poets, the reactionary tendencies that often accompany age; as we have seen illustrated in the two *Locksley Halls* of Tennyson; but Swinburne's position is not such a reversal as at first sight it may seem. We have to remember that he was intensely national and patriotic as a poet; yet the England of his ideal was not Victorian England but the England of the seventeenth century.

Though he had not hesitated to rate his countrymen for their lukewarmness in matters that roused him to white-hot indignation, he saw in English institutions something far more consonant with his old republican ideal than he saw in the rule of Kruger, and rightly or wrongly he sided with England in the struggle against the Transvaal.

Yet, one cannot but turn back with a sense of relief to such noble utterances as the *Sonnet to Louis Kossuth* (1877). If in political matters he is less satisfying as a poet with the course of years, none

could say that his muse lost either in cunning or in passion. Literature inspires him less and nature more, as time went on; and the beautiful nature poetry of his later years is among his most cherished work. None of our poets has more completely expressed in rhythmic beauty, "the rapturous resurrection of the year." If his powers mellowed as he grew older, his spirits seemed to grow more youthful. The poet of *A Midsummer Holiday* is younger than the poet of *Faustine;* and the fresh Blake-like sweetness of his lyrics on childhood, makes the amorous verse of the sixties strangely sophisticated and middle-aged by force of contrast.

So if the conservative accretions of age circumscribed his intellectual life with the passing of time, his imaginative life expanded and clarified. The influence of his intimate friend—one might say his only *really* intimate friend—Watts-Dunton, is no doubt largely responsible for this. Watts-Dunton's influence, both as man and as a distinguished man of letters, was of incalculable value to Swinburne; and none realised this more than the poet himself, as several of his famous dedications testify.

Technically, Swinburne's verse shows little development after the *Poems and Ballads;* for his powers as a literary artist ripened with astonishing rapidity. But the work of his later years gains in breadth and freshness, while losing no tittle of its brilliant finish and metrical beauty.

So far we have surveyed roughly the general trend of Swinburne's verse; let us now regard it in the light of certain salient and inherent qualities.

It has been said of Swinburne that his inspiration came from books and not from life. So far as the latter half of Swinburne's poetic career is concerned the statement is grotesquely wrong; as regards the earlier half it is one of those mischievous half-truths harder to combat than a downright lie.

Swinburne was, as we have seen, a man of wide culture and fine scholarship; and his extensive acquaintanceship with the literature not merely of his own country but of Europe, is quite obvious to students of his poetry. It may be admitted that great erudition is not necessarily an advantage to a poet: often indeed it has served to chill and devitalise the creative imagination. The truth of this may be illustrated from the poetic work of Landor and Matthew Arnold. But in Swinburne's case it is not so. His earlier work shows a special sensibility to literary impressions; but even here he derives more from nature, and from the life of his time, than did his friend and contemporary William Morris. The chief point to note, however, is that there is nothing of the pedant or mere bookworm about his verse.

The fire of Swinburne's muse has power to fuse all his vast learning into an incandescent splendour; and only by delicate gradations of tint in the jets of glowing flame here and there do you recognise the rich purples of the South or the delicate amber of Provence, a flicker of Gallic gaiety or a flash of Italian passion. The learning is all there, but it has caught light. "The bush burns with fire and is not consumed." Naturally, there are poems that appeal more to the cultured than to the uncultured reader; but it is a mistake to imagine that Swinburne's appeal is limited to the few.

It may surprise some people to hear that he appeals more strongly to the thoughtful artisan reader to-day than either Shelley or Tennyson. If there ever was a time when the merely literary poet would be elbowed aside, it would be to-day when there is an imperative demand for poets who shall deal with the primal matters of life and keep in close touch with living actualities.

Swinburne's popularity to-day is a tribute to the vitality of his work, even more than it is to its beauty. Beauty of workmanship has indeed never been more roughly and grudgingly appraised than it is to-day, as the present low ebb of Tennyson's popularity sufficiently indicates. We cannot therefore explain away Swinburne's hold on the reading public on purely æsthetic grounds. I believe that the power of fresh and happy observation (denied to Swinburne by some critics) is largely responsible for this. Take as illustration the following passages, and examine them apart from their rhythmic loveliness: the touches of pictorial clarity are italicised:

"They watching till the day should wholly die
Saw the far sea sweep to the far grey sky,
Saw the big sands *sweep* to the long grey sea,
And night made *one sweet mist* of moor and lea
And only far off shore *the foam gave light*,
And life in them sank silent as the night." [1]

"The pastures are herdless and sheepless,
No pasture or shelter for herds;
The wind is relentless and sleepless,
And *restless and songless* the birds;
Their cries from afar fall breathless,
Their wings are as lightnings that flee;
For the land has two lords that are deathless;
Death's self, and the sea." [2]

"Tall the plumage of the rush-flower tosses,
Sharp and soft in many a curve and line
Gleam and glow the sea-coloured marsh-mosses,
Salt and splendid from the circling brine.
Streak on streak of glimmering seashine crosses
All the land sea-saturate as with wine." [3]

"In a coign of the cliff between lowland and highland,
At the sea-down's edge between windward and lee,
Walled round with rocks as an inland island,
The *ghost of a garden* fronts the sea.
A girdle of brushwood and thorn encloses
The steep square slope of the blossomless bed
Where the weeds that grew green from the graves of its roses
Now lie dead." [4]

"Between the moondawn and the sundown here
The twilight hangs half starless . . .
But higher the steep green sterile fields, thick set
With *flowerless hawthorn* even to the upward verge
Whence the woods gathering watch new cliffs emerge
Higher than their highest of crowns that sea-winds fret,
Hold fast, for all that night or wind can say,
Some pale pure colour yet,
Too dim for green and luminous for grey." [5]

Are they not singularly happy in their detailed touches of observation, and in their open-air fragrance?

Swinburne's scholarship, then, is never pedantic. If this quality of Swinburne's verse, viz. his

[1] *Tristram of Lyonesse.* [2] *In the Salt Marshes*
[3] *By the North Sea.* [4] *A Forsaken Garden.*
[5] *On the Cliffs.*

vitalised scholarship, to regarded as one important feature, a more important still is the melodic splendour. This of course is the most obvious thing about his poetry, and even his most grudging critics have conceded it. Yet like many obvious criticisms the full value of its significance is not always realised. All great poetry must necessarily charm both the eye and the ear; these are the avenues by which it seeks to hold the imagination of the reader. To concede melodic beauty to a poet is really only to say in other words that he is a poet, and the question therefore in Swinburne is one of degree, not of kind. And it is here that the emphatic quality of Swinburne's music is appreciated; for he is the most musical of our poets.

In many of our poets the pictorial faculty is quite as dominant, sometimes, as in Rossetti's case, more dominant than the melodic. But in Swinburne's case everything is subordinate to the melodic.

"I would never have believed," said a distinguished critic, "that there could be such music in words, and especially in the English language." Just as Rossetti made *thought pictorially sensuous*, Swinburne has made *thought musically sensuous*. He is not merely melodic—Shelley was gloriously melodic—he is harmonic; Shelley's music is the music of the lute; Swinburne's the music of a full orchestra; his melodies are rich and complex, with a sweeping grandeur that no other poet has equalled, much less excelled.

The difference between the two may be appreciated if we compare Shelley's *Cloud* with one of the choruses in *Atalanta*—

"When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous
Is half assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

. . . . . .

Where shall we find her, how shall we sing to her,
Fold our hands round her knees, and cling?
O that man's heart were as fire and could spring to her
Fire, or the strength of the streams that spring!
For the stars and the winds are unto her
As raiment, as songs of the harp-player,
For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,
And the south-west wind and the west wind sing."

Swinburne's verse may be likened to an orchestral concert with instrumental solos; we recognise both the melodious sweetness and quality of differing instruments, and the concerted harmonies of all playing together.

Here, for instance, is the wistful cadence of the violin;

"Here, where the world is quiet;
Here, where all trouble seems
Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
In doubtful dreams of dreams;
I watch the green field growing
For reaping folk and sowing,
For harvest-time and mowing,
A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,
And men that laugh and weep;
Of what may come hereafter
For men that sow to reap:
I am weary of days and hours,
Blown buds of barren flowers,
Desires and dreams and powers
And everything but sleep."[1]

Here we seem to hear the clear call of the cornet:

"By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept,
Remembering thee,
That for ages of agony hast endured, and slept,
And wouldst not see.

By the waters of Babylon we stood up and sang,
Considering thee,
That a blast of deliverance in the darkness rang,
To set thee free.

And with trumpets and thunderings and with morning song
Came up the light;
And thy spirit uplifted thee to forget thy wrong
As day doth night."

The expressive contralto of the viola sounds in the dirge:

"For a day and a night Love sang to us, played with us,
Folded us round from the dark and the light;
And our hearts were fulfilled of the music he made with us,
Made with our hearts and our lips while he stayed with us,
Stayed in mid passage his pinions from flight
For a day and a night;"

and the limpid flutings of the reed instruments in these familiar lines:

"If love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf,
Our lives would grow together
In sad or singing weather,
Blown fields or flowerful closes,
Green pleasures or grey grief;
If love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf.

If I were what the words are,
And love were like the tune,
With double sound and single
Delight our lips would mingle,
With kisses glad as birds are
That get sweet rain at noon;
If I were what the words are,
And love were like the tune.

If you were life, my darling,
And I your love were death,
We'd shine and snow together
Ere March made sweet the weather
With daffodil and starling
And hours of fruitful breath;
If you were life, my darling,
And I your love were death.

If you were thrall to sorrow,
And I were page to joy,
We'd play for lives and seasons
With loving looks and treasons
And tears of night and morrow
And laughs of maid and boy;
If you were thrall to sorrow,
And I were page to joy.

If you were April's lady,
And I were lord in May,
We'd throw with leaves for hours,
And draw for days with flowers,
Till day like night were shady
And night were bright like day;
If you were April's lady,
And I were lord in May.

[1] *The Garden of Proserpine.*

If you were queen of pleasure,
And I were king of pain,
We'd hunt down love together,
Pluck out his flying-feather,
And teach his feet a measure,
And find his mouth a rein;
If you were queen of pleasure,
And I were king of pain."

Whilst in *Messidor* rolls up the rhythmic beat of the drum and trumpets:

"For the hour is for harvest or fight
To clothe with raiment of red;
O men sore stricken of hours,
Lo, this one, is not it ours,
To glean, to gather, to smite?
Let none make risk of his head
Within reach of the clean scythe-sweep,
When the people that lay as the dead
Put in the sickle and reap.

Lo, this one, is not it ours,
Now the ruins of dead things rattle,
As dead men's bones in the pit,
Now the Kings wax lean as they sit
Girt round with memories of powers
With masters counted as cattle,
And armies folded as sheep.
Till the red blind husbandman battle
Put in the sickles and reap."

Finally, in the *Hymn to Proserpine*, the combined strength and beauty of the full orchestra are brought into requisition, and the result is a rush and glory of words unsurpassed in our language:

"In the night where thine eyes are as moons are in heaven, the night where thou art,
Where the silence is more than all tunes, where sleep overflows from the heart.
Where the poppies are sweet as the rose in our world, and the red rose is white,
And the wind falls faint as it blows with the flame of the flowers of the night,
And the murmur of spirits that sleep in the shadow of gods from afar
Grows dim in thine ears and deep as the deep dim soul of a star,
In the sweet low light of thy face, under heavens untrod by the sun,
Let thy soul with their souls find place, and forget what is done and undone.
Thou art more than the Gods who number the days of our temporal breath;
For these give labour and slumber; but thou, Proserpina, death.
Therefore now at thy feet I bide for a season in silence. I know
I shall die as my fathers died, and sleep as they sleep; even so.
For the glass of the years is brittle wherein we gaze for a span;
A little soul for a little bears up this corpse which is man.
So long I endure no longer; and laugh not again, neither weep.
For there is no God found stronger than death; and death is a sleep."

Nor is this orchestral analogy a mere fanciful analogy as some may imagine. Swinburne's verbal music is no more a mere matter of verbal sound than is great instrumental music. Its delight does not stop short at the ear: it is the medium through which he expresses his thought, just as a nocturne by Chopin, a sonata by Beethoven, a study by Schumann is the means of conveying to us, in terms of musical notation, the moods and fundamental ideas of the musician. What the proseman does by logical suasion, and most poets by pictorial appeal and intellectual suggestion, Swinburne tries to achieve by metrical modulation, and the countless vagaries of rhythmic cadence. The attempt is a daring one, and, it may be frankly conceded, is a method of approach that is apt to fatigue the reader when carried to excess. You cannot transfer the methods of one art to another without doing some violence to that other: and after all, language is not music, however musical it may be made. Yet this is only to say that Swinburne, like many another great literary poet, suffers at times from the defects of his artistic virtues.

Swinburne's prose is not on a level with his verse, as an art form, any more than Elizabethan prose is commensurate with its verse; indeed his prose has many, both of the excellences and defects of Elizabethan prose. It is over-elaborated, diffuse, and lacking in light and shade; it is also full of colour and impetuous strength, and more intensely individual than his verse.

Quite obviously, Swinburne lacked one essential of the great critic: a sense of relative values. His appraisement runs always to superlatives; his disapproval tends to become invective. He reminds one of the schoolboy who said he divided his books into those that were "topping" and those that were "rotten." Swinburne's critical appraisement is too often confined to incense and vitriol. This defect prevents some readers from appreciating the occasional flashes of wonderful critical acumen that light up many of his essays. He is not a great critic, but he has great moments as a critic. In his note on the Brontës, in his criticism of Matthew Arnold, of Shakespeare, Marlowe, and the Elizabethans generally, he abounds in brilliant suggestiveness; while his eulogy of Browning and of Blake is well-nigh perfect in its subtle appreciation and interpretative power; whilst even his panegyric on Dickens, overstrained as it is by superlatives, contains some of the truest things ever said about that great story-teller of the common people.

Moreover one thing emerges from his prose, and that is the spiritual intensity of the man; a quality of soul that you will find only in the great poet; and having apprehended it in his prose, you will realise it more clearly in his verse, especially with the progress of years. The shrill defiance of his earlier work deepens into a more comprehending sympathy as he grew older; though he never lost his spirit of vigorous independence and love of freedom. But he lays hold more firmly of the world of spirit, and of dimly understood forces and influences behind the world of sense and appearance; he deals more often with the life of man and the simple and primal facts of life.

There are times, of course, when the old magic fails; when his eloquence runs into misty verbosity. But no poet can always maintain the heights: and the wings of the most aspiring droop listlessly at times. So let us not cavil at his limitations, or blame him for what he never professed to give, but rather render thanks to the Muses for sending

this daring and glorious singer at the close of an age so rich in poetic genius as the age of Shelley, Tennyson, and Rossetti.

King Lear

Of all Shakespeare's plays, *King Lear* is unquestionably that in which he has come nearest to the height and to the likeness of the one tragic poet on any side greater than himself whom the world in all its ages has ever seen born of time. It is by far the most Æschylean of his works; the most elemental and primeval, the most oceanic and Titanic in conception. He deals here with no subtleties as in *Hamlet*, with no conventions as in *Othello*; there is no question of "a divided duty" or a problem half insoluble, a matter of country and connection, of family or of race; we look upward and downward, and in vain, into the deepest things of nature, into the highest things of providence; to the roots of life, and to the stars; from the roots that no God waters to the stars which give no man light; over a world full of death and life without resting-place or guidance.

But in one main point it differs radically from the work and the spirit of Æschylus. Its fatalism is of a darker and harder nature. To Prometheus the fetters of the lord and enemy of mankind were bitter; upon Orestes the hand of heaven was laid too heavily to bear; yet in the not utterly infinite or everlasting distance we see beyond them the promise of the morning on which mystery and justice shall be made one; when righteousness and omnipotence at last shall kiss each other. But on the horizon of Shakespeare's tragic fatalism we see no such twilight of atonement, such pledge of reconciliation as this. Requital, redemption, amends, equity, explanation, pity and mercy, are words without a meaning here.

> "As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods;
> They kill us for their sport."

Here is no need of the Eumenides, children of Night overhead; for here is very Night herself.

The words just cited are not casual or episodical; they strike the keynote of the whole poem, lay the keystone of the whole arch of thought. There is no contest of conflicting forces, no judgment so much as by casting of lots: far less is there any light of heavenly harmony or of heavenly wisdom, of Apollo or Athene from above. We have heard much and often from the theologians of the light of revelation; and some such thing indeed we find in Æschylus—but the darkness of revelation is here.

For in this the most terrible work of human genius it is with the very springs and sources of nature that the student has set himself to deal. The veil of the temple of our humanity is rent in twain. Nature herself, we might say, is revealed—and revealed as unnatural. In face of such a world as this a man might be forgiven who should pray that chaos might come again. Nowhere else in Shakespeare's work or in the universe of jarring lives are the lines of character and event so broadly drawn or so sharply cut. Only the supreme self-command of this one poet could so mould and handle such types as to restrain and prevent their passing from the abnormal into the monstrous: yet even as much as this, at least in all cases but one, it surely has accomplished. In Regan alone would it be, I think, impossible to find a touch or trace of anything less vile than it was devilish. Even Goneril has her one splendid hour, her fireflaught of hellish glory; when she treads under foot the half-hearted goodness, the wordy and windy though sincere abhorrence, which is all that the mild and impotent revolt of Albany can bring to bear against her imperious and dauntless devilhood; when she flaunts before the eyes of her "milk-livered" and "moral fool" the coming banners of France about the "plumed helm" of his slayer.

On the other side, Kent is the exception which answers to Regan on this. Cordelia, the brotherless Antigone of our stage, has one passing touch of intolerance for what her sister was afterwards to brand as indiscretion and dotage in their father, which redeems her from the charge of perfection. Like Imogen, she is not too inhumanly divine for the sense of divine irritation. Godlike though they be, their very godhead is human and feminine; and only therefore credible, and only therefore adorable. Cloten and Regan, Goneril and Iachimo, have power to stir and embitter the sweetness of their blood. But for the contrast and even the contact of antagonists as abominable as these, the gold of their spirit would be too refined, the lily of their holiness too radiant, the violet of their virtue too sweet. As it is, Shakespeare has gone down perforce among the blackest and the basest things of nature to find anything so equally exceptional in evil as properly to counterbalance and make bearable the excellence and extremity of their goodness. No otherwise could either angel have escaped the blame implied in the very attribute and epithet of blameless. But where the possible depth of human hell is so foul and unfathomable as it appears in the spirits which serve as foils to these, we may endure that in them the inner height of heaven should be no less immeasurable.

It should be a truism well-nigh as musty as Hamlet's half-cited proverb, to enlarge upon the evidence given in *King Lear* of a sympathy with the mass of social misery more wide and deep and direct and bitter and tender than Shakespeare has shown elsewhere. But as even to this day and even in respectable quarters the murmur is not quite duly extinct which would charge on Shakespeare a certain share of divine indifference to suffering, of godlike satisfaction and a less than compassionate content, it is not yet perhaps utterly superfluous to insist on the utter fallacy and falsity of their creed who, whether in praise or in blame, would rank him to his credit or discredit among such poets as on this side at least may be classed rather with Goethe than with Shelley and with Gautier than with Hugo. A poet of revolution he is not, as none of his country in that generation could have been: but as surely as the author of *Julius Cæsar* has approved himself in the best and highest sense of the word at least potentially a republican, so surely has the author of *King Lear* avowed himself in the only good and rational sense of the words a spiritual if not a political democrat and socialist.[1]

I. POETRY. The Pessimistic Note in Victorian Poetry. Introduction—A. H. Clough—M. Arnold—E. FitzGerald—James Thomson.

THE PESSIMISTIC NOTE IN VICTORIAN POETRY

"The poetry of later paganism lived by the senses; and incidentally, the poetry of mediæval Christianity lived by the heart and the imagination. But the main element of the modern spirit's life is neither the senses and understanding, nor the heart and imagination; it is the poetry of reason." In this last phrase we have the germ of the poetry of Pessimism. It was the endeavour to *intellectualise* the visions of the imaginative life that led Arnold, Clough, FitzGerald, and James Thomson into that mood of wistful melancholy, that crystallised soon into a more or less pessimistic criticism of life.

In each case, though in different ways, the poetic

[1] *A Study of Shakespeare.*

impulse was governed by the questioning attitude of a sceptical intellect.

Arthur Hugh Clough (1819–1861) was as a youth one of Thomas Arnold's pupils at Rugby. He entered Balliol College, Oxford, in 1837, and was deeply influenced by the theological controversies of the time. The friend of that stalwart and brilliant Roman Catholic, W. G. Ward, he was never able to accept his friend's unquestioning attitude, and with scrupulous conscientiousness that always marked him, he resigned a fine position as Fellow and Tutor of Oriel College, on account of his religious difficulties, and signalised this step not by any weighty manifestation of his feelings, but by a mirthful pastoral, *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich* (1848), for he was at heart intensely relieved by this definite severance with the implication of orthodoxy. "I rejoice to see before me," he wrote, "the end of my servitude, yea, even as the weary foot-traveller rejoices at the sight of his evening hostelry, though there still lies a length of dusty road between." This was his first long poem, and gives us a just view of his capabilities and temperament. For all its play of humorous fancy, there is a deep underlying seriousness in the poem, and a sensitive appreciation of the weightiness of modern social problems. Interesting in its subject-matter and fresh in its treatment, it suffers from a certain roughness of artistry. Clough is only moderately successful in the use of the hexameter, and a much pleasanter illustration in modern verse may be found in Longfellow's *Evangeline*. His next publication was *Amours de Voyage*, written while travelling in Italy. The poem has slight artistic merit and is far inferior to its predecessor, but the theme is thoroughly characteristic of the man and his time—a kind of modern Hamlet, smitten by his own introspective questionings, so that he can embark on no settled course of conduct.

In the work that followed this, Clough essays an even bigger spiritual problem, and *Dipsychus* has been not unfairly compared in its general trend with Goethe's *Faust*, and in its treatment of evil, with Hawthorne's *Marble Faun*. It is a poem of considerable beauty in parts, but the subject was too vast for one with Clough's limited artistic powers to grapple with satisfactorily.

Clough is most satisfactory as a poet in his shorter pieces. His delicate spiritual feeling and intellectual hesitancy are nowhere more happily expressed than in the verses:

> "'Old things need not be therefore true,'
> O brother men, nor yet the new:
> Ah! still awhile the old thought retain,
> And yet consider it again!
>
> The souls of now two thousand years
> Have laid up here their toils and fears,
> And all the earnings of their pain,
> Ah, yet consider it again!
>
> We! what do we see? each a space
> Of some few yards before his face;
> Does that the whole wide plan explain?
> Ah, yet consider it again!
>
> Alas! the great world goes its way,
> And takes its truth from each new day:
> They do not quit, nor can retain,
> For less consider it again."

The pessimistic note is by no means dominant in Clough, and cheerfulness will break through at times, but there is more cloud than sunshine. There is even more cloud in the work of his better accomplished contemporary, Matthew Arnold.

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822–1888)

His Life

Matthew Arnold, the eldest son of Dr. Arnold of Rugby, was born near Staines, December 24, 1822, receiving his education at Winchester, Rugby, and Balliol College, Oxford. Having secured the Newdigate Prize he passed to Oriel, and was elected a Fellow in 1845. For a while he served as private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, afterwards accepting an Inspectorship of Schools.

In 1849 he published his first volume, *The Strayed Reveller and other Poems*, "By A."; *Empedocles on Etna* came in 1852, a second series of poems in 1855, *Merope* in 1859, and the *New Poems* in 1867. Meanwhile it was in 1853 that he first gave a taste of his quality as a prose-man. His critical prose was collected in 1865 and published under the title of *Essays in Criticism*; this was followed by *Lectures on the Study of Celtic Literature* (1867), *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), *Last Essays on Church and Religion* (1877), *Mixed Essays* (1879), and *Irish Essays* (1882).

In 1857 he had been elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford, received a pension of £250 a year in 1883, dying suddenly at Liverpool in April 1888.

A quiet, slight, delicate-looking man with a touch of superciliousness in his pleasant cultured voice, though nothing but graciousness in his manner; a presence that seemed to breathe a refined scholarly atmosphere. Unlike many poets who pass through one or other of the universities, Arnold was the personification of choice academic tradition. Oxford inspired some of his happiest verse, and who has summed up its peculiar charm more aptly than he?

> "Beautiful city! So venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so serene! There are our young barbarians, all at play! And yet, steeped in sentiment as she lies, spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchantment of the Middle Ages, who will deny that Oxford, by her ineffable charm, keeps ever calling us nearer to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection—to beauty, in a word, which is only truth seen from another side? Nearer, perhaps, than all the science of Tübingen. Adorable dreamer, whose heart has been so romantic! who has given thyself so prodigally, given thyself to sides and heroes not mine, only never to the Philistines! home of lost causes, and forsaken beliefs, and unpopular names, and impossible loyalties!"

Roughly speaking, his earlier life is preoccupied with verse, his later with prose. But verse at occasional intervals he continued to write throughout his life from the early forties to the late sixties, though the bulk of it was written while he was a young man.

In his verse he is a critic of life—in the abstract; in his prose a critic of life—in the concrete; but a critic always; urbane, detached, with sincerity and serenity in everything that he has written.

His Work

The writings of Matthew Arnold are characterised by three persisting qualities: *Suavity—Wistfulness*—and *Serenity*.

He has other characteristics, as for instance lucidity, at which he aimed so continuously and successfully, and a faculty for sympathetic interpretation which gives much value to his critical work. But these and other qualities were not, I think, especially personal to Arnold; he shares them with other writers; whereas the suavity of his method, the wistfulness of his muse, and the serenity of his outlook are peculiarly individual.

There is a persuasive charm, a gracious sympathy about everything that Arnold wrote. He never storms or bullies; he will attack with gentle irony, but he is always courteous, always fair-minded. Even when limitations of temperament prevent him from appreciating poets like Shelley, no exception would be taken to his method of stating his comparative indifference. Nothing could be better expressed from his own point of view than his summing up of Shelley as "a beautiful and ineffectual angel beating in the void his luminous wings in vain."

The excessive praise and violent blame which some fine critics—as for instance Swinburne—delight in, was alien to his nature; and no better way of appreciating the mellow suavity of his critical method could be mentioned than that of picking out the writers whose work provoked no response in Arnold's breast.

There is a suavity rather than passion in his poetry. He will never be a favourite with ardent, impetuous temperaments. He is too severe, too chill for the sensitive emotion of youth. He is not fierce and scornful like Byron, even in his moods of opposition; but he is courteously hostile, ironical often, satirical rarely.

In the initial sonnet to the volume of 1849, he strikes this note of suave detachment:

> "One lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee,
> One lesson that in every wind is blown,
> One lesson of two duties served in one,
> Though the loud world proclaim their enmity—
> Of toil unsevered from tranquillity!"

The suavity of Arnold is at its happiest in *The Scholar Gipsy* and *Thyrsis*, which rank among his best achievements. Here, Oxford and the Thames are the inspirations. These two poems cover nearly twenty years of his work.

Friendship inspired his art as it had inspired Tennyson's and Shelley's; and he forgets to brood and analyse his feelings. He is drawn out of himself. Friendship, the charm of Oxford, and the spell of the Thames—all these potent inspirations to Arnold meet and blend in these poems.

With what exquisite lucidity he paints the landscape in *Thyrsis*:

> "So, some tempestuous morn in early June,
> When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,
> Before the roses and the longest day—
> When garden-walks, and all the grassy floor,
> With blossoms, red and white, of fallen May,
> And chestnut-flowers are strewn—
>
> So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
> From the wet field, through the vext garden trees
> Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze:
> The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I!
>
> Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?
> Soon will the high Midsummer pomps come on,
> Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,
> Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
> Sweet William with its homely cottage-smell,
> And stocks in fragrant blow;
> Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
> And open, jasmine-muffled lattices
> And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,
> And the full moon, and the white evening-star."

How tenderly he bids the Scholar Gipsy fly from present-day complexities, in much the same spirit as Wordsworth did; though with a gentle importunity all his own.

This velvet glove of suavity, however, concealed a strong, virile hand. Arnold had the intellectual courage, the calm self-confidence of the great critic. But he had strong, decided opinions on politics, theology, and art; many of them directly counter to popular opinion. Yet bitter attack never disturbed him from his suavity, nor did neglect sting him into shouting as some writers have done when the world seemed deaf to their monitions.

In temperament, analytical, introspective, prone to weigh, reluctant to be swayed by emotions, he felt the intellectual difficulties of his Time, and could never quite escape their disturbing atmosphere. Empedocles solves the problem by throwing himself into a crater; Arnold, more restrained, throws himself into a sonnet, or elegy, and thereby eases his mind.

In the poems to Marguerite (five in number)—a fair blue-eyed girl at Berne—Arnold strikes that note of wistfulness so characteristic of his most individual poetic work. Conspicuously fine is the poem which begins:

> "Yes! in the sea of life enisled,
> With echoing straits between us thrown,
> Dotting the shore-less, watery wild,
> We mortal millions live alone."

The dreamy sadness of the poet finds beautiful expression in lines which are at once forcible and nobly reticent:

> "And bade betwixt their shores to be
> The unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea."

How delicate the pathos in the more fanciful poem *The Forsaken Merman*. It has the quaintness, the naïve simplicity and charm of Hans Anderson's *Little Mermaid*. Compare with this poem, *The Buried Life*, and *Longing*, and we realise forcibly the almost intolerable longing for human affection, especially womanly affection, that leaps up again and again in Arnold's work.

Take this from *The Buried Life*, with all its melancholy there is no self-sufficient pessimism. He shows what companionship may do to alleviate the fret and worry of life:

> "Only—but this is rare—
> When a beloved hand is laid in ours,
> When, jaded with the rush and glare
> Of the interminable hours,

Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,
When our world-deafen'd ear
Is by the tones of a loved voice caress'd,
A thrill is shot back somewhere in our breast
And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again;
The eye sinks inward, and the heart lies plain,
And what we mean, we say, and what we would,
we know.
A man becomes aware of his life's flow
And hears its winding murmur, and he sees
The meadows where it glides, the sun, the breeze.
And there arrives a lull in the hot race
Wherein he doth for ever chase
That flying and elusive shadow, Rest.
An air of coolness plays upon his face,
And an unwonted calm pervades his breast.
And then he thinks he knows
The Hills where his life rose,
And the Sea where it goes."

The serenity of Arnold differs from the serenity of Wordsworth, in that it is a state of mind consequent on intellectual effort, whereas with Wordsworth it was, largely at any rate, I believe, a matter of temperament. The brooding calm and emotional asceticism of Wordsworth, is best expressed by the word tranquillity. He had a native genius for transmuting sorrow and weakness into a quiet, but none the less intense, spiritual rapture.

He wrought on sorrow till it became

"Sorrow that is not sorrow, but delight."

There is a sublime confidence about Wordsworth's muse; a deep cheerfulness—for him

"The harvest of a quiet eye,
That broods and sleeps on its own heart"—

and it is the deep cheerfulness that Arnold lacks.

Arnold's serenity is the quiet stoicism of a melancholy soul.

"We cannot kindle when we will
The fire which in the heart resides;
The spirit bloweth, and is still—
In mystery our soul abides—
But tasks in hours of insight will'd
Can be thro' hours of gloom fulfilled.

With aching hands and bleeding feet
We dig and heap, lay stone on stone;
We bear the burden and the heat
Of the long day, and wish 'twere done.
Not till the hours of light return
All we have built do we discern."

No whining with Arnold, no luxury of grief, no sentimental pessimism. Neither is there any joy, any real power. It is the serenity of a troubled but brave spirit.

What could be more profoundly melancholy than the exquisite poem *Dover Beach?* Yet there is nothing maudlin, nothing unmanly about it. Poem after poem might be quoted, each imbued with a yearning, gentle wistfulness, a pathetic resignation. He is restful—but not at rest; serene—but not tranquil.

He is not satisfied with calm:

"Calm is not life's crown, tho' Calm is well.
'Tis all perhaps that man requires.
But 'tis not what our youth desires."

But Arnold's outlook on life is not without hope. In *The Future* he points, with all the keen appreciation of Morris, to the message of the past; and contrasts its large vitality and freshness with the jaded commercial restlessness of to-day. In *The New Age* he adverts again to the past, bidding us reverence its traditions. There is a touch of hope as well as of pity in *A Summer Night*; it has melancholy, but it has also a hardy stoicism.

"Plainness and clearness without shadow of stain,
Clearness divine!
Ye Heavens, whose pure dark regions have no sign
Of languor, though so calm, and though so grand
Are yet untroubled and unpassionate:
Who, though so noble, share in the world's toil,
And though so task'd, keep free from dust and soil:
I will not say that your mild deeps retain
A tinge, it may be, of their silent pain
Who have long'd deeply once, and long'd in vain;
But I will rather say that you remain
A world above man's head, to let him see
How boundless might his soul's horizon be,
How vast, yet of what clear transparency,
How it were good to sink there, and breathe free.
How high a lot to fill
Is left to each man still."

There is an increasing note of hopefulness and courage as the years roll on.

One turns to his reiterated admiration for Wordsworth and Goethe, as largely shaping his own ideal of life

"But we brought forth, and reared in hours
Of change, alarm, surprise,
What shelter to grow ripe is ours,
What leisure to grow wise.

Too fast we live, too much are tried,
Too harassed to attain;
Wordsworth's sweet calm and Goethe's wide
And luminous view to gain."

The calm and joy of Wordsworth, especially in his outlook on Nature; and the sane, large view of Goethe; in the healing power of Nature and the clarifying power of culture, Arnold found his inspiration. The quiet, delicate intelligence of Arnold is more readily seen in his prose, in his admirable criticism of modern social life in *Culture and Anarchy*.

In conclusion we may take note of the poet's fastidious workmanship, and of the many rhythmic felicities with which his work abounds:

"Still nursing the unconquerable hope—
Still clutching the inviolable shade."

"Who saw Life steadily and saw it whole."

"She let the legions thunder past
And plunged in thought again."

"And on his grave with shining eyes
The Syrian stars look down."

"Strew on her roses, roses,
And never a spray of yew.
In quiet she reposes:
Ah! would that I did too."

"Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in."

Then as an exquisite vignette of Nature, this from *Tristram and Iseult*—the sleeping children—Brittany:

"Ah, tired madcaps, you lie still.
But were you at the window now
To look forth on the fairy sight
Of your illumin'd haunts by night:
To see the park-glades where you play
Far lovelier than they are by day:
To see the sparkle on the caves,
And upon every giant bough
Of those old oaks, whose wet red leaves
Are jewell'd with bright drops of rain—
How would your voices run again!
And far beyond the sparkling trees
Of the castle park one sees
The bare heaths spreading, clear as day,
Moor behind moor, far, far away,
Into the heart of Brittany,
And here and there, look'd by the land,
Long inlets of smooth glittering sea,
And many a stretch of watery sand
All shining in the white moon-beams.
But you see fishes in your dreams."

Finally this:

"All pains the immortal spirit must endure."

In short, Matthew Arnold was a fine artist; more limited than Tennyson in his music; less virile than Browning in his grasp of life; but unequalled in depicting certain wistful moods of the spirit.

Edward FitzGerald's position as a poet stands somewhat apart from the Oxford men Clough and Arnold; for he is not concerned immediately with the abstract questioning of his day. Yet spiritually he is akin with them, and his translation of *Omar* is a perfect expression, in terms of paganism, of the sceptical spirit.

Edward FitzGerald, of Irish stock, was born at Bredfield House, Suffolk, in 1809, and educated at King Edward VI's School. In 1826 he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge. On leaving the university in 1830 he resided with his parents for eight years, after which, in a small cottage on his father's estate at Boulge Hall, near Woodbridge, he lived the life of a recluse with his books and garden. In 1853 he changed his mode of living and settled at Farlingay Hall near by, and three years after married the daughter of his friend Bernard Barton, the Quaker poet; they separated shortly afterwards, and lived the remainder of their lives apart.

Slow to form friendships, when once made they were not easily broken. James Spedding and J. M. Kemble had been his friends at school, Thackeray and Tennyson had been with him at Cambridge, and it was to FitzGerald that Tennyson dedicated *Tiresias*,—all remained in closest intimacy with him till his death, notwithstanding his petulant and wayward disposition, and a certain want of tact in his critical estimates of their work.

Yachting and gardening were his favourite outdoor amusements, and he delighted in the society of the old fishorfolk of Aldborough and Lowestoft. While paying his annual visit to his friend the Rev. George Crabbe at Merton Rectory, Norfolk, he died suddenly in 1883, and is buried at Boulge.

His first work, *Euphranor*, was published anonymously in 1851, and a year later *Polonius: a Collection of Wise Saws and Sayings*. From a study of Spanish he turned to Persian. When visiting the Bodleian Library in 1856 he became attracted by the works of Omar Khayyám, the eleventh-century astronomer-poet of Persia, and he at once set to work on a translation that he published anonymously in 1859. FitzGerald was also a charming letter-writer, the most interesting letters, perhaps, being those *To Fanny Kemble*.

By nature a shy, diffident man, of simple tastes and eccentric habits, he had nothing of that itch for fame that drives many men into literature; yet as Johnson said of Swift, "he touched nothing that he did not adorn," was an exquisite prose-man, and a translator of the highest kind. What that kind is, Professor Norton has admirably indicated, "One who should express the poetic transfusion of a poetic spirit from one language to another, and the re-presentation of the ideas and images of the original . . . the work of a poet inspired by the work of a poet . . . the reductions of a poetic imagination."

His earliest experiments in translation were from Calderon's dramas. With his genius for discerning the spirit beneath the mere letter, he made no attempt at literal translation, omitting and adding with a freedom that would appal the dry-as-dust scholar. As a result he made Calderon live for English readers.

In dealing with Sophocles and Æschylus his omissions and additions are less justifiable, for he is not so successful here in preserving the spirit of the original, but in his last and greatest work, his translation of the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* (1859), he is supremely successful. And for this reason. Although only a tolerable scholar, with a partial knowledge of Persian, he found in Omar a writer with whom he was spiritually at one, and for this reason his bold and unblushing liberties with the text, his own variation to the original music are in perfect accord with the primal melody. A literal translation, as the student of letters knows, often does far less justice to the genius of the original than a free translation.

FitzGerald's *Omar*, it may be admitted, has more of FitzGerald than of the Persian poet in its actual content. Indeed we must say, FitzGerald's version is less properly described as a translation than as a transcript in terms of Western feeling of an Oriental subject, and we have only to place side by side some of the literal translations extant, with FitzGerald's version, to feel that it is quite possible to have the letter and miss the spirit.

For this reason FitzGerald's translation has the force and beauty of an original work. Omar's indebtedness to FitzGerald is really scarcely inferior to the English poet's more obvious indebtedness

to the Persian. No book of primary significance ever made so insignificant an appearance. Two hundred and fifty copies only were printed, and two hundred of these FitzGerald presented to his publisher, Quaritch; most of the remainder were hurried into some obscure hiding-place, the author believing that scarcely anyone would be interested and not a few shocked by his work. He had not gauged incorrectly the lack of interest. A year after their publication, Rossetti and Swinburne came across copies at a penny each; this being the price the average inquisitive customer placed on the poem.

The *Rubáiyát* is like some rich mosaic, constructed out of divers patterns, each with a design and scheme of its own, yet related also in a large sense to some general scheme of decoration. In its cumulative effect it may be compared with *In Memoriam*. In each case we have a succession of moods cunningly wrought, each mood fashioned with delicate artistry, yet in its varying pictures presenting a certain oneness of design. Like Tennyson's great poem, the *Rubáiyát* is also a criticism of life, less explicit, less polemical in its form, but none the less definite. In its outlook Tennyson's poem stands midway between FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát* and Browning's *Easter Day*, blending the two characteristics of the day—a wistful hesitancy and a religious optimism—in a way that proved by its very compromise extremely welcome and soothing to many minds. FitzGerald's frank fatalism appealed to only a few, and repelled the majority; yet no more beautiful expression of an Epicurean philosophy has been uttered by an English writer. However we may resent its implications or dissent from its philosophy of life, we cannot as students of literature be blind to its artistic beauty, and its fine sincerity of utterance. FitzGerald's *Omar* has been likened to *Horace*, and the points of contact are admittedly obvious. Yet there are very pronounced differences.

Horace's gay cynical acceptance of things as they are, his airy and graceful materialistic outlook is fundamentally separated from the passionate regrets and genuine intensity of the *Rubáiyát*. Each writer, it is true, says in effect, Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die; but the tone is vastly different. "*Carpe Diem*," cried Horace, with the easy indifference of a cultured man of the world. Enjoy your day and make the most of your pleasant moments while you have the capacity to enjoy. FitzGerald strikes a more poignant note:

"Alas, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!
That Youth's sweet-scented Manuscript should close!
The Nightingale that in the Branches sang,
Ah whence, and whither flown again, who knows?"

Horace questions the meaning of life, and finding it insoluble, shrugs his shoulder and passes on; FitzGerald finds it equally inscrutable, but cannot adopt the careless pose of the Persian:

"There was the Door to which I found no Key;
There was a Veil past which I could not see;
Some little Talk awhile of Me and Thee
There seemed—and then no more of Thee and Me."

If we cannot accord FitzGerald a place among our greatest poets, because his work necessarily lacks creative originality in its primary inspiration, he is none the less a poet of great distinction, and a literary artist of the first order.

Inferior in his art to FitzGerald, yet like him endowed with a very real poetical imagination, and probably the most imaginative of all our sceptical poets, is JAMES THOMSON (the second). He was born in 1834 and died in 1882. His was a storm-tossed unhappy life, as much the result of an unfortunate temperament as of untoward circumstances. The son of a sailor, he was born at Port Glasgow, educated at the Caledonian Asylum, and became first an army schoolmaster, then a journalist. He was a striking though unequal writer of prose, and the same inequality pertains to his verse, but the power and intensity of his *City of Dreadful Night* (published originally in a "free-thought" newspaper, the *National Reformer*) is unquestionable. Thomson was forty years old when he wrote this poem, and the gloom and depression that envisage the poem are due largely to the many disappointments he had suffered, intensified by his constitutional intemperance.

Life is a hell, and Progress an illusion, that is the burden of the poem. Pessimism could go no further, but happily few pessimists ever carry out their convictions to the logical extreme. Even Thomson had his brighter moods, and fought for a while his despairing dread; while despite his views on progress, he grudged no time nor labour in aiding his fellow-men.

In addition to *The City of Dreadful Night*, Thomson wrote also *Vane's Story* (a thinly disguised fragment of autobiography), and *Weddah and Om-el-Bonain*; less powerful than *The City of Dreadful Night*, but exhibiting a great deal of poetic beauty, and though sombre in view the greys are flecked here with gold. These are all of considerable length. His earliest and latest work contain poems of lighter and more agreeable quality, such as *The Two Idylls of Cockayne*, and *Sunday up the River* and *Sunday at Hampstead* (1859), and *He heard her sing* (1892). As a man, his brighter moments are even more frequent than as a writer, and it is somewhat curious to read of him during his later days that on one occasion his host "recalls three days of incessant mirth and midsummer pleasure, Thomson being chief jester!"

His infirmities were unhappy legacies of a vitiated stock; for the rest he was, in his happier moments, an affectionate and steadfast friend, a delightful companion, and an unselfish worker in the cause of humanity.

I. POETRY: WOMEN POETS OF THE VICTORIAN ERA. Introduction—Joanna Baillie—Fanny Kemble—Helen Sheridan (Lady Dufferin)—Caroline Sheridan (Hon. Mrs. Norton)—Mrs. Clive—Emily Brontë—Charlotte Brontë—Anne Brontë—Elizabeth Barrett Browning—Christina Rossetti—Eliza Cook—Georgia Eliot—Adelaide Anne Procter—Jean Ingelow—Augusta Webster—Mathilde Blind—Michael Field—Madame Darmesteter—Jane Barlow—Katharine Tynan—Mrs. Meynell (see also *post*).

INTRODUCTION

That women should not only have made their mark in English fiction before they achieved distinction in verse, but continue to excel in prose rather than in verse, may at first sight appear strange to those who regard women as the more emotional and more imaginative sex. But so soon as we realise that psychological differentiation between the sexes (touched upon when dealing with the rise of the woman novelist), the predominance of woman in fiction and her relatively slight achievements in poetry become quite explicable. For woman is neither more emotional nor more imaginative than man; but her emotions and her imagination move on a *different* plane; a plane more concrete, more personal, more circumscribed in its interests, and the feminine impulse towards self-expression finds more readily, more easily, expression in a medium dealing on the whole less in abstractions, less logical and exacting in form than in verse. There are exceptions, of course, as I said in dealing with the rise of the woman novelist, just as there are masculine women and feminine men, and just as the normal sexual impulse is subject to the most extraordinary perversions; but as a rule—and happily for humankind—the imaginative and intellectual life of men and women is a complementary and divergent one.

In ballad writing, the contributions of women writers are comparatively slight; a few women have written songs, no whit inferior to the best that Burns has given us, though giving a distinctively feminine point of view—as for instance, *Auld Robin Gray*, *The Land o' the Leal*, and *Caller Herrin'*. Indeed, Scotland may claim priority to England as the nursery of the woman poet, for in addition to the balladists there was JOANNA BAILLIE who, though less original than Fanny Burney, occupies somewhat the same place in the development of the woman poet that the author of *Evelina* did in the development of the woman novelist. A more versatile and accomplished writer of verse was FANNY KEMBLE, grandniece of the tragedienne Mrs. Siddons, but neither in her case nor in the case of the facile Mrs. Hemans is there much originality, or a pronounced feminine note. Sara Coleridge wrote too little for us to judge fairly of her artistic power: but she had certainly a touch of the Coleridge genius, and of her intellectual gifts there can be no question. The genius of the Sheridan family is illustrated by its two brilliant sisters, one, HELEN SHERIDAN (Lady Dufferin), whose *Lament of the Irish Emigrant* has a tender charm that no familiarity can spoil; while her younger sister, CAROLINE (Hon. Mrs. Norton), whose life story inspired Meredith with his *Diana of the Crossways*, can at any rate hold her own with Mrs. Hemans as a flamboyant but spirited balladist. In MRS. CLIVE (1801–1870) there is less force than in many of her predecessors, but greater distinction and artistic finish.

In EMILY BRONTË there is both force and distinction, and that to a remarkable extent, slight as is the body of her work. Indeed Emily Brontë is the only one of the Brontë sisters whose verse has directly the touch of genius. CHARLOTTE BRONTË'S verse rarely, and ANNE BRONTË'S never, rises above the commonplace.

The position of Emily Brontë in our literature is indeed unique. That one whose experience of life was so limited, whose literary training was so slight, whose artistic content is so little varied and extensive in quantity should have impressed us indisputably, as a woman of high genius, is one of the marvels of literary history. Of *Wuthering Heights*, which is fundamentally not a novel but a prose-poem, rough hewn, elemental and sublime, mention is made elsewhere. I cannot, as some critics do, place her verse on a higher level, or even so high a level; though the famous *Last Lines* assuredly touch that level.

"No coward soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere:
I see Heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God within my breast,
Almighty, ever-present Deity!
Life—that in me has rest,
As I—undying Life—have power in thee!

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts: unutterably vain;
Worthless as withered words
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main,

To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by thine infinity;
So surely anchored on
The steadfast rock of immortality.

With wide-embracing love
Thy spirit animates eternal years,
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.

Though earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes ceased to be,
And Thou were left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee.

There is not room for Death
Nor atom that his might could render void:
Thou—Thou art Being and Breath,
And what Thou art may never be destroyed."

But she rarely wrote a stanza that has not the touch of fine poetry in it; such poems as *A little while, a little while, the weary task is put away*; *Remembrance*; *Shall Earth no more inspire thee?* *The Linnet in the rocky dell*—to mention a few only, are instinct with true poetic genius—a genius that triumphs over slight technical defects.

Greatness also belongs to a writer whose body of work is, of course, far more considerable, and more closely connected with the life of her age—ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

(1806–1861)

Elizabeth, daughter of Edward Moulton Barrett, was born at Coxhoe Hall, Durham, on March 6, 1806. She was naturally studious, thoughtful, and dreamy, delighting to

". . . escape
As a soul from the body, out of doors . . .
Then back again before the house should stir"—

and lived in a world of books, with a keen love for the Greek classics. Her garden was laid out to represent "Old Hector, once of Troy," and she almost believed that it contained the disembodied soul of her hero.

Educated at home and with her brother Edward until he was sent to Charterhouse, she pursued her studies with the blind scholar, Hugh Stuart Boyd, and wrote *The Battle of Marathon*, published by her father in 1820. At fifteen, through a spinal injury, she became an invalid.

Shortly after the removal of the family to London, the young poetess published *The Romaunt of Margret*, *The Rhyme of the Duchess May*, and *The Lay of the Brown Rosary*, and formed many notable friendships—Wordsworth, Landor, Miss Mitford—and John Kenyon, to whose unfailing interest she owed so much.

In 1840 her beloved brother Edward, while on a visit to her at Torquay, was drowned in Babbicombe Bay. At first prostrate with grief, her wonderful courage and innate cheerfulness induced her to throw herself into her work, although practically a prisoner moving only from bed to sofa.

Mutually attracted as they were, when Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett first met, she deemed it her duty to hide her feelings; but her scruples were soon overcome, and their marriage took place.

A deep sympathy with the oppressed and down-trodden women and children had found earlier expression. In later years she threw her whole heart and soul into the struggle for Italian Independence. After the Peace of Villafranca she was seriously ill, and the subsequent death of her hero, Cavour, probably hastened her end. Seized with a bronchial attack, she died in the arms of her husband on June 28, 1861, and was buried in the English cemetery at Florence.

An eager and enthusiastic student with a sensitive and strongly emotional nature, she began to write long before she had mastered the technique of her art. And her active imagination and viral interest in human affairs were always in excess of her power of execution. But despite an astonishing amount of slovenly writing there is work of the highest quality; and even her poorest output never lacked vitality. She has many of the merits of the great romantic writers; but the defects and weaknesses that poets like Keats and Coleridge sternly combated and subdued remained with Elizabeth Barrett Browning all her life, and have distressed some readers as they long ago distressed and exasperated FitzGerald, so as to blind them to the splendid opulence and deep imaginative insight of a goodly portion of her work.

Mrs. Browning's poetry bears much the same relation to the life of her times as does Charles Reade's fiction. It is charged with a passionate humanitarianism that makes of it a vigorous radical force in all the forward movements of the day. She is *qua* literary artist thoroughly romantic in her methods and ideals; but her romanticism is chiefly turned upon the problems of her own age and of her own sex; for Charlotte Brontë herself was not more thoroughly feminine in her outlook than Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Indeed it is the eagerness and enthusiasm with which she takes up these problems, that makes her careless as an artist. In her lack of form she resembles her husband, but there is this difference. Browning deliberately chose a rough medium, in order more effectually to express his thoughts; at times he is inartistic by *malice prepense*. Mrs. Browning seems entirely unconscious often what form she is using, when she is thoroughly possessed of her subject; and even when she is on the alert, her artistic sensibilities are blunter than those of Robert Browning, and the awkward line or the jarring sound will spoil some passage of great beauty.

Mrs. Browning's sequestered life and scholarly sympathies give necessarily a bookish inspiration to her earliest work, but her lyrical gift, with all its sweetness and spontaneity, is disclosed even in this experimental stage. The first poem in which she showed her power is the *Romaunt of Margret*. This is thoroughly in the old romantic vein; a vein that suited her methods very happily, for her sense of mystery, her simple human lovings, even her very peculiarities of diction harmonise with the genre of the romantic ballad. But she had too urgent a sense of present-day actualities to rest content with these pleasant ways of verse, although she has returned to them somewhat later in *The Rhyme of the Duchess May* and the *Lay of the Brown Rosary*; poems richer than *Margret* in romantic feeling and certainly surer in workmanship.

Personal griefs and delicate health suddenly forced upon her attention the universal problem of pain and suffering, and for some years her work is essentially didactic in form, as witness *The Cry of the Human* and *The Dead Pan*. But despite lines of beauty, these poems are lacking in that appealing magic that we find in her best work.

One of her happiest social utterances in verse is *The Cry of the Children*, that by its large-hearted compassion and simplicity of treatment, deservedly takes a high place in propaganda poetry; though here and there perhaps the greater artistic restraint shown by her contemporary, Hood, would have added to its poignancy.

The Cry of the Children

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,
And *that* cannot stop their tears.
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows,
The young birds are chirping in the nest,
The young fawns are playing with the shadows,
The young flowers are blowing toward the west—

But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.

They look up with their pale and drunken faces,
And their looks are sad to see,
For the man's hoary anguish drawn and presses
Down the cheeks of infancy.
"Your old earth," they say, "is very dreary;
Our young feet," they say, "are very weak!
Few paces have we taken, yet are weary—
Our grave-rest is very far to seek.
Ask the aged why they weep, and not the children;
For the outside earth is cold;
And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering,
And the graves are for the old."

. . . . . .

Alas, alas, the children! they are seeking
Death in life, as best to have;
They are binding up their hearts away from breaking
With a cerement from the grave.
Go out, children, from the mine and from the city,
Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do;
Pluck your handfuls of the meadow cowslips pretty,
Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through!
But they answer, "Are your cowslips of the meadows
Like our weeds anear the mine?
Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,
From your pleasures fair and fine!

"For oh," say the children, "we are weary,
And we cannot run or leap;
If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
To drop down in them and sleep.
Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping,
We fall upon our faces, trying to go;
And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,
The reddest flower would look pale as the snow;
For, all day, we drag our burden tiring
Through the coal-dark, underground—
Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron
In the factories, round and round.

"For, all day, the wheels are droning, turning,—
Their wind comes in our faces,—
Till our hearts turn,—our head, with pulses burning,
And the walls turn in their places.
Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling,
Turns the long light that drops adown the wall,
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling,
All are turning, all the day, and we with all.
And all the day, the iron wheels are droning,
And sometimes we could pray,
'O ye wheels' (breaking out in a mad moaning),
'Stop! be silent for to-day!'"

. . . . . .

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see,
For they mind you of their angels in high places,
With eyes turned on Deity!—
"How long," they say, "how long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand, to move the world, on a child's heart,—
Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?
Our blood splashes upward, O gold-heaper,
And your purple shows your path!
But the child's sob in the silence curses deeper
Than the strong man in his wrath."

The love story of Mrs. Browning proved a significant factor not only in her emotional experience but in her work as a poet. The poems in which she has enshrined that love remain her highest achievement in poetry. The so-called *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, published in 1850, were written some years earlier.

Browning has told us of his first introduction to them: "One day, early in 1847, their breakfast being over, Mrs. Browning went upstairs, while her husband stood at the window watching the street till the table should be cleared. He was presently aware of some one behind him, although the servant was gone. It was Mrs. Browning, who held him by the shoulder to prevent his turning to look at her, and at the same time pushed a packet of papers into the pocket of his coat. She told him to read that, and tear it up if he did not like it; and then she fled again to her own room."

The restraining influence necessarily laid upon the writer by the form of the sonnet, gave unusual excellence to her craftsmanship here, whilst the personal character of the poem was particularly suited to her genius. She did her best invariably under the influence of powerful emotion, and her intense affection for Robert Browning finds frank and unreserved expression in these beautiful poems. No finer statement of a woman's passion—of love from the feminine standpoint—exists in our literature.

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE

I

I thought once how Theocritus had sung
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,
Who each one in a gracious hand appears
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young:
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,
I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,
So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair,
And a voice said in mastery while I strove . . .
"Guess now who holds thee?"—"Death," I said.
But there,
The silver answer rang. . . . "Not Death, but Love."

XXIV

If I leave all for thee, wilt thou exchange
And be all to me? Shall I never miss
Home-talk and blessing and the common kiss
That comes to each in turn, nor count it strange,
When I look up, to drop on a new range
Of walls and floors . . . another home than this?
Nay, wilt thou fill that place by me which is
Filled by dead eyes too dear to know change?
That's hardest. If to conquer love, has tried,
To conquer grief, tries more . . . as all things prove;
For grief indeed is love and grief beside.
Alas, I have grieved so I am hard to love.
Yet love me—wilt thou? Open thine own heart wide
And fold within, the wet wings of thy dove.

XLIII

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God chooses,
I shall but love thee better after death.

Italy, that affected so strongly her husband's work, proved also a freshening inspiration in her own; better health, a more varied experience of life,

played their part also in giving a larger ease and surer mastery of her material to her work during her married life. Undoubtedly, *Aurora Leigh*, which is the chief fruit of these later years, presents us at once with the writer's maturest thought on the social problems of her day and some of her best work as a poet. *Aurora Leigh* is a fragment of spiritual autobiography, and its vitality lies in its intimate revelation of the writer's nature, temperament, and outlook. The story, of course, is a fictitious one; and like many stories in verse, is neither very clear nor very effective. Mrs. Browning had little narrative power, and it would have been better had she not planned her poem on so ambitious and elaborate a scale. Its faults are obvious enough; it lacks dramatic grip, lacks at times knowledge of the phases of life she is depicting, and is hampered by the thesis she is so anxious to prove. But despite these weaknesses, it is rich in great poetry, while its passion, its sincerity, and its pulsing life are incontestable. Moreover, like nearly everything that Mrs. Browning wrote, it is essentially an eloquent exposition of the woman's point of view.

Such memorable lines as these take the reader by the throat, so true and beautiful are they in their poignant femininity:

"How dreary 'tis for women to sit still
On winter nights by solitary fires
And hear the nations praising them far off,
Too far! aye, praising our quick sense of love,
Our very heart of passionate womanhood,
Which could not beat so in the verse without
Being present also in the unkissed lips
And eyes undried because there's none to ask
The reason they grew moist."

. . . . . .

"No lily-muffled horn of a summer-bee,
But finds some coupling with the spinning stars;
No pebble at your foot, but proves a sphere;
No chaffinch, but implies the cherubim;
And (glancing on my own thin, veined wrist),
In such a little tremor of the blood
The whole strong clamour of a vehement soul
Doth utter itself distinct. Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes,
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries,
And daub their natural faces unaware
More and more from the first similitude."

It is tragic to think that a poem that contains work of this quality, fine touches moreover, such as the following:

"Young
As Eve with Nature's daybreak in her Face!"

. . . . . .

"Because we are of one flesh after all
And need our flannel (with a proper sense
Of difference in the quality) . . .
She had lived
A sort of cage-bird life, born in a cage,
Accounting that to leap from perch to perch
Was act and joy enough for any bird."

. . . . . .

"These hot fire-seeds of Creation held
In Jove's clenched palm before the worlds were sown,"

should have so many platitudes and such arid wastes to obscure and almost choke the fresh and lovely oases that greet the patient reader.

None the less, when criticism has had its say, and the wheat has been vigorously winnowed from the chaff, there is a goodly crop of precious sustenance. For with all her limitations she is one of our great poets.

In striking contrast with Elizabeth Barrett Browning is Christina Rossetti. In the first place, her body of work is slight. In the second place, it is practically in one key; a wistful and delicate asceticism. In the third place, it is wrought with most scrupulous art.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

Christina Georgina Rossetti, born on December 5, 1830, was the younger daughter of Gabriele Rossetti, and sister of the poet-painter. With the exception of a tour in Normandy in 1861, and with her mother to Italy in 1865, she lived a life of retirement in London, devoted to her parents, to her poetry, and religious works.

At eleven years old she began to write verses, a small volume of these being privately published by her grandfather, Gaetano Polidori, in 1847; she likewise wrote some lyrics for *The Germ*, the organ of the Pre-Raphaelites, in 1850, under the *nom-de-plume* of "Ellen Alleyn."

The deep religious tone pervading most of her work was also part of Christina Rossetti's daily life. She was a consistent member of the Church of England, and much as her heart's love went out to Charles Cayley, who wished to marry her, she refused to do so rather than consent to a union with one not in sympathy with her religious views.

Self-sacrificing throughout life, she was most retiring and sensitive in disposition. Of a naturally delicate constitution, the last few years of her life were those of an invalid, and after a long illness she died on December 29, 1894, and was buried in Highgate Cemetery.

Her principal works are *Goblin Market and other Poems*, published in 1862, *The Prince's Progress* (1866), *A Pageant and other Poems* (1881), *Verses* (1893), *New Poems*, published posthumously in 1896, and *Sing-Song*, a book of verse for children.

Her work is almost entirely in the minor key; and looking merely at the subject-matter of her poems, one would expect to find the constant preoccupation with death and the futility of life, intolerably sad and depressing. But so exquisite is her art, so subtle her sense of beauty, that the insistent minor fascinates us rather than depresses us, and we are distracted from her melancholy matter by her charm of manner, partly also because she does not strive or cry, does not wail or repine, but accepts the pain and sadness of life as she finds it, and though at the opposite pole of thought from FitzGerald's, yet like him expresses, in consummate art, her temperament and outlook. Like her brother, she could treat supernaturalism at times in the spirit of fantastic decoration, with a kind of deliberate artistic triviality that is very attractive in its way. Of such is *Goblin Market* and *The Prince's Progress*. Unlike him, however, she is not merely enamoured of religion for its æsthetic beauty, for it appealed to her deepest feelings; and as a devotional poet she has no superior in English literature, save Crashaw and Francis Thompson.

Yet with all her intense religious feeling, there is nothing of the preacher or teacher in her. She does not seek, with Mrs. Browning, to justify the ways of God to man; she is content to picture with subtle simplicity the mystical moods of the spirit. Perhaps Blake alone among our poets can convey with equal clearness the reality of things unseen and unheard of by the ordinary senses; only his method is quite different from that of Christina Rossetti. Blake impresses us with his power of actualising the supernaturalism of the natural world; Christina Rossetti with her gift of actualising rather the naturalism of the supernatural world. But her peculiar originality as a religious poet lies in the fact that, unlike the majority of religious poets, she is in no way concerned with preaching to others or moralising for others, or dealing with the intellectual difficulties that beset faith. She believes—and worships. Her entire attitude is that of a worshipper; and in the moods of awe and ecstasy, she certainly has few rivals.

Take for instance the poem *Despised and Rejected*. What other poet would have visualised in all its naked simplicity this spiritual tragedy, without a word of comment, without the slightest effort to apply it, as the theologians say, to the individual life or to the life of her day.

"Then I cried out upon him: Cease,
Leave me in peace;
Fear not that I should crave
Aught thou mayst have.
Leave me in peace, vex trouble me no more,
Lest I arise and chase thee from my door.
What, shall I not be let
Alone, that thou dost vex me yet?

But all night long that voice spake urgently:
'Open to Me.'
Still harping in mine ears:
'Rise, let Me in.'
Pleading with tears:
'Open to Me, that I may come to thee.'
While the dew dropped, while the dark hours were cold:
'My Feet bleed, see My Feet,
See My Hands bleed that bring thee grace,
My Heart doth bleed for thee,
Open to Me.'

So till the break of day:
Then died away
That voice, in silence as of sorrow;
Then footsteps echoing like a sigh
Passed me by,
Lingering footsteps slow to pass.
On the morrow
I saw upon the grass
Each footprint marked in blood, and on my door
The mark of blood for evermore."

Critics like her brother have noted the ascetic passion of her verse, yet the asceticism is not that of the bloodless soul of one in whom loves and living are withered up, but of one who has all the capacity for enjoying the sensuous delights of life, yet has deliberately put them aside, and turned her eyes skywards, from choice.

The woman who could write

A Birthday

My heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
My heart is like an apple-tree
Whose boughs are bent with thickest fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these
Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down;
Hang it in vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves, and pomegranates,
And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
In leaves and silver fleur-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life
Is come, my love is come to me,

and

An Echo from Willowwood

Two gazed into a pool, he gazed and she,
Not hand in hand, yet heart in heart, I think,
Pale and reluctant on the water's brink,
As on the brink of parting which must be.
Each eyed the other's aspect, she and he,
Each felt one hungering heart leap up and sink,
Each tasted bitterness which both must drink,
There on the brink of life's dividing sea.
Lilies upon the surface, deep below
Two wistful faces craving each for each,
Resolute and reluctant without speech:—
A sudden ripple made the faces flow
One moment joined, to vanish out of reach:
So those hearts joined, and ah! were parted so,

and

Song-Song

Love me,—I love you,
Love me, my baby;
Sing it high, sing it low,
Sing as it may be.

Mother's arms under you,
Her eyes above you;
Sing it high, sing it low,
Love me,—I love you,

was no anæmic votary of what George Eliot has called aptly "Other worldliness."

There is all the magic of the half lights about Christina Rossetti's verse; its subdued melancholy, and its monotone. We miss, naturally, the immense vitality, the varied beauty, the glory of colour, that attend our poets of the morning and midday. Her appeal is more restricted, and there are times when its brooding sweetness and faintly tinted landscape oppress us, even enervate us.

An incomparably greater artist than Mrs. Browning, with a level excellence in her verse to which the writer of *Aurora Leigh* could never reach, with a more delicate and subtle intuition into certain moods and phases of the imaginative life, she yet lacks that thrilling human note which characterises Mrs. Browning at her greatest. In their sonnet sequences, where the two women challenge comparison, each is at her best. We see the breadth of the one and the subtlety of the other. It is not that Christina Rossetti is less capable of passionate emotion than Mrs. Browning; at times she can be as fierce in her ardour; and her music has the same power of intensity as Mrs. Browning's, though it is less varied. Miss Rossetti is oftener on the heights of Parnassus than her contemporary; but now and again Mrs. Browning has touched a peak to which Christina Rossetti never attained.

Eliza Cook (1818–1889), despite her popular vogue, scarcely reaches the mediocre level of Mrs. Hemans; and quite a number of verse writers fall considerably below that modest standard.

The verse of GEORGE ELIOT deserves attention if only for her position as a highly cultured woman and a great novelist, but it is far inferior to her prose. There are no cheap rhetorical effects, no facile sentimentalities; but the merits of *The Spanish Gypsy* and *The Legend of Jubal* are mostly negative; and though here and there a fine thought is happily expressed, there is really nothing that could not have been said equally well and better in prose. In her shorter pieces there are pleasant fancies to be found; but her Muse on the whole is stiff and cumbrous, and her imaginative sensibility never plays freely and easily. There is more poetry in a passage from *Silas Marner* than in all her verses put together.

A good deal of agreeable verse was written by ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTER (1825–1864), who inherited her father "Barry Cornwall's" gift of verse-making. Much of her work was published by Charles Dickens in *Household Words* under a pseudonym; and for a while he was ignorant who his contributor really was. She was popular, as Eliza Cook was popular, for she had all the elements that make for an immediate appeal; she was facile, sentimental, and homely; but she lacked power, and freshness of inspiration.

Her contemporary JEAN INGELOW (1820–97) had both power and to some extent freshness. Prolix and unequal, she is decidedly one of the poets who count. There is grip and imagination in *The High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire*, and *Requiescat in Pace*; and her shorter pieces especially display much versatility and subtlety of fancy. If she is not always musical, that is because she was not content with the jog-trot rhythm usually in favour, and there is abundant technical cleverness in some of her metrical experiments.

THE HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST OF LINCOLNSHIRE (1571)

The old mayor climbed the belfry tower,
The ringers ran by two, by three;
"Pull, if ye never pulled before;
Good ringers, pull your best," quoth he,
"Play uppe, play uppe, O Boston bells!
Ply all your changes, all your swells,
Play uppe 'The Brides of Enderby.'"

Men say it was a stolen tyde—
The Lord that sent it, He knows all;
But in mine ears doth still abide
The message that the bells let fall:
And there was nought of strange, beside
The flights of mews and peewits pied
By millions crouched on the old sea wall.

I sat and spun within the doore,
My thread brake off, I raised myne eyes;
The level sun, like ruddy ore,
Lay sinking in the barron skies,
And dark against day's golden death
She moved where Lindis wandereth,
My sonne's faire wife, Elizabeth.

"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
Ere the early dews were falling;
Farre away I heard her song.
"Cusha! Cusha!" all along
Where the reedy Lindis floweth,
Floweth, floweth;
From the meads where melick groweth
Faintly came her milking song—

. . . . . .

I looked without, and lo! my sonne
Came riding downe with might and main;
He raised a shout as he drew on,
Till all the welkin rang again,
"Elizabeth! Elizabeth!"
(A sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth).

"The olde sea wall (he cried) is downe,
The rising tide comes on apace,
And boats adrift in yonder towne
Go sailing uppe the market-place."
He shook as one that looks on death:
"God save you, mother!" straight he saith;
"Where is my wife, Elizabeth?"

"Good sonne, where Lindis winds away,
With her two bairns I marked her long;
And ere yon bells beganne to play
Afar I heard her milking song."
He looked across the grassy lee,
To right, to left, "Ho, Enderby!"
They rang "The Brides of Enderby!"

With that he cried and beat his breast;
For, lo! along the river's bed
A mighty eygre reared his crest,
And uppe the Lindis raging sped,
It swept with thunderous noises loud;
Shaped like a curling snow-white cloud,
Or like a demon in a shroud.

And rearing Lindis backward pressed
Shook all her trembling bankes amaine;
Then madly at the eygre's breast
Flung uppe her weltering walls again.
Then bankes came downe with run and rout—
Then beaten foam flew round about—
Then all the mighty floods were out.

. . . . . .

That flow strewed wrecks about the grass,
That ebbe swept out the flocks to sea;
A fatal ebbe and flow, alas!
To manye more than myne and mee:
But each will mourn his own (she saith)
And sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.

I shall never hear her more
By the reedy Lindis shore,
"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling
Ere the early dews be falling;
I shall never hear her song:—

. . . . . .

"Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
Mellow, mellow;
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot;
Quit your pipes of parsley hollow,
Hollow, hollow;
Come uppe Lightfoot, rise and follow;
Lightfoot, Whitefoot,
From your clovers lift the head;
Come uppe jetty, follow, follow,
Jetty, to the milking shed."

ECHO AND THE FERRY

Ay, Oliver! I was but seven, and he was eleven:
He looked at me pouting and rosy. I blushed where I stood.
They had told us to play in the orchard (and I only seven!
A small guest at the farm); but he said "Oh, a girl was no good!"
So he whistled and went, he went over the stile to the wood.
It was sad, it was sorrowful! Only a girl—only seven!
At home in the dark London smoke I had not found it out.
The pear-trees looked on in their white, and blue birds flashed about,
And they too were angry as Oliver. Were they eleven?
I thought so. Yes, every one else was eleven—eleven!

. . . . . .

In Augusta Webster (1837–1894) we have a writer less attractive superficially than Jean Ingelow, but with an intrinsic strength and originality of outlook that places her easily among the most distinguished women poets of the era. She was a woman of great mental energy and wide practical experience of life. Her father was a distinguished rear-admiral, and during her earlier years she lived on board ship at Banff Castle and at Penzance. Later on we find her at Cambridge, while her father was Chief Constable of the counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon. She married a Fellow of Trinity College in 1863, and for a period sat as member of the London School Board. She was always interested in social and educational subjects, and has written about them with ability and discernment. But it is as a poet that she will best be remembered; a poet with a deep and tender insight into life, and with dramatic power and psychological subtlety to reinforce her insight.

Some of her best work may be found in *A Woman Sold, and other Poems* (1867), and *Portraits* (1870). Like all high-class work achieved by women, it is distinctly feminine, and the woman's point of view is insisted on again and again with force and passion. In such poems as *A Castaway*, with its grim and powerful picture of the so-called "daughter of joy"; in *Too Faithful*, with its simple, unforced pathos; *Tired*, with its searching analysis of a superficial life; in the delicate Orientalism of *Yu-Pe-Ya's Lute*; and in some of her scholarly translations and dramas, she has made a genuine and valuable addition to English letters.

Too Faithful

Too fond and faithful, wilt thou vainly yet
  Waste love on one who does not ask it now
And, having wronged thee, seeks but to forget?

A fairer face smiles on his love, and thou,
  Thou with thy truth, and fervour, stand aside,
Thou nobler-natured to her beauty low.

There lingers in thee yet this much of pride
  That he who thus has wronged himself and thee
Could never win thy truth whate'er betide.

Since in thine eyes he never more may be
  So true and great that thou couldst bend to him,
Oh never more! Why is thy heart not free?

Oh wilt thou weep because his eyes are dim?
  And wilt thou blush because his choice is shame
Falling on one whose love is but a whim?

An idle whim to stir a languid heart,
  A business challenging the more and less
And rise and falling of the marriage mart.

Yet is it cause to deepen thy distress
  That he shall suffer for his misplaced trust?
For did he come into thy life to bless?

He buys a bauble something touched with rust,
  Passing through many hands that did not hold,
Its lustre deadened by the market's dust.

But what to thee, if he for this has sold
  His faith, his living heart, his nobler mind,
And given gold for that which is not gold?

Oh better that he should rest ever blind,
  Better for him—but should he wake to see
The gem, he dreamed so pure, of paltriest kind.

Too fond and faithful, what were that to thee?
  Thou hast thy sorrow; wherefore look beyond
To sorrow for his sorrow that shall be?

Too fond and faithful, weak in being fond,
  False to thyself by faithfulness to him,
Since he has freed thee wherefore art thou bond?

But if his cup hold poison to the rim,
  Dregged with life's malady beyond life's cure,
Why should its bitter drops to thine o'erbrim?

And yet, if thou hast love so deep and pure
  That, whatsoever change the years shall bring,
Before the sight of God it may endure,

And if it seem to thee a holy thing
  That, should he need it in his day of pain,
Thou mayst have sister power of comforting,

Well, if thy love be thus, let it remain;
  Thou wilt not fear to name it in thy prayer,
As though it were some passion wild and vain.

Well, let it be, it may make less that care
  Centered in self thou canst not wholly quell,
If others, not thine own its place shall share.

Not to Be

The rose said "Let but this long rain be past,
  And I shall feel my sweetness in the sun
And pour its fulness into life at last."
  But when the rain was done,
But when dawn sparkled through unclouded air
  She was not there.

The lark said "Let but winter be away,
  And blossoms come, and light, and I will soar
And lose the earth, and be the voice of day."
  But when the snows were o'er,
But when spring broke in bluebirds overhead,
  The lark was dead.

And myriad roses made the garden glow,
  And skylarks caroll'd all the summer long—
What lack of birds to sing and flowers to blow?
  Yet, ah, lost scent, lost song!
Poor empty rose, poor lark that never trilled!
  Dead unfulfilled!

From Yu-pe-ya's Lute

Too soon so fair, fair lilies
To bloom is then to wane;
  The folded bud has still
  To-morrow at its will;
Blown flowers can never bloom again.

  Too soon so bright, bright noontide;
The sun that now is high
  Will henceforth only sink
  Towards the western brink;
Day that's at prime begins to die.

* * * * * *

Like Augusta Webster, Mathilde Blind (1847–1896) was a woman of wide culture, and if she has not the original force and imaginative insight of her contemporary, she was at any rate one of the women poets who count. She has a sense of drama and a distinct lyrical gift, but she is at her best as a sonneteer, and had her work been surer, would have achieved a higher position among women poets. In her sonnet *The Dead* and in some of the songs in *Love in Exile*, we have worthy illustrations of her power and grace as a verse writer.

LOVE IN EXILE

Why will you haunt me unawares,
And walk into my sleep,
Pacing its shadowy thoroughfares,
Where long-dried perfume scents the airs,
While ghosts of sorrow creep,
Where on Hope's ruined altar stairs
With ineffectual beams,
The Moon of Memory coldly glares
Upon the land of dreams?

My yearning eyes were fain to look
Upon your hidden face;
Their love, alas! you could not brook,
But in your own you mutely took
My hand, and for a space
You wrung it till I throbbed and shook,
And woke with wildest moan
And wet face channelled like a brook
With your tears or my own.

A SUMMER WIND

O wind, thou hast thy kingdom in the trees,
And all thy royalties
Sweep through the land to-day.
It is mid June,
And thou, with all thy instruments in tune,
Thine orchestra
Of heaving fields and heavy swinging fir,
Strikest a lay
That doth rehearse
Her ancient freedom to the universe.
All other sound in awe
Repeats its law.
The bird is mute; the sea
Sucks up its waves; from rain
The burthened clouds refrain,
To listen to thee in thy leafery,
Thou unconfined,
Lavish, large, soothing, refluent summer wind.

Two women poets who deserve mention, wrote in collaboration as "MICHAEL FIELD." Their work shows no slight measure of that breadth of imagination that we associate with the Elizabethan age. Even their shortcomings are Elizabethan, and come from an excess of emotion, and an undisciplined power, that one may readily overlook, in view of their many felicities.

There is an agreeable lyrical quality in the verse of Madame DARMESTETER, and a fresher and original note in the Irish rural muse of Miss JANE BARLOW; while among other living lyric-writers none are sweeter and more spontaneous in their song than KATHARINE TYNAN (Mrs. Hinkson); show finer tragic power than DORA SIGERSON (Mrs. Clement Shorter); or a more delicate sense of artistic form than Mrs. MEYNELL. Indeed in sheer craftsmanship, Mrs. Meynell is certainly the ablest of women verse-writers now living.

I. POETRY: MISCELLANEOUS POETS OF THE LATER VICTORIAN ERA. William Bell-Scott—Thomas Woolner—Noel Paton—Coventry Patmore—Sydney Dobell—Alexander Smith—John Stuart Blackie—Arthur O'Shaughnessy—Aubrey de Vere—Samuel Ferguson—William Allingham—Lewis Morris—T. E. Brown—Charles Mackay—George Macdonald—Robert Buchanan—William Butler Yeats—Gerald Massey—E. C. Jones—Henry and Frank Lushington—Roden Noel—Philip Bourke Marston—T. Gordon Hake—William Cory—Francis Turner Palgrave—Lord de Tabley—"Owen Meredith"—Edwin Arnold—William Roscoe—Sebastian Evans—G. A. Simcox—W. B. Rands—Mortimer Collins—Canon Dixon—F. Lyall—A. L. Gordon—H. C. Kendall—John Payne—William Canton—Alfred Austin—Richard Garnett—F. W. Myers—Edward Dowden—J. A. Symonds—Ernest Myers—William Sharp—Samuel Waddington—Andrew Lang—John Todhunter—George Barlow—F. B. Money-Coutts—Alfred Hayes—Richard Le Gallienne—Norman Gale—Thomas Ashe—R. L. Stevenson—Lawrence Binyon—W. E. Henley—Henry Newbolt—Wilfred Scawen Blunt—Robert Bridges—Francis Thompson.

MISCELLANEOUS POETS OF THE LATER VICTORIAN ERA

AMONG the chief influences in the poetry of later Victorian times is that of Tennyson, Browning, Rossetti, and Swinburne. For instance we can trace Swinburne in Lord de Tabley; Rossetti in William Bell-Scott; Tennyson in Mr. Stephen Phillips; Browning's influence has been more diffused and indirect, and has been shown in the subject-matter rather than the style of a good many modern verse-writers; whereas the influence of Tennyson and Swinburne has been one of manner and treatment. The influence of Pre-Raphaelitism is apparent in the later verse of WILLIAM BELL-SCOTT (1812–1890), though much of his thoughtful and cultured verse belongs to an earlier period, and is independent of the romantic inspiration. But his association with Rossetti makes it convenient to treat of him as one of the more critical of the Pre-Raphaelite group. His work is essentially philosophic and contemplative; and he is more of a thinker in verse than a good literary artist. Yet there is some originality in his work, especially *The Sphinx*; and he is a more considerable figure in literature than THOMAS WOOLNER (1826–1892), whose excellence lay in another art than that of letters, or the poet-painter NOEL PATON (1821–1901).

COVENTRY PATMORE (1823–1896) has never lacked powerful admirers, and his place among the greater poets would be upheld by not a few able critics. None the less, despite his many rhythmic felicities, and his undoubted technical skill, his excessive fluency, and frequent banalities, seem to the present writer to exclude Patmore from the front rank. His projected poem in many volumes on the joys of married life was never carried out, "for the simple reason," as his great admirer Dr. Garnett has admitted, "that though married life is a very great subject, it is not a very poetical

one." Certainly, to have justified its thesis, *The Angel in the House* should have been dealt with in more concrete fashion, and with such a power of psychological insight as Browning and Meredith brought to their work in *James Lee's Wife* and *Modern Love*. *The Angel in the House* is a happier piece of work than *Faithful for Ever* or *The Victories of Love*; but its merit lies in fine passages of description and flashes of sententious wisdom. His later work, *The Unknown Eros*, and *Amelia*, have less pedestrian qualities perhaps, and show a remarkable mastery of metre; but Patmore was too unguarded as a poet about political and religious prejudices. These are out of place in serious verse. As a writer of satirical verse, he might have done notable work, had he given some of the time to it that he expended on his "angelic" themes. He was a man of very distinctive individuality, with a power of neat and trenchant expression, as shown in his famous squib on the first German Emperor:

"That is to say, my dear Augusta,
We've had another awful buster;
Ten thousand Frenchmen sent below,
Thank God from whom all blessings flow."

Wind and Wave

The wedded light and heat,
Winnowing the witless space,
Without a let,
What are they till they beat
Against the sleepy sod, and there beget
Perchance the violet?
Is the One found,
Amongst a wilderness of as happy grace,
To make Heaven's bound;
So that in Her
All which is hath of sensitively good
Is sought and understood
After the narrow mode the mighty Heavens prefer?
She, as a little breeze
Following still Night,
Ripples the spirit's cold, deep seas
Into delight;
But, in a while,
The unmeasurable smile
Is broke by fresher airs to flashes blent
With darkling discontent;
And all the subtle zephyr hurries gay,
And all the heaving ocean heaves one way,
T'ward the void sky-line and an unguess'd weal,
Until the vanward billows lee
The agitating shallows, and divine the goal,
And to foam roll,
And spread and stray
And traverse wildly, like delighted hands,
The fair and fleckless sands;
And so the whole
Unfathomable and immense
Triumphing tide comes at the last to reach
And burst in wind-kiss'd splendours on the deafening beach,
Where forms of children in first innocence
Laugh and fling pebbles on the rainbow'd crest
Of its untired unrest.

"He never weeded his garden," said Dr. John Brown, "and will I fear be strangled in his waste fertility." These words, uttered of Sydney Dobell (1824–1874), epitomise truly enough his besetting weakness. Lack of self-criticism had seriously affected the reputation of greater poets like Mrs. Browning and Wordsworth; and Dobell was not a great poet; yet he is often a remarkable one, and as a poet with a genuine passion for liberty, he has written some spirited and stirring verse, notably *The Youth of England to Garibaldi's Legion*, and *England in Time of War*.

The Market-Wife's Song

The butter an' the cheese weel stowit they be,
I sit on the hen-coop, the eggs on my knee,
The land kail jigs as we jog owre the rigs,
The gray mare's tail it wags wi' the kail,
The warm simmer sky is blue aboon a',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

I sit on the coop, I look straight before,
But my heart it is awa' the braid ocean owre,
I see the bluidy fiel' where my ain bonny chiel',
My wee bairn o' a', gead to fight or to fa',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

I see the gran' o' loun o' the big forria' loun,
I hear the cannon soun', I see the reek aboon;
It may be lang John lettin' aff his gun,
It may be the mist—your mother dims wist—
It may be the kirk, it may be the kye',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

An' I ken the Black Sea, ayont the rock o' dool,
Like a muckle blot o' ink in a buik fra' the schule,
An' Jock! it gars me min' o' your buikies lang syne,
An' mindin' o' it a' the tears begin to fa',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

Then the bull roars fra' the scaur, like rock's a bull ageu,
An' I hear the trump o' war, an' the carse is fu' o' men,
Up an' doun the morn I ken the bugle horn,
Like a birdie sma' is the fleein' cannon ba',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

Guid Heavens! the Russian host! We maun o'en gie up for lost,
Gin ye gain the battle hae ye countit a' the cost?
Ye may win a gran' name, but wad wee Jock come hame?
Dinna fecht, dinna fecht! there's room for us a',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

In vain, in vain, in vain! They are marchin' near and far!
Wi' swords an' slings an' wi' instruments o' war!
Oh, day see dark an' sair! like man seven feet an' mair!
I bow my head an' say, "Gin the Lord wad smit them a'!"
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

Then forth fra' their ban' there steps an armed man,
His tairge at his breast an' his claymore in his han',
His gowd pow glitters fine an' his shadow fa's behin',
I think o' great Goliath as he stan's before them a',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

To meet the Philistine leaps a laddie fra' our line,
Oh, my heart! oh, my heart! 'tis that wee lad o' mine!
I start to my legs—an' doun fu' the eggs—
The cocks an' hens a' they cackle an' they ca',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

Oh, Jock, my Hielan' lad,—oh, Jock, my Hielan' lad,
Never till I saw thee that moment was I glad!
Aye sooner sud thou dee before thy mither's e'e
Than a man o' the clan sud hae stept out but thee!
An' sae I cry to God—while the hens cackle a',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

A Nuptial Eve

Oh, happy, happy maid,
In the year of war and death
She wears no sorrow!
By her face so young and fair,
By the happy wreath
That rules her happy hair,
She might be a bride to-morrow!
She sits and sings within her moonlit bower,
Her moonlit bower in rosy June,
Yet, ah, her bridal breath,
Like fragrance from some sweet night-blowing flower,
Moves from her moving lips in many a mournful tune!

She sings no song of love's despair,
She sings no lover lowly laid,
No fond peculiar grief
Has ever touched or bud or leaf
Of her unblighted spring.
She sings because she needs must sing:
She sings the sorrow of the air
Whereof her voice is made,
That night in Britain howsoe'er
On any chords the fingers strayed,
They gave the notes of care.
A dim sad legend old
Long since in some pale shade
Of some far twilight told,
She knows not when or where.
She sings, with trembling hand on trembling lute-strings laid:

"The murmur of the mourning ghost
That keeps the shadowy kine;—
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

"Ravelston, Ravelston,
The merry path that leads
Down the golden morning hill
And through the silver meads;

"Ravelston, Ravelston,
The stile beneath the tree,
The maid that kept her mother's kine,
The song that sang she!

"She sang her song, she kept her kine,
She sat beneath the thorn,
When Andrew Keith of Ravelston,
Rode thro' the Monday morn.

"His henchmen sing, his hawk-bells ring,
His belted jewels shine:—
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

"Year after year, where Andrew came,
Comes evening down the glade;
And still there sits a moonshine ghost
Where sat the sunshine maid.

"Her misty hair is faint and fair,
She keeps the shadowy kine;—
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

"I lay my hand upon the stile,
The stile is lone and cold;
The burnie that goes babbling by
Says naught that can be told.

"Yet, stranger! here, from year to year,
She keeps her shadowy kine;—
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

"Step out three steps wher Andrew stood—
Why blanch thy cheeks for fear?
The ancient stile is not alone,
'Tis not the burn I hear!

"She makes her immemorial moan,
She keeps her shadowy kine;—
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!"

If the quality of Dobell's work at his best shows an energising power, that of his contemporary ALEXANDER SMITH (1830–1867), exhibits high pictorial beauty. Three volumes practically cover his work in verse, though it must not be forgotten that he wrote a charming volume of rural essays, *Dreamthorpe*; these volumes are *Poems* (1853), *City Poems* (1857), *Edwin of Deira* (1861). Of these, undoubtedly the finest flowers of his imagination are to be found in the *City Poems*. Over ornate at times, his descriptive passages abound in many beauties. His picture of Glasgow is one of his most remarkable things, and is rich in the poetry of crowds—a poetry so seldom realised by our verse writers.

"Instead of shores where ocean beats
I hear the ebb and flow of streets."

Where Alexander Smith stumbles is in the scenic extravagances of his style. In this respect he is in the same company with Dobell; but otherwise they have little in common, and whereas Dobell's work suffers from excess of thought, Smith's suffers from excess of feeling—that is to say, his sensuousness runs riot on occasion, as was the case with the youthful Keats. He had a good knowledge of blank verse, which he used with excellent effect in earlier verse, *The Life Drama*. He is certainly more neglected as a poet than he deserves to be, and if once he was unduly praised, to-day he is unfairly passed over.

GLASGOW

Sing, Poet, 'tis a merry world;
That cottage smoke is rolled and curled
In sport, that every moss
Is happy, every inch of soil;—
Before me runs a road of toil
With my grave out across.
Sing, trailing showers and breezy downs—
I know the tragic hearts of towns.

City! I am true son of thine;
Ne'er dwelt I where great mornings shine
Around the bleating pens;
Ne'er by the rivulet I strayed,
And ne'er upon my childhood weighed
The silence of the glens.
Instead of shores where ocean beats,
I hear the ebb and flow of streets.

Black labour draws his weary waves,
Into their secret-mouning caves;
But with the morning light,
The sea again will overflow
With a long weary sound of woe,
Again to faint in night.
Wave am I in that sea of woes,
Which, night and morning, ebbs and flows.

I dwelt within a gloomy court,
Wherein did never sunbeam sport;
Yet there my heart was stirr'd—
My very blood did dance and thrill,
When on my narrow window-sill,
Spring lighted like a bird.
Poor flowers—I watched them pine for weeks,
With leaves as pale as human cheeks.

Afar, one summer, I was borne
Through golden vapours of the morn,
I heard the hills of sheep:
I trod with a wild ecstasy
The bright fringe of the living sea:
And on a ruined keep
I sat, and watched an endless plain
Blacken beneath the gloom of rain.

O fair the lightly sprinkled waste,
O'er which a laughing shower has raced:
O fair the April shoots!
O fair the woods on summer days,
While a blue hyacinthine haze
Is dreaming round the roots!
In thee, O city! I discern
Another beauty, sad and stern.

THE CELTIC NOTE

A little group of poets, more or less Celtic in their inspiration, now claim our notice. These are Arthur O'Shaughnessy, the younger Aubrey de Vere, Samuel Ferguson, William Allingham, Thomas Edward Brown, Lewis Morris, Charles Mackay, George Macdonald, and Robert Buchanan. To these may be added, John Stuart Blackie (1809–1895), a delightful and original personality who, however, is best remembered for his encouragement of the study of Celtic literature, shining in only a modest way as a maker of verse.

Arthur O'Shaughnessy (1844–1881) was a melodious and agreeable writer of considerable sweetness if little originality, much influenced by the Pre-Raphaelite School. He wrote *An Epic on Women* (1870), *Lays of France* (1872), *Music and Moonlight* (1874), while *Songs of a Worker* (1881) was published after his death.

The younger Aubrey de Vere (1814–1902) was a voluminous writer of verse, among his best work being *Innisfail and other Poems* (1861) and *The Legends of St. Patrick* (1872). Like O'Shaughnessy he is more imitative than original, and modelled himself largely upon Wordsworth. Both he and Sir Samuel Ferguson (1810–1886) were hampered by a fatal facility in verse-making, which mars their work. Ferguson's best volume is his *Lays of the Western Gael* (1865), for his portentously long epic, *Congal*, is wearisome and commonplace.

In William Allingham (1824–1889), we have a fresher and more original writer; not strong, nor varied, but like O'Shaughnessy undeniably sweet. His most striking work lies in his *Poems* (1850) and *Day and Night Songs* (1854).

Sir Lewis Morris (1833–1907) is one of the very few representatives we have of the Cymric poet. His writings once were exceedingly popular; the *Epic of Hades* having passed blithely through nearly forty editions. He was facile to a degree, and knew how to blend didacticism and sentiment into an acceptable bolus for his large public to swallow. His cheery outlook on life contributed also to his success as a verse writer. But there are hundreds of obscure and little-read poets, who had more real inspiration than this successful Welshman. A writer far superior to him in every way is the Manxman Thomas Edward Brown (1830–1897), whose dialect verses *Fo'c'sle Yarns* (1881) are among the best of their kind. Nor was he merely a clever dialect writer, he could write in good classical English almost as well, and his best work shows genuine dramatic power, insight into character (especially that of simple folk), and a refreshing vein of humour. His ample output suffers from occasional diffuseness and a lapse into the pretty-pretty; but he is certainly one of the poets who count.

In Charles Mackay (1814–1889) we have a spirited though rather commonplace representative of the Scottish Celt, and in George Macdonald (1824–1905), one who achieved distinction in several branches of literature, with a deep and delicate imagination, who, although happier in prose than in verse, has written some admirable religious verse (e.g. *Love's Ordeal* and *The Diary of an Old Soul*) and a few delightful lyrics, Blake-like in their fresh simplicity, e.g. *Where did you come from, Baby dear?*

By far the ablest, however, of the modern Scottish poets was Robert Buchanan (1841–1901). The son of a Glasgow journalist, he came early to London to try his fortune. His friend, a young and promising poet, David Gray, soon gave up the struggle and left London only to die. Buchanan remained, and after one or two tentative volumes, published in 1866 his *London Poems*, that contain some of his best and most representative work.

In dealing with the problems of poverty and humble life, Buchanan is more in touch with the methods of Crabbe than those of Wordsworth; but he had a greater sense of beauty than Crabbe possessed, for ugly and sordid as are the stories and studies he put into verse, they are framed in a fine imaginative setting.

In *The Book of Orm, the Celt*, the realistic method is discarded, but behind the fervent imaginings of this remarkable book there looms that uncompromising sense of reality that never deserted Buchanan, even in his most imaginative flights.

Buchanan indeed is a poet who has not received the meed of praise due to his considerable powers. The greater popularity of his novels and his plays has obscured the fact that his genius is more fully expressed in his verse than anywhere else, impressive and striking as some of his novels may be. He was an acute observer, a vigorous thinker, with a strong sense of humour and a versatile imagination. In his highest moments, moreover, he shows the spiritual intensity of the Scot at his best. To some extent we may regard Buchanan as the pioneer of the note of romantic realism in verse, so greatly in vogue at the present day.

Nell

She gazes not at her who hears,
  But, while the gathering darkness cries,
Stares at the vacancy through tears,
  That burn upon her glistening eyes,
Yet do not flow. Her hair falls free
  Around a face grown deathly thin;
Her elbow rests upon her knee
  And in her palms she props her chin.

See, Nan! his little face looks pinch'd with fright,
  His little hands are clench'd together tight!
Born dead, that's comfort! quiet too; when one
  Thinks of what kill'd him! kiss him, Nan, for me.
Thank God, he never look'd upon the sun
  That saw his father hang'd on gallows-tree;
O boy, my boy! you're better dead and sleeping,
Kill'd by poor mother's fears, and shame, and weeping;
She never loved another living man,
  But held to father all through, right or wrong—
Ah, yes! I never turn'd against him, Nan,
  I stuck by him that stuck by me so long!

You're a kind woman, Nan! ay, kind and true!
  God will be good to faithful folk like you!
You knew my Ned? A better, kindor lad never drew breath—
We loved each other true, though never wed
In church, like some who took him to his death;
A lad as gentle as a lamb, but lost
  His senses when he took a drop too much—
Drink did it all—drink made him mad when cross'd—
  He was a poor man, and they're hard on such.

O Nan ! that night ! that night :
When I was sitting in this very chair,
Watching and waiting in the candle-light,
And heard his foot come creaking up the stair,
And turn'd, and saw him standing yonder, white
And wild, with staring eyes and rumpled hair !
And when I caught his arm and call'd in fright,
He push'd me, swore, and to the door he pass'd
To lock and bar it fast :
Then down he drops just like a lump of lead,
Holding his brow, shaking, and growing whiter,
And—Nan !—just then the light seem'd growing brighter,
And I could see the hands that hold his head,
All red ! all bloody red !
What could I do but scream ? He groan'd to hear,
Jump'd to his feet, and gripp'd me by the wrist ;
"Be still, or I shall kill thee, Nell !" he hissed.
And I was still for fear.
"They're after me—I've knifed a man !" he said,
"Be still !—the drink—drink did it—he is dead !"
And as he said the word, the wind went by
With a whistle and cry—
The room swam round—the babe unborn seem'd to scream out and die !

Then we grew still, dead still. I couldn't weep—
All I could do was cling to Ned and hark—
And Ned was cold, cold, cold, as if asleep,
But breathing hard and deep.
The candle flicker'd out—the room grew dark—
And—Nan !—although my heart was true and tried,—
When all grew cold and dim,
I shudder'd—not for fear of them outside,
But just afraid to be alone with him.
For winds were wailing—the wild rain cried,—
Folk's footsteps sounded down the court and died—
What could I do but clasp his knees and cling ?
And call his name beneath my breath in pain ?
Until he threw his head up, listening,
And gave a groan, and hid his face again :
"Ned ! Ned !" I whisper'd—and he moan'd and shook—
But did not heed nor look !
"Ned ! Ned ! speak, lad ! tell me it is not true !"
At that he raised his head and looked so wild,
Then, with a stare that froze my blood, he threw
His arms around me, crying like a child,
And held me close—and not a word was spoken—
While I clung tighter to his heart and press'd him—
And did not fear him, though my heart was broken—
But kiss'd his poor stain'd hands, and cried, and bless'd him !

Then, Nan, the dreadful daylight, coming cold
With sound of falling rain,—
When I could see his face, and it look'd old,
Like the pinch'd face of one that dies in pain !
Well, though we heard folk stirring in the sun,
We never thought to hide away or run,
Until we heard those voices in the street,
That hurrying of feet.
And Ned leap'd up, and knew that they had come.
"Run, Ned !" I cried, but he was deaf and dumb.
"Hide, Ned !" I scream'd, and hold him—"hide thee, man !"
He stared with bloodshot eyes, and hearken'd, Nan !
And all the rest is like a dream—the sound
Of knocking at the door—
A rush of men—a struggle on the ground—
A mist—a tramp—a roar—
For when I got my senses back again,
The room was empty—and my head went round !
The neighbours talk'd and stirr'd about the lane,
And Seven Dials made a moaning sound ;
And as I listen'd, lass, it seem'd to me
Just like the murmur of the great dark Sea,
And Ned a-lying somewhere stiff and drown'd !

God help him ? God will help him ! Ay, no fear !
It was the drink, not Ned—he meant no wrong ;
So kind ! so good !—and I am useless here,
Now he is lost that loved me true and long.
Why, just before the last of it, we parted,
And Ned was calm, though I was broken-hearted ;
And ah, my heart was broke ! and ah, I cried
And kiss'd him,—till they took me from his side ;
And though he died that way (God bless him !) Ned
Went through it bravely, calm as any there
They've wrought their fill of spite upon his head,
And—there's the hat and clothes he used to wear !

. . . That night before he died
I didn't cry—my heart was hard and dried
But when the clock went "one," I took my shawl
To cover up my face, and stole away,
And walk'd along the silent streets, where all
Look'd cold and still and gray,—
Only the lamps o' London here and there
Scatter'd a dismal gharming ;
And on I went, and stood in Leicester Square,
Ay, like a woman dreaming !

But just as "three" was sounded close at hand,
I started and turn'd east, before I knew,—
Then down Saint Martin's Lane, along the Strand,
And through the toll-gate, on to Waterloo.
How I remember all I saw, although
'Twas only like a dream !
The long still lines o' lights, the chilly gleam
Of moonshine on the deep black stream below ;
While far, far, far away, along the sky
Streaks soft as silver ran,
And the pale Moon look'd paler up on high,
And little sounds in far-off streets began !
Well, while I stood, and waited, and look'd down,
And thought how sweet 'twould be to drop and drown,
Some men and lads went by,
And turning round, I gazed, and watch'd 'em go,
Then felt that they were going to see him die,
And drew my shawl more tight, and follow'd slow,
How clear I feel it still !
The streets grew light, but rain began to fall ;
I stopp'd and had some coffee at a stall,
Because I felt so chill ;
A cock crew somewhere, and it seem'd a call
To wake the folk who kill !
The man who sold the coffee stared at me !
I must have been a sorry sight to see !
More people pass'd—a country cart with hay
Stopp'd close beside the stall,—and two or three
Talk'd about it ! I moan'd, and crept away !
Ay, nearer, nearer to the dreadful place,
All in the falling rain,
I went, and kept my shawl upon my face,
And felt no grief or pain—
Only the wet that soak'd me through and through
Seem'd cold and sweet and pleasant to the touch—
It made the streets more drear and silent, too,
And kept away the light I fear'd so much.
Slow, slow the wet streets fill'd, and all seem'd going,
Laughing and chatting, the same way,
And grayer, sadder, lighter, it was growing,
Though still the rain fell fast and darken'd day !
Nan !—every pulse was burning—I could feel
My heart was made of steel—
As crossing Ludgate Hill, I saw, all blurr'd,
Saint Paul's great clock and heard it slowly chime,
And hadn't power to count the strokes I heard,
But strain'd my eyes and saw it wasn't time.
Ah ! then I felt I dared not creep more near,
But went into a lane off Ludgate Hill,
And sitting on a doorstep, I could hear
The people gathering still !

And still the rain was falling, falling,
And deadening the hum I heard from *there* ;
And wet and still, I heard the people calling,
And watch'd the rain-drops glistening down my hair,
My elbows on my knees, my fingers dead,—
My shawl thrown off, now mum could see,—my head
Dripping and wild and bare.

I heard the crying of a crowd of men
And next, a hollow sound I knew full well,
For something gripp'd me round the heart!—and then
There came the solemn tolling of a bell!
O God! O God! how could I sit close by,
And neither scream nor cry?
As if I had been alone, all hard and cold,
I listen'd, listen'd, listen'd, still and dumb,
While the folk murmur'd, and the death-bell toll'd,
And the day brighten'd, and his time had come. . . .
. . . Till—Nan!—all else was silent, but the knell
Of the slow bell!
And I could only wait, and wait, and wait,
And what I waited for I couldn't tell,—
At last there came a groaning deep and great—
Saint Paul's struck "eight"—
I scream'd, and seem'd to turn to fire, and fell!

God bless him, live or dead!
Oh, he was kind and true—
They've wrought their fill of spite upon his head—
Why didn't they be kind, and take *me* too?
And there's the dear old things he used to wear,
And here's a lock o' hair!
And Ned! my Ned!
In fast asleep, and cannot hear me call;—
God bless you, Nan, for all you've done and said,
But don't mind *me*! My heart is broke, that's all!

RADCLIFFE MEG

Then methought I saw another sight;
Darkness—a Garret—a rushlight dying—
On the broken-down bed a Sailor lying,
Sleeping fast, in the feeble light;—
The Wind is wailing, the Rain is weeping.
She croucheth there in the chamber dim,
She croucheth there with her eyes on him
As he lieth sleeping—
Hark! Hark!
Who cries outside in the dark?
Only the Wind on its way,
Only the wild gusts astray
In Tiger Bay.

Still as a child the Sailor lies:—
She waits—she watches—is she human?
Is she a Tigress? is she a woman?
Look at the gleam of her deep-set eyes!
Blotted and stain'd in every feature,
With iron jaws, throat knotted and bare,
Eyes deep sunken, jet-black hair,
Crouches the creature.
Hark! Hark!
Who cries outside in the dark?
Only the wind on its way,
Only the wild gusts astray
In Tiger Bay.

Hold her! scream! or the man is dead;
A knife in her tight-clench'd hand is gleaming;
She will *kill* the man as he lieth dreaming!
Her eyes are fixed, her throat swells red,
The Wind is wailing, the Rain is weeping;
She is crawling closer—O Angels that love him!
She holds her breath and hands above him,
While he stirreth sleeping.
Hark! Hark!
Who cries outside in the dark?
Only the Wind on its way,
Only the wild gusts astray
In Tiger Bay.

A silken purse doth the sleeper clutch,
And the gold peeps through with a fatal glimmer;
She creepeth near—the light grows dimmer—
Her thick throat swells, and she thirsts to touch.
She looks—she pants with a feverish hunger—
She dashes the black hair out of her eyes—
She glares at his face . . . he smiles and sighs—
And the face looks younger.
Hark! Hark!
Who cries outside in the dark?
Only the Wind on its way,
Only the wild gusts astray
In Tiger Bay.

She gazeth on,—he doth not stir—
Her fierce eyes close, her brute lip quivers;
She longs to strike, but she shrinks and shivers.
The light on his face appalleth her.
The Wind is wailing, the Rain is weeping:
Something holds her—her wild eyes roll;
His soul shines out, and she fears his Soul,
Tho' he lieth sleeping.
Hark! Hark!
Who cries outside in the dark?
Only the Wind on its way,
Only the wild gusts astray
In Tiger Bay.

ROSES

Sad, and sweet, and wise,
Here a child reposes,
Dust is on his eyes,
Quietly he lies,—
Satan, strew Roses!

Weeping low, creeping slow,
Came the Weary-Winged!
Roses red over the dead
Quietly he flingèd.

"I am old," he thought,
"And the world's day closes;
Pale and fever-fraught,
Sadly have I brought
These blood-red Roses."

By his side the mother came
Shudderingly creeping;
The Devil's and the woman's heart
Bitterly were weeping.

Swift he came and swift he flew,
Hopeless he reposes;
Waiting on is weary too,—
Wherefore on his grave we strew
Bitter, withering Roses.

The Devil gripped the woman's heart,
With gall he staunched its bleeding;
Far away, beyond the day,
The Lord heard interceding.

"Lord God, One in Three!
Sure Thy anger closes;
Yesterday I died, and see
The Weary-Winged over me
Bitterly streweth Roses."

The voice cried out, 'Rejoice! rejoice!
There shall be sleep for evil!"
And all the sweetness of God's voice
Passed strangely through the Devil.

If Buchanan is a notable example of the Celtic Scot, WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1866) is an equally significant illustration of the Irish Celt. Though he has neither the versatility nor the dramatic force of Buchanan, yet in sheer poetic quality he is certainly superior. There is a delicate and haunting music about his work, and the title of one of his volumes, *The Wind among the Reeds*, is no inapt symbol of his muse. He is like a wander-

ing voice of the woods, a lyric cry, somewhat thin and faint at times, with a certain chilly sweetness, but with an attractive magic of its own, unlike that of any other contemporary singer. In his *Plays*, while there is little genuine drama, there is often a poignant beauty. But Mr. Yeats is essentially a dreamer, and his dreams seem wrought out of

> "the dreams the drowsy gods
> Breathe on the burnished mirror of the world,
> And then smooth out with loving hands and sigh."

The war fever that swept over England in the mid-century, occasioned by the Crimean War, inspired a few writers of verse with the patriotic *motif*. GERALD MASSEY'S *War Waits*; E. C. JONES' *The Waves and the War*; and *La Nation Boutiquière* and *Points of View* by HENRY and FRANK LUSHINGTON, were among the more notable contributions of the time; though as writers of patriotic verse, none of them attained the beauty and finish of Tennyson's patriotic verse, or the grip of Kipling's ballads.

RODEN NOEL (1834–1894) and PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON (1850–1887) were verse makers of the later Victorian era, of fine merit. Noel's best work may be found in his *Modern Faust* and *A Little Child's Monument*, where he shows strength and sincerity, if not much art. MARSTON, the blind poet, is chiefly remembered by a few musical lyrics and neatly turned sonnets. He is particularly happy with the wind as a poetic inspiration—as in his *Wind Waves* (1883).

THOMAS GORDON HAKE (1809–1895), whose name is pleasantly associated with that of the greater Pre-Raphaelites, is one of the more remarkable names in the poetic literature of the late century. A physician by profession, of wide experience, he varied his scientific studies with experiments in literature. Here he showed much versatility, exhibiting no mean power of characterisation in his novel *Her Winning Ways* in 1870, and achieving distinction in sonnet, narrative, and dramatic verse. Over elaborate at times, and in his earlier work somewhat crude in artistic form, his poetry impresses the reader with the realisation of a fresh, vigorous, and original personality. His best work may be found in *New Symbols* (containing such striking poems as *The Snake Charmer* and *Michael Angelo*), and in *The New Day*, a series of nearly a hundred *Sonnets*, musical and expressive and seminal in thought. Perhaps the most lasting impression left on the mind of the reader is the poet's subtle insight into varieties of character, and the spiritual breadth of his sympathies.

THE SNAKE CHARMER

The forest roars on lifted arms
  Its leafy dome, whence verdurous light
Shakes through the shady depths and warms
  Proud tree and stealthy parasite,
There where those cruel coils enclasp
The trunks they strangle in their grasp.

An old man creeps from out the woods,
  Breaking the vine's entangling spell
He thrids the jungle's solitudes
  O'er bamboos rotting where they fell
Slow down the tiger's path he wends
Where at the pool the jungle ends.

No moss-greened alley tells the trace
  Of his love step, no sound is stirred,
Even when his tawny hands displace
  The boughs, that backward sweep unheard;
His way as noiseless as the trail
Of the swift snake and pilgrim snail.

The old snake-charmer,—once he played
  Soft music for the serpent's ear,
But now his cunning hand is stayed;
  He knows the hour of death is near.
And all that live in brake and bough,
All know the brand is on his brow.

Yet where his soul is he must go;
  He crawls along from tree to tree,
The old snake-charmer doth he know
  If snake or beast of prey he be?
Bewildered at the pool he lies
And sees as through a serpent's eyes.

Weeds wove with white-flowered lily crops
  Drink of the pool, and serpents lie
To the thin brink as noonday drops,
  And in the froth-daubed rushes lie.
There rests he now with fastened breath
'Neath a kind sun to bask in death.

* * * * * *

The later years of the era had its scholar poets no less than its earlier period, though they are not quite so prominently in evidence.

WILLIAM CORY (1823–1892) and FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE (1824–1897) are cases in point. Cory was the finer scholar, and he excelled in translations from the Greek and Latin, and was always scrupulously classical in form in his original work. His *Ionica*, published in 1858, had to wait long for recognition; and admittedly its appeal is only to the highly cultured few. Palgrave is best remembered for his admirable *Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics*, where he showed a fine faculty for critical discernment. His original work is tame and nerveless.

JOHN BYRNE LEICESTER WARREN, Lord de Tabley (1835–1895), was another scholarly poet, sensitive to the influences of his age, yet unlike poetic scholars like Garnett and Myers (the distinction is a real one), had a distinctive and original power of his own, when all allowances are made for the influences that greater poets like Tennyson and Swinburne especially left on his work.

His earliest work was dramatic in form, *Philoctetes* (1866) and *Orestes* (1867), exhibiting an essential mastery of blank verse. His later work is more lyrical, and although this did not come so easily to him, he achieved some notably artistic successes as a lyric writer, showing a simplicity and strength as well as a sweetness in his song. Though scarcely appreciated by many of his contemporaries, among whom Gladstone was certainly not to be included, and never receiving the deserts due to his artistic gifts, he had some wise and discerning friends, none more so than Mr. Watts-Dunton, who wrote the obituary notice of him in the *Athenæum*. He there testifies to the remarkable versatility of Lord de Tabley's intellectual gifts:

"On first visiting him, as on many a subsequent occasion, I was struck by the variety of his intellectual interests, and the thoroughness with which he pursued them all. I have lately said in print what I fully believe—that he was the most learned of English poets, if

learning meant something more than mere scholarship. He was a skilled numismatist, and in 1882 published through the Numismatic Society, 'An Essay on Greek Federal Coinages,' and 'An Essay on some Coins of Lycia under Rhodesian Domination and of the Lycian League.' He even took an interest in book-plates, and actually in 1880 published 'A Guide to the Study of Book-Plates.' He was a profound botanist, and wrote books upon the botany of Cheshire."[1]

Nature poems he wrote like an imaginative man of science, whose science is not blended with his art in what chemists call a mechanical mixture, but in what they call a chemical mixture, when they blend absolutely into a fresh, distinctive entity.

Take as illustration:

A Winter Sketch

When the snow begins to feather,
And the woods begin to roar,
Clashing angry boughs together,
As the breakers grind the shore,
Nature then a bankrupt goes,
Full of wreck and full of woes.

When the swan for warmer forelands
Leaves the sea-firth's ice-bound edge:
When the gray geese from the moorlands
Cleave the cloud in noisy wedge,
Woodlands stand in frozen chains,
Hung with ropes of solid rains.

Shepherds creep to byre and haven,
Sheep in drifts are nipped and numb:
Some belated rook or raven
Rooks upon a sign-post dumb.
Mere-waves solid as a clod
Roar with skaters thunder-shod.

All the roofs and chimneys rumble,
Roads are ridged with slush and sleet:
Down the orchard apples tumble,
Ploughboys stamp their frosty feet.
Millers, jolted down the lanes,
Hardly feel for cold their reins.

Snipes are calling from the trenches,
Frozen half and half at flow,
In the parishes servant wenches
Work with shovels at the snow.
Rusty blackbirds, weak of wing,
Clean forget they once could sing.

Dogs and boys fetch down the cattle,
Deep in mire and powdered pale:
Spinning wheels commence to rattle,
Landlords spice the smoking ale.
Hail, white winter, lady fine,
In a cup of elder wine.

Very different in its appeal, but equally fine, and with the clarity and restraint of the true poet, are his pathetic verses:

Misrepresentation

Peace, there is nothing more for men to speak
A larger wisdom than our lips' decrees.
Of that dumb mouth no longer reason seek,
No censure reaches that eternal peace,
And that immortal ease.

Believe them not that would disturb the end
With earth's invidious comment, idly meant.
Speak and have done thine evil: for my friend
Is gone beyond all human discontent,
And wisely meant.

Say what you will and have your sneer and go.
You see the specks, we only heed the fruit
Of a great life, whose truth—men hate truth so—
No lukewarm age of compromise could suit,
Laugh and be mute!

[1] *Athenæum*, November 30, 1895

The second Lord Lytton (1831–91) known in literature as "Owen Meredith," inherited most of his father's versatility and impressionability. A widely read man, his work reflects far more clearly the influence of his great contemporaries than it mirrors any individual outlook. He echoed Tennyson, Mrs. Browning, and the Pre-Raphaelites at various times, and with considerable popular success.

Just as we may follow the vagaries of English fiction and the rise and decline of differing tendencies in the versatile work of the elder Lytton, so may we judge the popular taste of the day in verse by a study of "Owen Meredith's" work.

Another cultured man, who also achieved popular success, was Sir Edwin Arnold (1832–1904), but there is more of the genuine poet in him than in his contemporary.

The Light of Asia (1879) may not be a great poem, but it breaks fresh and fascinating ground; and although we may desire for so vast a subject a more dignified, a more profound treatment, yet it has that agreeable fluency and play of fancy that pleases a large number of readers. At any rate it opened what was practically a sealed book to the public at large—the life and faith of an Eastern people—a subject that of late years has received increasing attention from men of letters.

But it was a far cry from the graceful saccharine sentiment of Sir Edwin Arnold to the imaginative insight of a Fielding Hall in his *Soul of a People*, or to the delicate discernment of a Lafcadio Hearn.

Of quite another type of poet is William Caldwell Roscoe (1823–1859), who came of literary stock, and is responsible for a varying though attractive body of delicate, artistic verse. Roscoe is essentially a Nature poet; preferring to dwell on her more peaceful aspects, which he does in a graceful and musical manner, with hints of fundamental brainwork behind the melody, that saved him from the ladylike productions of some graceful poetasters.

Daybreak in February

Over the ground white snow, and in the air
Silence. The stars, like lamps soon to expire,
Gleam tremblingly; serene and heavenly fair,
The eastern hanging crescent climbeth higher.
See, purple on the azure softly steals
And Morning, faintly touched with quivering fire,
Leans on the frosty summits of the hills,
Like a young girl over her honey sire.
Oh, such a dawning over me has come,
The daybreak of thy purity and love;—
The sadness of the never satiate tomb
Thy countenance hath power to remove,
And from the sepulchre of Hope, thy palm
Can roll the stone, and raise her bright and calm.

Approximating to Roscoe in his delicate art and love of Nature, is the quaint mediævalism of Sebastian Evans (1830); and the mystic mediævalism of George Augustus Simcox.

More playful and extravagant in his moods is William Brighty Rands (1823–1880). He excelled in the fantastic and had a rich gift for parabolic fancies, such as *Lilliput Legends*, *Silver Sand*, and *The Carrier Pigeon*. In his quality of imagination he reminds us not infrequently of Nathaniel Hawthorne. There is a delightful whimsicality about

his work, and some of his graceful absurdities will long outlive the portentous verse of many a contemporary.

TOPSYTURVEY-WORLD

If the butterfly courted the bee,
And the owl the porcupine;
If churches were built in the sea,
And three times one were nine;
If the pony rode his master,
If the buttercups ate the sows,
If the cat had the dire disaster
To be worried, sir, by the mouse;
If mamma, sir, sold the baby
To a gipsy for half a crown;
If a gentleman, sir, was a lady,—
The world would be Upside-Down!
If any of all these wonders
Should ever come about,
I should not consider them blunders,
For I should be Inside-Out!

Chorus

Ba-ba, black wool,
Have you any sheep?
Yes, sir, a pack-full,
Creep, mouse, creep!
Four-and-twenty little maids
Hanging out the pie,
Out jumped the honey-pot,
Guy-Fawkes, Guy!
Cross latch, cross latch,
Sit and spin the fire,
When the pie was opened,
The bird was on the brier!

POLLY

Brown eyes,
Straight nose;
Dirt pies,
Rumpled clothes

Torn books,
Spoilt toys;
Arch looks,
Unlike a boy's;

Little rages,
Obvious arts;
(Three her age is),
Cakes, tarts;

Falling down
Off chairs;
Breaking crown
Down stairs;

Catching flies
On the pane
Deep sighs,—
Cause not plain.

Bribing you
With kisses
For a few
Farthing blisses;

Wide awake,
As you hear,
Mercy's sake,
Quiet dear!

New shoes,
New frock;
Vague views
Of what's o'clock.

When it's time
To go to bed,
And scorn sublime
For what is said

Folded hands,
Saying prayers.
Understands
Not, nor cares;

Thinks it odd,
Smiles away;
Yet may God
Hear her pray.

Bedgown white,
Kiss Dolly;
Good night!—
That's Polly.

Fast asleep,
As you see;
Heaven keep
My girl for me!

Another verse writer with a blessed sense of humour, though, owing to the exigencies of a hard-driven life, with less art, is MORTIMER COLLINS (1827–1876). His best lyrics have grace and charm, and his humour, with admirable antiseptic properties, destroys the bacteria of sentimentality that flourishes too often in graceful minor verse.

TO F. C.

Fast falls the snow, O lady mine,
Sprinkling the lawn with crystals fine,
But by the gods we won't repine
While we're together,
We'll chat and rhyme, and kiss and dine,
Defying weather.

So stir the fire and pour the wine,
And let those sea-green eyes divine
Pour their love-madness into mine:
I don't care whether
'Tis snow or sun or rain or shine
If we're together.

There is a pleasant old-time atmosphere about the cultured romantic verse of CANON DIXON (1833–1900), the friend of Morris and Burne-Jones; while the romance of Anglo-India has one of its earlier singers in Sir ALFRED LYALL (1835).

Mention of other lands recalls also yet another romantic poet, ADAM LINDSAY GORDON (1833–1870), whose vivid and picturesque pictures of Bush life in Australia find many admirers not merely across the seas, where he is regarded with special affection, but in England, where his local colour cannot affect us as strongly as it does down south.

Born in the Azores, and educated at Cheltenham, he had a roving and varied career. A youthful exuberance at home led to his departure over seas, and for six years he was in the Mounted Police of South Australia, with occasional experiments as a horse-breaker. After various vicissitudes, and a fairly constant repitching of his tent, he settled in Melbourne, where his verse was first published under the title of *Sea Spray and Smoke Drift*. This was followed by *Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes*. Straitened circumstances, however, and failing health preyed upon his mind, and one morning it was found that he had put an end to his anxieties by means of a bullet. He was a fine athlete, and knew his Australia well. The life there appealed particularly to his imagination, and without the stimu-

lus of that environment it is doubtful whether he would ever have made a name as a verse writer.

The vigorous and imaginative intensity of his work may be gauged from the following illustration:

CONFESSION

The shore boat lies in the morning light,
By the good ship ready for sailing;
The skies are clear, and the dawn is bright,
Tho' the bar of the bay is fleck'd with white,
And the wind is fitfully wailing;
Near the tiller stands the priest, and the knight
Leans over the quarter railing.

There is time while the vessel tarries still,
There is time while her shrouds are slack,
There is time ere her sails to the west wind fill,
Ere her tall masts vanish from town and from hill,
Ere she cleaves to her keel the track:
There is time for confession to those who will,
To those who may never come back.

Sir priest, you can shrive these men of mine,
And, pray you, shrive them fast,
And shrive those hardy sons of the brine,
Captain and mates of the *Ephemine*,
And sailors before the mast;
Then pledge me a cup of the Cyprus wine,
For I fain would bury the past.

And hast thou naught to repent, my son?
Dost thou scorn confession and shrift?
Ere thy sands from the glass of time shall run
Is there naught undone that thou should'st have done,
Naught done that thou should'st have left?
The guiltiest soul may from guilt be won,
And the stonie & heart be cleft.

Have my ears been closed to the prayer of the poor
Or deaf to the cry of distress?
Have I given little, and taken more?
Have I brought a curse to the widow's door?
Have I wronged the fatherless?
Have I steep'd my fingers in guiltless gore,
That I must perforce confess?

Have my steps been guided in purity
Through the paths with wickedness rife?
Hast thou never smitten thine enemy?
Hast thou yielded naught to the lust of the eye,
And naught to the pride of life?
Hast thou passed all snares of pleasure by?
Hast thou shunn'd all wrath and strife?

Nay, certes! a sinful life I've led,
Yet have suffered, and lived in hope;
I may suffer still, but my hope has fled,—
I've nothing now to hope or to dread,
And with fate I can fairly cope;
Were the waters glaring over my head,
I should scarcely catch at a rope."

. . . . . .

Along with Gordon may be placed HENRY CLARENCE KENDALL (1841–1882), who was an Australian by birth as well as by inspiration. He is a poet of richer and intenser imagination than his contemporary, and is a kind of spiritual counterpart to Gordon. Where Gordon is picturesque and vigorous, Kendall is mystical and passionate. His landscapes, as compared with those of Gordon, are turning from a Rembrandt to look at a Constable. A venturesome and varied life, a life also of struggle and unhappiness, he was cut off in his prime, succumbing to the exactions of trying climatic conditions.

SEPTEMBER IN AUSTRALIA

Grey winter hath gone like a wearisome guest,
And behold, for repayment,
September comes in with the wind of the west,
And the spring in her raiment!
The ways of the frost have been filled of the flowers,
While the forest discovers
Wild wings with the halo of hyaline hours,
And the music of lovers.

September, the maid with the swift, silver feet,
She glides, and she graces
The valleys of coolness, the slopes of the heat,
With her blossomy traces.
Sweet month, with a mouth that is made of a rose,
She lightens and lingers
In spots where the harp of the evening glows,
Attuned by her fingers.

The stream from its home in the hollow hill slips
In a darling old fashion;
And the day goeth down with a song on its lips
Whose key-note is passion.
Far out in the fierce, bitter frost of the sea
I stand, and remember
Dead things that were brothers and sisters of thee,
Resplendent September.

The west, when it blows at the fall of the noon,
And beats on the beaches,
Is filled with a tender and tremulous tune
That touches and teaches
The stories of Youth, of the burden of Time,
And the death of devotion,
Come back with the wind, and are themes of the rhyme
In the waves of the ocean.

We, having a secret to others unknown
In the cool mountain recesses,
May whisper together, September, alone
Of our loves and our losses.
One word for her beauty, and one for the grace
She gave to the hours;
And then we may kiss her and suffer her face
To sleep with the flowers.

High places that knew of the gold and the white
On the forehead of morning,
Now darken and quake, and the steps of the Night
Are heavy with warning!
Her voice in the distance is lofty and loud,
Through the echoing gorges;
She hath hidden her eyes in a mantle of cloud,
And her feet in the surges!

On the top of the hills, on the turreted cones—
Chief temples of thunder—
The gale, like a ghost in the middle watch moans,
Gliding over and under.
The sea, flying white through the rack and the rain,
Leapeth wild to the forelands;
And the plover, whose cry is like passion with pain,
Complains in the moorlands.

Oh, season of changes, of shadow and shine,
September the splendid!
My song hath no music to mingle with thine,
And its burden is ended;
But thou, being born of the winds and the sun,
By mountain, by river,
May lighten and listen, and loiter and run,
With thy voices for ever.

Another scholar who has shown a gift of narrative is Mr. JOHN PAYNE (1842), but of greater importance are his translations for the Villon Society, and his *Decameron*. The Villon translations are particularly fine. His *Arabian Nights* has met with high praise from experts, though they consider it less accurate than Burton's.

There is an atmosphere of competent mediocrity about a considerable number of late Victorian writers. They are mostly men of taste and culture, skilled in the art of letters—as accomplished craftsmen often, too, highly distinguished in other fields; but there is little freshness and originality or poetic distinction about their work. They have drunk deep from the well of poesy, and have learned much from the great men of the past; they are seldom varied, often graceful, melodious, and thoughtful; but poetry seems to be in their hands more of an agreeable by-product, than a genuine and spontaneous expression of their temperament and personality. To such belong Sir Alfred Austin, late Poet Laureate, Richard Garnett, John Addington Symonds, Edward Dowden, Ernest Myers, Frederic W. H. Myers, William Sharp, and Samuel Waddington.

Symonds, Dowden, Garnett, and Myers have won their laurels in literary and art criticism, whilst Sharp has distinguished himself also in imaginative prose; and their memories are stored with the poetical riches of the past. There is nothing trivial, nothing slovenly, in their polished scholarly verse, neither is there that breath of spontaneous impulse that often visits many a writer far more ill-equipped, far less skilful in craftsmanship than they.

On the other hand, two other writers of our time have written verse that has in it a welcome note of distinction and spontaneity—Andrew Lang (1844–1912), and John Todhunter (1839). In technical power it is in no way superior to that already mentioned, but it exhibits more life and individuality. Take for instance;

Alma Mater
St. Andrews, 1862–Oxford, 1865

St. Andrews by the Northern Sea,
A haunted town is ie to me!
A little city, worn and gray,
The grey North Ocean girds it round,
And o'er the rocks, and up the bay,
The long sea-rollers surge and sound.
And still the thin and biting spray
Drives down the melancholy street,
And still endure, and still decay,
Towers that the salt winds vainly beat.
Ghost-like and shadowy they stand
Clear mirrored in the wet sea-sand.

O, ruined chapel, long ago
We loitered idly where the tall
Fresh-budded mountain-ashes blow
Within thy desecrated wall;
The tough roots broke the tomb below,
The April birds sang clamorous,
We did not dream, we could not know
How soon the fates would sunder us!

O, broken minster, looking forth
Beyond the bay, above the town,
O, winter of the kindly North,
O, college of the scarlet gown,
And shining sands beside the sea,
And stretch of links beyond the sand.
Once more I watch you, and to me
It is as if I touched his hand!

And therefore art thou yet more dear,
O, little city, gray and sere,
Though shrunken from thine ancient pride
And lonely by thy lonely sea,
Than these fair halls on Isis' side,
Where Youth an hour came back to me.
A land of waters green and clear,
Of willows and of poplars tall,
And in the Spring-time of the year,
The white may breaking over all,
And Pleasure quick to come at call;
And Summer rides by marsh and wold,
And Autumn with her crimson pall
About the towers of Magdalen rolled;
And strange enchantments from the past,
And memories of the friends of old,
And strong Tradition, binding fast
The flying terms with bands of gold,—
All these hath Oxford; all are dear,
But dearer far the little town,
The drifting surf, the wintry year,
The college of the scarlet gown,
St. Andrews by the Northern Sea,
That is a haunted town to me!

Nightingale Weather

I'll never be a nun, I trow,
While apple bloom is white as snow,
But far more fair to see;
I'll never wear nun's black and white
While nightingales make sweet the night
Within the apple tree.

Ah, listen! 'tis the nightingale,
And in the wood he makes his wail,
Within the apple tree;
He singeth of the sore distress
Of many ladies loverless;
Thank God, no song for me.

For when the broad May moon is low,
A gold fruit seen where blossoms blow
In the bough of the apple tree,
A step I know is at the gate—
Ah, love, but it is long to wait
Until night's noon bring thee!

Between lark's song and nightingale's
A silent space, while dawning pales,
The birds leave still and free
For words and kisses musical,
For silence and for sighs that fall
In the dawn, 'twixt him and me.

The themes are trite enough, but they are touched by a light and airy grace that individualises them. In others—the *Ballades*, for instance—there is a kind of blithe wisdom, a note of pensive gaiety, that has a special charm. The *Ballade to Theocritus in Winter* is a happy example of this.

Dr. Todhunter is more deliberate, and a shade more studied, than his contemporary, but he has the same power to give force and distinction to trifles, has attempted with admirable success the risky experiment of the unrhymed lyric, and shows real skill in his manipulation of blank verse.

The Banshee

Green, in the wizard arms
Of the foam-bearded Atlantis,
An isle of old enchantment,
A melancholy isle,
Enchanted and dreaming lies:
And there, by Shannon's flowing,
In the moon-light, spectre-thin,
The spectre Erin sits.

An aged desolation,
She sits by old Shannon's flowing,
A mother of many children,
Of children exiled and dead,
In her home, with bent head, homeless,
Clasping her knees she sits,
Keening, keening!

And at her keene the fairy-grass
Trembles on dun and barrow;
Around the foot of her ancient crosses
The grave grass shakes and the nettle swings;
In haunted glens the meadow-sweet
Flings to the night wind
Her mystic mournful perfume;
The sad spearmint by holy wells
Breathes melancholy balm.

Sometimes she lifts her head,
With blue eyes tearless,
And gazes athwart the reek of night
Upon things long past,
Upon things to come.

And sometimes, when the moon
Brings tempest upon the deep,
And roused Atlantic thunders from his caverns in the west,
The wolfhound at her feet
Springs up with a mighty bay,
And chords of mystery sound from the wild harp at her side,
Strung from the heart of poets;
And she flies on the wings of tempest
Around her shuddering isle,
With grey hair streaming:
A meteor of evil omen,
The spectre of hope forlorn,
Keening, keening!

She keenes, and the strings of her wild harp shiver
On the gusts of night:
O'er the four waters she keenes—over Moyle she keenes,
O'er the sea of Milith, and the Strait of Strongbow,
And the ocean of Columbus.

And the Fianna hear, and the ghost of her cloudy hovering heroes;
And the swan, Fianoula, wails o'er the waters of Inisfail,
Chanting her song of destiny,
The rune of the weaving Fates.

And the nations hear in the void and quaking time of night,
Sad unto dawning, dirges,
Solemn dirges,
And snatches of bardic song;
Their souls quake in the void and quaking time of night,
And they dream of the weird of kings,
And tyrannies moulting, sick
In the dreadful wind of change.

Wail no more, lonely one, mother of exiles wail no more,
Banshee of the world—no more!
Thy sorrows are the world's, thou art no more alone;
Thy wrongs, the world's.

There is strength and the note of revolt (preluding the Victorian reaction) in the verse of FRANCIS B. T. MONEY-COUTTS (1852), that is combined with graceful and delicate art. His most representative work is found in *The Revelation of St. Love the Divine* (1898), *The Poet's Charter* and *The Book of Job* (1903). Lacking the gift of popular appeal, he is certainly a real force in modern poetry, and his treatment of Love has much of the sane vigour, though less imaginative strength, that we find in the work of such men as Mr. Edward Carpenter.

Force and sweetness, though more typically Victorian, is shown also in the work of ALFRED HAYES (1857), but his lyrics, though agreeable and musical, are less original and distinctive than his narrative work. In *The March of Men* (1892) and *The Storming of Nazareth* he shows both force and restraint, and these poems have many striking felicities of phrase.

Sweetness without strength characterises the verse of RICHARD LE GALLIENNE (1866). Fluency, grace, pleasing fancy, and a gift of melody are certainly his, but the tendency to affectation and to amorous gush—pardonable in a very young writer—have not decreased in the course of years, and he can scarcely be said to have redeemed his early promise. Mr. Le Gallienne is a man of wide culture and of fine critical insight (as witness his books on Meredith and Kipling), and his talent is far more virile than one would judge from his verse.

NORMAN GALE (1862), on the other hand, has lyric charm and sweetness; with a freshness of outlook and a light and airy strength that make him an agreeable addition to the band of late Victorian verse-writers, with individuality of their own. He belongs to the "Spring" order of Nature poets, for there is in his verse the lilt, the keenness, the blithences of the Spring.

A PASTORAL

Along the lane beside the mead
Where cowslip gold is in the grass
I matched the milkmaid's easy speed,
A tall and springing country lass:
But though she had a merry plan
To shield her from my soft replies,
Love played at Catch-me-if-you-Can
In Mary's eyes.

A mile or twain from Varley Bridge
I plucked a dock leaf for a fan,
And drove away the constant midge,
And cooled her forehead's strip of tan.
And though the maiden would not spare
My hand her pretty finger-tips,
Love played at Kiss-me-if-you-Dare
On Mary's lips.

And now the village flashed in sight,
And closer came I to her side;
A flush ran down into the white,
The impulse of a pinky tide:
And though her face was turned away,
How much her panting heart confessed
Love played at Find-me-if-you-May
In Mary's breast.

THE POETRY OF CHILDHOOD

Less powerful and versatile, but not unlike De Tabley in the delicate beauty of his best work, is THOMAS ASHE (1835–1862). He also was a man of scholarly attainment, and lacked the popular appeal; but the appreciative few cheered him on, and he met the general indifference of the reading public with philosophic resignation. His fascination for child life, and his attitude towards children, recalls on its sentimental side that of another mathematician—"Lewis Carroll."

Perhaps a touch or so of Carroll's humour might have been of advantage to Ashe as a poet, and obviate the faint, though appreciable, strain of morbidity in Ashe's fancies.

The Poetry of Child Life is of two kinds: that in which the grown-up peer down at dawning life, fascinated by its fresh simplicity and adolescent charm; and that where the grown-up, by virtue of his sympathetic imagination, identifies himself with the child, looking at the world through the child's eyes. This is the rarer gift and the most attrac-

tive. Ashe had the one, Stevenson the other. Stevenson's art is not happily expressed in much of his verse, and his ballads are greatly inferior to Newbolt's; but all his youthful, whimsical, and Puck-like qualities emerge in his *Child's Garden of Verse*. They are entirely delightful, and without any rival in our literature.

MY SHADOW

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see!
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;
And I see him jump before me when I jump into my bed.

The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow—
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow.
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an india-rubber ball,
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.
He stays so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;
I'd think shame to stick to nurse as that shadow sticks to me!

One morning very early, before the sun was up,
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.

There is quite an individual charm about the lyric verse of WILLIAM CANTON (1845), who spent many of his earlier years in America, and received some of his happiest inspiration from his environment there. He excels in depicting with fresh beauty the familiar aspects of Nature, and has written with tenderness and grace and restraint on childhood.

The pleasant lyrical sweetness of GEORGE BARLOW (1847) is at its best in homely and simple themes, such as his tender verses:

THE DEAD CHILD

But yesterday she played with childish things,
With toys and painted fruit.
To-day she may be speeding on bright wings
Beyond the stars! We ask. The stars are mute.

But yesterday her doll was all in all;
She laughed and was content.
To-day she will not answer, if we call:
She dropped no toys to show the road she went.

But yesterday she smiled and ranged with ark
Her playthings on the bed.
To-day and yesterday are leagues apart!
She will not smile to-day, for she is dead.

THE CALL OF THE TOWN IN VICTORIAN VERSE

The Call of the Town, and especially the Call of London, that has lured some of our great novelists, from Dickens onwards, has, for obvious reasons, proved less of a spell in verse than in prose. In the age of Pope, the "dear, damn'd, distracting town" exercised a sorcery that Nature was powerless to counteract. Artificial verse needs artificial inspiration. But from the Romantic Revival onwards the poets breathed more easily in the open air, on the mountain top, "beside the lake, beneath the trees." None the less, that there is a poetry of the town no less than a poetry of the countryside was realised by so fervent a high priest of Nature as Wordsworth, as his sonnet on *Westminster Bridge* will testify; and the keen discerner will note among the poets of the Victorian age, not a few whose art has been touched by what has been called "The greatest wonder which the world can show . . . London." Rossetti, Tennyson, Browning, Matthew Arnold, were all indebted at times to the stimulus of the crowded streets. Arnold's poetry reflects again and again the problems of the City, *e.g.* his sonnet on *East London*; Tennyson recalls Fleet Street with affection; Browning's crowd worship is frank enough; and Rossetti, for all his old-time romanticism, has left in two poems dealing with the life of the Town, *Jenny* and *The Burden of Nineveh*, some of his strongest work. Similarly, the student may trace without much difficulty the magic of the City in many of the poets. But it is only in comparatively recent times, when a more realistic note was creeping into our literature, that the Call of the Town declares itself as an insistent and ever dominant one. The call is unmistakable in the *London Visions* of that accomplished and versatile poet, LAURENCE BINYON (1869), still more so in much of Henley's work:

> "O the wonder, the spell of the streets!
> The stature and strength of the horses,
> The rustle and echo of footfalls,
> The flat roar and rattle of wheels!
> A swift tram floats huge on us. . . .
> Is't a dream?
> The smell of the mud in my nostrils
> Is brave—like a breath of the sea!"

There is nothing half-hearted about this.

While in Davidson, Kipling, and Arthur Symons, to mention no others, the "spell of the streets" had proved an equally potent inspiration.

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY (1849–1903) was a distinguished and forceful man of letters; provocative as a critic, though undeniably fresh and suggestive; interesting if not satisfying as a dramatist, and certainly stimulating and unconventional as a poet. His verses entitled *The Hospital: Rhymes and Rhythms*, assuredly pioneered the realistic verse of to-day, and are the product of a mind at once brutally concrete and highly imaginative. The deft and happy phrase in which he suggests the background of these verses, bespeaks a genuine poetic imagination:

> "The morning mists still haunt the stony street;
> The northern summer air is shrill and cold;
> And lo, the Hospital, grey, quiet, old,
> Where life and death like friendly chatterers meet."

Better still, for he allows himself greater imaginative scope, are the *London Voluntaries*. Apart from the London note in his work, Henley showed himself to be a spirited and impassioned lyric writer, and has added materially to our store of vigorous patriotic verse.

SOME LATTER-DAY POETS

Another writer of patriotic verse, simpler and less rhetorical in its appeal than was Henley's, is HENRY JOHN NEWBOLT (1862). Temperamentally as an artist he is closely akin to Mr. Kipling; but in a matter of literary indebtedness he owes nothing to him, though some critics have spoken as if he were one of Kipling's followers. With a breezy humour, a simple, direct appeal, and a happy faculty of expressing energy in verse, Sir Henry Newbolt has proved an extremely popular poet; but he has not merely caught the ear of the groundlings, he has pleased fastidious ears; and for all his seeming roughness is a deft and accomplished craftsman, who has gauged many possibilities of metrical structures.

Political life does not often yield a notable poet, but it did so in the case of WILFRED SCAWEN BLUNT (1849), who has been both a diplomatist and a traveller, as well as a man of letters. He attracted considerable notice by his warm championship of the cause of Arabi Pasha; *England, my England*, resented the implied slur upon her general attitude towards the Egyptian Question. His sympathy for oppressed nationalities went beyond the usual literary protest of the poet, and he was proud of "the honour" of spending two months in prison for the sake of Ireland. As a poet he has a fresh, original outlook, intensity of feeling, and indubitable sincerity; these things give genuine interest to the vital and agreeably assertive personality which we find in *The Love Sonnets of Proteus*, and in the volume *In Vinculis*.

This survey of later Victorian verse may conclude with a brief estimate of the work of our present Laureate, Robert Bridges, and Francis Thompson.

A greater contrast with Mr. Bridges than is afforded by Francis Thompson would be impossible: yet on one point they fall into line. Neither owes any spiritual indebtedness to his age. Each stands aloof from the spirit of his time; each, in his own very different manner, harking back to the music of the seventeenth century, in no imitative way, but by virtue of his temperament. But the unobtrusiveness and delicate enjoyment of Mr. Bridges is strangely at variance with the insistent and thrilling raptures of Thompson.

The distinguishing qualities in ROBERT BRIDGES' (1844) verse are sober sincerity and a fastidious simplicity. In his love of experimentalising, in his dainty and delicate sense of rhythm, in the freshness of his diction, he derives from romanticism. Yet how unlike are the pearl greys of his decorative muse, to the glowing tints of romantic verse as we know it. Take for instance this song:

> "I have loved flowers that fade,
> Within whose magic tents
> Rich hues have marriage made,
> With sweet unmeasured scents.
> A honeymoon delight,—
> A joy of love at sight,
> That ages in an hour:—
> My song be like a flower!
>
> I have loved airs, that die
> Before their charm is writ
> Along a liquid sky
> Trembling to welcome it.
>
> Notes, that with pulse of fire
> Proclaim the spirit's desire,
> Then die, and are nowhere:—
> My song be like an air
>
> Die, song, die like a breath,
> And wither as a bloom;
> Fear not a flowery death,
> Dread not an airy tomb!
> Fly with delight, fly hence!
> 'Twas thine love's tender sense
> To feast; now on thy bier
> Beauty shall shed a tear.

This is like a lyric from one of the Elizabethan song-writers, minus the rapture.

Mr. Bridges is certainly a passionate writer; yet the passion has light without heat. His finest work has the chill beauty of a spring dawn—a dawn of gradually diffused silver grey, never merging into anything warmer than a faint delicate amber. There are no scarlets, no purples in his work. It expresses no thrill of wonder, no strange apocalypse of beauty; merely a wistful surmise, or ecstasy so faint that unless we listen carefully to his tones we may miss it. And the ecstasy is there: the primal quality of Mr. Bridges' work is emotional, not intellectual, as a hasty survey might lead us to imagine. He belongs neither to the philosophic verse-maker, as illustrated by Matthew Arnold, nor the marmoreal school of sculptured phrase, of which Landor is so distinguished an exponent. He is reflective and pensive like Arnold; he is austerely cool like Landor; but his muse, unlike these, is essentially a lyric muse, though sometimes the music is merely thin and ghostly in its timbre, and lacking that haunting sweetness that we look for in our song writers. Perhaps Mr. Bridges has made his point of view sufficiently clear in this verse:

> "Simple enjoyment calm in its excess,
> With not a grief to cloud, and not a ray
> Of passion overhot my peace to oppress;
> With no ambition to reproach delay,
> Nor rapture to disturb my happiness."

This is more ascetic even than Wordsworth, whose austere raptures were none the less raptures; whereas the "simple enjoyment" of Mr. Bridges seems a curiously negative affair. Where, it may be asked, is the emotional quality here? To some this rigid tranquillity may suggest stagnation. Yet there is certainly never that; and although it may be frankly conceded such a temperament is singularly restricted in its appeal, yet to a few it can make a very definite appeal. But the work of Mr. Bridges is essentially the work of a sensitive scholar, who dallies delicately with the simplicities and complexities of Nature and of Art; shrinking from robust expression and fervent rapture as something noisy and distasteful. We can fancy him retreating with faint, well-bred amazement from the coverts where the nightingale was singing out her heart; not wholly unresponsive, for after all he is a singer also, but inclined to endorse the criticism of the lady who observed after one of these tumults of song, "Very pretty; but don't you think the bird overdoes it?"

Mr. Bridges has a horror of overdoing any-

thing, and we cannot help thinking that an occasional orgy would do him no little good.

But we must take the gifts the gods provide; and the delicate flutings of our Poet Laureate carry with them admittedly a magic of their own, while the deft skill of his prosodic experiments interest even when they do not convince. There is a twilight charm about his poetry, not the warm brown twilight of Rossetti that hints at nocturnal mysteries; but a cool silver grey from which he whispers to us sedately and graciously.

FRANCIS THOMPSON was born at Preston, Lancashire, in 1859. With a view to the Roman Catholic priesthood he was sent to Ushaw College, but from a curious melancholy and absent-mindedness, attributed to indolence, his superiors decided he had no vocation. He then went to Owen's College, Manchester, to study for his father's profession—that of a doctor. Here he distinguished himself in Greek, but the shy, self-centred, visionary youth found nothing congenial in the prospect of the dissecting-room, and would not attend classes. This inability to carry out his father's wishes preyed upon a naturally introspective mind; a nervous illness followed, and, like De Quincey, whose *Confessions* was his constant companion, he had recourse to opium, responsible for so much later misery.

Thompson at length made his way to "the unfathomable abyss" of London, where, friendless and without money, he suffered much privation; for a time he (or rather a part of him, and that a small part) was a bookseller's assistant, a messenger, and a boot-black, but his whole sentient life, his sympathies, and all that was real in him, went into his poetry. In 1887 he sent the fruit of his labour to Mr. and Mrs. Meynell; a close intimacy sprang up between them, and with the family he eventually made his home. Indeed, without their ungrudging care and sympathy Francis Thompson could not have long existed.

Thompson's first volume of *Poems* was published in 1893, followed by *Sister Songs* in 1895; his prose works include *Health and Holiness* (1904), a complaint made by the Body "Brother Ass" against its rider the Soul; an *Essay on Shelley*, a brilliant piece of decorative prose; and he did much fine critical work for the *Academy* and the *Athenæum*.

A naturally fragile constitution had been impaired by his erratic mode of living, while the opium, though it may have helped for a while the lung trouble, proved a paralysing curse, from which he never really escaped. All that love could do was done for him by his devoted friends, but without avail, and his death took place in London at the early age of forty-eight.

With the ascetic passion of Miss Rossetti, Thompson shows some affinity; and inasmuch as each excelled in devotional poetry, they have at any rate one common aim and aspiration. But Thompson's genius is richer and more tempestuous, and by virtue of this, as well as by his curious inequalities, he has more in common with Crashaw than with any poet of his own century. The imaginative daring and sonorous beauty of the *Hound of Heaven*, his most arresting piece, is generally admitted to-day; and no writer has excelled him in the subtle intensity with which he has presented in artistic form the psychological aspects of Catholic philosophy and pietism.

But he is by no means merely the poet of mysticism, and has wrought some of his own miserable, De Quincey-like experiences into exquisite verse:

"Forlorn, and faint, and stark,
I had endured through watches of the dark
The abashless inquisition of each star;
Yea, was the outcast mark
Of all those heavenly passers' scrutiny;
Stood bound and helplessly
For Time to shoot his barbèd minutes at me;
Suffered the trampling hoof of every hour
In night's slow-wheelèd car;
Until the tardy dawn dragged me at length
From under those dread wheels; and, bled of strength,
I waited the inevitable last.
Then there came past
A child; like thee, a spring-flower but a flower
Fallen from the budded coronal of Spring,
And through the city-streets blown withering.
She passed,—O brave, sad, lovingest, tender thing!
And of her own scant pittance did she give,
That I might eat and live;
Then fled, a swift and trackless fugitive."[1]

Sometimes the magnificence of his style o'erleaps itself; and the glittering phrasing tires the eye like the sun on the high Alps; while his fondness for Latinised diction leads him into obscurities and absurdities that imperil the beauty. This is the greater pity, since no poet could be simpler and more lucid when he chose, as his poem *Daisy* shows:

. . . . . .

"She went her unremembering way,
She went, and left in me
The pang of all the partings gone,
And partings yet to be.

She left me marvelling why my soul
Was sad that she was glad;
At all the sadness in the sweet,
The sweetness in the sad.

Still, still I seemed to see her, still
Looked up with soft replies,
And take the berries with her hand,
And the love with her lovely eyes.

Nothing begins and nothing ends,
That is not paid with moan;
For we are born in others' pain,
And perish in our own."

That he is at his best a fine and true poet none could question; whether he is so great as some modern critics are inclined to rate him is a more debatable point that must be left for judgment to that High Court of Appeal—Time.

[1] *Sister Songs.*

I. POETRY: LIGHT VERSE AND THE ART OF PARODY. Introduction—J. Hookham Frere—James and Horace Smith—R. H. Barham—Theodore Hook—J. R. Planché—Samuel Lover—T. H. Bayly—W. M. Praed—G. Outram—R. Monckton Milnes—W. E. Aytoun—Laman Blanchard—Shirley Brooks—Thackeray—Edward Lear—F. Locker-Lampson—C. S. Calverley—J. K. Stephen—Owen Seaman—W. S. Gilbert—Henry S. Leigh—Ashby Sterry—"Lewis Carroll"—Austin Dobson—R. C. Lehmann—C. L. Graves—E. V. Lucas—Barry Pain—"Dum-Dum"—"Adrian Ross"—Harry Graham—F. C. Burnand.

LIGHT VERSE AND THE ART OF PARODY

HUMOROUS and satirical verse became a force in our literature with the advent of Samuel Butler, and from *Hudibras* to the polished gibes of Sir Owen Seaman, humorous verse has rarely failed to find an experienced and effective craftsman. We may regard Lucilius as the first to nurture the satirical muse; he is "the founder of the mocking style," and to him Horace, Juvenal, and Persius owe much of their satirical treatment of men and manners. The old Greek dramatists—Aristophanes especially—furnish much matter for mockery at the infirmities of human nature; but the Latin genius gave the mocking note that peculiar tang which brings it into line with the modern satire. It was natural that the other great romance nation, France, should foster this form of literature with special care, and when Butler wrote his *Hudibras*, he was deeply read in Gallic satire. In the hands of Matthew Prior, a lighter and more genial note is introduced. He showed that the spirit of comedy could be airy and graceful as well as tart and savage; while in Gay we lost sight of the didacticism that underlay the humorous verse of his predecessors; he is essentially sprightly and unmoral.

More pungent in his wit, and neat and fluent as a verse writer, is JOHN HOOKHAM FRERE (1769–1846), who took part with Canning in founding the *Anti-Jacobin*. Byron owed much to him, for it was not until he had seen Frere's treatment of the octave stanza that he stumbled on the medium that was to prove his salvation as a poet. And so *Beppo* was written frankly in imitation of Frere's work, which had taken Byron's fancy. Byron's wit is the finer, and the better sustained; but Frere's is happy in snatches:

"Dinner and supper kept their usual hours;
Breakfast and luncheon never were delay'd,
While to the sentries on the walls and towers
Between two plates hot messes were convoy'd.
At the departure of the invading powers,
It was a boast the noble Abbot made,
None of his monks were weaker, paler, thinner,
Or, during all the siege, had lost a dinner."[1]

"Poets consume excisable commodities,
They raise the nation's spirit when victorious,
They drive an export trade in whims and oddities,
Making our commerce and revenue glorious:
As an industrious and painstaking body 'tis
That poets should be reckon'd meritorious:
And therefore I submissively propose
To erect one Board for verse and one for Prose."[2]

THE BOY AND THE PARROT

"Parrot, if I had your wings
I should do so many things:
The first thing I should like to do
If I had little wings like you,
I should fly to Uncle Bartle,
Don't you think 'twould make him startle,
If he saw me when I came,
Flapping at the window frame
Exactly like the parrot of fame?"
All this the wise old parrot heard,
The parrot was an ancient bird,
And paused and ponder'd every word,
First, therefore, he began to cough,
Then said,—"It is a great way off,
A great way off, my dear:" and then
He paused awhile—and coughed again:—
"Master John, pray think a little,
What would you do for beds and victual?"
"Oh! parrot, Uncle John can tell—
But we should manage very well:
At night we'd perch upon the trees,
And so fly forward by degrees."
"Does Uncle John," the Parrot said,
"Put nonsense in his nephew's head?
Instead of telling you such things,
And teaching you to wish for wings,
I think he might have taught you better,
You might have learnt to write a letter:—
That is the thing that I should do
If I had little hands like you."

If Frere outshines Gay in his wit, JAMES and HORACE SMITH transcend him as parodists. Indeed their *Rejected Addresses* rank among the comic classics in our language. HORACE SMITH (1779–1849) was a most lovable character, to whose charm of personality both Leigh Hunt and Shelley testified:

"Wit and sense,
Virtue and human knowledge, all that might
Make this dull world a business of delight,
Are all combined in Horace Smith."

His parodies are not of equal excellence: that would be expecting too much, but the *Scott* and the *Moore* are admirable.

A TALE OF DRURY LANE

As Chaos, which, by heavenly doom,
Has slept in everlasting gloom,
Started with terror and surprise
When light first flash'd upon her eyes—
So London's sons in nightcap woke,
In bed-gown woke her dames;
For shouts were heard 'mid fire and smoke,
And twice ten hundred voices spoke—
"The playhouse is in flames!"
And, lo! where Catherine Street extends,
A fiery tail its lustre lends
To every window-pane;
Blushes each spout in Martlet Court,
And Barbican, moth-eaten fort,
And Covent Garden kennels sport,
A bright sanguinel drain;
Meux's new Brewhouse shows the light,
Rowland Hill's Chapel, and the height
Where Patent Shot they sell;
The Tennis Court, so fair and tall,
Partakes the ray, with Surgeons' Hall,
The Ticket-Porters' House of Call,
Old Bedlam, close by London Wall.
Wright's shrimp and oyster shop withal,
And Richardson's hotel.

[1] *The Monks and the Giants.*
[2] *The Knights of the Round Table.*

Among JAMES SMITH'S (1775–1839) happiest contributions are the *Wordsworth* and *Southey* parodies:

THE BABY'S DEBUT, BY W. W.

My brother Jack was nine in May,
And I was eight on New-Year's day;
So in Kate Wilson's shop
Papa (he's my papa and Jack's)
Bought me, last week, a doll of wax,
And brother Jack a top.

Jack's in the pouts, and this it is,—
He thinks mine came to more than his;
So to my drawer he goes,
Takes out the doll, and, O, my stars!
He pokes her head between the bars,
And melts off half her nose!

Quite cross, a bit of string I beg,
And tie it to his peg-top's peg,
And bang with might and main,
Its head against the parlour-door;
Off flies the head, and hits the floor,
And breaks a window-pane.

This made him cry with rage and spite:
Well, let him cry, it serves him right.
A pretty thing, forsooth!
If he's to melt, all scalding hot,
Half my doll's nose, and I am not
To draw his peg-top's tooth!

Aunt Hannah heard the window break,
And cried, "O naughty Nancy Lake,
Thus to distress your aunt:
No Drury Lane for you to-day!"
And while papa said, "Pooh, she may!"
Mamma said, "No, she sha'n't!"

Harsher in substance, though dexterous enough in their rhythmic ingenuities, are the *Ingoldsby Legends* of RICHARD BARHAM (1788–1845). These first appeared in *Bentley's Miscellany*, then under the editorship of Charles Dickens. They proved a little godsend to the earlier Victorian readers, though their popularity, once so great, has declined almost to zero of late years. Barham had a vein of poesy in his nature, as his verses *As I lay a thynkynge* show; but, unlike many of the best writers of light verse, he subdues this entirely in his *Legends*, and his drolleries weary one, save in judicious snatches, through their noisy and spun-out farcicalities.

The brilliant Society jester by no means necessarily shines as a literary wit. This is shown by comparing the verses of THEODORE HOOK (1788–1841) with the stories around him and the neat audacious sallies with which he enlightened his escapades. In cold print his fun seems commonplace and mechanical. He excelled at comic improvisation, but the jest loses at once if torn from its context. This, for instance, which is a smart enough quip delivered on the spur of the moment. Being interrupted in a song on one occasion, by a man named Winter, who was a tax-collector, he continued his song and introduced the following verse:

"Here comes Mr. Winter, collector of taxes;
I'd advise you to pay him whatever he axes;
Excuses won't do; he stands no sort of flummery,
Though Winter his name is, his process is summary."

JAMES ROBINSON PLANCHÉ (1796–1880), a prolific lay-writer, showed an agreeable knack in the direction of extravaganzas, and ephemeral as most of them are, yet his humour wears better than that of Hook; there is more play of fancy, and a lighter touch. Take for instance:

ANSWER TO THE ALPHABET

Dear friends! although no more a dunce
Than many of my betters,
I'm puzzled to reply at once
To four-and-twenty letters.

Perhaps you'll think that may not be
So hard a thing to do,
For what is difficult to me
Is A B C to you.

However, pray dismiss your fears,
Nor fancy you have lost me,
Though many, many bitter tears
Your first acquaintance cost me.

Believe me, till existence ends,
Whatever ills beset you,
My oldest literary friends,
I never can forget you.

SAMUEL LOVER (1797–1868), novelist, painter, dramatist, song-maker, composer, and etcher, was a versatile Irishman, whose characteristic Celtic humour, whimsical, extravagant, and tender, finds pleasant expression in his verse:

THE ROAD OF LIFE, OR SONG OF THE IRISH POST-BOY

Oh! youth, happy youth! what a blessing
In thy freshness of dawn and of dew!
When hope the young heart is caressing,
And our griefs are but light and but few:
Yet in life, as it swiftly flies o'er us,
Some musing for sadness we find;
In youth—we've our troubles before us,
In age—we leave pleasure behind.

Aye—Trouble's the post-boy that drives us
Up-hill—till we get to the top;
While Joy's an old servant behind us
We call on forever to stop.
"Oh, put on the drag, Joy, my jewel,
As long as the sunset still glows;
Before it is dark 'twould be cruel
To haste to the hill-foot's repose."

But *there* stands an inn we must stop at,
An extinguisher swings for the sign;
That house is but cold and but narrow—
But the prospect beyond it—divine!
And there—whence there's never returning
When we travel—as travel we must—
May the gates be all free for our journey!
And the tears of our friends lay the dust!

"Butterfly BAYLY" (1797–1839), whose sentimental verse is referred to elsewhere, also wrote light humorous verse—e.g. *Why don't the Men Propose?*—but his work stands on a much lower level than that of Lover.

So far, however, there is no one writer save Hookham Frere who has carried on the polished, satirical tradition of Prior. Humorous verse has shown a tendency rather to deviate in the direction of burlesque or fantasy.

In WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED (1802–1839), however, we meet the lineal descendant of Prior, one who proved an exceedingly deft maker of poetic soufflé. Without the range of Prior, he has a lighter

and more sensitive touch. Indeed as a writer of *vers de société* he is unsurpassed. In his play of fancy he shows some affinity with Hood, but he relies far less on mere verbal humours, and his wit has a finer bouquet. On the other hand, of course, he showed no trace of that vivid and powerful imagination that Hood could command. True, he is a mere trifler, but he is a very Prince of Triflers.

THE BELLE OF THE BALL-ROOM

Years—years ago,—ere yet my dreams
  Had been of being wise or witty,—
Ere I had done with writing themes,
  Or yawn'd o'er this infernal Chitty:—
Years—years ago,—while all my joy
  Was in my fowling-piece and filly,—
In short while I was yet a boy,
  I fell in love with Laura Lily.

I saw her at the County Ball;
  There, when the sound of flute and fiddle
Gave signal sweet in that old hall
  Of hands across and down the middle,
Here was the subtlest spell by far
  Of all that set young hearts romancing;
She was our queen, our rose, our star;
  And then she danced—O Heaven, her dancing!

Dark was her hair, her hand was white;
  Her voice was exquisitely tender;
Her eyes were full of liquid light;
  I never saw a waist so slender!
Her every look, her every smile,
  Shot right and left a score of arrows;
I thought 'twas Venus from her isle,
  I wondered where she'd left her sparrows.

She talk'd,—of politics or prayers,—
  Of Southey's prose, or Wordsworth's sonnets,—
Of daggers,—or of dancing bears,
  Of battles,—or the last new bonnets;
By candle-light, at twelve o'clock,
  To me it mattered not a tittle,
If those bright lips had quoted Locke,
  I might have thought they murmured Little.

Through sunny May, through sultry June,
  I loved her with a love eternal;
I spoke her praises to the moon,
  I wrote them for the *Sunday Journal*:
My mother laughed; I soon found out
  That ancient ladies have no feeling;
My father frowned; but how should gout
  See any happiness in kneeling?

She was the daughter of a Dean,
  Rich, fat, and rather apoplectic;
She had one brother, just thirteen,
  Whose colour was extremely hectic;
Her grandmother for many a year,
  Had fed the parish with her bounty;
Her second cousin was a peer,
  And Lord Lieutenant of the county.

* * * * *

She smil'd on many, just for fun—
  I knew that there was nothing in it;
I was the first—the only one,
  Her heart had thought of for a minute;
I knew it, for she told me so,
  In phrase which was divinely moulded;
She wrote a charming hand—and oh!
  How sweetly all her notes were folded!

Our love was like most other loves;—
  A little glow, a little shiver,
A rose-bud, and a pair of gloves,
  And "Fly not yet"—upon the river;
Some jealousy of some one's hair,
  Some hopes of dying broken-hearted,
A miniature, a lock of hair,
  The usual vows,—and then we parted.

We parted;—months and years rolled by
  We met again four summers after;
Our parting was all sob and sigh;—
  Our meeting was all mirth and laughter;
For in my heart's most secret cell
  There had been many other lodgers;
And she was not the ball-room Belle,
  But only—Mrs.—Something—Rogers!

Mention must be made of GEORGE OUTRAM (1805–1856), who is in many ways a Scottish Praed, with shrewd insight into character, and a neat technique. Called to the Scottish Bar in 1827, and for many years editor of the *Glasgow Herald*, he wrote chiefly for the benefit of his friends, and is one of the very few verse-writers who really did—what a polite convention declares of so many—"publish by request." One of his most amusing pieces is *The Annuity*.

THE ANNUITY

I gaed to spend a week in Fife—
  An unco week it proved to be—
For there I met a waesome wife
  Lamentin' her viduity.
Her grief brak out sae fierce and fell,
I thought her heart waud burst the shell;
And—I was sae left to mysel'—
  I sell't her an annuity.

The bargain looked fair enough—
  She just was turned o' saxty-three—
I couldna guessed she'd prove sae tough
  By human ingenuity.
But years have come, and years have gane
And there she's yet as stieve's a stane—
The limmer's growin' young again,
  Since she got her annuity.

* * * * *

Last Yule she had a fearfu' bowst—
  I thought a kink might set me free;
I led her out, 'mang snaw and frost,
  Wi' constant assiduity.
But Deil ma' care!—the blast gaed by,
An' miss'd the auld anatomy;
It just rest me a tooth, forbye
  Discharging her annuity.

* * * * *

RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES, Lord Houghton (1809–1885), was a cultured and versatile man of letters, to whom Carlyle said on one occasion, with reference to his catholic sympathies: "There is only one post fit for you, and that is the office of perpetual president of the Heaven and Hell Amalgamation Society." Milnes could write seriously as well as trifle excellently; and his serious, critical prose is admirable. Despite the gift of pathos, he is, as a verse-writer, happiest when in light and irresponsible mood.

WILLIAM EDMONSTONE AYTOUN (1813–1865) was a sprightly Professor of English Literature in Edinburgh University, whose spirited Scottish lyrics have already been noted. He wrote in collaboration with Sir THEODORE MARTIN (1816–1909) *The Bon Gaultier Ballads* (1855), delightful in their sub-acid yet perfectly good-natured humour; also *Firmilian* (1854), satirising a prevalent school of verse dubbed "The Spasmodic School."

On a lower level are LAMAN BLANCHARD (1804–1845) and SHIRLEY BROOKS (1816–1874), editor of *Punch* in 1870, on the death of Mark Lemon), who resembled Hood in their mingling of fun and gravity, but with little of his imaginative power. Brooks, however, is the nearer to Hood in his serious moments.

THACKERAY deserves a passing tribute for his light, agreeable verse, especially for his delightful *Ballad of Bouillabaisse*; but EDWARD LEAR (1812–1888) is something much more than a distinguished maker of light verse. He is one of the great original comic forces of the century, and his incomparable *Nonsense* verses constitute a landmark in the development of humorous literature. He is absolutely sublime in his whimsical extravagances; and he may be as safely applied as an infallible test for the sense of humour to any doubtful person, just as we should adjudge a man's imaginative faculty by his attitude towards *The Ancient Mariner*.

One recalls Ruskin's pleasant extravagance: "I should place him first of my hundred authors."

A Lancashire man, and the youngest of twenty-one children, he showed at an early age artistic leanings, and was always fond of natural history. He was a great traveller, and a fairly successful landscape painter, but it is as the inspired jester of the *Book of Nonsense*—first published in 1846—that he will be remembered by old and young alike.

There was an Old Man in a tree, who was horribly bored by a bee;
When they said, "Does it buzz?" he replied, "Yes, it does!
It's a regular brute of a bee!"

There was an Old Man who said, "How shall I flee from that horrible cow?
I will sit on this stile, and continue to smile,
Which may soften the heart of that cow!"

There was an Old Man of Jamaica, who suddenly married a Quaker;
But she cried out, "Alack! I have married a black!"
Which distressed that Old Man of Jamaica!

There was an Old Person of Anerley, whose conduct was strange and unmannerly;
He rushed down the Strand, with a pig in each hand,
But returned in the evening to Anerley.

There was a Young Lady of Portugal, whose ideas were excessively nautical;
She climbed up a tree to examine the sea,
And declared she would never leave Portugal.

There was an Old Person whose habits induced him to feed upon rabbits;
When he'd eaten eighteen he turned perfectly green,
Upon which he relinquished those habits.

There was an Old Lady whose folly induced her to sit in a holly;
Whereupon by a thorn her dress being torn,
She quickly became melancholy.

There was an Old Person of Chili, whose conduct was painful and silly;
He sat on the stairs eating apples and pears,
That imprudent Old Person of Chili.

There was a Young Lady whose bonnet came untied when the birds sat upon it;
But she said, "I don't care! all the birds in the air
Are welcome to sit on my bonnet!"

There was an Old Man on a hill, who seldom, if ever, stood still;
He ran up and down in his grandmother's gown,
Which adorned that Old Man on a hill.

FREDERICK LOCKER-LAMPSON (1821–1895) carries on the Praed tradition; and if he is somewhat less dexterous and polished in his trifling, he has a richer poetic strain in his nature than Praed could claim, as *At Her Window* can illustrate:

AT HER WINDOW

Ah, minstrel, how strange is
The carol you sing!
Let Psyche who ranges
The garden of spring,
Remember the changes
December will bring.

Beating heart! we come again
Where my Love reposes:
This is Mabel's window-pane;
These are Mabel's roses.

Is she rested? Does she kneel
In the twilight stilly,
Lily clad from throat to heel,
She, my virgin Lily?

Soon the wan, the wistful stars,
Fading, will forsake her;
Elves of light, on beamy bars,
Whisper them, and wake her.

Let this friendly pebble plead
At her flowery grating;
If she hear me will she heed?
Mabel, I am waiting.

Mabel will be deck'd anon,
Zoned in bride's apparel;
Happy zone! O hark to you
Passion-shaken carol!

Sing thy song, thou trancèd thrush,
Pipe thy best, thy clearest;—
Hush, her lattice moves, O hush—
Dearest Mabel!—dearest. . . ."

Then comes CHARLES STUART CALVERLEY (1831–1884), a fine scholar, a clever (but over-rated) parodist, and a delightful companion. He was a fine translator, had a remarkable sense of rhythm, and a keen, if somewhat tart, sense of humour. Though famous as a parodist, he is, despite the brilliant work he accomplishes here, less first-rate than in his miscellaneous work, for strong literary prejudices have marred to an extent his art of mimicry. This point will be appreciated by all who compare his well-known parody of Browning, *The Cock and the Bull*, with that of his successor, J. K. Stephen.

THE COCK AND THE BULL

You see this pebble-stone? It's a thing I bought
Of a bit of a chit of a boy i' the mid' o' the day—
I like to look the smaller parts-o'-speech,
As we curtail the already cur-tail'd cur

You catch me paronomasia, play 'po' words?)
Did, rather, i' the pre-Landseerian days.
Well, to my muttons. I purchased the concern,
And clapt it i' my poke, having given for same
By way o' chop, swop, barter or exchange—
"Chop" was my snickering dandiprat's own term—
One shilling and fourpence, current coin o' the realm.
O-n-e one and f-o-u-r four
Pence, one and fourpence—you are with me, sir?—
What hour it skills not: ten or eleven o' the clock
One day (and what a roaring day it was
To shop or sight-see—but a spit o' rain!)
In February, eighteen sixty-nine,
Alexandrina Victoria, Dilsi—
Hm—hm—how runs the jargon?—being on throne.
. . . . . .

J. K. STEPHEN (1859–1892) had a finer poetic imagination than Calverley, and more plastic sympathies, and his parodies strike deeper than do Calverley's. Calverley burlesques the syntax of Browning; but Stephen burlesques with a light inimitable touch the Browning *attitude* also.

OF R. B. TO A. S.

Birthdays? yes, in a general way;
For the most if not for the best of men:
You were born (I suppose) on a certain day:
So was I: or perhaps in the night: what then?

Only this: or at least, if more,
You must know, not think it, and learn, not speak:
There is truth to be found on the unknown shore;
And many will find where few will seek.

For many are called and few are chosen,
And the few grow many as ages lapse:
But when will the many grow few: what dozen
Is fused into one by Time's hammer taps?
. . . . . .

P. S.

There's a Me Society down at Cambridge,
Where my works, *cum notis variorum*,
Are talked about; well, I require the same bridge
That Euclid took toll at as *Asinorum*:

And, as they have got through several dittoes
I thought were as stiff as a brick-built wall,
I've composed the above, and a stiff one it is,
A bridge to stop asses at, once for all.

More acidulated in his humour, lacking the breadth and human note of some of his contemporaries in light verse, such as Locker-Lampson and J. K. Stephen; yet unexcelled by any in his metrical ingenuity, is WILLIAM SCHWENCK GILBERT (1836–1911).

Gilbert is at his best in the *Bab Ballads*, written during the sixties. Here many of the comic ideas, elaborated in the Savoy Operas, are seen at their freshest and happiest, as thumbnail sketches. The great merit of the Gilbert and Sullivan collaboration lies in the fact that here we have two humorists blending their fun in different arts. Sullivan's infectious gaiety and melodic charm succeed in toning down the acerbity of his collaborator, while exhibiting to their best advantage Gilbert's extravaganzas. Gilbert interpreted in music is a sheer delight, and how the nimble jesters gained from this setting may be judged by listening to the operas and then reading the librettí in the study. On the other side, it is only fair to add that the rhythmic ingenuities of Gilbert, and his aptitude for writing real, *singing* songs, proved of great help to Sullivan.

One of his most amusing efforts was the well-known burlesque of Æstheticism in *Patience*.

THE ÆSTHETE

If you're anxious for to shine in the high Æsthetic line as a man of culture rare,
You must get up all the germs of the transcendental terms, and plant them everywhere.
You must lie upon the daisies, and discourse in novel phrases of your complicated state of mind.
The meaning doesn't matter if it's only idle chatter of a transcendental mind.
And every one will say,
As you walk your mystic way,
"If this young man expresses himself in terms too deep for me,
Why, what a very singularly deep young man this deep young man must be!"
. . . . . .

Then a sentimental passion of a vegetable fashion must excite your languid spleen,
An attachment *à la* Plato for a bashful young potato, or a not-too-French French bean!
Though the Philistines may jostle, you will rank as an apostle in the high æsthetic band,
If you walk down Piccadilly with a poppy or a lily in your medieval hand.
And every one will say,
As you walk your flowery way,
"If he's content with a vegetable love which would certainly not suit me,
Why, what a most particularly pure young man this pure young man must be!"

Of lesser note, but worthy of mention, are HENRY S. LEIGH (1837–1889), who wrote *Carols of Cockayne*, facile, nimble pleasantries in verse; and ASHBY STERRY (1838), whose dainty and sparkling paean of river scenes and life are well known to faithful students of *Punch*.

THE TWINS

In form and feature, face and limb,
I grew so like my brother,
That folks got taking me for him,
And each for one another.
It puzzled all our kith and kin,
It reach'd an awful pitch;
For one of us was born a twin,
Yet not a soul knew which.
. . . . . .

This fatal likeness even dogg'd
My footsteps when at school,
And I was always getting flogg'd,
For John turn'd out a fool.
I put this question hopelessly
To every one I knew,—
What *would* you do, if you were me,
To prove that you were *you*?

Our close resemblance turn'd the tide
Of my domestic life
For somehow my intended bride
Became my brother's wife.
In short, year after year the same
Absurd mistakes went on;
And when I died—the neighbours came
And buried brother John!

Two modern writers of distinction remain to be noticed: "Lewis Carroll"—master of comic fantasy—and Austin Dobson, whose delicate art is unequalled in its airy deftness and grace, save by Praed and Locker-Lampson at their best.

"Lewis Carroll" (Rev. C. L. Dodgson), (1833–1898), has this in common with Edward Lear, that he owes nothing to any predecessor for his vein of humour, and has succeeded in delighting children of all ages with it. "Whom shall I bring?" wrote Thoreau to his friend Emerson on the occasion of one of his famous huckleberry parties. "All children from six to sixty," was the prompt reply. And all children from six to sixty may come to Carroll's parties.

What is the distinctive feature of his humour? It is not madly extravagant like Lear's, for there is a delicious wayward intellectuality about it, an inverted logic that appeals to the cultured mind; while it can be enjoyed equally well by children who see only the inventive fertility; absurdities they are quite ready to take seriously, as part of their own imaginative experiences. The glorious incongruities of such things as the *Alice* books, and *The Hunting of the Snark*, is rendered the more delightful by the droll affectation of precision and the mock-serious manner.

There may be some who can read unmoved the wild ballad of the *Jabberwock*, or that genuine "slice of life" in a fantastic key, *The Walrus and the Carpenter*, and indeed we have heard tell of those to whom *The Hunting of the Snark*, with its parabolic extravagances, was merely a "piece of dull silliness." For such we can only say (*à la* Elia) that we suspect their taste in higher matters.

In his later writings, "Lewis Carroll" largely forsook his earlier vein, with unhappy results. There are some of the old individual touches in *Sylvie and Bruno*: but for the most part it is as inferior to the *Alice* books and *The Hunting of the Snark* as is a turnip to a nectarine. At his best, and that is considerable, "Lewis Carroll" is the most delightful spinner of whimsical dreams that our literature can boast of.

THE AGED MAN

I'll tell thee everything I can;
There's little to relate.
I saw an aged aged man,
A-sitting on a gate.
"Who are you, aged man?" I said,
"And how is it you live?"
And his answer trickled through my head
Like water through a sieve.

He said "I look for butterflies
That sleep among the wheat:
I make them into mutton pies,
And sell them in the street.
I sell them unto men," he said,
"Who sail on stormy seas;
And that's the way I get my bread—
A trifle, if you please."

But I was thinking of a plan
To dye one's whiskers green,
And always use so large a fan
That they could not be seen.
So, having no reply to give
To what the old man said,
I cried "Come, tell me how you live!"
And thumped him on the head.

His accents mild took up the tale:
He said "I go my ways,
And when I find a mountain-rill,
I set it in a blaze;
And thence they make a stuff they call
Rowland's Macassar Oil—
Yet twopence-halfpenny is all
They give me for my toil."

But I was thinking of a way
To feed oneself on batter,
And so go on from day to day
Getting a little fatter.
I shook him well from side to side,
Until his face was blue:
"Come, tell me how you live," I cried,
"And what it is you do!"

He said "I hunt for haddocks' eyes
Among the heather bright,
And work them into waistcoat buttons
In the silent night.
And these I do not sell for gold
Or coin of silvery shine,
But for a copper halfpenny,
And that will purchase nine.

"I sometimes dig for buttered rolls,
Or set limed twigs for crabs;
I sometimes search the grassy knolls
For wheels of Hansom-cabs.
And that's the way" (he gave a wink)
"By which I get my wealth—
And very gladly will I drink
Your Honour's noble health."

I heard him then, for I had just
Completed my design
To keep the Menai Bridge from rust
By boiling it in wine.
I thanked him much for telling me
The way he got his wealth,
But chiefly for his wish that he
Might drink my noble health.

And now, if e'er by chance I put
My fingers into glue,
Or madly squeeze a right-hand foot
Into a left-hand shoe,
Or if I drop upon my toe
A very heavy weight,
I weep, for it reminds me so
Of that old man I used to know—
Whose look was mild, whose speech was slow,
Whose hair was whiter than the snow,
Whose face was very like a crow,
With eyes, like cinders, all aglow,
Who seemed distracted with his woe,
Who rocked his body to and fro,
And muttered mumblingly and low,
As if his mouth were full of dough,
Who snorted like a buffalo—
That summer evening long ago
A-sitting on a gate.

Mr. Austin Dobson (1840) is not merely a writer of clever and amusing jingles, he has a ripe and scholarly imagination, a delicate and plastic fancy ranging from grave to gay, and a technical mastery over rhyme and metre, that is never at fault. He is perfectly aware of his own limitations, but within these, he moves like a great artist. He has done for verse what Jane Austen did for prose.

The following snatches may give some idea of his range and variety:

INCOGNITA

Just for a space that I met her—
Just for a day in the train!
It began when she feared it would wet her
That tiniest spurtle of rain:

So we tucked a great rug in the sashes,
And carefully packed the pane;
And I sorrow in sackcloth and ashes,
Longing to do it again!

Then it grew when she begged me to reach her
A dressing-case under the seat;
She was "really so tiny a creature,
That she needed a stool for her feet!"
Which was promptly arranged to her order
With a care that was even minute,
And a glimpse—of an open-worked border,
And a glance—of the fairyest boot.

Then it drooped, and revived at some havels—
"Were they horses for men or for pigs?"
Then it shifted to masculine novels,
With a little digression on prigs:
She thought *Vices and Daughters* "so jolly";
"Had I read it?" She knew when I had,
Like the rest, I should dote upon "Molly":
And "poor Mrs Gaskell—how sad!"

"Like Browning?" "But so-so." His proof lay
Too deep for her frivolous mood,
That preferred your mere metrical *soufflé*
To the stronger poetical food:
Yet at times he was good—"as a tonic";
Was Tennyson writing just now?
And was this new poet Byronic,
And clever and naughty, or how?

Then we trifled with sonnets and croquet,
Then she daintily dusted her face:
Then she sprinkled herself with "Ess Bouquet,"
Fished out from the foregoing case;
And we chatted of Gassier and Crist,
And voted Aunt Sally a bore;
Discussed if the right rope were easy,
Or Chopin much harder than Spohr.

And oh! the odd things that she quoted,
With the prettiest possible look,
And the price of two buns that she noted
In the prettiest possible book;
While her talk like a musical rillet
Flashed on with the hours that flew,
And the carriage, her smile seemed to feel it
With just enough summer—for Two.

Till at last in her corner, peeping
From a nest of rugs and of furs,
With the white shut eyelids sleeping
On those dangerous looks of hers
She seemed like a snowdrop breaking,
Not wholly alive nor dead
But with one blind impulse waking
To the sounds of the spring overhead;

And I watched in the lamplight's swerving
The shade of the down-drooped lid,
And the lip-line's delicate curving,
Where a slumbering smile lay hid.
Till I longed that, rather than sever,
The train should shriek into space,
And carry us onward—for ever—
Me and that beautiful face.

But she suddenly woke in a fidget,
With fears she was "nearly at home,"
And talk of a certain Aunt Bridget,
Whom I mentally wished—well, at Rome;
Got out at the very next station,
Looking back with a merry *Bon Soir*,
Adding, too, to my utter vexation
A surplus, unkind *Au Revoir*.

So left me to muse on her graces,
To doze and to muse, till I dreamed
That we sailed through the sunniest places
In a glorified galley, it seemed;
But the cabin was made of a carriage,
And the ocean was Eau-de-Cologne,
And we split on a rock labelled MARRIAGE,
And I woke,—as cold as a stone.

And that's how I lost her—a jewel,
Incognita—one in a crowd,
Not prudent enough to be cruel,
Not worldly enough to be proud.
It was just a shut lid and its lashes,
Just a few hours in a train,
And I sorrow in sackcloth and ashes,
Longing to see her again.

The foregoing sketch of the development of light verse makes no pretence of completeness. All it has been possible to do here is to touch on the most representative of the "light brigade." As we approach our own time the number of omissions must necessarily be larger. During the last twenty years there has been a remarkable renascence of parody and satirical verse, and there is no richer store-house for seeking these than in the pages of *Punch*. What is especially remarkable is the level excellence of the work: Praed, Calverley, and Stephen have served as admirable mentors, and at the present day light verse—whether *vers de société* or parody—is probably in the zenith of its glory.

Among a host of writers, all approximating to this high standard of technical merit, may be especially mentioned the present editor of *Punch*, Sir OWEN SEAMAN, R. C. LEHMANN, C. L. GRAVES, E. V. LUCAS, BARRY PAIN, "DUM-DUM," "ADRIAN ROSS," and HARRY GRAHAM. The late editor, Sir FRANCIS BURNAND, found more congenial expression in prose than in verse for his exuberant sense of fun; but the present editor, admirable in each capacity (though his wit may be a shade too dry in flavour for some palates), has raised the metrical standard of *Punch* to a pitch that it has never before reached; and while there may be some clever verse-writers who have not yet found a home in that national institution of humour, *The London Charivari*, it may be safely averred that during the last twenty years at any rate much of the best humorous verse of the day has first seen light in its columns.

II. PROSE: (*a*) CHARLES DICKENS AND THE HUMANITARIAN GROUP. Charles Dickens—His Life—His Work—The Humorist—The Pictorial Artist—Its Humanity. Charles Kingsley and Charles Reade—Characteristics of Reade and Kingsley—The Fundamental Realism of their Fiction—The Social Purpose in the Novels. Walter Besant and James Rice. Richard Whiteing.

CHARLES DICKENS (1812–1870)

HIS LIFE

"I WAS born on a Friday," said David Copperfield. In this, and in many another particular, were David and his creator at one.

Charles Dickens was born at Landport, in Hampshire, on February 7, 1812; his father, John Dickens, was a Clerk in the Navy Pay Office at Portsmouth Dockyard; of his mother little is recorded.

When the boy was two years old his parents moved to London, three years later to Chatham.

Genial and lively in disposition, but delicate in constitution, this "very queer small boy" much preferred to curl himself up in a corner with a book than take part in the mildest of games; in fact he was "a terrible boy to read," said his nurse. Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, with its realistic highway robberies and royal pranks, was a mighty favourite, and it is well known how the boyish dream of owning the house called "Gad's Hill Place," built on the site of these old associations, was realised.

The happy days at Chatham were exchanged for a depressing existence in a dingy London suburb. The family became involved in debt and creditors many and pressing; at length John Dickens was arrested and imprisoned in the Marshalsea.

At this serious crisis in the family fortunes, Charles, now eleven years old, "a child of singular abilities, quick, eager, and delicate," went out to earn his living in a blacking factory. "My mother and father were quite satisfied," he says. "They could hardly have been more so if I had been twenty years of age . . . and going to Cambridge."

How difficult was the task to make his few shillings a week last out till the next pay day, he tells us in *David Copperfield*. At last "I wrapped it into six little parcels, each containing the same amount, and labelled with a different day"—Sunday was spent with his father in the Marshalsea.

Notwithstanding these painful experiences he had an abundance of animal spirits, and a fund of humour that probably kept him from breaking down, but how deeply the life affected him may be seen in the various allusions to it in his novels.

At length the hateful employment came to an end and Charles was sent to school. At Wellington House Academy, in the Hampstead Road, he learned little, but he laid by a store of material for future use. At fifteen he left school, and found employment with Messrs. Ellis & Blackmore, attorneys, of Gray's Inn. A fellow-clerk says: "He could imitate in a manner that I have never heard equalled the low population of the streets of London, in all their varieties . . . and the popular singers of that day, whether comic or patriotic; as to his acting, he could give us Shakespeare by the ten minutes, and imitate all the leading actors of that time." There was, however, small prospect of Dickens distinguishing himself in the legal profession, so he turned to the mysteries of shorthand, and so quickly gained proficiency that in 1830 he became a Parliamentary reporter. Many years later, in speaking on behalf of the Newspaper Press Fund, he said: "I have worn my knees by writing on them on the old back row of the old gallery in the House of Commons; and I have worn my feet by standing to write in a preposterous pen in the old House of Lords, where we used to be huddled together like so many sheep," and "to the wholesome training of severe newspaper work when I was a very young man, I constantly refer my first success."

In 1833 Dickens made his first essay in authorship. One evening at twilight, with fear and trembling, he stealthily dropped his first manuscript "into a dark letter box, in a dark office, up a dark court in Fleet Street." When he saw it in print he walked down to Westminster Hall and turned into it for half an hour, he tells us, "because my eyes were so dim with joy and pride, and not fit to be seen in the street."

Then came *Pickwick*—and Fame!

Almost concurrently with the first number of *Pickwick*, Dickens married Miss Catherine Hogarth, daughter of a fellow-worker on the *Morning Chronicle*. The next few years his literary output was simply prodigious: *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Oliver Twist*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*; and after *Barnaby Rudge*, in 1841, Dickens was asked to represent the town of Reading in Parliament; but he never coveted Parliamentary honours, and the request was met with a polite refusal.

A warm and hearty invitation from Washington Irving decided him to visit America, and on January 4, 1841, he left for the States, where he met with an enthusiastic reception. When, however, the *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit* appeared, in which he spoke so courageously against the Slavery system, ill-will sprang up across the Atlantic, and in a burlesque of *Macbeth* at one of the New York theatres the actors exhibited their feelings in the incantation scene by pitching into the witches' cauldron a copy of the novel. But all this had been forgotten when he made his second visit in 1867–1868.

After *Martin Chuzzlewit* came the famous *Christmas Carol* (1843). Dickens had hoped to make £1000 by its sale, but only realised about £700. As he was in want of money, he sold the fourth share in his work for the next eight years to Messrs. Bradbury & Evans for £2800, bought "a good old shabby devil of a coach," engaged a courier, let his house in Devonshire Terrace, and accompanied by Mrs. Dickens, her sister Miss Hogarth, five children and a maid, left England for Italy, where they remained till July 1845; in the *Pictures from Italy* we have the experiences of this tour.

On his return Dickens became involved in a big journalistic scheme and was the first editor of the *Daily News*, with charge of its literary department; but he soon wearied of the drudgery of editorship, and vacated the post in three weeks. The following year, 1846, he went to Paris for three months and made the acquaintance of the elder Dumas, Victor Hugo, Scribe, Lamartine, and Chateaubriand, and began to write *Dombey and Son*, his last Christmas story, *The Haunted Man*, appearing the same year.

In order to obtain the local colour for the famous Peggotty scenes in *David Copperfield*, written in 1849–50, the novelist spent some time at Yarmouth, at that time a quaint and quiet fishing town. The first chapter of this, his favourite work, appeared in *Household Words* at the birth of the magazine on March 30, 1850. At the conclusion of the novel he wrote to his friend Forster: "If I were to say half what Copperfield makes me feel, how strangely, even to you, I should be turned inside out. I seem to be sending some part of myself into the shadowy world."

The year 1851 was a sad one; his father, to whom he was sincerely attached, died in March, and a baby daughter died suddenly while Dickens was at a dinner on behalf of the Theatrical Fund. In the same year he left Devonshire Terrace for a

larger house in Tavistock Square, and began to write *Bleak House;* when published (1853), Dickens and Wilkie Collins made a holiday tour in France and Italy, and on their return Dickens gave his first public reading at Birmingham, when nearly £500 was realised for the benefit of a local institute.

The success of these readings induced him to start on a tour. In everything that Dickens did he gave of his very best, but the constant strain upon his nervous energies told seriously upon his health, and a railway accident was a tremendous shock from which his nerves never recovered; well or ill, he always bestowed the same care and attention upon his readings, and the exhaustion afterwards, on some occasions, was terrible to witness. With nerves worn and shattered, he gave a reading tour in 1866 throughout the British Isles and Paris, and the following year sailed once more for America.

In 1869 he began his last novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, destined to be left unfinished, though the copyright was already disposed of for £7500.

On March 15, 1870, he gave a final reading in London. Never had he faced a larger or more enthusiastic audience. The reading over, in response to numerous calls, he returned and spoke with a voice full of emotion, ending with the words: "From these garish lights I vanish now for evermore, with a heartfelt, grateful, respectful, and affectionate farewell." On June 9th, he devoted the entire day to writing some fresh chapters in *Edwin Drood*, and was taken ill suddenly at six o'clock; his sister-in-law's efforts to get him on the sofa were unavailing. "On the ground," he murmured, and shortly afterwards passed away without recovering consciousness.

"No death since 1866," wrote Carlyle referring to that of his wife, "has fallen on me with such a stroke. The good, the gentle, high-gifted, ever-friendly and noble Dickens—every inch of him an honest man."

In the Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey, one early morning he was buried quietly and without ostentation by Dean Stanley, in the presence of his immediate family and a few friends. Strange that the last words he should ever write were those from the unfinished chapter of *Edwin Drood:* "Changes of glorious light from moving boughs, songs of birds, scents from gardens, woods and fields . . . penetrate into the Cathedral, subdue its earthly odour, and preach the Resurrection and the Life."

His Work

The immediate success of Dickens was due to two causes: one literary, the other social.

On the literary side he came precisely at the right time in the history of English fiction. The dominating factor in the history of the early century was the rapid growth of town life under the stimulus of the industrial revolution. The countryside had found its story-tellers in Scott, Maria Edgeworth, Susan Ferrier, and Jane Austen; but for a chronicler of town life one had to go back to the age of Fielding; and social conditions had changed vastly since the time of *Evelina* and *Tom Jones*. Dickens knew from painful experience the life of the workshop, the office, and the terrible life of the streets. So, as the story-teller of London life, he occupies a niche claimed by no other writer of the time. He was not, of course, the only writer who had described the town life of his day, and some of the Cockney humours of *Pickwick* owe something no doubt to the picaresque extravagances of Pierce Egan; but he was the first genuine story-teller.

The other cause of his popularity lay in the fact that he was not merely a story-teller but a social reformer who used fiction as a platform for his social appeals; and who proved to be that rare type of reformer who could moralise with a smile on his lips, and mix his sermonic powders in such excellent jam, that his contemporaries did not realise for a while that he was doctoring them for their good. So Dickens taught us to laugh at a time of storm and stress when we badly needed it, and having laughed with him, we took heed of his passionate monitions.

Yet both these causes would have proved insufficient had not the novelist been a writer of genius. He was the pioneer of a great age of fiction, and would soon have been elbowed aside had he lacked the elements of greatness. But his stories, however they may suffer at times from over insistence on the primary colours, are so amazingly rich in vitality, that "age cannot wither them nor custom stale their infinite variety." He is not only the first great story-teller of the common lives of commonplace people in commonplace surroundings, but remains, after countless imitators and brilliant successors, yet *facile princeps*. For he took the trivialities of everyday life, the little worries, the little pleasures, the little hardships, the little comedies, the little tragedies, and irradiated them with his glorious humour and ever-flowing sympathy.

The Humorist

"Humour," said Carlyle, "is a sympathy with the seamy side of things." Whatever may be said of this as a comprehensive definition of that elusive quality, humour, it fastens with unerring insight upon the essentials of Dickens' humour. A sympathy with what is odd, out-of-the-way, bizarre, lies at the bottom of all his uproarious fun and quick sensibility. His humour and pathos are not to be sharply differentiated; laughter and tears lie closely together in his writings and frequently invade one another's territory. In no other writer of our time do we realise more fully the truth of John Bunyan's quaint comment, "Some things are of that nature as to make one's fancy chuckle while his heart doth ache."

Both the strength and weakness of Dickens' humour and pathos lie in his hypersensitive imagination. There are no great depths to his imagination as there are in Shakespeare and Milton, no such subtleties as in Meredith and Thomas Hardy, but for acute *sensibility* he has no peer in English letters. Thus both humour and pathos alike are rich in inventive fancy. His imagination plays round his subject; let it be what it may—the

appearance of a London street, a door knocker, a Cockney urchin, a middle-aged oddity, a short-tempered landlady, a no'er-do-weel, a humbug, a London fog, a coach ride, an east wind; until he has invested its familiar aspects with strange grotesque fantasies that none-the-less are not extraneous extravagances, but are logical and integral parts of his subject; and thus a genuine Dickens character and Dickens scene are at once amazingly like and amazingly unlike anything in our own experience.

For this reason most of us accept his humour the more readily for its unexpected extravagances; though we are sometimes repelled by the intrusion of the gargoyle into the domain of pathos. So long as his fun and pathos are intermingled the appeal is not to be withstood, as in the adventures of young David Copperfield; where he sets his scene determined to be solemn at all costs, as in the death scene of little Paul or little Nell, we realise a sense of artificiality.

Yet undoubtedly the humour of Dickens is at its best when he can mingle the humour with the pathos; and he never does this more effectively than when he is dealing with childhood.

There we have a humour that caresses, a pathos that brightens, a rainbow humour where the author is smiling at us through his tears. It is hard to overpraise Dickens' sketches of child life. Dickens did not describe a child—he became a child for the time being. He lived over again his own childish days. Hence the poignancy and actuality of his pictures. Perhaps on occasion his sentimentalism and his love for a "curtain," as in the death scene of Pip, and Joe the crossing sweeper, lead him to utter a false note or so. But the false notes are very rare; and the beauty, delicacy, and tender humour of his pictures of child life need no encomium at this date. The merits of his three notable studies of sensitive, nervous childhood—Paul, David, and Pip—are universally recognised. Here obviously his own temperament is speaking; but he was also extremely happy in describing children and young people of other temperaments than his own. There is Robin Toodles, the robustious offspring of the nurse in *Dombey and Son*; Noah Claypole, the loutish charity boy, is another type; Joe, the crossing-sweeper, is a typical Cockney lad; Traddles and Steerforth as boys at school are admirable studies in contrast. How lifelike is this description:

"Poor Traddles in a tight, sky-blue suit that made his arms and legs like German sausages, he was the merriest and most miserable of all the boys. He was always being caned—I think he was caned every day, except on holiday Monday, when he was only ruler'd on both hands, and was always going to write to his uncle about it, and never did. After laying his head on the desk for a little while he would cheer up somehow, begin to laugh again and draw skeletons all over his slate before his eyes were dry. I used to wonder what comfort Traddles found in drawing skeletons, and for some time looked upon him as a sort of hermit, who reminded himself by these symbols of mortality that caning couldn't last for ever, but I believe he only did it because they were easy and didn't want any features."

In his Christmas story, *The Haunted Man*, there are some spirited sketches of the small Tetterbys; of Dolphus, a newspaper boy, *cetat* ten, who hit upon the brilliant invention of varying the first vowel in the word "paper," and thus imparting a colour and interest in the day's routine. So before daylight he would yell "morning pa-per," an hour before noon "morning pup-per," which about two changed to "morning pip-per," which in a couple of hours changed to "morning pop-per," and so declined with the sun into "evening pup-per," to the great relief and comfort of this young gentleman's spirits.

Who can readily forget, moreover, the amusingly precocious children in *The Holly Tree Inn* story, a story abounding in touches of sympathetic observation of children's ways? But no doubt the most enduring of his sketches of precocious children is the poor little half-starved slavey in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, a far more vital study than poor little Nell. The curious mixture of worldly shrewdness and childlike sweetness is admirably suggested. Almost driven insane through ill-treatment, a natural strain of goodness survives the ill-treatment of Sally Brass. The scenes between Dick Swiveller and the Marchioness are the most delightful and the most enduring in this novel, though we cannot agree with Mr. Swiveller that Sophronia Sphynx, albeit "euphonious and genteel," was a name worthy of her.

The Pictorial Artist

To pass from the humorist to the pictorial artist. What gives the humorist such compelling power is the dramatic genius of the writer. He can actualise, vitalise *things* no less than people.

Dickens' stories and sketches, especially the later ones, abound in fine dramatic situations of incalculable help to him as a painter of London life. That the drama tends to degenerate into melodrama, may be frankly admitted. But the melodramatic element is chiefly noticeable in his earlier work, in *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*; while the simple poignancy, the restraint and dignity of many of his scenes from *David Copperfield* onwards, are under-estimated by many.

It is hard to overpraise scenes so admirable as the finding of Steerforth's body, the duel between Madame Defarge and Miss Pross, the death of Sidney Carton, the river scenes in *Our Mutual Friend*, the tragic fooling of Dr. Marigold, the quarrel of the young men in *Edwin Drood*.

None but a genuine dramatic artist could modulate his style as Dickens can so as to take on the mood of the moment. His treatment of the wind is a case in point. He uses it as a stage property, with the most astounding effect. Whether blustering cheerily through *Pickwick*, or wailing through *The Chimes*; whether taking on the note of comedy or informing with sinister accompaniment the note of tragedy, the effect is always achieved with fine art. In the striking description of the marshes at the beginning of *Great Expectations*, with its creeping fog and flat loneliness, his language becomes almost a mist of words and phrases. In his description of a coach ride, the language quickens and slackens, becomes rollicking or deliberate, according to the pace of the coach. In reading the ride of Tom Pinch to London one

recalls the famous lines in Homer and Virgil, where the sound of the horses' hoofs is imitated in the rhythm. What especially attracts him in Nature is just what we should expect from a man of his temperament—her restless vitality. No writer can better convey the idea of physical exhilaration. His descriptions of journeys from country to town abound in rich observation, but the physical experiences are especially emphasized. Very little is said of those mental states of feeling dear to Mr. Thomas Hardy. Egdon Heath would have been little more than a wind-blown ridge to Dickens. As a rule, novelists have a preference for the summer-time; but Dickens not only gives the preference to winter, but is far more effective in his winter sketches. Often he describes cold weather with the genial appreciation of a full-blooded man; at other times, perhaps, some early experience inspiring him or the sight of some wretched, shivering beggar, he describes the miseries of the cold with a Dantesque power of imagination. What is this but using natural phenomena with the eye of the dramatist who makes things, both animate and inanimate, serve to intensify and vivify the situations he is describing? and by reason of this power there is no better guide to the London of the early nineteenth century, than in his pages.

This is well illustrated in his sensibility to the "genius of places."

This, for instance, of Harley Street, from *Little Dorrit*:

"Like unexceptionable society, the opposing rows of houses in Harley Street were very grim with one another. Indeed, the mansions of their inhabitants were so much alike in that respect, that the people were often to be found drawn up on opposite sides of dinner tables, in the shade of their own loftiness, staring at the other side of the way with the dullness of the houses. . . . The expression in uniform twenty houses, all to be knocked at and rung at in the same form, all approachable by the same dull steps, all fended off by the same pattern of railing, all with the same unpracticable fire-escapes, the same inconvenient fixtures in their heads, and everything without exception, to be taken at high valuation."

Here you have deadly respectable dullness, a dullness which spread itself over large tracts of Bayswater in Dickens' day, and has now extended in the direction of West Kensington. Contrast with the above, the almost affectionate mockery lurking in his picture of Lant Street.

Lant Street also is dull—but it is *shabby*; and Dickens can never resist a certain tenderness towards shabbiness.

"There is an air of repose about Lant Street in the Borough, which sheds a gentle melancholy on the soul. . . . If a man wished to extract himself from within the reach of temptation, to place himself beyond the possibility of any inducement to look out of the window, he should by all means go to Lant Street. The majority of the inhabitants either direct their energies to the letting of furnished apartments, or devote themselves to the healthful and invigorating pursuit of mangling. The chief features in the still life of the street are green shutters, lodging bills and brass door plates, the pot-boy, the muffin youth, and the baked potato man. The population is migratory, usually disappearing on the verge of quarter-day, and generally by night. His Majesty's revenues are seldom collected in this happy valley the rents are dubious; and the water communication is very frequently cut off."

The Uncommercial Traveller is rich in these dramatic touches. Dickens not only felt keenly the personality of a street and the larger personality of the Great City, but could actualise it for us.

"The way in which it tumbles and tosses before it can get to sleep. . . . Except in the Haymarket, which is the worst kept part of London, and about Kent Street in the Borough, and along a portion of the line of the Old Kent Road, the peace was seldom violently broken. But it was always the case that London, as if in imitation of the individual citizens belonging to it, had expiring fits and starts of restlessness. After all seemed quiet, if one cab rattled by, half a dozen would surely follow; and Houselessness even observed that intoxicated people appeared to be magnetically attracted towards each other."

That might be written to-day. The description of "the stones that pave the way to Waterloo Bridge," and the thumbnail sketch of the toll-keeper, are clearly dated. So also the reverie about the Courts of Law in Westminster, which hinted "in low whispers what numbers of people they were keeping awake, and how intensely wretched and horrible they were rendering the small hours to unfortunate suitors."

The spirit of modernity has touched the Inns of Court since Dickens' day; but only gently, and the *genius loci* may still be felt as Dickens felt it. The peculiar sense of loneliness in those solitary chambers again and again he has pictured in a novel and fugitive paper.

"It is not to be denied that on the terrace of the Adelphi, . . . or anywhere among the neighbourhoods that have done flowering and have run to seed, you may find Chambers replete with the accommodation of solitude, closeness, and darkness, where you may be as low-spirited as in the genuine article, and might be as easily murdered, with the placid reputation of having merely gone down to the seaside. But the many waters of life did run musical in those dry channels once,—among the Inns never."

Here is a sketch of Symond's Inn, which has vanished now for many a year. Once it stood lonely and haggard in Cursitor Street, Chancery Lane; now it is replaced by the stir and whirr of printing.

"A little, pale, wall-eyed, woe-begone Inn, like a large dustbin of two compartments and a sifter. It looks as if Symond were a sparing man in his day, and constructed his Inn of old building materials, which took kindly to the dry rot, and to dirt, and all things decaying and dismal, and perpetuated Symond's memory with congenial shabbiness."

If Dickens is at his best as a dramatic artist in his later books, yet the earlier ones are by no means devoid of striking scenes. The trial scene of Fagin is as impressive as anything in his later work; there are masterly touches in the pictures of South London in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and unmistakable power, though crudely used, in the scene where Jonas Chuzzlewit goes down to murder Montague Tigg.

The value afforded by this dramatic power to

Dickens as a painter of London life is quite obvious. Walter Bagehot well described him as "a special correspondent for posterity." His retentive memory, his keen perceptions, his genius for minutiæ are remarkable enough, certainly, and impress all that he wrote. But more remarkable even than the sights he witnessed and the things he observed is the fantastic imagination that read new and distinctive meanings into what he witnessed and observed. It is not the "special correspondent" in him so much as the humorist that gives such vitality to his pictures of London life. Apparently the most objective of writers, he is really intensely subjective, as every great humorist must be. He lulls by the familiarity of his settings, into the belief that he is a realist. But his realism lies only on the surface, and his pictures of London life are magnificent pieces of idealised description, sometimes as fantastic as a passage from *Notre Dame*. With all its mannerisms there is the element of greatness about Dickens' style. For colour, movement, and variety it is a remarkable style. Tawdry and mannered at times, if you will, but despite this, fascinating, arresting, and with the impress of the writer's infectious personality.

The Humanitarian Note

A third quality in Dickens' writing—its humanity—is best seen by a consideration of his character drawing.

What is our dominant feeling after closing a book of Dickens'? We do not feel we have been absorbed in the study of conflicting emotions and psychological subtleties as we do after reading Meredith's; we do not feel we have been moving in a world of fierce, primal passions as we do after closing a book of Victor Hugo's. But we do feel that we have been living in a quaint, picturesque world, inhabited by a variety of human beings whose every detail of manners, appearance, dress, is impressed upon our memory. A fantastic world, a burlesque of the world we live in is our first impression perhaps; with some people, it is the ultimate impression. But to others (including the present writer) the fantasy fades from view after a while, and the essential reality and humanity of the world of Dickens remains. Despite the broad brush of caricature, despite the over-insistence on the externals of his characters, he makes them *live*; and they live, as we shall see, by virtue of their humanity. Yet it cannot be denied that the way in which Dickens relies on expressing his people in *physical* terms, has been made the basis of an attack upon the reality of his creations. It has been said that when not incarnations of certain qualities they are merely puppets with certain tricks and mannerisms, insisted upon in a wearisome manner to distract our attention from the wooden and lifeless character of the people described. Mr. Pecksniff, it is said, is hypocrisy personified; Mr. Dombey pride personified; Tom Pinch amiability personified; in each case a special quality is so magnified that we lose sight of all other traits and characteristics. The Dickens enthusiast will repel this accusation with indignation, and say that to him at any rate the characters are emphatically alive. But we must not rest content with mere assertion. Is there any basis of truth in this criticism, and if so, how much is false and how much true?

Now it cannot be denied that Dickens has in certain cases rounded off his characters rather in order to point some moral, or to add definiteness to a satire, than to present a reasonable human being. There are a good many Pecksniffs in the world, but who would venture to say that they kept up so persistently the moral pose as does the character in *Martin Chuzzlewit*? Nor does it follow that a Pecksniff must be a man of no intellectual weight whatever. As a matter of fact we know that hypocrisy and ability very often go hand in hand; and although Mr. Pecksniff's architectural futilities are amusing enough, they detract, we must admit, from the lifelike character of the representation. The fact is, that Dickens has drawn a certain number of satirical portraits which must be placed outside the range of his characterisations at large, and to these cases the adverse criticisms mentioned may with some fairness be applied, not otherwise. For the rest it is not Dickens who has over-stated, but we who fail in our observation. Broadly speaking, the characters of Dickens fall into two main divisions:

1. The normal.
2. The abnormal.

With the first class we can group many of his men, notably the so-called heroes of the story, and the majority of his women and children. The second division may be further sub-divided into:

a. Satirical portraits (drawn for a special purpose).
b. The villains.
c. The grotesques.

First, the normal.

I take these first because here, with certain exceptions, Dickens is the least happy and the least individual. He has a genius for transforming geese into swans, for pointing out the possibilities of ugly ducklings; he can make you a silk purse of a sow's ear, or a tolerable imitation thereof, and discovers a gleam of gold in the most unpromising soil. Nevertheless—putting aside the children—some eccentricity of manner, some mental twist, some intellectual slowness is required by him in order to obtain the fullest effects of his art. With the average young man and young woman, and with people who have nothing superficially to differentiate them, he is less interested, and seems rather at a loss how to treat them. How shadowy are Martin Chuzzlewit, Nicholas Nickleby, and Walter Gay compared with Tom Pinch, Newman Noggs, and Captain Cuttle. Why is this? Partly, no doubt, because these characters are less adapted to his methods of character delineation; they make no call upon his sense of humour, nor do they arouse his satirical purpose. Partly also because Dickens does not concern himself with the spiritual history of men and women; and here an interesting contrast is afforded by the writings of George Eliot. Her method of character study is precisely the reverse of Dickens'. Dickens treats of his characters primarily from *without*, and only such characteristics as

may express themselves externally are dwelt upon by him. George Eliot conducts you within; she is first and foremost anxious to show you the growth and expansion of the inward man or woman—that something we call the soul. It is only secondarily, and even then not always, that she is concerned with the externals of her characters. Dickens was not a scientific student of character; he was a shrewd observer of certain types of character, and although he did not confine his character studies altogether to these types, yet he was rarely successful when he diverged from them.

Physical beauty did not appeal strongly to Dickens as it did to Thackeray. As a novelist and a sentimentalist he was bound to pay some homage at the shrine of feminine grace and charm; but his description of such strikes the reader as strained and artificial. Compare the strained sentimentality of his picture of Ruth Pinch, meant to convey her personal attractiveness, with that of George Eliot's convincing description of Hetty Sorrel's beauty. He could convey many things with his picturesque and powerful pen, but the subtle charm of sex was not among them.

The tragedy of sensitive, ill-used children is a tragedy that Dickens could draw with force, tenderness, and imaginative insight; but the tragedy of love, the tragedy of pitiful passions, of futile affections, the tragedy of Juliet, of Maggie Tulliver, of Tess of the D'Urbervilles, is outside his range altogether. Estella is little more than a youthful edition of Edith Dombey. She has been brought up by Miss Havisham (another of Dickens' failures) to look with contempt on affection and sentiment. She is drilled into a hard, cynical young woman, who breaks hearts as a pastime. The beautiful woman without a heart is common enough in fiction, but never was anyone more devoid of semblance to humanity than Estella. She does not talk like a creature of flesh and blood, but as a personified theory. Pip, deeply in love with her, tells her of his feelings.

"It seems," said Estella, very calmly, "that there are sentiments and fancies—I don't know how to call them—which I am not able to comprehend. When you say you love me I know what you mean, as a form of words, but nothing more; you address nothing in my heart; you touch nothing there. I don't care for what you say at all."

Is this the language of a cynical young woman, or, indeed, of any young woman?

With another type of woman Dickens is far more successful. With women past their first youth, who are eccentric in their ways, who have little or no physical charm and often no mental brilliance, yet who have a certain soundness and sweetness of heart; with women of this type Dickens is extraordinarily happy. And although these fall within the grotesque group, they may be considered here while dealing with the women. Betsy Trotwood, Miss La Creevy, and Miss Pross may be cited as noteworthy examples. Betsy Trotwood is easily first; indeed, she ranks among one of Dickens' unqualified successes, and from the moment she administers the strange mixture of restoratives to her young nephew ("I am sure I tasted linseed water, anchovy sauce, and salad dressing") to her kindly hints to David about Agnes, almost at the end of the book, she attracts us to her; what a dear, golden-hearted old lady she must have made, her little peculiarities and occasional acerbity just giving an agreeable fillip to her sterling qualities. Long may her type exist to sweeten human life and to help the many Mr. Dicks floating about the world!

Dickens is also no less successful when shrewd observation rather than psychological analysis is called for. This type is drawn almost entirely from the lower class. Consider his termagants and shrews: Mrs. Joe, Mrs. Snagsby, Mrs. Varden, Mrs. Sowerberry, Mrs. Gummidge, Miss Miggs, Mrs. MacStinger, Mrs. Jellyby, and Mrs. Pocket, to mention a few. What a detestable collection of females; what an unpromising assortment of minor vices! Yes, minor vices; they haven't enough character to be even vicious on a big scale. Yet with what amazing art are they drawn, not a repulsive feature missed, and yet etched in with such humorous twists and twirls that you cannot help laughing at them, however foolish or contemptible they may be.

Of the London landlady no one had a wider knowledge than Dickens; it is amazing the varieties he gives you of a type which one would have thought admitted of so few. Mrs. Bardell belongs, perhaps, to the region of farcical romance; but there is enough life about Mrs. Raddle and Mrs. Cripp. Mrs. Todgers, who would probably have objected to be classed as a landlady, has some good points. She is by no means altogether the calculating vixen—at the same time one would like to see her—only at rare intervals. Mrs. Lirriper, who gives the name to one of his short stories, is the most human, and perhaps it is unfair to class her among the disagreeables; but we fancy she would rather get on the "nerves," her kindliness notwithstanding.

Taken on the whole, then, we must pronounce Dickens' women characters as ineffective, except where they are either eccentric or disagreeable. Accepting these qualifications, he has contributed some remarkably humorous and not a few genuinely pathetic figures to the world of noveldom.

Mrs. Pipchin

Mrs. Pipchin was an elderly lady, who had for some time devoted all the energies of her mind to the study and treatment of infancy. She was generally spoken of as "a great manager" of children; and the secret of her management was, to give them everything that they didn't like, and nothing that they did. Mrs. Pipchin had also founded great fame on being a widow lady whose husband had broken his heart in pumping water out of the Peruvian mines. . . . This was a great recommendation to Mr. Dombey; for it had a rich sound. Broke his heart of the Peruvian mines, mused Mr. Dombey. Well, a very respectable way of doing it.

This celebrated Mrs. Pipchin was a marvellous ill-favoured, ill-conditioned old lady, of a stooping figure, with a mottled face, like bad marble, a hook nose, and a hard grey eye, that looked as if it might have been hammered up on an anvil without sustaining any injury. Forty years at least had elapsed since the Peruvian mines had been the death of Mr. Pipchin; but his relict still wore black bombazeen, of such a lustreless, deep, dead, sombre shade, that gas itself couldn't light her up after dark, and her presence was a quencher to any number of candles. She was such a bitter old lady, that one was tempted to believe that there had been some

mistake in the application of the Peruvian machinery, and that all her waters of gladness and milk of human kindness had been pumped out dry, instead of the mines.[1]

To pass from the normal to the abnormal is to pass at once from a group of characterisations which greatly vary in merit to a group that—with a few reservations concerning the bold, bad villains—are uniformly and extraordinarily successful. It is to pass from a territory in which other writers of less power have succeeded often much better than our author, to a little domain of which Dickens is the master and ruler; in which he is unapproachable.

Never alone come the eccentrics! The bad characters—the out-and-out bad characters—succeed just where we should expect them to succeed, and fail where we should expect them to fail. Where they present merely studies in coarse brutality, animal ferocity combined with the intelligence of the "rough" or "cad," they are effective enough. The cowardice of the "bully," the savage anger and treachery of the blackguard, is excellently depicted. Sikes and Fagin, Jonas Chuzzlewit and, on the whole, Quilp, serve their purpose well enough. But not every devil may be detected by his cloven foot, not every villain by his scowl. Yet unless Dickens could show some physical manifestation of the soul, could hint by a deformity of limb the deformity of moral fibre, he was unable to impress the reader with the personality of the character. Carker's villainy seems so inseparably bound up with his gleaming white teeth, that we are almost persuaded that were he to become on a sudden toothless he would *ipso facto* develop into a highly virtuous gentleman. He suggests a study in molars and morals!

Dickens is, as has been said, in no sense a psychologist. His work is impressionistic, not analytical. When he elaborates his portrait, it is not to show the quality of motives so much as the quantity of waistcoat buttons. Such as they are, however, the villains as a rule serve their purpose well, and where they fail, as in the case of Carker, Monks, and Uriah Heep, it is because some psychological insight into the workings of the mind is wanted to give vitality and reality to the picture.

To turn now to the class of grotesques which play the most conspicuous share in his writings. Here physical uncouthness and mental disability, ranging from good-natured stupidity down to sheer imbecility, is shown combined with sterling moral qualities—in particular, tenderness and sympathy. The recipe for the characters is not especially promising, and one would surmise that they would quickly weary. This, however, is certainly not the case. From Newman Noggs, who appeared in *Nickleby*, down to Joe Gargery in *Great Expectations*, each creation is a fresh delight, each has some new and unexpected touch of humour, and with none of them would we part. Some are lovable, some are merely amusing, but all of them are creatures of warm flesh and blood to be reckoned among the friends of our imagination.

And here let me say that by the phrase abnormal I do not mean unnatural or necessarily cranky—though some are cranks—but characters removed from the ordinary average human being by reason of certain peculiarities or eccentricities of temperament. Joe Gargery is not the normal blacksmith; he is abnormal, luckily for us, and his oddities are irradiated by the searchlight of the author's penetrating humour. Yet he is perfectly natural; we may never have met Joe, but we feel we might meet him at any moment. He is a genuine creation.

"Joe being invited to sit down to table, looked all round the room for a suitable spot on which to deposit his hat, as if it were only on some few very rare substances in nature that it could find a resting-place, and ultimately stood it on an extreme corner of the chimney-piece, from which it ever afterwards fell *off* at intervals.

"'Do you like tea or coffee, Mr. Gargery?' asked Herbert.

"'Thank'ee, sir,' said Joe, stiff from head to foot, 'I'll take whichever is most agreeable to yourself.'

"'What do you say to coffee?'

"'Thank'ee, sir,' returned Joe, evidently dispirited by the proposal; 'since you are so kind as to make choice of coffee, I will not run contrary to your opinions. But don't you never find it a little 'eating?'

"'Say tea, then,' said Herbert, pouring it out.

"Here Joe's hat tumbled off the mantelpiece and he started out of his chair, and fitted it to the same exact spot, as if it were an absolute point of good breeding that it should tumble off again soon.

"'When did you come to town, Mr. Gargery?'

"'Were it yesterday afternoon?' said Joe, after coughing behind his hand as if he had had time to catch the whooping cough since he came. 'No, it were not, you it were. Yes, it were yesterday afternoon' (with an appearance of mingled wisdom, relief, and strict impartiality).

"'Have you seen anything of London yet?'

"'Why yes, sir,' said Joe. 'Me and Wopsle went off straight to look at the Blacking Ware'us. But we didn't find it come up with its likeness to the red bills on shop doors; which I mean to say,' added Joe, 'as it is there drawd too architectooralooral.'

"I really believe Joe would have prolonged the word (mightily expressive to my mind of some architecture that I know) into a perfect chorus, but for his attention being providentially attracted by his hat, which was toppling. Indeed, it demanded from him a constant attention and a quickness of eye and hand very like that exacted by wicket keeping. He made extraordinary play with it, and showed the greatest skill—now rushing at it and catching it neatly as it dropped; now merely stopping it midway, beating it up, and humouring it in various parts of the room, and against a good deal of the pattern of the wall, finally splashing it into the slop basin, where I took the liberty of laying hands on it."

Apart from the perfect touches of characterisation, what a genius for "stage business" this and similar passages show? One can well believe how excellent an actor Dickens was.

On similar lines, though not with such delicacy of touch or such play of humorous fancy, is the character of Mr. Peggotty drawn. Peggotty loses in interest somehow when he goes in quest of Emily, whereas Joe grows upon us as the story proceeds, and is perhaps the most lovable of all Dickens' characters; the strength and tenderness of the man being portrayed with infinite skill.

Excellent, as studies of trustful simplicity, are the characters of Tom Pinch and his first cousin, Bob Cratchit, who idealises Scrooge in a way not altogether dissimilar from that of Pinch!

Belonging, of course, to these grotesques are certain female characters we have glanced at already

[1] *Dombey and Son.*

when dealing with Dickens' women—Betsy Trotwood, Miss Pross, Mrs. Gamp, Betsy Prig. It is curious how sure is his touch and effective his portraiture when grotesquerie, involving some measure of humorous fantasy, enters into the character. Putting aside the shrewd and crazy women, he scarcely ever draws a live woman except grotesque. Among the male characters also, his most striking successes are grotesques, but he has drawn some interesting portraits apart from these, e.g. Pip, Steerforth, Traddles, Jaggers, Talkinghorn, and for the matter of that, the majority of his lawyers. Two, however, of his most notable paintings must be classed with the "grotesques," even though, as in the case of Joe and Mr. Peggotty, the grotesque element only faintly colours the portrait and does not interfere with its lifelike character. I allude to Dick Swiveller and Mr. Micawber. Stripped of their engaging personalities and looked at through the cold eye of criticism, it is difficult to see anything especially attractive about them. Dick is a chronic tippler, rarely sober, a shiftless Bohemian, alternating between getting into drink and into debt.

Surely here is a man who might be held up as an awful example by the temperance party, yet as seen by the humorous and sympathetic eye of Dickens his failings fall into insignificance, even his intemperance is presented in a merry, fantastic light; whereas the good-heartedness of the character and the happy-go-lucky mercurial temperament are emphasized and dwelt upon with rare skill. We are made to feel that there is a refinement about the man, that he is not only a "good sort" at heart but that under happier circumstances "the fire of soul would have been kindled at the taper of conviviality" of a more moderate character.

Mr. Micawber is another type of the attractive mercurial temperament, ready to look on the bright side of things at the smallest provocation. Apart from this, the needy, improvident man would have served the stern moralist's purposes almost as well as Swiveller. But really we are scarcely conscious of his faults, so delighted are we by his company. This, it may be said, is due to the author making unfair use of his gift of humour, and idealising the man out of all human probability. That he idealizes may be admitted.

Mr. Micawber

The counting-house clock was at half-past twelve, and there was a general preparation for going to dinner, when Mr. Quinion tapped at the counting-house window, and beckoned me to go in. I went in, and found there a stoutish, middle-aged person, in a brown surtout and black tights and shoes, with no more hair upon his head (which was a large one, and very shining) than there is upon an egg, and with a very extensive face, which he turned full upon me. His clothes were shabby, but he had an imposing shirt-collar on. He carried a jaunty sort of a stick, with a large pair of rusty tassels to it; and a quizzing-glass hung outside his coat—for ornament, I afterwards found, as he very seldom looked through it, and couldn't see anything when he did.

"This," said Mr. Quinion, in allusion to myself, "is he."

"This," said the stranger, with a certain condescending roll in his voice, and a certain indescribable air of doing something genteel, which impressed me very much, "is Master Copperfield. I hope I see you well, sir?"

I said I was very well, and hoped he was. I was sufficiently ill at ease, Heaven knows; but it was not in my nature to complain much at that time of my life, so I said I was very well, and hoped he was.

"I am," said the stranger, "thank Heaven, quite well. I have received a letter from Mr. Murdstone, in which he mentions that he would desire me to receive into an apartment in the rear of my house, which is at present unoccupied—and is, in short, to be let as a—in short," said the stranger, with a smile and in a burst of confidence, "as a bedroom—the young beginner whom I have now the pleasure to——" and the stranger waved his hand, and settled his chin in his shirt-collar.

"This is Mr. Micawber," said Mr. Quinion to me.

"Ahem!" said the stranger, "that is my name."

"Mr. Micawber," said Mr. Quinion, "is known to Mr. Murdstone. He takes orders for us on commission, when he can get any. He has been written to by Mr. Murdstone, on the subject of your lodgings, and he will receive you as a lodger."

. . . . . .

The only visitors I ever saw or heard of, were creditors. They used to come at all hours, and some of them were quite ferocious. One dirty-faced man, I think he was a boot-maker, used to edge himself into the passage as early as seven o'clock in the morning, and call up the stairs to Mr. Micawber—"Come! You ain't out yet, you know. Pay us, will you? Don't hide, you know; that's mean. I wouldn't be mean if I was you! Pay us, will you? You just pay us, d'ye hear? Come!" Receiving no answer to these taunts, he would mount in his wrath to the words "swindlers" and "robbers"; and these being ineffectual too, would sometimes go to the extremity of crossing the street, and roaring up at the windows of the second floor, where he knew Mr. Micawber was. At these times, Mr. Micawber would be transported with grief and mortification, even to the length (as I was once made aware by a scream from his wife) of making motions at himself with a razor; but within half an hour afterwards, he would polish up his shoes with extraordinary pains, and go out, humming a tune with a greater air of gentility than ever.[1]

All Dickens' characters are idealised one way or the other. That is part of his method. That it is done to an inartistic extent, that it deprives the character of human interest cannot be admitted. Surely we can recall many persons whose charm of manner or whose personal magnetism has affected us so strongly that we have been inclined to overlook their weaknesses and condone their faults, faults that in less sympathetic or attractive characters would have provoked disgust and disapprobation.

Herein comes the special and enduring value of Dickens' character-painting. So sure is his touch, so vital his imagination, that the credibility or psychological accuracy of a character study scarcely affects its success at all. Some of his frankest caricatures live with us, as do few of the correctly-drawn personages of other novelists. So intensely does he believe in Pecksniff, Stiggins, Chadband, Scrooge, sy. and his Winkles and Tupmans too, that we also are compelled to believe in them. The reformed Scrooge screaming out of the window for the largest turkey, or digging the astonished Cratchit in the ribs, is outrageously improbable. But, improbable or not, Scrooge is alive and declines to be dismissed into the limbo of forgotten worthies. And are not many of Dickens' characterisations wrought

[1] *David Copperfield.*

into the very texture of our thoughts, impressed upon our imaginations as are few characters even in real life?

If one will only compare the multitudinous Christmas stories that are written nowadays with the Christmas tales of Dickens, then one will appreciate more than ever the beauty and moral stimulus of that novelist's work. The feeling that Dickens in his Christmas books did so much to deepen the feeling of kindliness, of universal love, of practical sympathy, is absent from the majority of these volumes written for Christmas time. It may be said that Dickens' Christmas is largely convention, yet it is a convention to which these books owe their existence, and the tender, tolerant, generous spirit of Dickens influences few of them. The Christmas message of Dickens, we have been told, is a roast-beef-and-plum-pudding-and-plenty-to-drink message. It was so to this extent only that he recognised that nothing could be hoped for in the way of social uplifting while men and women and little children know what hunger is, that it is cant to talk of the blessings of poverty, or to force a sermon upon an empty stomach.

And thus it is that the Christmas stories of Dickens touch us as do few others, inasmuch as they carry within them sunshine of a gentle-hearted galety. No scene of his so darkly drawn but had its rainbow; and therein lies the compelling charm of stories like *The Carol*, *The Chimes*, and *The Cricket on the Hearth*. In fact, Dickens seemed to say, "Feed before you moralise; satisfy the hunger of these poor folk before you try to teach them what to do and what not to do." A simple enough lesson, but one all the same that was badly needed. Too much of the piety of the time was hard and unsympathetic, and one is reminded of the sensible old woman in one of George Eliot's early stories who remarked about the parson's housekeeper, "I have nothing to say agin her piety, my dear, but I know very well I shouldn't like her to cook my victles. When a man comes in hungry and tired piety won't feed him, I reckon. Hard carrots lie heavy on the stomach, piety or no piety. I called in one day when she was dishing up Mr. Tryan's dinner, and I could see his potatoes was as watery as watery. It's right enough to be spiritual, I'm no enemy to that, but I like my potatoes mealy. I don't see as anyone'll get to heaven any the sooner for not digesting their dinners, provided they don't die sooner." This practical philosophy appealed very strongly to Dickens, and no one has illustrated its truth more picturesquely or more humorously.

There are some books from which we rise with the knowledge that our souls are the sweeter and saner for what we have read. And among such books none have exerted a more compelling interest towards a greater tolerance for men and women, a livelier sympathy for the poor and outcast, than the Christmas stories of Charles Dickens.

Betsy Trotwood's famous advice to her nephew fairly epitomises the teaching of Dickens. "Never be mean, never be false, never be cruel." *Never be mean*, that is the burden of his Christmas books. *Never be false*, that sentiment runs beneath all his satire. *Never be cruel*, that is the mainspring of his tender humour—his compassion for the weak, the infirm, the oppressed.

Dickens has touched with pity and tenderness the springs of our national life, and English life no less than English letters, is the saner, the sweeter, and the sunnier for his presence.

CHARLES KINGSLEY

CHARLES KINGSLEY was born at Holne Vicarage, Devonshire, on June 12, 1819, his boyhood being passed among the fens of Nottingham. His father was a man of cultivated tastes, a cleric, an artist, a linguist, and a keen sportsman; his mother was a Miss Lucas of Barbadoes, from whom he inherited the romance in his nature. A delicate, sensitive, and precocious child, he began to write poems and preach sermons to imaginary congregations when four years old.

Educated at Clifton during the time of the Bristol Riots, the horrors witnessed at that time awakened in him an unwonted courage. Twenty-seven years later, when giving a lecture there, he said:

"It was in this very City of Bristol, that I received my first lesson in what is now called 'social science,' and yet, alas, ten years elapsed ere I could even spell out that lesson, though it has been written for me (as well as for all England) in letters of flame, from one end of the country to the other. . . . It is good for a man to be brought once at least in his life, face to face with fact, ultimate fact, however horrible it may be; and have to confess to himself, shuddering, what things are possible upon God's earth."

Kingsley was not popular as a schoolboy, for while active he was not keen on games. Of endurance to pain he had no lack, he would heat a poker to cauterise his wounded finger, yet at the same time was tender-hearted to others; of most forgiving nature, while keenly sensitive to ridicule.

In 1839 he went up to Cambridge, and came under the influence of Coleridge, Carlyle, and Maurice. After his ordination in 1842 he settled as curate in Eversley, Hants, to be his home, with a short interval, for thirty-three years. After his marriage to Miss Fanny Grenfell in 1844, he became rector, and very popular. His aim was to be "all things to all men" —and he would give his sympathy and advice alike to huntsman and poacher, to farmer and labourer, while taking the lead in the social life of his poorer parishioners.

In 1848 appeared *The Saint's Tragedy*. This year was a strenuous one, for in addition to his parish and literary work he accepted the Professorship of English Literature at Queen's College, London. On May 6 appeared the first number of *Politics for the People*, his own contributions being over the signature of "Parson Lot." *Yeast* was also running serially in *Fraser's Magazine*. Nerves and brain were continually on the stretch, and resulted in a breakdown. For months he could do nothing but wander on the seashore at Ilfracombe, where he had removed with his family for rest.

When *Alton Locke* was published in 1849, furious attacks were made upon this expression of the author's socialistic views, but "he stuck to his guns." After *Hypatia* (1853), *Westward Ho* (1855), and *Two Years Ago* (1857), he was appointed Pro-

fessor of Modern History at Cambridge (1860); then came the charming fantasy, *Water Babies* (1863), and the quarrel with Cardinal Newman that resulted in the publication of the *Apologia*.

In 1869 Kingsley was made Canon of Chester, and of Westminster in 1873. The following year he went to America, where he lectured and preached to large crowds, but had a serious illness in Colorado. Returning to Eversley in August, he took up his work there with the same grim determination and noble self-repression that had marked his whole life. But his life work was nearly over. Having preached in Westminster Abbey on Advent Sunday he was much exhausted, the following day he was taken ill, and died on January 23, 1875.

The Work of Kingsley

Kingsley belonged temperamentally to the Romantic school, and that particular side of the Romantic school which followed in the wake of Scott. He is a good, spirited writer of the second rank; virile, straightforward, and of a lively imagination. Hence he is a capital writer for boys, and in any case is best enjoyed in the uncritical days of youth, when his prejudices and partialities ride lightly over us. But his strong anti-Catholic sentiment, and horror of celibacy and the ascetic life, become rather troublesome obsessions in his stories. In *Hereward the Wake* this is of less moment; we are interested in the writer's vigorous portraiture of the Viking nature, with its coarse power and passionate tenacity; but the Elizabethan setting of *Westward Ho* brings the partisanship more prominently forward, and this spirited story, with its warm patriotic note, would have been all the better had he been less anxious to idealise our attractive but not over squeamish old sea-dogs, Hawkins and Drake, and to paint in such lurid colours the Catholic Spaniard. Narrow and intolerant they may have been, but no whit more so than the Protestants of the time. The Spaniard was a poor coloniser as compared with the Englishman, and certainly treated the Indian cruelly. Kingsley sees this clearly enough. It is a pity that he does not see equally clearly that our treatment of the Irish was no whit less odious, and that the wholesale thieving of Messrs. Hawkins and Company is not to be counted for righteousness so far as those gallant and picturesque navigators were concerned.

Directly Kingsley approached modern times his sense of moral perspective is wonderfully clear. Once he is away from his bugbears—Catholicism and Asceticism—his sense of justice is impeccable. If from the standpoint of the literary artist his humanitarian fictions are inferior to his romances, they certainly exhibit his fine social sympathies, and both *Yeast* and *Alton Locke* are excellent as preachments. Here he supplements the work of Dickens very usefully. It was good to point out, as Dickens had done, the moral qualities of the poor and uneducated; it was equally good to show, as Kingsley did, that the poor man had a head as well as a heart.

English Manliness

One bright summer's afternoon, in the year of grace 1575, a tall and fair boy came lingering along Bideford quay, in his scholar's gown, with a satchel and slate in hand, watching wistfully the shipping and the sailors, till, just after he passed the bottom of the High Street, he came opposite to one of the many taverns which looked out upon the river. In the open bay window sat merchants and gentlemen, discoursing over their afternoon's draught of sack; and outside the door was gathered a group of sailors, listening earnestly to some one who stood in the midst. The boy, all alive for any sea-news, must needs go up to them, and take his place among the sailor-lads who were peeping and whispering under the elbows of the men; and so came in for the following speech, delivered in a loud, bold voice, with a strong Devonshire accent, and a fair sprinkling of oaths:

"'If you don't believe me, go and see, or stay here and grow all over blue mould. I tell you, as I am a gentleman, I saw it with these eyes, and so did Salvation Yeo there, through a window in the lower room; and we measured the heap, as I am a christened man, seventy foot long, ten foot broad, and twelve foot high, of silver bars, and each bar between a thirty and forty pound weight. And says Captain Drake, 'There, my lads of Devon, I've brought you to the mouth of the world's treasure-house, and it's your own fault now if you don't sweep it out as empty as a stock-fish.'"

"'Why didn't you bring some of they home, then, Mr. Oxenham?'"

"'Why weren't you there to help to carry them? We would have brought 'em away, safe enough, and young Drake and I had broke the door abroad already, but Captain Drake goes off in a dead faint: and when we came to look, he had a wound in his leg you might have laid three fingers in, and his boots were full of blood, and had been for an hour or more; but the heart of him was that, that he never knew it till he dropped, and then his brother and I got him away to the boats, he kicking and struggling, and bidding us let him go on with the fight, though every step he took in the sand was in a pool of blood. And so we got off. And tell me, ye sons of shotten herrings, wasn't it worth more to save him than the dirty silver? for silver we can get again, brave boys: there's more fish in the sea than ever came out of it, and more silver in Nombre de Dios than would pave all the streets in the west country: but of such captains as Franky Drake, Heaven never makes but one at a time: and if we lose him, good-bye to England's luck says I, and who don't agree, let him choose his weapons, and I'm his man."

He who delivered this harangue was a tall and sturdy personage, with a florid black-bearded face, and bold restless dark eyes, who leaned, with crossed legs and arms akimbo, against the wall of the house; and seemed in the eyes of the schoolboy a very magnifico, some prince or duke at least.[1]

CHARLES READE

Charles Reade was born at Ipsden House, Oxfordshire, in 1814, his mother, "to whom," he said, "I owe the larger half of what I am," being the daughter of John Scott Waring, a member of Parliament and the friend of Grote and Wilberforce. After graduating at Oxford he became Dean of Arts at Magdalen in 1845, and Vice-President of his college in 1851. At this time his style of dress—notably a green coat with brass buttons—caused some sensation. Although called to the Bar in 1843, the law had no attraction for him as a profession—though, doubtless, his legal equipment well served him later in the many lawsuits which, through a hasty and imperious temper, he became involved.

As a dramatist he made his first essay with *The Ladies' Battle*; this was followed by *Masks and*

[1] *Westward Ho!*

Faces, written in collaboration with Tom Taylor. During the rehearsal of this play at the Haymarket Theatre, he made the acquaintance of Mrs. Laura Seymour, an actress and his friend for many years, who advised him to try fiction. Acting on her suggestion he turned the incidents of this play into a novel, *Peg Woffington*, and wrote *Christie Johnstone*; as novels they were successful, but £30 was all they brought to their author. However, he was a prolific writer and not daunted by small pay. In drawing up his "account with literature" in 1851, he says for the first eighteen years: "In all, one hundred and five pounds. That is to say, about half a crown a week—not enough to pay for pens, ink, and paper, leaving copying and shoe leather out of the question." . . . "Had it not been for the fellowship . . . and a mother's generous help, I must have been in the workhouse or breaking stones on the highway."

In 1855 the trial of the Governor of Birmingham Gaol for cruelties to the prisoners under his charge attracted Reade's attention, and after studying the gaols of Durham, Oxford, and Reading, his indignation was aroused, and he wrote *It's Never too Late to Mend* (1856). In 1859 *The Cloister and the Hearth*, as *A Good Fight*, made a partial appearance in *Once a Week*, and increased its circulation by twenty thousand. The tale was brought to an abrupt conclusion by Reade in consequence of the liberties taken with the manuscript by the editor. *Hard Cash* in 1863, and *Griffith Gaunt* two years later. For the latter Reade received his highest payment for a novel—£1500 for the serial rights—from Mrs. Henry Wood, founder of the *Argosy*. Some further dramatic ventures, more or less remunerative, followed, but his greatest success, *Drink* (adapted from Zola's *L'Assommoir*), in 1879, brought the author £20,000.

As a man Reade was a contradictory, irascible, litigious, kind-hearted and extremely generous man; always ready to listen to anyone with a grievance, and was especially interested in those who had "come down" in the world. A great lover of animals, he kept quite a menagerie at his residence in Knightsbridge, where he lived from 1868–1880. He died at Shepherd's Bush in 1884.

Characteristics of Reade and Kingsley

Both Reade and Kingsley had so much in common as literary artists that it may prove suggestive to consider their work in the light of certain salient characteristics.

(1) *A Vivid Appreciation of the Dramatic Element in Life*

Both men were inclined to regard human life as a successive series of crises, a constant diorama of situations.

Kingsley came from a long line of country gentlemen and soldiers. With his big fund of animal spirits, his store of nervous energy, he turned naturally to those phases of concrete life where opposing forces made themselves most readily felt. He had the instinct of the soldier who loves to fight against heavy odds. His own life was a hard struggle between his passions and his ideals; between the natural man and the ethical man. Much superfluous energy he worked off in characteristic fashion. He scaled the high wall of his college to begin fishing some miles away one morning at three o'clock; and he met the troubles of headache, not by bromide but by a long tramp over the fens in a head wind. It is easy to understand, therefore, why he was excellent as a parish priest in a rough country village. He was one of his people, able to understand their weaknesses and frailties. And this quality, that made him forceful as a pastor, made him forceful as a writer. The man who is keenly alive to the dramatic side of life may be a bad historian and an unblushing partisan, but he never lacks the power to interest. He may not be a clear thinker, but he is certainly a clear observer. His romances are dramas, and his best poems are dramas. *Heroes* is the drama of the old Gods; *Westward Ho*, the drama of religious creeds; *Hypatia*, the drama of the clash between the East and the West at the dawn of Christianity; *Hereward the Wake*, the drama of the Viking and Ascetic Ecclesiasticism; *Yeast* and *Alton Locke*, the drama of industrial strife; *Three Fishers* and *The Sands of Dee*, the drama of Man versus Nature. Even in that charming fancy, *Water Babies*, the dramatic element is not lacking.

Turning from Kingsley to Reade, we find the same predominance of the dramatic element—with a difference. What is this difference? It is not a difference of attitude but of presentment. A boy, if asked to state it, would say that Reade was the more exciting. The critic would expound this difference by pointing out that Reade, while no less interested than Kingsley in the moral element of drama, is more emphatic about its physical constituents. Kingsley is absorbed by his story because it deals with a conflict; Reade because it deals with a picturesque and thrilling conflict. He is more self-conscious than Kingsley, more of the deliberate artist, and often frankly delights in his situations as situations. It was the dream of his life to write a successful play, and he devoted eighteen years to the study of art, preferring the drama to the novel. His chief friends were connected with the stage rather than with letters. *Never too Late to Mend* was evolved from his own play, *Gold*, that in its turn being inspired by a play; *Peg Woffington* is a novel based on his play *Masks and Faces*.

He had a knowledge of stage technique that Kingsley lacked, and this makes him superior to Kingsley in dramatic intensity; though Kingsley at his best is more spontaneous and less mannered.

For sheer manipulation of thrilling situations he has no superior in English fiction, though his contemporary, Wilkie Collins, excelled him at times in subtlety of method in achieving his effects. The reader must be hard to move, however, who could read with tranquil pulse such finely devised episodes as that of the scuttled ship in *Hard Cash*, of the man-hunt in *Never too Late to Mend*, the escape by windmill in *The Cloister and the Hearth*, or the fight with the pirate ship in *Hard Cash*.

(2) *The Fundamental Realism of their Fiction*

The union of the elder romance and the younger realism that we note in Scott is yet further developed by some of the Victorian novelists. Despite their rich romantic equipment, both Reade and Kingsley are essentially realists in method. One recalls the village feast in *Yeast*, with its coarseness and sudden gaiety; such portraits as that of the poacher, or that rough diamond Mackenzie, in *Alton Locke*; and Reade is even more thorough in his realism. He is less prone than Kingsley was to stop and moralise; he knew the value of "cutting the cackle and coming to the 'osses"; and if he is inordinately long at times (as he is in his masterpiece, *The Cloister and the Hearth*), this is not because he wants to preach, but because he is over generous with his sensations. One reservation must, however, be made; his realism deals with things rather than with people. His heroes and heroines and villains are more often than not mere abstractions, useful puppets for furthering his ingenious purposes as a story-teller, but unconvincing as vital portraits of real men and women.

But turn from the puppets of the drama to the background, and Reade is nearly always clear and convincing; whether he is treating of prison life or of convict settlements, or private asylums, or life on a desert island, he has gripped his subject-matter, mastered his facts, and makes the reader see the thing described with his own eyes.

(3) *The Social Purpose in the Novels*

Both Reade and Kingsley were preachers at heart, and there is the same downright, vigorous morality in their writings. Both men not only attacked injustices but proposed remedies. Artistically, Reade has the greater power to fuse his social purpose and dramatic imagination; and as a humanitarian force, though no more strenuous than Kingsley, he is more varied, more impressive. Indeed no English novelist—Dickens himself not excepted—put his genius with freer disinterestedness at the service of the public than did Reade. His realism, clever as it is, would have been of slight service had not his romantic imagination reinforced it. Lacking Kingsley's lyric faculty, he is none-the-less a poet at heart. No man without the poet's soul could have penned *The Cloister and the Hearth*. There is the true "Renascence of Wonder" in its pages.

In short, both men were realists in the best sense of the word, which implies no slavish reproduction of the externals of life, but a faithful presentation of such primal facts as love, pity, courage, endurance, and especially those simple domesticities beloved by Teutonic races. Kingsley's paean of love is but the prelude to his glorification of happy home life, and Reade is never so happy as when he is showing that even in the most degraded breast, clear, simple home affection may still be lurking.

The Fight with the Bear

There was a peculiar sound, like something heavy, but not hard, rushing softly over the dead leaves. Gerard turned round with some little curiosity. A colossal creature was coming down the road at about sixty paces distant.

He looked at it in a sort of calm stupor at first, but the next moment he turned ashy pale.

"Denys!" he cried. "Oh, God! Denys!"

Denys whirled round.

It was a bear as big as a cart-horse.

It was tearing along with its huge head down, running on a hot scent. The very moment he saw it Denys said in a sickening whisper:

"The cub!"

Oh! the concentrated horror of that one word, whispered hoarsely, with dilating eyes! For in that syllable it all flashed upon them both like a sudden stroke of lightning in the dark—the bloody trail, the murdered cub, the mother upon them, *and it*. Death.

All this in a moment of time. The next she saw them. Huge as she was, she seemed to double herself (it was her long hair bristling with rage): she raised her head big as a bull's, her swine-shaped jaws opened wide at them, her eyes turned to blood and flame, and she rushed upon them, scattering the leaves about her like a whirlwind as she came.

"Shoot!" screamed Denys, but Gerard stood shaking from head to foot, useless.

"Shoot, man! ten thousand devils, shoot! too late! Tree! tree!" and he dropped the cub, pushed Gerard across the road, and flew to the first tree and climbed it, Gerard the same on his side; and as they fled, both men uttered inhuman howls like savage creatures grazed by death.

With all their speed one or other would have been torn to fragments at the foot of his tree; but the bear stopped a moment at the cub.

Without taking her bloodshot eyes off those she was hunting, she smelt it all round, and found, how, her Creator only knows, that it was dead, quite dead. She gave a yell such as neither of the hunted ones had ever heard, nor dreamed to be in nature, and flew after Denys. She reared and struck at him as he climbed. He was just out of reach.

Instantly she seized the tree, and with her huge teeth tore a great piece out of it with a crash. Then she reared again, dug her claws deep into the bark, and began to mount it slowly, but as surely as a monkey.

Denys's evil star had led him to a dead tree, a mere shaft, and of no very great height. He climbed faster than his pursuer, and was soon at the top. He looked this way and that for some bough of another tree to spring to. There was none; and if he jumped down, he knew the bear would be upon him ere he could recover the fall, and make short work of him. Moreover, Denys was little used to turning his back on danger, and his blood was rising at being hunted. He turned to bay....

Gerard's heart was better than his nerves. He saw his friend's mortal danger, and passed at once from fear to blindish rage. He slipped down his tree in a moment, caught up the crossbow, which he had dropped in the road, and running furiously up, sent a bolt into the bear's body with a loud shout. The bear gave a snarl of rage and pain, and turned its head irresolutely.

"Keep aloof!" cried Denys, "or you are a dead man."

"I care not;" and in a moment he had another bolt ready and shot it fiercely into the bear, screaming, "Take that! Take that!"

Denys poured a volley of oaths down at him. "Get away, idiot!"

He was right: the bear finding so formidable and noisy a foe behind him, slipped growling down the tree, rending deep furrows in it as she slipped. Gerard ran back to his tree and climbed it swiftly. But while his legs were dangling some eight feet from the ground, the bear came rearing and struck with her fore paw, and out flew a piece of bloody cloth from Gerard's hose. He climbed, and climbed; and presently he heard as it were in the air a voice say, "Go out on the bough!" He looked, and there was a long massive branch before him shooting upwards at a slight angle: he threw his body across it,

and by a series of convulsive efforts worked up it to the end.

Then he looked round panting.

The bear was mounting the tree on the other side. He heard her claws scrape, and saw her bulge on both sides of the massive tree. Her eye not being very quick, she reached the fork and passed it, mounting the main stem. Gerard drew breath more freely. The bear either heard him, or found by scent she was wrong: she paused; presently she caught sight of him. She eyed him steadily, then quietly descended to the fork. Slowly, cautiously she stretched out a paw and tried the bough. It was a stiff oak branch, sound as iron. Instinct taught the creature this: it crawled carefully out on the bough, growling savagely as it came.

Gerard looked wildly down. He was forty feet from the ground. Death below. Death moving slow but sure on him in a still more horrible form. His hair bristled. The sweat poured from him. He sat helpless, fascinated, tongue-tied.

As the fearful monster crawled growling towards him, incongruous thoughts coursed through his mind. Margaret: the Vulgate, where it speaks of the rage of a she-bear robbed of her whelps—Rome—Eternity.

The bear crawled on. And now the stupor of death fell on the doomed man; he saw the open jaws and bloodshot eyes coming, but in a mist.

As in a mist he heard a twang: he glanced down; Denys, white and silent as death, was shooting up at the bear. The bear snarled at the twang, but crawled on. Again the cross-bow twanged, and the bear snarled, and came nearer. Again the cross-bow twanged; and the next moment the bear was close upon Gerard, where he sat, with hair standing stiff on end and eyes staring from their sockets, palsied. The bear opened her jaws like a grave, and hot blood spouted from them upon Gerard as from a pump. The bough rocked. The wounded monster was reeling; it clung, it stuck its sickles of claws deep into the wood; it toppled, its claws held firm, but its body rolled off, and the sudden shock to the branch shook Gerard forward on his stomach with his face upon one of the bear's straining paws. At this, by a convulsive effort, she raised her head up, up, till he felt her hot fœtid breath. Then huge teeth snapped together loudly close below him in the air, with a last effort of baffled hate. The ponderous carcass rent the claws out of the bough, then pounded the earth with a tremendous thump. There was a shout of triumph below, and the very next instant a cry of dismay, for Gerard had swooned, and without an attempt to save himself, rolled headlong from the perilous height.

Denys caught at Gerard, and somewhat checked his fall; but it may be doubted whether this alone would have saved him from breaking his neck, or a limb. His best friend now was the dying bear, on whose hairy carcass his head and shoulders descended. Denys tore him off her. It was needless. She panted still, and her limbs quivered, but a hare was not so harmless; and soon she breathed her last.[1]

The Fight with the Pirates

Dodd cast his eyes all round the horizon for help.

The sea was blank.

The bright sun was hidden now; drops of rain fell, and the wind was beginning to sing, and the sea to rise a little.

"Gentlemen," said he, "let us kneel down and pray for wisdom, in this sore strait."

He and his officers kneeled on the quarter-deck. When they rose, Dodd stood rapt about a minute; his great thoughtful eye saw no more of the enemy, the sea, nor anything external; it was turned inward. His officers looked at him in silence.

"Sharpe," said he at last, "there *must* be a way out of them both with such a breeze as this is now, if we could but see it."

"Ay, *if*," groaned Sharpe.

Dodd mused again.

"About ship!" said he softly, like an absent man.

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Steer due north!" said he, still like one whose mind was elsewhere.

While the ship was coming about, he gave minute orders to the mates and the gunner, to ensure co-operation in the delicate and dangerous manœuvre that were sure to be at hand.

The wind was WNW: he was standing north: one pirate lay on his lee beam stopping a leak between wind and water, and hacking the deck clear of his broken mast and yards. The other fresh, and thirsting for the easy prey, came up to weather on him and hung on his quarter, pirate fashion.

When they were distant about a cable's length, the fresh pirate, to meet the ship's change of tactics, changed his own, luffed up, and gave the ship a broadside, well aimed but not destructive, the guns being loaded with ball.

Dodd, instead of replying immediately, put his helm hard up and ran under the pirate's stern while he was jammed up in the wind, and with his five eighteen-pounders raked him fore and aft, then paying off, gave him three carronades crammed with grape and canister; the rapid discharge of eight guns made the ship tremble, and enveloped her in thick smoke; loud shrieks and groans were heard from the schooner: the smoke cleared: the pirate's mainsail hung on deck, his jibboom was cut off like a carrot and the sail struggling: his foresail looked lace, lanes of dead and wounded lay still or writhing on his deck, and his lee scuppers ran blood into the sea. Dodd squared his yards and bore away.

The ship rushed down the wind, leaving the schooner staggered and all abroad. But not for long; the pirate wore and fired his bow-chasers at the now flying *Agra*, split one of the carronades in two, and killed a Lascar, and made a hole in the foresail; this done, he hoisted a mainsail again in a trice, sent his wounded below, flung his dead overboard, to the horror of their foes, and came after the flying ship, yawing and firing his bow-chasers. The ship was silent. She had no shot to throw away. Not only did she take these blows like a coward, but all signs of life disappeared on her, except two men at the wheel, and the captain on the main gangway.

Dodd had ordered the crew out of the rigging, armed them with cutlasses, and laid them flat on the forecastle. He also compelled Kenealy and Fullalove to come down out of harm's way, no wiser on the smooth-bore question than they went up.

The great patient ship ran environed by her foes; one destroyer right in her course, another in her wake, following her with yells of vengeance, and pounding away at her—but no reply.

Suddenly the yells of the pirates on both sides ceased, and there was a moment of dead silence on the sea.

Yet nothing fresh had happened.

Yes, this had happened: the pirates to windward, and the pirates to leeward, of the *Agra* had found out, at one and the same moment, that the merchant captain they had lashed, and bullied, and tortured was a patient but tremendous man. It was not only to rake the fresh schooner he had put his ship before the wind, but also by a double, daring master-stroke to hurl his monster ship bodily on the other. Without a foresail she could never get out of her way. The pirate crew had stopped the leak, and cut away and unshipped the broken foremast, and were stepping a new one, when they saw the huge ship bearing down in full sail. Nothing easier than to slip out of her way could they get the foresail to draw; but the time was short, the deadly intention manifest, the coming destruction swift.

After that solemn silence came a storm of cries and curses, as their seamen went to work to fit the yard and raise the sail; while their fighting men seized their matchlocks and trained the guns. They were well commanded by an heroic, able villain. Astern the consort thundered; but the *Agra's* response was dead silence more awful than broadsides.

[1] *The Cloister and the Hearth*

For then was seen with what majesty the enduring Anglo-Saxon fights.

One of that indomitable race on the gangway, one at the foremast, two at the wheel, conned and steered the great ship down on a hundred matchlocks and a grinning broadside just as they would have conned and steered her into a British harbour.

"Starboard!" said Dodd, in a deep calm voice, with a motion of his hand.

"Starboard it is."

The pirate wriggled ahead a little. The man forward made a silent signal to Dodd.

"Port!" said Dodd quietly.

"Port it is."

But at this critical moment the pirate astern sent a mischievous shot and knocked one of the men to atoms at the helm.

Dodd waved his hand without a word, and another man rose from the deck, and took his place in silence, and laid his unshaking hand on the wheel stained with that man's warm blood whose place he took.

The high ship was scarce sixty yards distant; *she seemed to know*: she reared her lofty Figure-head with great awful shoots into the air.

But now the panting pirates got their new foresail hoisted with a joyful shout; it drew, the schooner gathered way, and their furious consort close on the *Agra's* heels just then scourged her deck with grape.

"Port!" said Dodd calmly.

"Port it is."

The giant prow darted at the escaping pirate. That acre of coming canvas took the wind out of the swift schooner's foresail; it flapped: oh, then she was doomed! That awful moment parted the races on board her; the Papuans and Soulous, their black faces livid and blue with horror, leaped yelling into the sea, or crouched and whimpered; the yellow Malays and brown Portuguese, though blanched to one colour now, turned on death like dying panthers, fired two cannon slap into the ship's bows, and snapping their muskets and matchlocks at their solitary executioner on the ship's gangway, and cut flew their knives like crushed wasps' slings. CRASH! the Indiaman's cutwater in thick smoke beat in the schooner's broadside: down went her masts to leeward like fishing rods whipping the water; there was a horrible shrieking yell; wild forms leaped off on the *Agra*, and were hacked to pieces almost ere they reached the deck—a surge, a chasm in the sea, filled with an instant rush of engulphing waves, a long, awful, grating, grinding noise, never to be forgotten in this world, all along under the ship's keel—and the fearful, majestic monster passed on over the blank she had made, with a pale crew standing silent and awe-struck on the deck; a cluster of wild heads and staring eyeballs bobbing like corks in her foaming wake, sole relic of the blotted-out destroyer; and a wounded man staggering on the gangway, with hands uplifted and staring eyes.

Shot in two places, the head and the breast!

With a loud cry of pity and dismay, Sharpe, Fullalove, Kennaly, and others rushed to catch him: but, ere they got near, the captain of the triumphant ship fell down on his hands and knees, his head sunk over the gangway and his blood ran fast and pattered in the midst of them, on the deck he had defended so bravely.[1]

Towards the close of the Victorian era, WALTER BESANT (1836–1901), an industrious man of letters, with a pleasant infusion of romantic imagination, dealt largely with contemporary life and manners, sometimes in collaboration with his friend, JAMES RICE, at other times, as in *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*, single-handed. The latter book dealt with life in East London, describing it with a humanitarian vigour and shrewd insight not without its influence on the goodly company of "East End" story-tellers that sprang up in the nineties. And the "People's Palace" in Whitechapel is a memorial of the profound influence that Besant exerted. During the last few years of his life Besant worked hard at a series of books dealing with London life throughout the ages, and excelled particularly in illuminating its social aspects. In his bigger studies of London he was helped by others, though the guiding spirit was his: but his admirable little volumes on *Westminster* and *London* remain to show the skill with which he could vitalise the life of a bygone age.

At the close of the eighties the humanitarian note in our fiction becomes much less pronounced. The astringent realism that has proved one of the forces of the succeeding era gave a less propagandist, less sentimental flavour to the novel of social life and manners. Now and again, as in Mr. RICHARD WHITING'S *No. 5, John Street*, humanitarian zeal lights up the record of "mean streets" and sordid living, but with the spread of Socialism a more dispassionate and scientific treatment of social problems succeeded the emotional appeal. But the humanitarian note had served its purpose; had shaken the complacency of the apathetic middle class, and had proved a powerful ally to supplement the work of such reformers as Wilberforce, Ashley, Oastler, Robert Owen. Their work to-day has been taken up by such playwrights as Bernard Shaw and John Galsworthy.

[1] *Hard Cash.*

II. PROSE: (*a*) FICTION. THACKERAY AND THE NOVEL OF SATIRE. Thackeray—Disraeli—Trollope—Butler.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY
(1811–1863)

HIS LIFE

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY came of a good old Yorkshire family, and was born in Calcutta, July 18, 1811, where his father, who held an important post under the East India Company, died in 1816. In 1817 the boy was sent to England in company with a young cousin, and well remembered being taken by a black servant to see the exiled Napoleon at St. Helena, and being told that "he eats three sheep every day, and all the little children he can lay hands upon."

At no time inclined for study, he was sent first to school at Chiswick, then to Charterhouse in 1822 under Dr. Russell, who denounced him as "an idle, shuffling, profligate boy." A fellow-pupil named Liddell, afterwards Dean of Christchurch, Oxford, said, "He never attempted to learn. . . . We spent our time mostly in drawing. . . . I remember one—Macbeth as a butcher brandishing

two blood-reeking knives, and Lady Macbeth as a butcher's wife clapping him on the shoulder to encourage him." As most schoolboys, he had a liking for the "tuck shop," and on one occasion consumed half a crown's worth, "including ginger beer"; a fight with his friend Venables ended in a broken nose, a noticeable feature in all his portraits.

After leaving Charterhouse he went down to Devonshire; here he made his first contribution to literature, a parody of Moore's *Minstrel Boy*, printed in a local newspaper; three humorous drawings in water-colour for a copy of *The Birds* of Aristophanes are also known to exist.

In 1829 he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, became the moving spirit of a brilliant set that included Alfred Tennyson, Monckton Milnes, and Edward FitzGerald; he also won the Chancellor's prize for his poem *Timbuctoo*, that afterwards appeared in the University journal—*The Snob*. Thackeray has said that he was "licked into indolence" when a child, as a lad "abused into sulkiness," and later "bullied into despair," but nothing seems to have been an incentive to study; the itch of travel was felt in the blood, and he left the university in 1830 without a degree.

On coming of age he inherited about £20,000; of this he soon lost some in gambling, a little through the failure of a bank, then purchased a newspaper, the *National Standard*, that floated less than five months, and still further lessened his income; then with his stepfather, Major Carmichael-Smyth, he focused his energies on a Radical newspaper named *The Constitutional*. In this Thackeray showed much promise as a journalist, but it required more than this to make it a success. It gradually collapsed, and with it the remainder of Thackeray's fortune.

While acting as Paris correspondent for *The Constitutional* he added to his responsibilities in 1836 by his marriage with Miss Isabella Shawe, daughter of Colonel Shawe of Cork. On leaving Cambridge he had travelled on the Continent in a dilettante fashion, studying French and German and frequenting the art schools of Paris. Now that he is thrown upon his own resources for a living his ambition is to become an artist. Many ventures were made without success; at last, on Dickens refusing his offer to illustrate *Pickwick*, Thackeray made a bid for literature. In this he was more fortunate. In 1837 he became a member of the staff and a regular contributor to *Fraser's Magazine*; for which he wrote *The Letters of Mr. C. J. Yellowplush* (1837–8), *Catherine* (1839–40), *The Great Hoggarty Diamond* (1841), and the celebrated *Memoirs of Barry Lyndon* (1844). In 1842 he made a tour in Ireland and met with Charles Lever; the following year one of the most humorous of his works, *The Irish Sketch-Book*, was published.

In 1840 he was in sore trouble; the health of his young wife gave way—despite all his love and care, culminating in complete mental breakdown; and in 1844 he was left alone to lavish all his affection on their two little girls. Mrs. Thackeray died in 1892.

On joining the staff of *Punch*, Thackeray made a wide appeal to the general public with *The Book of Snobs* (1846), but it was not till *Vanity Fair* appeared (1847–8) in monthly parts that he received full recognition; even the sale of this was so small at first that the publishers thought of suppressing it. However, with the sixth number and the account of Mrs. Perkins's Ball, the sale increased enormously, and *Vanity Fair* became the talk of London.

Thackeray was never averse to talking about his books, and there is a little story of *Vanity Fair* in Dean Liddell's *Life*. Mrs. Liddell said to him one day, "Oh, Mr. Thackeray, you must let Dobbin marry Amelia!" "Well," he replied, "he shall, and when he has got her he will not find her worth having."

With all Thackeray's satirical condemnation of the life of Belgravia there was no more welcome figure in their midst; every house was open to him, and he thoroughly enjoyed their flattery and attention. "There are people who would give their ears, or half their incomes, to go to these fine places," he was heard to say. Yet he was equally happy and loyal to his friends in Bohemia.

After *Vanity Fair* came *Pendennis* (1848–50). In 1851 he broke new ground and gave the first of a course of lectures on *The English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century*.

"The audience," Charlotte Brontë tells us, "was said to be the cream of London society, and it looked so. . . . I could not always coincide with the sentiments expressed, or the opinions broached; but I admired the gentlemanlike ease, the quiet humour, the taste, the talent, and the originality of the lecturer."

After the London lectures he crossed to America, where he became very popular.

"Nobody is quiet here," he wrote, "nor am I. The rush and restlessness please me, and I like, for a little, the dash of the stream. I am not received like a god, which I like too. There is one paper which goes on every morning saying I am a snob, and I don't say no. Six people were reading it at breakfast this morning, and the man opposite me this morning popped it under the table-cloth. But the other papers roar with approbation."

In 1853 he published *The Newcomes*, *Esmond* (1855), with its sequel *The Virginians* (1857–9); and in 1860 started the *Cornhill Magazine* with *Lovel the Widower*, *The Adventures of Philip*, and the charming *Roundabout Papers*.

For some years Thackeray had been suffering from heart trouble, but he worked on steadily; he had just started on his new novel, *Denis Duval*, when he died suddenly in December 1863.

Like many big men—Thackeray stood six feet four inches—he had the most gentle and lovable manner, and was the idol of his children and all young people.

"Few persons," says a contemporary, "would imagine his sterling qualities of solid mirth and faithfulness in friendship. With strangers reserved and uncommunicative, to those who knew him he is open-hearted, kindly disposed, and generous. To great sensibility and an innate love of all that is good and noble, he unites sentiments of profound hate and contempt for falsehood, meanness, worldliness, and hypocrisy."

His Work

Thackeray first found himself as a writer in *The Book of Snobs*. The weakness and the strength of his long-sustained satire against the social foibles of his time are revealed in that book. Other writers had dealt with it before Thackeray, but more to mock quietly than to rail bitterly as did he. The strength of his attack is better seen in the simpler illustrative material of *Vanity Fair* than in the thumbnail sketches here; for he is neither clear nor convincing in *The Book of Snobs*. That snobbery is contemptible all decent men and women are agreed; and most people are conscious of a snob when they meet one. It is a more delicate matter, though no less essential for a satirist, to clearly define in advance how the genus may be detected and what are its distinctive marks. Thackeray's own definition is somewhat inept: "He who meanly admires mean things is a snob"—for the snob is not to be caught and ticketed in this way.

It is surely not the mean admiration of mean things, but the mean admiration of *anything*, whatever be its worth or unworthiness, that is the essence of snobbery. Snobbery lies in its mental attitude, and has nothing necessarily to do with the object of the attitude. I am not a snob merely because I prefer a Duke to a dustman: I may prefer his company because I esteem culture, refinement, and breeding before ignorance, vulgarity, and coarseness. I am only a snob if I give my preference on the ground of his social position irrespective of his mental and moral qualities. "Hearts just as rich and rare may dwell in Belgrave Square as in the lowly air of Seven Dials." Thackeray himself was no snob; yet he frankly preferred the ways of "polite society" to the rough and ready ways of the Bohemian. He had a marked preference, as Mrs. Lynn Lynton once observed, for "good living, good manners, pretty women, and refined talk." You may call this a form of "social sensuality" if you like; but it is certainly not snobbery. Thackeray, however, was not in the least bound by the restrictions of his own definition; and applied the term snob indiscriminately to every variety of behaviour. To spend more money than you can afford, as Lady B—— does, may be a form of snobbery—though every spendthrift is not a snob—since this lady is truckling to mere position. But we may reasonably decline to place poor Sir Walter Raleigh on the black-list because of that little affair with the cloak on the muddy roadway.

It is quite arguable, of course, that there is a touch of snobbery in most of us, just as there is a touch of Sir Willoughby Patterne in most men; but Thackeray is not concerned with the general failings of human nature so much as the specific failings of certain people.

As a matter of fact snobbery became a literary obsession with Thackeray, and he read it into everything and into almost everyone.

This bluntness of perception mars the effect of a good deal of his satire. It is a pity, for Thackeray can be subtle enough in exposing our middle-class failings, as his powerful picture of the Crawleys, the Sedleys, and the Osbornes can testify.

Yet we do not see the best part of Thackeray in his mordant presentments of respectable mediocrities and pretentious fools. It was well done—but was it worth the doing on this scale? His finest art is shown in his pictures of rogues, male and female. There is promise, if little more than promise, in that genial rogue, Barry Lyndon; brilliant performance in Becky Sharp and Rawdon Crawley. Just as Dickens can make his mentally weak characters likeable, so can Thackeray attract us to his moral weaklings. Becky, despite her early Victorian dress, is a vital and triumphant creation; and Rawdon deserves to be bracketed with her.

Granted a spice of devilry, a dash of the vagabond element, and Thackeray as an artist moves with ease and cunning. Beatrix is not a scamp, but neither is she a model of all the virtues as is Amelia. Yet how much more alive?

Great praise has been accorded to the picture of Colonel Newcome; but for freshness, force, and trueness to life, commend me to the happy-go-lucky Pen and the peasant Costigan.

Thackeray's insight into the psychology of the plausible scoundrel and into thoughtless, hot-blooded youth, is seen not only in his novels but in his critical estimates. Read his *English Humourists*, and you will realise how admirably he seizes on the essential greatness of Fielding, and of Steele, not oblivious to their failings as men but valuing their defects in their proper relations. But face him with the pathological vagaries of a Swift or Sterne, and his detestation of the men blinds him in the most amazing way to their unquestionable genius.

Thackeray's inadequate treatment of Swift is the more curious inasmuch as these two have much in common. Each was continually harping on the insincerities and shams of life, each favoured irony as a method of presentment; in both there is a certain bitterness of spirit and disgust with contemporary life. Swift, of course, is infinitely more savage, more one-sided, more cynical; but Swift's nature cannot be estimated without taking his physical infirmities into account. Perhaps Thackeray's violence towards him is due to some instinctive appreciation of the bond between them and because he saw in Swift an exaggerated edition of himself.

Thackeray was no cynic, though he has often been termed one; and herein lies the fundamental difference between him and Swift. His bitterness, indeed, is often merely a cloak to hide his sensitiveness. His own life was clouded by tragedy, and he is intensely susceptible to the sinister elements in other human lives. It is the old story of the Princess and the Pea over again. But like many proud, sensitive natures he is terrified of taking the world into his confidence; of showing his inherent sentimentality (which will out in spite of him), and for fear he should be laughed at by the worldlings he savagely fastens upon the infirmities of human nature, whereas all the while he has a profound belief in the essential goodness of things;

thus he mocks and jests and taunts as poor Punchinello did, to hide his own aching sympathies.

How acutely he felt with suffering may be judged from the following passage:

"Between me and those fellow-creatures of mine who are sitting in the room below, how strange and wonderful is the partition! We meet at every hour of daylight, and are indebted to each other for a hundred offices of duty and comfort of life; and we live together for years and don't know each other. John's voice to me is quite different to John's voice when he addresses his mates below. If I met Hannah in the street with her bonnet on, I doubt whether I should know her. And all these good people, with whom I may live for years and years, have cares, interests, dear friends and relatives, mayhap schemes, passions, longing hopes, tragedies of their own, from which a carpet and a few planks and beams utterly separate me. When we were at the seaside, and poor Helen used to look so pale, and run after the postman's bell, and seize a letter in a great scrawling hand, and read it, and cry in a corner, how should we know that the poor little thing's heart was breaking? She fetched the water, and she smoothed the ribbons, and she laid out the dresses, and brought the early cup of tea in the morning, just as if she had no care to keep her awake."

Dickens' pathos is genuine enough, but suffers too often from over-emphasis. Thackeray's greater artistic reticence keeps him from melodramatics:

"No more firing was heard at Brussels; the pursuit rolled miles away. Darkness came down on the field and city; and Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face dead, with a bullet through his heart."

What could be simpler or more briefly stated? Yet in its very brevity and simplicity lies its power.

Equally compelling in its unforced pathos is the following:

"We were to leave our lodgings on Monday morning, but on Saturday evening the child was seized with convulsions, and all Sunday the mother watched and prayed for it; but it pleased God to take the innocent infant from us, and on Sunday at midnight, it lay a corpse on its mother's bosom. Amen! We have other children happy and well, now round about us, and from the father's heart the memory of this little thing has almost faded; but I do believe that every day of her life the mother thinks of her first-born that was with her for so short a while; . . . and she wears still at her neck a little, little lock of golden hair, which she took from the head of the infant as he lay smiling in his coffin. It has happened to me to forget the child's birthday, but to her never!"

It is to be regretted that Thackeray did not deal more often with the pitiful side of things, and stand more aloof from the silliness and pretence he saw around him. Not that this did not need exposing, but it was not worth so much time as he spent over it. No one could depict adventurers, cheats, sycophants, and fools better than he: but the world is not made up of these, and no one knew that better than Thackeray. If only he had been less concerned to hide his feelings and had taken more pains to give freer expression to his real genius!

Thackeray satirised social conventions, Dickens national weaknesses. Pretence and snobbery felt the lash of the one, hypocrisy and cruelty the rage of the other. Dickens uses a big brush and lays on the colours thickly; subtle effects are more in Thackeray's line. Dickens paints in oils, Thackeray in water colours. Each has a big canvas, but Dickens excelled in vivid, massive effects, Thackeray in delicate touches and in clear draughtsmanship. What could be better done or more delicately effective than this passage about Bohemia, over which

"there hangs an endless fog occasioned by much tobacco; a land of billiard rooms, supper rooms, oysters and land of song; a land where gods water flows freely in the morning; a land where men call each other by their Christian names; where most are poor, where almost all are young, and where, if a few old stars enter, it is because they have preserved more tenderly and carefully than others their youthful spirits and the delightful capacity to be idle."

In his pictures of Bohemian life in early Victorian London, Thackeray is wonderfully happy. He knew his Costigans and Fanny Boltons and Harry Fokers, as well as Dickens knew his Codlins and Shorts, his little Marchioness, and his Jingles. His amiable young women are neither better nor worse than Dickens'. Neither novelist excelled in drawing heroines; but his young men are more convincing, and his old ladies equally effective though less irrepressibly humorous.

As a stylist Thackeray is, at once, both superior and inferior to Dickens. His riper culture, his greater fastidiousness keeps him from the glaring crudities that mar Dickens' writings; and his eloquence, when he lets himself go, has a tragic beauty that did not lie in Dickens' homelier art to compass. At the same time the intimate homeliness, the contagious zest of Dickens' style, carries with it a wider, a more universal appeal.

Thackeray's style appeals to our critical intelligence, Dickens' to our heart and imagination. Indeed the critic in Thackeray is insistent everywhere. He is always ready to intrude on the story: he is behind every character, and takes no pains, as some novelists do, to keep up the illusion of reality. A few strong prejudices apart, he is a sound, broad-minded critic; there is admirable stuff in *The English Humourists* and in *The Four Georges*; while no one but a genuine critic could have written *Esmond*, with its intimate knowledge and appraisement of eighteenth-century ways and manners.

From the artistic point of view he never equalled, much less excelled, this picture of Queen Anne's time. There are passages in *Pendennis* and *Vanity Fair*, fewer passages in *The Newcomes* and *The Virginians* and *Denis Duval*, that are as satisfying in conception and execution. But nowhere does he achieve the same easy level of excellence as in *Esmond*. It is a great historical novel, not in the sense that *The Cloister and the Hearth* is great, but in the sense that *Old Mortality* is great. Reade gave us a brilliant *tour de force*, Thackeray a perfectly natural expression of two-thirds of his temperament as well as of his own scholarly knowledge. Mere scholarship, however erudite, will never inspire a great historical novel unless there be some idiosyncratic affinity that gives a man psychological insight into the life of the time.

Esmond is no dexterous piece of Wardour Street craftsmanship; indeed, Thackeray is not over-

scrupulous to reproduce the phraseology of the age, he has done something far better than that, he has reproduced the inmost spirit of the era of Queen Anne. If in his reproduction of actual historical figures he is less satisfying, we must remember that even Scott is not at his best there; and the personal predilection of the reader comes into play as soon as men like Addison and Steele are brought upon the scene. None the less Addison and Steele, Steele especially, are admirably drawn, while Swift at any rate is not unskilfully depicted—once grant Thackeray's hostile point of view.

The greatness of the book, however, lies in its private history, and in such perfect pieces of characterisation as the capricious but lovable Lady Castlewood, Beatrix, "whose eyes are fire, whose look is love," the shiftless yet attractive Lord Castlewood, and Esmond himself.

Esmond is Thackeray's greatest book. His other books are great in parts, but lack homogeneity and perspective. They have been abused for their excessive discursiveness: but discursiveness is no fatal bar to a great book, though it may be to a great novel. *Tristram Shandy* is hopeless as a novel; but it is one of the great books of literature. And it would be impossible to deny the attribute of greatness to *Vanity Fair*, to *Pendennis*, and to *The Newcomes*. Sterne's discursiveness is woven in one pattern, Thackeray's is not. The preaching harmonises ill with the comedy, and obtrudes detrimentally on the illusion of reality created by the characters. This is a real pity; for the characterisation is often admirable, occasionally supereminent. It is less obtrusive in *Vanity Fair* and *Pendennis*; it is more obtrusive in *The Newcomes*. Consequently these later books afford us less satisfaction than the earlier ones, though in sheer power of characterisation *The Newcomes* and *The Virginians* contain some of Thackeray's best work. It is the greater regret, therefore, that the tedious moralising and wearisome rhapsody should distract our attention from such finely drawn figures as Ethel and Barnes Newcome, Lady Kew and the Baroness de Bernstein, or such delightful caricatures as Charles Honeyman, "F. B.," and Sampson.

Thackeray's moralising is the most welcome when he faces us frankly as the discursive essayist. This he does in the *Roundabout Papers*, which are happily blended with genial humour and pleasant whimsicality. Here he is not too serious or too improving. When he is very serious he is unquestionably a bore, unlike George Eliot, who had a really consistent philosophy of life behind her monitory moods.

Looking at Thackeray's work from the point of view of its place in the development of English fiction, we are struck by the more emphatic realism of his stories as compared with that of his predecessors. His instinctive critical faculty revolted against the garish sentiment of Lytton and Ainsworth, the philanthropic romanticism of Dickens, the machine-made morality of G. P. R. James. The criminal, he protested, is not necessarily a picturesque hero—like your Eugene Aram and Jack Sheppard; the aristocrat is not necessarily a scoundrel nor the poor man an angel of light; our political and social institutions are not so inept and infamous as the reforming novelist would have them. Let us face the world we live in with clearer eyes and a more critical discernment. Scoundrels are often excellent company so long as we do not sentimentalise their villainy; but they come from every class in the community. They are peculiar neither to Belgravia nor to the New Cut.

In all this he did good and memorable work in restoring to English fiction a sober actuality and a fairer appraisement of class virtues and class failings than it had received since the time of Fielding. For this reason Thackeray excels as a painter of manners, as an artist of the conventions, as a draughtsman of civilised man with all his merits and limitations. And he did the same service for English fiction as Ben Jonson did for the English drama; and just as Jonson, loving Shakespeare, yet saw his deficiencies and his danger as a model to writers with less genius, so Thackeray realised the imperfections of Dickens and the danger attaching to young writers who should slavishly follow in his wake.

The analogy need not be pressed too close; but it has its instructive side, and is fraught with greater significance, perhaps, than many admirers of Thackeray would care to admit.

In one respect, certainly, Dickens resembled Shakespeare, and that is in the rich, resilient vitality of his creative work; and this it is which makes him triumph over many other writers superior to him in mental adornment and in artistic cunning; and this it is, I think, which, despite the more fastidious craftsmanship of Thackeray, gives Dickens the more important position to-day. While writers have been wrangling over the respective merits of these great satirists, and while the scholarly critics have relegated Dickens to a decidedly inferior position, Time has calmly taken the matter out of their hands, and few things in literary history are more striking than the continuous and steady hold of Dickens upon the English people and the remarkable decline of Thackeray's influence of late years.

Some will attribute this fact to what they call the coarser strength of Dickens and the more fastidious culture of Thackeray. It is natural, they will say, that Dickens should appeal to the many, Thackeray to the few; adding that Thackeray none-the-less is the finer genius. The more fastidious culture of Thackeray may be conceded readily, but his greater genius is a far more debatable matter, and one may add a barren matter for discussion. Whether Thackeray *at his best* is better than Dickens *at his best* is a problem of no great value. It is like asking whether a nectarine is better than an apple. The excellence is a different excellence: let it go at that. It is another matter, however, whether Thackeray was able to express his genius as easily and amply as his great contemporary. And herein lies the secret, I think, of Thackeray's decline. He was at his best a great artist, a great stylist, and an admirable painter of manners, but his genius did *not* lie in the way of

social regeneration, his irony is *not* best exhibited in his didactic moods.

In other words, whereas Dickens on the whole knew his limitations and kept within them, Thackeray too often neglected those qualities of ironic portraiture in which he excelled, for sermonisings that did really scant justice to his wide human sympathies. "A beautiful vein of genius lay struggling about in him," as Carlyle so admirably said. Unhappily, we see too much of the struggle in what he has given us.

Lady Castlewood and her Young Worshipper

My Lady had on her side three idols: first and foremost, Jove the supreme ruler, was her lord, Harry's patron, the good Viscount of Castlewood. All wishes of his were laws with her. If he had a headache, she was ill. If he frowned, she trembled. If he joked, she smiled and was charmed. If he went a-hunting, she was always at the window to see him ride away, her little son crowing on her arm, or on the watch till his return. She made dishes for his dinner; spiced his wine for him; made the toast for his tankard at breakfast; hushed the house when he slept in his chair, and watched for a look when he woke. If my Lord was not a little proud of his beauty, my Lady adored it. She clung to his arm as he paced the terrace, her two fair little hands clasped round his great one; her eyes were never tired of looking in his face and wondering at its perfection. Her little son was his son, and had his father's look and curly brown hair. Her daughter Beatrix was his daughter, and had his eyes—were there ever such beautiful eyes in the world? All the house was arranged so as to bring him ease and give him pleasure. She liked the small gentry round about to come and pay him court, never caring for admiration for herself; those who wanted to be well with the lady must admire him. Not regarding her dress, she would wear a gown to rags, because he had once liked it; and if he had brought her a brooch or a ribbon, would prefer it to the most costly article of her wardrobe.

My Lord went to London every year for six weeks, and the family being too poor to appear at Court with any figure, he went alone. It was not until he was out of sight that her face showed any sorrow: and what a joy when he came back! What preparation before his return! The fond creature had his arm-chair at the chimney-side—delighting to put the children in it, and to look at them there. Nobody took his place at the table; but his silver tankard stood there as when my Lord was present.

A pretty sight it was to see, during my Lord's absence, or on those many mornings when sleep or headache kept him a-bed, this fair young lady of Castlewood, her little daughter at her knee, and her domestics gathered round her, reading the Morning Prayer of the English Church. Esmond long remembered how she looked and spoke, kneeling reverently before the sacred book, the sun shining upon her golden hair until it made a halo round about her. A dozen of the servants of the house kneeled in a line opposite their mistress. For a while Harry Esmond kept apart from these mysteries, but Doctor Tusher showing him that the prayers read were those of the Church of all ages, and the boy's own inclination prompting him to be always as near as he might to his mistress, and to think all things she did right, from listening to the prayers in the ante-chamber, he came presently to kneel down with the rest of the household in the parlour; and before a couple of years my lady had made a thorough convert. Indeed the boy loved his catechiser so much that he would have subscribed to anything she bade him, and was never tired of listening to her fond discourse and simple comments upon the book, which she read to him in a voice of which it was difficult to resist the sweet persuasion and tender appealing kindness. This friendly controversy, and the intimacy which it occasioned, bound the lad more fondly than ever to his mistress. The happiest period of his life was this; and the young mother, with her daughter and son, and the orphan lad whom she protected, read and worked and played, and were children together. If the lady looked forward—as what fond woman does not?—towards the future, she had no plans from which Harry Esmond was left out; and a thousand and a thousand times, in his passionate and impetuous way, he vowed that no power should separate him from his mistress; and only asked for some chance to happen by which he might show his fidelity to her. Now, at the close of his life, as he sits and recalls in tranquillity the happy and busy scenes of it, he can think, not ungratefully, that he has been grateful to that early vow.[1]

The Battle of Waterloo

All our friends took their share and fought like men in the great field. All day long, whilst the women were praying ten miles away, the lines of the dauntless English infantry were receiving and repelling the furious charges of the French horsemen. Guns which were heard at Brussels were ploughing up their ranks, and comrades falling, and the resolute survivors closing in. Towards evening, the attack of the French, repeated and resisted so bravely, slackened in its fury. They had other foes besides the British to engage, or were preparing for a final onset. It came at last: the columns of the Imperial Guard marched up the hill of Saint Jean, at length and at once to sweep the English from the height which they had maintained all day, and spite of all. Unscared by the thunder of the artillery, which hurled death from the English line, the dark rolling column pressed on and up the hill. It seemed almost to crest the eminence, when it began to waver and falter. Then it stopped, still facing the shot. Then at last the English troops rushed from the post from which no enemy had been able to dislodge them, and the Guard turned and fled.[2]

Benjamin Disraeli (1804–1881), one of the brilliant and forceful personalities of mid-Victorian times, has in his novels—*Vivian Grey*, *Coningsby*, *Tancred*, and *Sybil*—pictured somewhat flamboyantly, yet with a good deal of humorous insight, the social and political life of the age. There are some neat satirical pictures in his novels, and he was a powerful upholder of the new Tory Democracy. *Sybil* (1845) dealt with labour conditions subsequent to the first Chartist riots. Though his point of view is that of the satirist, the painter of manners rather than that of the humanitarian story-teller, he yet did no little to prepare the way for such reformers in fiction as Mrs. Gaskell and Charles Kingsley.

As a novelist, Anthony Trollope (1815–1882) has every qualification save that of genius. His inventive powers, if not brilliant, were certainly striking; he had humour, a sense of tragedy, a nice instinct for characterisation. His literary style is pleasant and attractive, and his craftsmanship invariably sound and conscientious. An output of thirty novels testifies to his productive fertility, and when we recollect that the majority of these were clever and interesting and a few of remarkable merit, it must be admitted that Trollope was a decided force in Victorian fiction.

First and foremost he was a good painter of character. His scope here is not especially diversified, but within certain prescribed limits he was extremely effective. Particularly did he excel in depicting illustrations of the genial worldling type.

[1] *Henry Esmond.* [2] *Vanity Fair.*

This is best exemplified in his Cathedral stories, and his portraits of the provincial clergy and of the provincial folk that congregate in Cathedral towns have never been excelled. With keen observation and ready humour he differentiates these folk, and in unfolding the comedies of their lives rarely descends into caricature. As a painter of middle-class life he stands midway between Dickens and Thackeray, on the one hand, and George Eliot on the other. Lacking the astounding vitality of Dickens and the sensitive art of Thackeray, he never falls into that vein of fantastic exaggeration that so often accompanies writers of exuberant imagination. He saw less clearly, less sensitively the dominant traits of the men and women about him than they did, but on the other hand he saw round them more surely and more faithfully, and in his work we meet with the beginning of that scientific appraisement of character raised to so fine an art by George Eliot.

Unhappily, the faculty of faithful and judicial observation leads Trollope and his reader into very dull company at times, and we sigh for the idealising whimsicality of Dickens, who took care to make his fools such glorious company. How we should have yawned over Trollope's delineation of Mrs. Nickleby!

To return, however, to the more attractive side of Trollope's power. Not only is he good at character drawing, he is a capital story-teller. This does not mean that he was expert in his plots; in plot he is decidedly inferior to many of his contemporaries, and the dexterity of Wilkie Collins was always a source of good-natured envy to the author of *Barchester Towers*. But he has a clear, competent, pleasant style, with no irritating mannerisms such as disfigured his greater contemporary Charles Reade, and could mingle incident and characterisation and description with sufficient skill to please the most experienced novel reader. He is not a great stylist, but he would have scorned producing the shoddy writing that goes to make up so many successes of the season in our own day.

Yet, while critical enough to avoid the mistakes into which his greater contemporaries fell, he had not sufficient integrating power, or, if we will, that touch of genius that would preserve his books for future generations. One character alone among a crowd of admirable but undistinguished creations is worthy to join the gallery of Immortals, and that is Mrs. Proudie, wife of the Bishop of Barchester. She deserves a place along with Aunt Clegg, Mrs. Poyser, Mrs. Gamp, and Becky Sharp. A fine study of the female bully. A vulgar, overbearing, narrow-minded woman, yet sincere and not wholly so flint-hearted as she seems. Trollope took real joy in her company, and was loth to part with her, introducing her into more than one novel.

All things considered, Trollope is at his happiest in delineating those scenes and those characters that exhibit especially Saxon qualities. He knew his John Bull, appreciating his strong points—had he not much in common with the gentleman?—but fully alive to his weaknesses. No one can sketch for us more sympathetically than he the English middle-class matron, the jog-trot country doctor, the average Member of Parliament, the commonplace yet kind-hearted country cleric. His best characters thrive on roast beef and good beer.

In his methods of presentation he seems to us often a masculine edition of Jane Austen, a shade less delicate in his humour and several shades more vigorous in his mental outlook. Less sensitive to his limitations than she, he is inferior in his artistry, but his novels reflect with equal fidelity the provincial life of the mid-Victorian age as hers do the late Georgian. As a man, a thoroughly good fellow, "as downright as a box on the ear," as a writer, a vigorous, fair-minded, well-informed craftsman. He will not stir the imagination nor titillate the intellect; but he knew his business as a story-teller and did it thoroughly. And that, after all, is no mean qualification.

SAMUEL BUTLER (1835–1902). Lacking the sense of artistic form possessed by men like Thackeray, and the diversity of gifts that accentuated the force of Meredith's satirical faculty, his books may be regarded rather as a storehouse of ironic comment and suggestion than works of art. But his influence on some of the ablest writers to-day, Bernard Shaw for instance, has been very profound. No one has more frankly admitted this than Mr. Shaw himself, and to some extent he has done for Butler what Huxley did for Spencer, popularised his methods of thought. For Butler was a distinctive original force, as all admit who have read his *Erewhon* (1872), *Erewhon Revisited* (1901), and *The Way of all Flesh* (1903).

A scholar, an acute thinker on the problems of modern life, his writings are not easy to construe, but their suggestive wisdom is likely to become far-reaching during the next decade or so. He will never be popular, for he could not throw his thought into clear dramatic form, and the multitude do not take kindly to elaborate irony. But as a satirical critic of modern life he must always be reckoned among the more potent influences of his generation.

II. PROSE: (*a*) FICTION. WOMEN NOVELISTS OF THE VICTORIAN ERA. Introduction—M. Russell Mitford—Mrs. Bray—Mrs. Clive—Mrs. Marsh—Mrs. Trollope—The Brontës—Mrs. Gaskell—George Eliot—Mrs. Henry Wood—Mrs. Craik—Charlotte Yonge—Mrs. Oliphant—Mrs. Lynn Lynton—M. E. Braddon—"Ouida"—Rhoda Broughton—Edna Lyall.

THE first chapter in the development of the women novelists practically began with Fanny Burney and ends with Jane Austen. Between Jane Austen and the Brontës there are no names of vital importance. There is charm in Miss Mitford's *Our Village*, and touches of Harriet Martineau's vigorous intellect in her novel *Deerbrook*, but neither here nor in the facile romances of Mrs. BRAY, or in Mrs. CLIVE'S *Paul Ferroll*, is there any striking power. Yet the crowd of women writers is quite respectable

in its size, and number many story-tellers who enjoyed a good popular vogue in their time, such as Mrs. Gore, Mrs. Marsh, and Mrs. Trollope—all voluminous and facile writers. The case of Mrs. Trollope (1780–1863) is interesting for having essayed fiction at the age of fifty to retrieve her husband's fortunes; she succeeded in restoring those fortunes, and continued with such cheerful rapidity to turn out her volumes like so many sand pies, that in about five-and-twenty years she had a hundred novels to her credit. Her first success was not a novel (though the American of the day would have decidedly classified it among pure fiction), and dealt with her experiences in America. It produced a good deal of sore feeling at the time across the Atlantic by the lack of taste and tact which she showed in this volume. Its success probably was largely owing to this fact.

THE BRONTËS

On a chill February day in 1820 a dull procession of heavily-laden wagons made its way across the bleak wind-swept Yorkshire moors, through the little village of Haworth, depositing its burden at the vicarage; these wagons contained the household goods of the "new parson."

The Rev. Patrick Brontë was an Irishman, of peasant stock, with the strong, passionate nature of his countrymen; a morose, impatient, selfish man with ideas of his own on the training and education of children. He had been a schoolmaster in the north of Ireland until he was thirty, and, having saved a little money, proceeded to Cambridge where he took his degree in 1806; eventually we find him at Hartshead in Yorkshire as curate. Here he met and married, in 1812, Maria Branwell, a gentle, loving, delicate little Cornishwoman who invariably looked upon the bright side of every trouble, including her husband's peculiar temperament: "Ought I not to be thankful," she said, "that he never gave me an angry word?"

In 1816 Mr. Brontë, with his wife and two baby girls—Maria and Elizabeth—left Hartshead. He had accepted the charge of the parish of Thornton, near Bradford, and here were born Charlotte (1816), Patrick Branwell (1817), Emily Jane (1818), and Anne (1820). Shortly after the birth of Anne, in the year of the removal to Haworth, Mrs. Brontë died, and her sister came from Penzance to do her part in caring for those motherless children.

There was something unusually barbaric in the nature of Mr. Brontë. He was fond of his children, but in following out his principles of education he exhorted them to the sternest self-repression from babyhood. Frail and delicate, and bereft of the society of other children, they grew up so unnaturally reserved and silent that "you would never have known there was a child in the house." Maria, at seven years old, would be quite content with a newspaper or periodical, and her father says he "could always converse with her on any topic with pleasure, as with a grown person." After less than a year at school, Maria and Elizabeth both died of consumption in 1825.

The story of the only son is a sad one. Patrick Branwell was the one spoilt member of the family, in whom all their hopes centred, and for whose pleasure, present comfort, and future welfare one and all willingly sacrificed themselves. But their devotion was ill-requited. Showing some talent as an artist, he was sent to London to pursue his studies, yet economise at home as they did, it was found impossible to continue providing him with the necessary funds for his expenses, and he returned to Haworth. After five months as a tutor we find him acting as clerk on the Leeds and Manchester Railway. The disordered state of his accounts necessitated an interview with the directors, and resulted in his dismissal. Again he resorts to teaching. In 1842 he became tutor in the family of a wealthy clergyman named Robinson, where Anne was also a governess. His conduct in this household was unutterably base, though his sisters, while disgusted, were but too ready to accept their brother's view of the matter. To Haworth he returns, to continue his dissolute course of living in spite of loving care and remonstrance, until his death in 1848.

"It is not permitted us to grieve for him who is gone," wrote Charlotte, "as others grieve for those they love. . . . There is such a bitterness of pity for his life and death, such a yearning for the emptiness of his whole existence as I cannot describe."

We now approach Charlotte, who, although Branwell's senior, has been left till now in order to follow her life more in conjunction with that of her sisters—Emily and Anne.

Born on 21st April 1816, when eight years old Charlotte, accompanied by Emily, was sent to Cowan Bridge school for the daughters of clergymen: a grim, insanitary dwelling wherein the children were half-starved. On the death of Maria and Elizabeth, Charlotte and Emily were recalled home, and pursued their studies as best they could under the direction of their aunt.

Even at this early age Charlotte had begun to write, and there still exist twenty-two volumes, in the minutest handwriting, of from sixty to one hundred pages each—the output of less than two years.

Charlotte's second experience of school life was at Roehead, between Leeds and Huddersfield, whither she went in January 1831. Here the principal, Miss Wooler, with her kind motherliness, and two fellow-pupils, Ellen Nussey and Mary Taylor (the "Caroline Helstone" and "Rose Yorke" of *Shirley*) became her lifelong friends. An omnivorous reader, in which she had been encouraged by her father, she knew her Shakespeare and modern poets well, and, like Dickens, was invaluable as a story-teller, her Irish accent and strong political bias being responsible for much good-natured banter from her schoolfellows.

In Mrs. Gaskell's biography Charlotte Brontë, at the age of fifteen, is described as

"a quiet, thoughtful girl, very small in figure, with soft, thick brown hair and peculiar eyes of a reddish brown colour," while "now and then on some just occasion or vivid interest or wholesome indignation, a

light would shine out, as if some spiritual lamp had been kindled which glowed behind their expressive orbs . . . the rest of her features were plain, large and ill-set; but, unless you began to catalogue them you were hardly aware of the fact, for the eyes and power of the countenance overbalanced every physical defect, the crooked mouth and the large nose were forgotten and the whole face arrested the attention and presently attracted all those whom she herself would have cared to attract."

In 1832 she left Roehead, but returned in 1833 as a teacher, in order that the money might be utilised for Branwell's art training. At this time she was accompanied by Emily, a tall, striking-looking girl of seventeen.

Reserved as was Charlotte, Emily was still more reserved. She seemed to have absorbed the silence of the gaunt, lonely moors in her aversion to society, and her passion for the moors in all seasons and in all weathers made her almost as one of themselves. "In the bleak solitude she found many and dear delights," wrote Charlotte, "and not the least and best loved was liberty. Liberty was the breath of Emily's nostrils, without it she perished." With the wonderful eyes of the Brontës she had the pallor of disease on her countenance. Homesick, she remained but three months at Roehead, then returned to Haworth, her place in the school being taken by Anne.

Teaching was very uncongenial to the restless Charlotte: she had neither the liking for the society of young people, nor aptitude for the work, and she became dispirited and despondent. Shortly after the school removed to Dewsbury Moor her health and spirits became affected by the change —"So home I went," she said, "and the change at once roused and soothed me."

Literature now attracted her, as it always had, and she sent some of her poetry to Southey, whose view of literature as a calling for women was certainly most discouraging and evoked her reply, "I trust I shall never more feel ambitious to see my name in print."

In 1837 the brother of her friend Ellen Nussey, a young clergyman, wished to marry her, but her strong emotional nature felt the imperative necessity of an "intense attachment which should make me willing to die for him"—this was denied her.

Teaching seemed to be the only means of a livelihood for these girls. They looked forward to keeping a school of their own; so to gain the necessary proficiency Charlotte and Emily entered the Héger Pensionnat, Brussels. The elder girl was happy in her way, but the younger never settled down. They were studious, and became so proficient in French that at the end of their term, Madame Héger suggested that they should remain and give English and music lessons in return for German. The illness and death of their aunt at Haworth recalled them home—Anne was already acting as a private governess—and their father's failing sight and Branwell's conduct necessitated that one should remain in the diminished family circle. Emily was chosen to do this, and we may be sure she acquiesced willingly, and Charlotte returned to Brussels alone, the kindly, intellectual interest of Professor Héger at this period becoming a considerable influence in moulding her literary tastes and work.

At the end of her term in Belgium, an attempt to secure pupils at Haworth failed: "Everyone wishes us well, but there are no pupils to be had." One day Charlotte found a manuscript copy of some verses written by Emily, that "To my ear," said her sister, "had a peculiar music, wild, melancholy, and elevating." Then Anne shyly produced some of hers; which had a "sweet, sincere pathos of their own." Thereupon they agreed to arrange a small collection and if possible get them printed. The little volume appeared in 1845 as *Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell*.

The following year the sisters' endeavours to find a publisher for their three prose volumes were rewarded in so far that Emily's *Wuthering Heights* and Anne's *Agnes Grey* were accepted by Mr. Newby "on terms somewhat impoverishing to the authors." Charlotte's volume, *The Professor*, journeyed from publisher to publisher without success. At length a gleam of hope came with its rejection by Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co., who offered to consider favourably the new work which "Currer Bell" informed them *he* was writing. *Jane Eyre* was quickly finished, and on its reception took the publisher's readers by storm, was accepted, and issued in three volumes on October 16, 1847, its author receiving £500 for the manuscript. £500 has since been refused by the publishers for the original still in their possession.

Jane Eyre was an immediate success, yet Mr. Brontë was quite in ignorance of his daughter's fame. One day, armed with a copy of the book and a few reviews—not forgetting to include an adverse one—she carried them into his study—

"Papa, I've been writing a book."

"Have you, my dear?"

"Yes, and I want you to read it."

"I am afraid it will try my eyes too much."

"But it is not in manuscript; it is printed."

"My dear, you've never thought of the expense it will be! It will be almost sure to be a loss; for how can you get a book sold? No one knows you or your name."

"But, papa, I don't think it will be a loss. No more will you if you will just let me read a review or two, and tell you more about it."

This she did, and then left him to peruse her work.

The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, Anne's second novel, was published in June 1848, and was advertised by the publisher, Mr. Newby, as the work of the author of *Jane Eyre*. In consequence of this deception it became necessary for the girls to disclose their identity. Emily's health was rapidly failing, so "Anne and I," writes Charlotte, "packed up a small box, sent it down to Keighley, set ourselves out after tea, walked through a snowstorm to the station, got to Leeds, and whirled up by night train to London, with the view of proving our separate identity to Smith and Elder, and confronting Newby with his lie."

Then came the pleasant interview with Mr. Smith, her publisher, and his astonishment at finding "Currer Bell"—not a man as everyone had supposed, but a shy, sensitive little woman, with meek

brown eyes. Explanations ensued, and the sisters spent an enjoyable three days in London.

Wuthering Heights was just published when Emily was taken ill, and died of consumption in December 1848. Anne also drooped and sickened, and on May 28, 1849, died at Scarborough, almost with her last breath exhorting her sister to "Take courage, Charlotte, take courage."

After the publication of *Shirley* in 1849, Charlotte Brontë paid a visit to London and met several of her literary idols: Thackeray, to whom she dedicated the second edition of *Jane Eyre*; Harriet Martineau, to whose books she acknowledged "the pleasure and profit derived from them"; John Forster, and also "a party of my critics—seven of them: some of them had been very bitter foes in print, but they were prodigiously civil face to face." Many other notabilities she might have met but for her shyness, and all attempts to lionise her failed.

Villette followed in January 1853. Begun in 1851, before the close of the year she was seriously ill. On regaining health, work was resumed, but had again to be postponed on account of the illness of her father. After it was finished, in October 1852, she paid a round of visits, among them one to Harriet Martineau at Ambleside, another to Mrs. Gaskell at Manchester.

In 1853 Mr. Brontë's curate, the Rev. A. B. Nicholls, the fourth to sue for Charlotte's hand in marriage, was refused by her father, so he resigned his curacy. The following year Mr. Brontë relented, and the marriage took place at Haworth on June 29, 1854.

Happy in the love of her husband and the prospect of motherhood, Charlotte's joy was to be short-lived, and she died at Haworth on March 31, 1855; the last recorded words to her husband being, "We have been so happy."

The Work of Charlotte Brontë

There are three characteristics that detach themselves from the writings of Charlotte Brontë: the note of intimacy, the note of passion, the note of revolt.

The Note of Intimacy

That confidential relationship which some writers establish between themselves and their readers is quite a modern note. The older romances are necessarily impersonal and objective; crystallising as they do tales that have been floating about many countries, having their origin in oral tradition, and continually receiving fresh accretions from divers sources.

Elizabethan literature is in its broad features essentially objective; it aims at describing life, not talking about it. We learn little about Lyly from *Euphues*, or about Sidney from the *Arcadia*; and this objectivity pursues us along the seventeenth and most of the eighteenth century. The great novelists of the time—Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, Sterne, Smollett, Goldsmith—are all of them men of strongly marked personalities and temperaments; but it is only indirectly in their writings that we catch a glimpse of these; they exhibit a certain aloofness from their audience; and the asides of Fielding are the asides of a sensible, broad-minded, matter-of-fact man of the world, that express aptly and clearly the common-sense, prudential morality of the time, but do not when carefully examined throw any intimate light upon Fielding the *Man*, as apart from Fielding the novelist of a certain type.

The same applies with stronger force to Defoe. In Sterne the attitude is more relaxed, certainly; Sterne makes a great parade of being confidential, but it is the pose of a consummate literary artist. There is little intimacy in Scott; while part of Jane Austen's charm lies, as we have seen, in her sense of gentle self-detachment from the subject-matter of her stories. We think mainly of the art of the story-teller in reading *Pride and Prejudice*; we think primarily of the personality of the story-teller, in reading *Jane Eyre*. Indeed she is really the first novelist to bring the note of intimacy, of self-revelation, to the forefront. Dickens is a friendly, easy, and a delightful companion in print; but not intimate. And Thackeray takes special pains to mask his real feelings at times behind a shade of cynicism.

Yet by an interesting paradox of temperament, Charlotte Brontë, reserved and almost inarticulate in ordinary intercourse, lets herself go with frank and eager abandonment directly she takes pen in hand.

It was this that so shocked and disturbed the critic in the *Quarterly*: it seemed a startling and outrageous thing,—this passionate whispering in the reader's ear. Outrageous it was not: startling it may well have appeared: and Charlotte Brontë was really only applying to fiction what had already been applied with such delightful results by men like Elia and Hazlitt to the Essay. They are our earliest idiosyncratic essayists. "Elia" tells us much more about Charles Lamb, than Charles ever told us about Lamb. Let it be remembered also that Lamb, for all his faculty for comradeship, had a ring of reserve that none broke through. To the modern reader many scenes in *Jane Eyre*, to a less extent in *Villette*, seem strained, hysterical, theatrical; but the reader has little discernment if unable to realise while reading, that this excitability is only a surface quality; largely determined by the writer's relief in being at least able to express herself and to unburden her soul. She is in reality neither theatrical nor hysterical; she has self-command, grit, and a stark sincerity that would put to shame the average sentimental writer of to-day. We need not be blind to her technical faults; they are obvious enough. Her experience of life was limited and sometimes she attempts to describe phases with which she was quite unacquainted. She had not, as Jane Austen had, a shrewd fact that made her confine herself to the matter which she knew at first hand. Yet we need not wonder that this ardent intimacy should sometimes lead her into unfamiliar surroundings; it is more to the purpose to wonder how it was that with so slight an experience of the main stream of human life, with so little objective material to work upon, she could achieve such vital result. But so it is: for this prim little woman was alive to her finger-tips, and she wrote her pages with her own life blood.

Some story-tellers write for material advantage; others for fame; she writes simply because it is a necessary condition of her existence. There is no trace of self-consciousness in her self-abandonment. She is far too serious to pose. The turbulent forces that ordinary intercourse and the conventions of life had driven inward, burst out with the greater unreserve so soon as the barrier was removed. She does not really live until she takes up pen and ink. Then she is a woman of genius. Till that moment she is merely the queer-tempered, painfully shy, old fashioned daughter of an obscure country person.

Indeed the reader feels an almost intolerable sense of intrusion when he comes across so intimate a passage as this:

"Take the matter as you find it; ask no questions, utter no remonstrances; it is your best wisdom. You expected bread, and you have got a stone; break your teeth on it, and don't shriek because your nerves are martyrised; do not doubt that your mental stomach—if you have such a thing—is strong as an ostrich's—the stone will digest. You held out your hand for an egg, and fate put into it a scorpion. Show no consternation; close your fingers firmly upon the gift; let it sting through the palm. Never mind: in time, after your hand and arm have swelled and quivered long with torture, the squeezed scorpion will die, and you will have learned the great lesson how to endure without a sob. For the whole remnant of your life, if you survive the test,—some, it is said, die under it,—you will be stronger, wiser, less sensitive. . . . Nature is an excellent friend in such cases, sealing the lips, interdicting utterance, commanding a placid dissimulation—a dissimulation often wearing an easy and gay mien at first, settling down to sorrow and paleness in time, then passing away, and leaving a convenient stoicism, not the less fortifying because it is half bitter."

The Note of Passion

Charlotte Brontë has written of lonely, repressed womanhood with a passion and intensity unsurpassed in English fiction, even among the outspoken fiction of our own day. Until she began to write, no woman had dared to write of life from the woman's point of view, as Fielding had done from the man's. The masculine convention, that whatever a woman may feel it is bad for her to express it; that while the man may do and dare the woman must wait meekly and patiently, had held good in our fiction. This convention Charlotte Brontë utterly broke down. She revealed woman as a human being. Not content, in the words of Mrs. Meynell's poignant verses, "to stand upon the threshold with a face of dumb desire," but proclaiming the rights of her sex to give expression to that desire; impatient with those who thought that woman should meekly await the "not impossible" but highly problematic *he*. How very real the tragedy of the unloved woman was, none felt more keenly than the large-hearted creator of *Aurora Leigh* when she wrote of

> "The unkissed lips
> And eyes undried, because there's none to ask
> The reason they grew moist."

Yet there is no breath of lawlessness in her passion; to us to-day indeed, she seems quaintly puritanical in her outlook on life. We recall Mrs. Carlyle's satirical exclamation when she met George Eliot: "What! *she* an improper female!" And if she is volcanic, a primmer volcano never existed than Charlotte Brontë.

And thus we have this curious result: while the agonies of a woman yearning for affection are exhibited—especially in *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*—with a poignant feeling, beside which the love troubles of Maggie Tulliver seem half-hearted and conventional; yet the solution of the emotional problem, which seems to her inevitable, strikes many of us as curiously timid and strait-laced, for all its honesty and sincerity.

But the primness of her heroine's conduct serves to increase the intensity with which she depicts the passion. Love was the breath of life to Charlotte Brontë; the be-all and end-all of human life; thus this preoccupation with love in her novels that bored Harriet Martineau and moved George Henry Lewes to mild remonstrance.

But remonstrance was vain with a child of the "stormy sisterhood." Harriet Martineau was framed on other lines; she could not realise the emotional receptivity of a highly wrought nature such as Charlotte Brontë's. And Lewes, when he wrote and advised her to study Jane Austen's novels, might have spared his ink. One might as well have advised Chopin to study Bach's fugues. She needed, of course, to practise the art of restraint and omission, but with that temperament of hers it was merely a matter of concentrating the flame in place of diffusing it.

We know now sufficient of her life story, to realise how frustrated love threw its grey shadow across her path. And even if we had known nothing of the Brussels episode, and only surmised that her interest in M. Héger was something more than intellectual admiration, we might have gathered from the character and temperament of the woman, as exhibited in her writings and the records of friends, that she was moulded for tragic disappointment. For this reason, too much must not be made of the Brontë environment. The moorland and its denizens helped no doubt to emphasize the primal elements in the Brontë temperament, and it makes a striking background for such a temperament. But Charlotte and Emily would have been aloof and tragic souls had they been brought up in the most cheerful urban surroundings. Charlotte had the soul of the primitive woman, leashed in by a few early Victorian conventions, and she is always straining against the leash while upbraiding at herself for doing so. All the while that the curates were wooing her she was probably longing for some dashing Lochinvar to ride up and swing her across his saddle. But the gallant lover of her dreams never materialises, and she had to content herself with Mr. Nicholls—a good, worthy soul, assuredly, but not the Fairy Prince. She goes down to posterity as a type of the plain, sensitive woman hungering for a love that will never be hers; not that she was really unattractive: her eyes, her delicate hands, her pleasant voice were not devoid of magic. But it was not the kind of magic to win over the man destined to transfigure her life. Yet, happiness in a measure might have been hers, as the wife of Mr. Nicholls, only ironic Destiny, that had made the Brontë history read like a transcript of

Æschylus, again stepped in, and silenced her cry for "more life." None perhaps realised in her life and experience the poignancy of Browning's lines more fully than she:

> "O the little more and how much it is,
> And the little less and what worlds away."

The Note of Revolt

It is hard perhaps to associate with the gospel of insurgency, a woman who cautioned her friends against reading the comedies of Shakespeare, tabooed *Don Juan*, and whose hero in those days of flaming personalities was the Duke of Wellington. And an insurgent in the modern sense of the term, an insurgent of the militant feminist type to-day, she is far from being. She is insurgent just because she is a primal woman: she is insurgent just as a caged thrush is insurgent that beats itself against the bars of its cage. Modern civilisation always provides a cage for primal natures.

Insurgent womanhood! How familiar the phrase to-day! How unfamiliar in those early Victorian days. Yet Charlotte Brontë is the first to sound the note of sex revolt. She is the pioneer of the novel of emancipation. She was a revolutionary, one might say, in spite of herself. And her revolutionary sentiment is expressed in various ways.

She revolted against the accepted convention of the heroine in fiction; she revolted against the accepted convention of woman's place in the routine of life; she revolted against the formalism and hypocrisy, the harshness and cruelty, that she saw around her.

Thus in the first place she accomplished something like a literary revolution. It was, as Mrs. Oliphant once reminded us: "The period of the heroine in white muslin, the immaculate creature who was of sweetness and goodness all compact." Not even Jane Austen with her shrewd humour had been able to dislodge this convention from the pages of fiction. The governess was not unknown to novel readers, but hitherto she had been surrounded with the halo of romance. No one had dared to make her plain and dowdy until Charlotte Brontë came along and proved that dowdy-like Jane could attract the interest and grip the imagination and sympathy as fully as the most beautiful heroine of romance.

"As fully," it were true to say far more fully; for these creatures were airy visions; Jane Eyre was a living, breathing reality. And the revolt went deeper still; it not merely struck at the literary convention but the current social convention of the time. Charlotte was far too sincere, and too clear-visioned to accept this convention. Thus the shocked surprise of contemporary hypocrites when the writer drew a real woman and not a puppet; when she inveighed with furious scorn against the monstrous masculine invention of the "waxwork sex."

Finally, while revolting against this convention, she incidentally ran tilt against many others. She was at heart in spiritual sympathy with those rough, primal natures, so familiar to her and to her sister Emily in the environment of the rugged moors. Her whole nature rose up against the tame-bird view of life.

This bias shows itself again and again in that wonderful description of unhappy school life in the early chapters of *Jane Eyre*, where she heaps up her scorn on mealy-mouthed religionists; in her characteristic and obvious admiration for the rough, brutal, yet not unattractive Rochester; in the spirited description of the strike in *Shirley*; in that Rembrandt-like portrait of Rachel in *Villette*, where the primitive woman in her admires, and the Puritan in her loathes. Even in her scenic pictures it is the elemental fury of Nature that inspires her best as an artist.

Take for instance this vivid little pen sketch from *Shirley*: "This is an autumn evening wet and mild. There is only one cloud in the sky, but it curtains it from pole to pole. The wind cannot rest. It hurries sobbing over hills of sullen outline and colourless with twilight and mist." Or her fine metaphor of the Yorkshire moors—"washed from the world in whitening sheets of rain."

Yet for all her revolutionary ardour she has nothing of the satirist in her nature. Her passionate seriousness left little room for humour as a literary weapon. I cannot agree with the customary criticism that she lacked humour; for surely no writer who was devoid of humour could ever have penned that interview with Mr. Carus Wilson in *Jane Eyre*, given us that delightful picture of the curates in *Shirley*, or have made Paul Emanuel so vital a figure.

But life was so full of tragic pain and misery to Charlotte Brontë, that merely to laugh at and deride the weaknesses of humanity seemed to her pitifully inadequate. This temperamented view she shared with Charles Kingsley, another earnest critic of his time, to whom satire made no appeal. We can perfectly understand her attitude, though we may not sympathise with her impatience of Thackeray's jesting methods. She could never hide her feelings under a guise of flippant fun. It is useless to gird at her for this. It was part of her nature; and the work she accomplished was effected by quite other methods. Hence the over-emphasis, the strong high lights in her fiction: the absence of light and shade; hence also the stereoscopic actuality.

Charlotte Brontë's reputation rests on three books: *Jane Eyre*, *Shirley*, and *Villette*. Of these it may be said briefly that whilst *Shirley* is the least faulty as a work of art, *Jane Eyre*, inequalities notwithstanding, is the most vital. There is probably no piece of fiction in our language which has, together with such an abundance of crude accentuation, preposterous episodes, and glaring immaturity of outlook, so unequivocal a genius. There are scenes in the book that read like the ineptitudes of a sentimental schoolgirl; there are scenes—especially in the earlier portion—so amazingly actual, so finely imaginative, that only a woman of genius could have written them. And the genius triumphs. It enthrals and holds us captive. We are quite willing to condone the absurdities for the great moments of inspiration. As an illustration take the first meeting of the little governess with Rochester outside the house. There is nothing

far-fetched or melodramatic in the episode, it is quite a natural and probable one; yet, that a writer of inexperience should instinctively invest this chance encounter with all the arresting magic of romantic splendour, shows a quality of imagination, and a power of actuality, for which we can find no other term than—great.

There is more cleverness and greater sobriety and artistic reticence in *Shirley*; also far less genius. Yet it has considerable episodic power and some admirable pieces of characterisation; notably Caroline, the heroine (modelled on her sister Emily), and the curates—from whom poor Charlotte Brontë could never escape either in her life or fiction.

But her highest achievement in characterisation is found in the delightfully vital picture of M. Paul Emmanuel—inspired of course by M. Héger. We may have our doubts as to the reality of St. John Rivers; and remain unmoved by the blustering extravagances of Rochester—who certainly only lives by fits and starts. But Paul Emmanuel, with his nervous excitability, his comical vanity, his greatness of heart and childishness of disposition, is unmistakably alive. Her vision of life and character is limited and circumscribed; but where she did see she saw with startling lucidity and insight. She is at heart a poet; a poet who could not express herself in verse; but there is a rich poetical quality about her prose.

Emily was also a poet, though unlike Charlotte she could find satisfying expression in verse. Like Charlotte, she has the soul of the primitive woman without the feminine gentleness and greater plasticity that kept her sister's tumultuous energy in check.

We have glimpses in Charlotte Brontë's writings of the fierce, untamable spirit of the Brontës, its coarse volume of passion. In Emily's character and work it *is* revealed naked and unashamed: she is like a fine edition of Branwell.

Beyond a few poems, and *Wuthering Heights*, we have nothing by which to judge Emily's powers. But they suffice. If Charlotte's personality attracts us, Emily's fascinates us. She seems the very embodiment of the wind-swept moors, and moves through Mrs. Gaskell's biography more like an elemental spirit than a woman, shunning society, inscrutable and silent even among her own kin, revelling in all the bleakness, the loneliness, the storm-tossed vicissitudes of that countryside; dogged by relentless disease, yet grimly defiant, desperately self-controlled to the very last—

> "Whose soul
> Knew no fellow for might,
> Passion, vehemence, grief,
> Daring, since Byron died."

How Charlotte would have thrilled to these words; how she would have thrilled still more to the noble and eloquent tribute of Swinburne!

Something of this power and intensity of gloom meets us in her verse; but its fullest expression is found in that strange, amazing, and terrible book, *Wuthering Heights*. Shadowy, incoherent, remote from concrete human existence, oppressive and appalling in its violent imagery, it is lit up and transfigured by a magic splendour rarely surpassed in English fiction. The chief characters in the story are scarcely human beings at all, and defy all psychological standards: they are the primal forces of Nature, incarnate passions; yet such fierce intensity of feeling has gone into their creation, that we accept them at their creator's imperious command. A barbaric fragment if you will, this extraordinary book; but one of the imperishable fragments of imaginative genius,—Titanic in its fierce undisciplined power; with a haunting and poignant beauty underlying all its horror; making us realise as no other story in our language does, the significance of

> "Infinite passion
> And the pain of finite hearts that yearn."

Jane Eyre

Mrs. Reed occupied her usual seat by the fireside: she made a signal to me to approach: I did so, and she introduced me to the stony stranger with the words: "This is the little girl respecting whom I applied to you."

He, for it was a man, turned his head slowly towards where I stood, and having examined me with the two inquisitive-looking grey eyes, which twinkled under a pair of bushy brows, said solemnly and in a bass voice: "Her size is small: what is her age?"

"Ten years."

"So much?" was the doubtful answer; and he prolonged his scrutiny for some minutes. Presently he addressed me:—

"Your name, little girl?"

"Jane Eyre, sir."

In uttering these words, I looked up: he seemed to me a tall gentleman; but then I was very little: his features were large, and they and all the lines of his frame were equally harsh and prim.

"Well, Jane Eyre, and are you a good child?"

Impossible to reply to this in the affirmative: my little world held a contrary opinion: I was silent. Mrs. Reed answered for me by an expressive shake of the head, adding soon, "Perhaps the less said on that subject the better, Mr. Brocklehurst."

"Sorry indeed to hear it! she and I must have some talk;" and bending from the perpendicular, he installed his person in the arm-chair, opposite Mrs. Reed's. "Come here," he said.

I stepped across the rug. He placed me square and straight before him. What a face he had, now that it was almost on a level with mine! what a great nose! and what a mouth! and what large prominent teeth!

"No sight so sad as that of a naughty child," he began, "especially a naughty little girl. Do you know where the wicked go after death?"

"They go to hell," was my ready and orthodox answer.

"And what is hell? Can you tell me that?"

"A pit full of fire."

"And should you like to fall into that pit, and to be burning there for ever?"

"No, sir."

"What must you do to avoid it?"

I deliberated a moment; my answer, when it did come, was objectionable: "I must keep in good health, and not die."

"How can you keep in good health? Children younger than you die daily. I buried a little child of five years old only a day or two since,—a good little child, whose soul is now in heaven. It is to be feared the same could not be said of you, were you to be called hence."

Not being in a condition to remove his doubt, I only cast my eyes down on the two large feet planted on the rug, and sighed, wishing myself far enough away.

"I hope that sigh is from the heart, and that you repent of ever having been the occasion of discomfort to your excellent benefactress."

"Benefactress! benefactress!" said I inwardly. "they all call Mrs. Reed my benefactress: if so, a benefactress is a disagreeable thing."

"Do you say your prayers night and morning?" continued my interrogator.

"Yes, sir."

"Do you read your Bible?"

"Sometimes."

"With pleasure? Are you fond of it?"

"I like Revelations, and the book of Daniel, and Genesis and Samuel, and a little bit of Exodus, and some parts of Kings and Chronicles, and Job and Jonah."

"And the Psalms? I hope you like them?"

"No, sir."

"No? oh, shocking! I have a little boy, younger than you, who knows six Psalms by heart: and when you ask him which he would rather have, a ginger-bread nut to eat, or a verse of a Psalm to learn, he says: 'Oh! the verse of a Psalm! angels sing Psalms,' says he: 'I wish to be a little angel here below;' he then gets two nuts in recompense for his infant piety."

"Psalms are not interesting," I remarked.

"That proves you have a wicked heart; and you must pray to God to change it; to give you a new and clean one; to take away your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."

Jane Eyre's First Meeting with Rochester

The ground was hard, the air was still, my road was lonely; I walked fast till I got warm, and then I walked slowly to enjoy and analyse the species of pleasure brooding for me in the hour and situation. It was three o'clock; the church bell tolled as I passed under the belfry: the charm of the hour lay in its approaching dimness, in the low-gliding and pale-beaming sun. I was a mile from Thornfield, in a lane noted for wild roses in summer, for nuts and blackberries in autumn, and even now possessing a few coral treasures in hips and haws, but whose best winter delight lay in its utter solitude and leafless repose. If a breath of air stirred, it made no sound here: for there was not a holly, not an evergreen to rustle, and the stripped hawthorn and hazel bushes were as still as the white, worn stones which causewayed the middle of the path. Far and wide, on each side, there were only fields, where no cattle now browsed; and the little brown birds, which stirred occasionally in the hedge, looked like single russet leaves that had forgotten to drop.

This lane inclined up-hill all the way to Hay: having reached the middle, I sat down on a stile which led thence into a field. Gathering my mantle about me, and sheltering my hands in my muff, I did not feel the cold, though it froze keenly; as was attested by a sheet of ice covering the causeway, where a little brooklet, now congealed, had overflowed after a rapid thaw some days since. From my seat I could look down on Thornfield: the grey and battlemented hall was the principal object in the vale below me; its wood and dark rookery rose against the west. I lingered till the sun went down amongst the trees, and sank crimson and clear behind them. I then turned eastward.

On the hill-top above me sat the rising moon; pale yet as a cloud, but brightening momently: she looked over Hay, which, half lost in trees, sent up a blue smoke from its few chimneys: it was yet a mile distant, but in the absolute hush I could hear plainly its thin murmurs of life. My ear too felt the flow of currents; in what dales and depths I could not tell: but there were many hills beyond Hay, and doubtless many becks threading their passes. That evening calm betrayed alike the tinkle of the nearest streams, the songh of the most remote.

A rude noise broke on these fine ripplings and whisperings, at once so far away and so clear: a positive tramp, tramp; a metallic clatter, which effaced the soft wave-wanderings; as, in a picture, the solid mass of a crag, or the rough boles of a great oak, drawn in dark and strong on the foreground, effaces the aerial distance of azure hill, sunny horizon, and blended clouds, where tint melts into tint.

The din was on the causeway: a horse was coming; the windings of the lane yet hid it, but it approached. I was just leaving the stile; yet, as the path was narrow, I sat still to let it go by. In those days I was young, and all sorts of fancies bright and dark tenanted my mind: the memories of nursery stories were there amongst other rubbish; and when they recurred, maturing youth added to them a vigour and vividness beyond what childhood could give. As this horse approached, and as I watched for it to appear through the dusk, I remembered certain of Bessie's tales, wherein figured a North of England spirit, called a "Gytrash"; which, in the form of a horse, mule, or large dog, haunted solitary ways, and sometimes came upon belated travellers, as this horse was now coming upon me.

It was very near, but not yet in sight: when, in addition to the tramp, tramp, I heard a rush under the hedge, and close down by the hazel stems glided a great dog, whose black and white colour made him a distinct object against the trees. It was exactly one mask of Bessie's Gytrash,—a lion-like creature with long hair and a huge head: it passed me, however, quietly enough; not staying to look up, with strange preternatural eyes, in my face, as I half expected it would. The horse followed,—a tall steed, and on its back a rider. The man, the human being, broke the spell at once. Nothing ever rode the Gytrash: it was always alone; and goblins, to my notions, though they might tenant the dumb carcases of beasts, could scarce covet shelter in the commonplace human form. No Gytrash was this,—only a traveller taking the short cut to Millcote. He passed, and I went on; a few steps, and I turned: a sliding sound and an exclamation of "What the deuce is to do now?" and a clattering tumble, arrested my attention. Man and horse were down; they had slipped on the sheet of ice which glazed the causeway. The dog came bounding back, and seeing his master in a predicament, and hearing the horse groan, barked till the evening hills echoed the sound, which was deep in proportion to its magnitude. He snuffed round the prostrate group, and then he ran up to me: it was all he could do,—there was no other help at hand to summon. I obeyed him, and walked down to the traveller, by this time struggling himself free of his steed. His efforts were so vigorous, I thought he could not be much hurt; but I asked him the question:—

"Are you injured, sir?"

I think he was swearing, but am not certain; however, he was pronouncing some formula which prevented him from replying to me directly.

"Can I do anything?" I asked again.

"You must just stand on one side," he answered as he rose, first to his knees, and then to his feet. I did; whereupon began a heaving, stamping, clattering process, accompanied by a barking and baying which removed me effectually some yards distance; but I would not be driven quite away till I saw the event. This was finally fortunate; the horse was re-established, and the dog was silenced with a "Down, Pilot!" The traveller now, stooping, felt his foot and leg, as if trying whether they were sound; apparently something ailed them, for he halted to the stile whence I had just risen, and sat down.

I was in the mood for being useful, or at least officious, I think, for I now drew near him again.

"If you are hurt, and want help, sir, I can fetch some one from Thornfield Hall or from Hay."

"Thank you; I shall do: I have no broken bones,—only a sprain;" and again he stood up and tried his foot, but the result extorted an involuntary "Ugh!"

Something of daylight still lingered, and the moon was waxing bright: I could see him plainly. His figure was enveloped in a riding cloak, fur collared, and steel clasped; its details were not apparent, but I traced the general points of middle height, and considerable breadth of chest. He had a dark face, with stern fea-

tures and a heavy brow; his eyes and gathered eyebrows looked ireful and thwarted just now. He was past youth, but had not reached middle age; perhaps he might be thirty-five. I felt no fear of him, and but little shyness. Had he been a handsome, heroic-looking young gentleman, I should not have dared to stand thus questioning him against his will, and offering my services unasked. I had hardly ever seen a handsome youth; never in my life spoken to one. I had a theoretical reverence for beauty, elegance, gallantry, fascination; but had I met those qualities incarnate in masculine shape, I should have known instinctively that they neither had nor could have sympathy with anything in me, and should have shunned them as one would fire, lightning, or anything else that is bright but antipathetic.

If even this stranger had smiled and been good-humoured to me when I addressed him; if he had put off my offer of assistance gaily and with thanks, I should have gone on my way and not felt any vocation to renew inquiries: but the frown, the roughness of the traveller set me at my ease: I retained my station when he waved to me to go, and announced:—

"I cannot think of leaving you, sir, at so late an hour, in this solitary lane, till I see you are fit to mount your horse."

He looked at me when I said this: he had hardly turned his eyes in my direction before.

"I should think you ought to be at home yourself," said he, "if you have a home in this neighbourhood: where do you come from?"

"From just below; and I am not at all afraid of being out late when it is moonlight: I will run over to Hay for you with pleasure, if you wish it; indeed, I am going there to post a letter."

"You live just below—do you mean at the house with the battlements!" pointing to Thornfield Hall, on which the moon cast a hoary gleam, bringing it out distinct and pale from the woods, that, by contrast with the western sky, now seemed one mass of shadow.

"Yes, sir!"

"Whose house is it?"

"Mr. Rochester's."

"Do you know Mr. Rochester?"

"No, I have never seen him."

"He is not resident, then?"

"No."

"Can you tell me where he is?"

"I cannot."

"You are not a servant at the hall, of course. You are—" He stopped, ran his eye over my dress, which as usual was quite simple: a black merino cloak, a black beaver bonnet; neither of them half fine enough for a lady's maid. He seemed puzzled to decide what I was: I helped him.

"I am the governess."

"Ah, the governess!" he repeated; "demoe take me, if I had not forgotten! The governess!" and again my raiment underwent scrutiny. In two minutes he rose from the stile: his face expressed pain when he tried to move.

"I cannot commission you to fetch help," he said; 'but you may help me a little yourself, if you will be so kind."

"Yes, sir."

"You have not an umbrella that I can use as a stick?"

"No."

"Try to get hold of my horse's bridle and lead him to me: you are not afraid?"

I should have been afraid to touch a horse when alone, but when told to do it, I was disposed to obey. I put down my muff on the stile, and went up to the tall steed; I endeavoured to catch the bridle, but it was a spirited thing, and would not let me come near its head; I made effort on effort, though in vain: meantime, I was mortally afraid of its trampling fore-feet. The traveller waited and watched for some time, and at last he laughed.

"I see," he said, "the mountain will never be brought to Mahomet, so all you can do is to aid Mahomet to go to the mountain; I must beg of you to come here."

I came. "Excuse me," he continued; "necessity compels me to make you useful." He laid a heavy hand on my shoulder, and leaning on me with some stress, limped to his horse. Having once caught the bridle, he mastered it directly, and sprang to his saddle; grimacing grimly as he made the effort, for it wrenched his sprain.

"Now," said he, releasing his under lip from a hard bite, "just hand me my whip; it lies there under the hedge."

I sought it and found it.

"Thank you; now make haste with the letter to Hay, and return as fast as you can."

A touch of a spurred heel made his horse first start and rear, and then bound away; the dog rushed in his traces: all three vanished,

> "Like heath that, in the wilderness,
> The wild wind whirls away."

Shirley

Caroline Helstone was just eighteen years old; and at eighteen the true narrative of life is yet to be commenced. Before that time, we sit listening to a tale, a marvellous fiction; delightful sometimes, and sad sometimes; almost always unreal. Before that time, our world is heroic; its inhabitants half-divine or semi-demon; its scenes are dream-scenes darker woods and stranger hills; brighter skies, more dangerous waters; sweeter flowers, more tempting fruits; wider plains, drearier deserts, sunnier fields than are found in nature, overspread our enchanted globe. What a moon we gaze on before that time! How the trembling of our hearts at her aspect bears witness to its unutterable beauty! As to our sun, it is a burning heaven—the world of gods.

At that time—at eighteen, drawing near the confines of illusive, void dreams, Elf-land lies behind us, the shores of Reality rise in front. These shores are yet distant: they look so blue, soft, gentle, we long to reach them. In sunshine we see a greenness beneath the azure, as of spring meadows; we catch glimpses of silver lines, and imagine the roll of living waters. Could we but reach this land, we think to hunger and thirst no more: whereas many a wilderness, and often the flood of Death, or some stream of sorrow as cold and almost as black as Death, is to be crossed ere true bliss can be tasted. Every joy that life gives must be earned ere it is secured; and how hardly earned, those only know who have wrestled for great prizes. The heart's blood must gem with red beads the brow of the combatant, before the wreath of victory rustles over it.

At eighteen, we are not aware of this. Hope, when she smiles on us, and promises happiness to-morrow, is implicitly believed:—Love, when he comes wandering like a lost angel to our door, is at once admitted, welcomed, embraced: his quiver is not seen; if his arrows penetrate, their wound is like a thrill of new life: there are no fears of poison, none of the barb which no leech's hand can extract: that perilous passion—an agony ever in some of its phases; with many, an agony throughout—is believed to be an unqualified good; in short, at eighteen, the school of Experience is to be entered, and her humbling, crushing, grinding, but yet purifying and invigorating lessons are yet to be learnt.

Alas, Experience! No other mentor has so wasted and frozen a face as yours: none wears a robe so black, none bears a rod so heavy, none with hand so inexorable draws the novice so sternly to his task, and forces him with authority so resistless to its acquirement. It is by your instructions alone that man or woman can ever find a safe track through life's wilds; without it, how they stumble, how they stray! On what forbidden grounds do they intrude, down what dread declivities are they hurled!

Caroline, having been conveyed home by Robert, had no wish to pass what remained of the evening with her

uncle; the room in which he sat was very sacred ground to her; she seldom intruded on it, and to-night she kept aloof till the bell rang for prayers. Part of the evening Church service was the form of worship observed in Mr. Helstone's household; he read it in his usual nasal voice, clear, loud, and monotonous. The rite over, his niece, according to her wont, stepped up to him.

"Good-night, uncle."

"Hey! You've been gadding abroad all day—visiting, dining out, and what not!"

"Only at the cottage."

"And have you learnt your lessons?"

"Yes."

"And made a shirt?"

"Only part of one."

"Well, that will do: stick to the needle—learn shirt-making and gown-making, and pie-crust-making, and you'll be a clever woman some day. Go to bed now; I'm busy with a pamphlet here."

The name of Charlotte Brontë is intimately bound up with that of her friend and biographer, ELIZABETH CLEGHORN GASKELL (1810–1865). She was the daughter of a Unitarian minister, William Stevenson, and married a minister of the same theological school. She and her husband lived for many years at Manchester, and from her experiences of Lancashire life, she found the material at hand for her first novel, *Mary Barton* (1848), and *North and South* (1855).

Social politics flash across the pages of *Shirley*, but industrial and economic problems that were to enter so largely into Victorian fiction, meet us for the first time in feminine fiction in the pages of Mrs. Gaskell.

Mrs. Gaskell did, in some ways, for the North what Charles Kingsley was already doing for the South. She is not the industrial reformer that Kingsley was, but she knew out of the fulness of her own experiences the bitterness and misery arising from those early conflicts between capital and labour; and she was as familiar with strikes as was Kingsley with sweating. But Mrs. Gaskell's importance as a novelist lies not merely in her spirited and faithful achievement of industrial dramas, but in the method of her story-telling.

Both the Brontës and Dickens were at heart romantics who applied their romanticism to every-day life: and the lesser novelists, the Brays and the Gores, were also romantics though in a more superficial manner. Mrs. Gaskell, however, approaches rather to the more realistic methods of Jane Austen—but with a difference. She lays greater stress than Miss Austen on the emotional life, and is less interested in the external history than in the inner history of her characters. In other words, Mrs. Gaskell may fairly be regarded as the pioneer of the novel of *character*, of which George Eliot is the first brilliant exponent.

Despite the fact that both Dickens and Thackeray adopted very largely the old discursive, picaresque framework of the episodic novel, more and more attention was being paid to the delineation of character. One can trace throughout Dickens' writings, a steadily increasing care in this respect; and although it may be doubted whether the nature of his genius did not excel in bold, flamboyant presentments rather than in carefully constructed portrait studies, yet the elaboration of his later characters, say from *Bleak House* onwards, is a significant testimony to the artistic drift of his time.

The gradual diffusion of scientific ideas on the subject of education, environment, heredity, contributed largely to foster the psychological novel; and the publication of *The Origin of Species* and *Adam Bede* in the same year, is something more than a literary accident.

Mrs. Gaskell had neither the intellectual equipment nor the artistic power of George Eliot, but she was a shrewd observer, with a tolerant sympathy and a strong sense of humour. Curiously enough, she never did full justice to her humorous faculty, save in *Cranford*, which beyond a doubt is her highest achievement in fiction—an entirely fresh and delightful sojourn in a sleepy little country town. There is a pleasant aroma of fresh butter and dried lavender in its pages. The characterisation is rich in happy little touches, reminiscent of Jane Austen's art, yet with a more whimsical play of humorous fancy than she would have tolerated.

If *Cranford* is a real gem, the other novels are far from being paste imitations. *Mary Barton* is a sincere and moving story, which might easily have been spoilt by sentimentality. *North and South* gives us a thoughtful study of the problems that arise out of the factory system; while there is excellent workmanship in *Wives and Daughters*; and a tragic power in *Ruth*. Indeed had Mrs. Gaskell never written *Cranford* we might have been less critical of her other stories. Having achieved a little masterpiece in *Cranford*, we are naturally more critical about the rest of her work, which is good, thoughtful, workmanlike fiction of the secondary order.

From this criticism we ought to except the *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, which is a fine and worthy study of a difficult yet fascinating subject. This and *Cranford* should survive when the other tales have long since been buried in oblivion.

OLD LETTERS

I have often noticed that almost every one has his own individual small economies—careful habits of saving fractions of pennies in some one peculiar direction—any disturbance of which annoys him more than spending shillings or pounds on some real extravagance. An old gentleman of my acquaintance, who took the intelligence of the failure of a joint-stock bank, in which some of his money was invested, with stoical mildness, worried his family all through a long summer's day because one of them had torn (instead of cutting) out the written leaves of his now useless bank-book; of course, the corresponding pages at the other end came out as well, and this little unnecessary waste of paper (his private economy) chafed him more than all the loss of his money. Envelopes fretted his soul terribly when they first came in; the only way in which he could reconcile himself to such waste of his cherished article was by patiently turning inside out all that were sent to him, and so making them serve again. Even now, though turned by age, I see him casting wistful glances at his daughters when they send a whole inside of a half-sheet of notepaper, with the three lines of acceptance to an invitation, written on only one of the sides. I am not

above owning that I have this human weakness myself. String is my foible. My pockets get full of little hanks of it, picked up and twisted together, ready for uses that never come. I am seriously annoyed if any one cuts the string of a parcel instead of patiently and faithfully undoing it fold by fold. How people can bring themselves to use india-rubber rings, which are a sort of deification of string, as lightly as they do, I cannot imagine. To me an india-rubber ring is a precious treasure. I have one which is not new—one that I picked up off the floor nearly six years ago. I have really tried to use it, but my heart failed me, and I could not commit the extravagance.

Small pieces of butter grieve others. They cannot attend to conversation because of the annoyance occasioned by the habit which some people have of invariably taking more butter than they want. Have you not seen the anxious look (almost mesmeric) which such persons fix on the article? They would feel it a relief if they might bury it out of their sight by popping it into their own mouths and swallowing it down; and they are really made happy if the person on whose plate it lies unused suddenly breaks off a piece of toast (which he does not want at all) and eats up his butter. They think that this is not waste.

Now, Miss Matty Jenkyns was chary of candles. We had many devices to use as few as possible. In the winter afternoons she would sit knitting for two or three hours—she could do this in the dark, or by firelight—and when I asked if I might not ring for candles to finish stitching my wristbands, she told me to "keep blind man's holiday." They were usually brought in with tea; but we only burnt one at a time. As we lived in constant preparation for a friend who might come in any evening (but who never did), it required some contrivance to keep our two candles of the same length, ready to be lighted, and to look as if we burnt two always. The candles took it in turn; and, whatever we might be talking about or doing, Miss Matty's eyes were habitually fixed upon the candle, ready to jump up and extinguish it and to light the other before they had become too uneven in length to be restored to equality in the course of the evening.

One night I remember this candle economy particularly annoyed me. I had been very much tired of my compulsory "blind man's holiday," especially as Miss Matty had fallen asleep and I did not like to stir the fire and run the risk of awakening her; so I could not even sit on the rug, and scorch myself with sewing by firelight, according to my usual custom. I fancied Miss Matty must be dreaming of her early life; for she spoke one or two words in her uneasy sleep bearing reference to persons who were dead long before. When Martha brought in the lighted candle and tea, Miss Matty started into wakefulness with a strange, bewildered look around, as if we were not the people she expected to see about her. There was a little sad expression that shadowed her face as she recognised me, but immediately afterwards she tried to give me her usual smile. All through tea-time her talk ran upon the days of her childhood and youth. Perhaps this reminded her of the desirableness of looking over all the family letters and destroying such as ought not to fall into the hands of strangers, for she had often spoken of the necessity of this task, but had always shrunk from it, with a timid dread of something painful. To-night, however, she rose up after tea and went for them in the dark, for she piqued herself on the precise neatness of all her chamber arrangements, and used to look uneasily at me when I lighted a bed-candle to go to another room for anything. When she returned there was a faint, pleasant smell of Tonquin beans in the room. I had always noticed this scent about any of the things which had belonged to her mother; and many of the letters were addressed to her—yellow bundles of love-letters, sixty or seventy years old.

Miss Matty undid the packet with a sigh, but she stilled it directly, as if it were hardly right to regret the flight of time or of life either. We agreed to look them over separately, each taking a different letter out of the same bundle, and describing its contents to the other before destroying it. I never knew what sad work the reading of old letters was before that evening, though I could hardly tell why. The letters were as happy as letters could be—at least those early letters were. There was in them a vivid and intense sense of the present time, which seemed so strong and full, as if it could never pass away, and as if the warm, living hearts that so expressed themselves could never die and be as nothing to the sunny earth. I should have felt less melancholy, I believe, if the letters had been more so. I saw the tear stealing down the well-worn furrows of Miss Matty's cheeks, and her spectacles often wanted wiping. I trusted at last that she would light the other candle, for my own eyes were rather dim, and I wanted more light to see the pale, faded ink; but no, even through her tears, she saw and remembered her little economical ways.

The earliest set of letters were two bundles tied together and ticketed (in Miss Jenkyns' handwriting), "Letters interchanged between my ever-honoured father and my dearly-beloved mother prior to their marriage in June 1774." I should guess that the rector of Cranford was about twenty-seven years of age when he wrote these letters, and Miss Matty told me that her mother was just eighteen at the time of her wedding. With my idea of the rector, derived from a picture in the dining-parlour, stiff and stately, in a huge full-bottomed wig, with gown, cassock, and bands, and his hand upon a copy of the only sermon he ever published—it was strange to read these letters. They were full of eager, passionate ardour, short homely sentences, right fresh from the heart (very different from the grand Latinised Johnsonian style of the printed sermon preached before some judge at the assize time). His letters were a curious contrast to those of the girl-bride. She was evidently rather annoyed at his demands upon her for expressions of love, and could not quite understand what he meant by repeating the same thing over in so many different ways; but what she was quite clear about was a longing for a white "Paduasoy"—whatever that might be, and six or seven letters were principally occupied in asking her lover to use his influence with her parents (who evidently kept her in good order) to obtain this or that article of dress, more especially the white "Paduasoy." He cared nothing how she was dressed, she was always lovely enough for him, as he took pains to assure her, when she begged him to express in his answer a predilection for particular pieces of finery, in order that she might show what he said to her parents. But at length he seemed to find out that she would not be married till she had a "trousseau" to her mind; and then he sent her a letter which had evidently accompanied a whole box of finery, and in which he requested that she might be dressed in everything her heart desired. This was the first letter ticketed in a frail, delicate hand, "From my dearest John." Shortly afterwards they were married, I suppose, from the intermission in their correspondence.

"We must burn them, I think," said Miss Matty, looking doubtfully at me. "No one will care for them when I am gone." And one by one she dropped them into the middle of the fire, watching each blaze up, die out, and rise away in faint, white, ghostly semblance up the chimney, before she gave another to the same fate. The room was light enough now; but I, like her, was fascinated into watching the destruction of those letters, into which the honest warmth of a manly heart had been poured forth.

The next letter, likewise docketed by Miss Jenkyns, was endorsed, "Letter of pious congratulation and exhortation from my venerable grandfather to my beloved mother on the occasion of my birth. Also some practical remarks on the desirability of keeping warm the extremities of infants, from an excellent grandmother."

The first part was, indeed, a severe and forcible picture of the responsibilities of mothers, and a warning against the evils that were in the world, and lying in ghastly wait for the little baby of two days old. His wife did not write, said the old gentleman, because he

had forbidden it, she being indisposed with a sprained ankle, which (he said) quite incapacitated her from holding a pen. However, at the foot of the page was a small "T.O." and on turning it over, sure enough, there was a letter to "my dear, dearest Molly," begging her, when she left her room, whatever she did, to go up-stairs before going down and telling her to wrap her baby's feet up in flannel and keep it warm by the fire, although it was summer, for babies were so tender.

It was pretty to see from the letters, which were evidently examined with some frequency between the young mother and the grandmother, how the girlish vanity was being weeded out of her heart by love for her baby. The white "Dolmassy" figured again in the letters, with almost as much vigour as before. In one, it was being made into a christening cloak for the baby. It decked it when it went out with its parents to spend a day or two at Arley Hall. It added to its charms when it was "the prettiest little baby that ever was seen. Dear mother, I wish you could see her! Without any partiality, I do think she will grow up a regular beauty." I thought of Miss Jenkyns, gray, withered, and wrinkled, and I wondered if her mother had known her in the courts of heaven; and then I knew that she had, and that they stood there in angelic guise.

There was a great gap before any of the rector's letters appeared. And then his wife had changed her mode of endorsement. It was no longer from "My dearest John," it was from "My honoured Husband." The letters were written on occasion of the publication of the same sermon which was represented in the picture. The preaching before "My Lord Judge," and the "publishing by request," was evidently the culminating point—the event of his life. It had been necessary for him to go up to London to superintend it through the press. Many friends had to be called upon and consulted before he could decide on any printer fit for so onerous a task; and at length it was arranged that J. and J. Rivingtons were to have the honourable responsibility. The worthy rector seemed to be strung up by the occasion to a high literary pitch, for he could hardly write a letter to his wife without cropping out into Latin. I remember the end of one of his letters ran thus: "I shall ever hold the virtuous qualities of my Molly in remembrance. *Bona mente ipse vivi, dum spiritus regit artus*," which, considering that the English of his correspondent was sometimes at fault in grammar, and often in spelling, might be taken as a proof of how much he "idealised" his Molly; and, as Miss Jenkyns used to say, "People talk a great deal about idealising nowadays, whatever that may mean." But this was nothing to a fit of writing classical poetry which soon seized him, in which his Molly figured away as "Maria." The letter containing the *carmen* was endorsed by her, "Hebrew verses sent me by my honoured husband. I thought to have had a letter about killing the pig, but must wait. Mem., to send the poetry to Sir Peter Arley, as my husband desires." And in a post-scriptum note in his handwriting it was stated that the ode had appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, December 1782.

Her letters back to her husband (treasured as fondly by him as if they had been "M. T. Ciceronis Epistolæ") were more satisfactory to an absent husband and father than his could ever have been to her. She told him how Deborah sewed her seam very neatly every day and read to her in the books he had set her; how she was a very "forward," good child, but would ask questions her mother could not answer, but how she did not let herself down by saying she did not know, but took to stirring the fire or sending the "forward" child on an errand. Matty was now the mother's darling, and promised (like her sister at her age) to be a great beauty. I was reading this aloud to Miss Matty, who smiled and arched a little at the hope, so fondly expressed, that "little Matty might not be vain, even if she were a beauty."

"I had very pretty hair, my dear," said Miss Matilda, "and not a bad mouth." And I saw her soon afterwards adjust her cap and draw herself up.[1]

[1] *Cranford.*

GEORGE ELIOT (1819–1880)

Her Life

Mary Ann Evans (George Eliot) was born at South Farm, Arbury, in Warwickshire, on November 22, 1819. Her father, Robert Evans, was agent to Sir Roger Newdigate of Arbury Hall, her grandfather a builder and carpenter in Derbyshire. Robert Evans was a well-seasoned Tory with the firm belief that anyone with the revolutionary strain in his blood was a scoundrel of the deepest dye. "I was accustomed," remarks his daughter with dry humour, "to hear him utter the word 'Government' in a tone that charged it with awe and made it part of my effective religion, in contrast with the word 'rebel,' which seemed to carry the stamp of evil in its syllables, and lit by the fact that Satan was the first rebel made an argument dispensing with more detailed inquiry." It was a neighbourhood that made for Toryism, a sleepy, prosperous, well-watered district, where life ambled along in a pleasant jog-trot fashion. In this region George Eliot spent the first thirty-two years of her life; and the life of the place passed into her nature and became a rich inspiration in which to draw in her wonderful pictures of provincial life.

At first, of course, she accepted with docility her father's views, and though thoughtful and imaginative even as a young child, there was a certain reflective diffidence about her that made her mental development proceed slowly. But in the early forties she came under the influence of the Brays, and the acquaintanceship proved a crisis in her intellectual life.

Charles Bray was a ribbon manufacturer by trade; and a philanthropist by inclination. He was interested in Socialism and turned his energies in the direction of social reform.

In 1836 Bray married Caroline Hennell, who came of a Unitarian family. Bray himself was a sceptic, and his brother-in-law, Charles Hennell, in endeavouring to convince him of the error of his ways, became a sceptic himself. Hennell's book *An Enquiry concerning the Origin of Christianity* (1838) made a deep impression on George Eliot. "My only desire is," she wrote to a friend, "to know the truth, my only fear to cling to error."

But she was not prepared to give up revealed religion as yet, though insensibly it affected her attitude towards her father's rigid Puritanism. She gave up church-going, and this naturally led to strained family relationships. Meanwhile she had acknowledged obligations to a mentor, whose association with rationalism may seem somewhat startling. I allude to her references to Sir Walter Scott, whom in later life she declared had materially helped to unsettle her orthodoxy.

As a matter of fact it seems to have been Scott the artist, not Scott the man, that wrought this astonishing change. For Scott's broad and tolerant treatment of conflicting religious opinions appealed very naturally to George Eliot's essentially judicial attitude. She was too fair-minded not to see how dynamic an influence religion had proved in moulding human life; she was too clear-headed to attribute this influence to any particular set of doctrines.

She was always maintaining, even when quite a girl, that the great lesson of life was tolerance; and this made her out of touch on one side with the school of militant sceptics, and on the other with militant religionists.

After her father's death she settled in London, and became assistant editor of the *Westminster Review*, to whose columns she had already contributed. Fresh and potent influences now came into her life; the two Martineaus, James and Harriet, James one of the most powerful Theistic writers that the century had produced, his sister a keen intellectual writer on social and political subjects; above all, Herbert Spencer and George Henry Lewes.

Meanwhile she boarded with the Chapmans in the Strand, Chapman being the proprietor of the *Westminster Review*. Herbert Spencer she found "a good, delightful creature"; and the brilliant and volatile George Henry Lewes, who at first rather repelled her by his flippancy, finally won her affections,—being "like a few other people in the world . . . much better than he seems,—a man of heart and conscience."

Lewes was already married, though living apart from his wife, unable to get a divorce through some technicality in the existing law. George Eliot, though disapproving of "light and easily broken ties," felt very strongly that the law binding Lewes to his wife was not a moral law; and she determined deliberately to throw in her lot with his, declaring that no one "acquainted with the realities of life" could prove such a union "immoral." The union proved in many ways not only a happy one, but a fortunate one in determining George Eliot's literary career. She was already well known as a singularly able critic and translator; but it was due to Lewes' discernment and encouragement that she now turned to essay fiction. She was thirty-eight when she wrote her first *Scenes from Clerical Life* for *Blackwood's Magazine*. It is characteristic of her peculiar diffidence as to her own powers that the impulse to write a story came not from some sudden kindling of the creative imagination, but from the suggestion of her friend Lewes. The result was dramatic in the phenomenal success that attended this departure; and so long as she drew upon her own memories and impressions, her power was unquestionable. When she left this fount of inspiration, she proved far more uncertain in her touch, and less satisfying as a literary artist.

In 1878 Mr. Lewes died, and some two years later she married a young London banker, Mr. John Walter Cross, about twenty years her junior. To some this step may have reflected on the passionate devotion she had always expressed for Lewes; but all who knew her intimately felt that it was merely a natural expression of that curious dependency in her otherwise strong and decisive nature—a dependency which she refers to in her letters, the need of someone always upon whom she may lean for support.

This is her own statement on the matter:

"Deep down below there is a river of sadness, but this must always be with those who have lived long—and I am able to enjoy my newly opened life. I shall be a better, more loving creature than I could have been in solitude. To be constantly, lovingly grateful for the gift of a perfect love is the best illumination of one's mind to all the possible good there may be in store for man on this troublesome little planet."

Shortly after her marriage her health failed, and in December 1880 she died suddenly, after a short illness.

Her Work

The amazing contrast between the subject of Cross's biography and the creator of *Adam Bede* and *The Mill on the Floss* has always perplexed literary students. George Eliot, the moralist and idealist, was well known from her novels; but this anxious, self-analytical woman, with her strained intellectual pose, proved an unpleasant surprise to them. In point of fact, Cross's *Life* is a one-sided presentation of a many-sided personality. Undoubtedly it represented a side, and the side most familiar to him; but it was the staid George Eliot of the seventies, rather than the woman with strong passions, with the Maggie Tulliver-like waywardness,—one of the brilliant Bohemians that circled round the old *Westminster Review*. What trace is there in the biography of the writer of those polished, ironical essays in criticism, written from Mr. Chapman's boarding-house in the Strand? What indication in the bulky correspondence that looms out so prominently in the *Life*, of the wit, the humour, the restless vitality of the George Eliot endeared to such a wide circle of friends.

In those severely analytical letters, she seems to be perpetually in a state of intellectual tip-toe. The biography of Cross is unsatisfactory in the way that all biographies written by devotees must necessarily be. Through the obscuring mist of "good, thick, strong, stupefying incense smoke," the woman is partly lost to sight. And it is the essential womanliness of George Eliot that gives vitality to her best work. Her delicate intuition, her tact, her woman's power of sympathy, these are the qualities that give greatness to *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *Silas Marner*. Her intellectual gifts, splendid as they were and invaluable in her critical work, are positive drawbacks to her as an artist. The best part of *Romola* lies in the subtle delineation of the young Greek hedonist, Tito; the scholarship shown in the book is sheer dead weight from the artistic point of view. Similarly in *Daniel Deronda*, when she writes as a woman she makes the pages live; when as a follower of Comte and as a student of racial problems, then the wheels of her chariot drive very heavily.

At the present time, however, she is almost ludicrously under-rated, and her literary reputation is certainly under a cloud; thus it is more serviceable to point out the solid worth of her writings than to dilate on her shortcomings.

The influence of that clever, lively though superficial man, George Henry Lewes, has been severely criticised, yet surely his influence was on the whole a sound and stimulating one. The one mistake he made was to safeguard her too anxiously from hostile criticism, after she had made her name, when a wholesome course of frank criticism would have done her good. But it was after all through

him that she took to writing. He saw in her a woman of keen observation and of unusual reflective power, and knew that she had humour and imagination. "Use your own experience and feelings in fiction," he had said with admirable point; "don't be afraid of yourself." In this way he encouraged her, when nearly forty, to essay fiction, and without his encouragement it is improbable she would ever have tried. As it was, her earliest efforts justified Lewes' prophecy, and she was rightly heralded as a new force in fiction.

What kind of force?

She was the first novelist to lay the stress wholly upon character rather than incident; to make her stories spiritual rather than physical dramas. It is true that Charlotte Brontë had drawn attention to the emotional life, but she had lacked the knowledge of men and women, the mental detachment necessary for giving actuality to many of her characters. Within her own limited range she depicted character with force and insight; but the range was narrow and the high lights were over-strong. She flung the emotional life of her heroine at you in a seething ferment and did not, as did George Eliot, trace its source and confluence with patient care.

Essentially a critic of life, George Eliot, keenly observant, richly humorous as she is, was never content with merely chronicling the result of her observations. For good or ill, you never forgot the philosopher in the story-teller. It has been urged that herein lies her great defect as a novelist. But such an assertion is too sweeping.

That a philosophic tendency may serve artistic ends, is sufficiently obvious from the verse of Browning and the prose and verse of Meredith. A writer is not disqualified because he or she may happen to be a thinker, though unfortunately the absence of thought is held to be a justification for story-telling in many cases. George Eliot thought deeply on human life, and she has embodied the result of her thought in many fine aphorisms and apothegms scattered through her stories, and many a scene of purely dramatic humour has gained a distinctive flavour of its own by reason of it, as for instance the Harvest Supper scene in *Adam Bede* and the famous discourse on Ghosts in the "Rainbow" scene of *Silas Marner*.

George Eliot's critical method of narration may be clearly discerned if we contrast it with that of two famous predecessors—Jane Austen and Dickens.

Here is Jane Austen: essentially the close, detailed observer:

"'Oh, my dear sir, how are you this morning?—My dear Miss Woodhouse—I come quite overpowered. Such a beautiful hind quarter of pork! You are too bountiful! Have you heard the news? . . . Mr. Elton is going to be married.

. . . . . .

"'But where could you hear it. . . . Where could you possibly hear it? For it is not five minutes since I received Mrs. Cole's note—No, it cannot be more than five—or at least ten—for I had got my bonnet and spencer on, just ready to come out—I was only gone down to speak to Patty again about the pork. Jane was standing in the passage—were not you, Jane? For my mother was so afraid that we had not any salting pan large enough. So I said I would go down instead?—for I think you have a little cold, and Patty has been washing the kitchen"—Oh my dear, said I.—well and just came the note. A Miss Hawkins—that's all I know—a Miss Hawkins of Bath. . . . But Mr. Knightley, how could you possibly have heard of it?—for the very moment Mr. Cole told Mrs. Cole of it, she sat down and wrote to me—A Miss Hawkins——'"

Here is Dickens dealing with inconsequential femininity:

"'Kate, my dear,' said Mrs. Nickleby—'I don't know how it is, but a fine warm summer day like this, with the birds singing in every direction, always puts me in mind of roast pig, with sage and onion sauce, and made gravy.'

"'A curious association of ideas, is it not, Mama!'

"'Upon my word, my dear, I don't know,' replied Mrs. Nickleby. 'Roast pig—let me see—On the day five weeks after you were christened we had a roast—no, that could not have been a pig, either, because I recollect there was a pair of them to serve, and your poor Papa and I could never have thought of sitting down to two pigs—they must have been partridges. Roast pig! I hardly think we could even have had one, now I come to remember, for your Papa could never bear the sight of them in the shops, and used to say they always put him in mind of very little babies, only the babies had much fairer complexions, and he had a horror of little babies too. . . . I recollect dining once at Mrs. Bevan's, in that broad street round the corner by the coach maker's, where the tipsy man fell through the cellar flap of an empty house nearly a day before the Quarter day and wasn't found till the new tenant went in—and we had roast pig there. It must be that, I think, that reminds me of it, especially as there was a little bird in the room that would keep on singing all the time of dinner—at least not a little bird, for it was a parrot, and he didn't sing exactly, for he talked and swore dreadfully; but I think it must be that. Indeed, I am sure it must. Shouldn't you say so, my dear?'"

The difference between Dickens and Jane Austen is not that one is more observant than the other. Each is a marvellously acute observer; but whereas Jane Austen leaves the result of her observation to achieve its own effect, Dickens is so delighted with the type he is depicting that he cannot resist heightening the absurdity of the picture. Just as a raconteur in telling a good story, puts in little touches of extravagance to intensify the humour, Mrs. Nickleby is more irresistible in her fatuous inconsequentiality than Miss Bates: but Miss Bates may be met any day of the week; Mrs. Nickleby (unhappily for our delectation), equally true in conception, belongs to the world of delicious fantasy.

Here is George Eliot:

"Mrs. Tulliver looked all round in silence for some moments and then said emphatically:

"'Well, sister, I'll never speak against the full crowns again!'

"It was a great concession, and Mrs. Pullet felt it. She felt something was due to it.

"'You'd like to see it on, sister?' she said sadly: 'I'll open the shutter a bit further.'

"'Well, if you don't mind taking off your cap, sister,' said Mrs. Tulliver.

"Mrs. Pullet took off her cap, displaying the brown silk scalp with a jutting promontory of curls which was common to the more mature and judicious women of those times, and placing the bonnet on her head, turned slowly round, like a draper's lay figure, that Mrs. Tulliver might take no point of view.

"'I've sometimes thought there's a loop too much ribbon on this left side, sister; what do you think?' said Mrs. Pullet.

"Mrs. Tulliver looked earnestly at the point indicated, and turned her head on one side.

"'Well, I think it's best as it is. If you meddle with it, sister, you might repent.'

"'That's true, sister,' said Aunt Pullet, taking off the bonnet and looking at it contemplatively. 'Ah!' she said at last, 'I may never wear it twice, sister; who knows?'

"'Don't talk of that, sister,' answered Mrs. Tulliver. 'I hope you'll have your health this summer.'

"'Ah, but there may come a death in the family, as there did soon after I got my green silk satin bonnet. Cousin Abbot may go, and we can't think of wearing crape less nor half a year for him.'

"'That *would* be unlucky,' said Mrs. Tulliver, entering thoroughly into the possibility of an inopportune decease; 'There's never so much pleasure in wearing a bonnet the second year—especially when the crowns are so changeable, never two summers alike.'

"'Ah! it's the way of this world,' said Mrs. Pullet, returning the bonnet to the wardrobe and looking it up."

Unlike Dickens, George Eliot can detach herself completely from her creations, and her appreciation of them never tempts her to extravagance. Unlike Jane Austen, she acts as chorus to her characters, throwing in by way of occasional parenthesis her appreciation of their values. Jane Austen would never have added "entering thoroughly into the possibility of an inopportune decease," or "it was a great concession"; but it is quite possible to admire and enjoy all these methods, and it seems a great pity that some of Jane Austen's admirers can never praise that delightful artist without seeking to vilify poor George Eliot.

The scene just quoted is a good illustration of her dramatic humour, but though she could do this sort of thing excellently, her real strength lies in reflective humour. There she has no peer save Meredith. From the ample storehouse of wise and shrewd sayings, here are a few examples:

"There are answers which in turning away wrath only send it to the other end of the room."

"We sit up at night to read about St. Francis or Oliver Cromwell, but whether we should be glad for anyone like them to call on us next morning, still more to reveal himself as a new relation, is quite another affair."

"I often think it's wi' the old folks as wi' the babbies: they're satisfied wi' looking, no matter what they're looking at. It's God Almighty's way of quieting them before they go to sleep."

"It's poor work allus setting the dead up above the livin'; we shall all on us be dead some time, I reckon: it 'ud be better if folks 'ud make much on us beforehand, instead o' beginning when we're gone. It's but little good you'll do watering the last year's crop."

"Animals are such agreeable friends, they ask no questions, they pass no criticisms."

"Some folks' tongues are like the clocks as run on strikin', not to tell you the time of day, but because there is summat wrong in their inside."

"What a man wants in a wife mostly is to make sure of one fool as'll tell him he's wise."

"I'm not denyin' the women are foolish. . . . God Almighty made 'em to match the men."

"I have nothing to say against Craig—only it's a pity he couldn't be hatched over again—and hatched different."

"Always the way with them weak-faced people . . . as well pelt a bag of feathers as talk to them."

"I'm not one of those who can see the Cat in the dairy and wonder what she's come after."

"Easy finding reasons why other folks should be patient."

"Mrs. Poyser's a terrible woman; don't say the apple isn't sound at the core, but it sets my teeth on edge."

George Eliot is at her happiest in characterisation; here we find both subtlety and variety. The most casual inspection will reveal the variety. Florentine scholars, half-witted rustics, cultured free-thinkers, wayward, passionate natures, shallow, insincere characters, mystics, men of the world. Her wide range of observation, her generous sympathies, and the power of detachment, trained by scientific study, all helped to give breadth and variety to her canvas.

The writer who could vitalise for us the hedonistic Tito; the fine old Puritan Dr. Lyons; the erratic Gwendolen Harleth; the steadfast Mary Garth; the commonplace Fred Vincy and the brilliant Lydgate; the rough, uncultured Bob Wakem and the polished scholar Casaubon; dealing justice to each, fairly appraising their merits and no less keenly exposing their weaknesses, was a writer with no ordinary power of psychological portrayal.

Nor is she a whit inferior in the subtlety of her method. Note the delicate nuances in the characterisation of Mary Garth and Rosamund Vincy, and Romola. An unassuming yet sweet-natured girl, a shallow pate, and a young inexperienced woman of cultured tastes. Here there are no dramatic elements, no striking contradictions of character that make characterisation easy and effective. It is easier to draw a Maggie Tulliver than to draw a Rosamund Vincy; for unless the scales of justice are scrupulously held the latter portrait inevitably becomes a merely repellent sketch. Her shortcomings are neatly epitomised in the remark that "in poor Rosamund's mind was not room enough for luxuries to look small in"; yet the physical charm of the girl is no less admirably suggested; you may despise her personality, but it is never negligible, and Lydgate's early passion for her is readily comprehended.

Can you not read Mary Garth's character at once from fine touches such as the following scrap of dialogue shows:

Fred. I don't see how a man is to be good for much unless he has some one woman to love him dearly.

Mary. I think the goodness should come before he expects that.

Fred. You know better, Mary; women don't love men for their goodness.

Mary. Perhaps not, but if they love them they never think them bad.

Equally well is Romola's character revealed in the scene with Tito from which the following fragment is taken:

"Romola sat silent and motionless. She could not blind herself to the direction in which Tito's words pointed. He wanted to persuade her that they might get the library (her father's) deposited in some monastery, or take some other means to rid themselves of a task and of a tie to Florence; and she was determined never to submit her mind to his judgment, on this question of duty to her father. She was inwardly prepared to en-

counter any sort of pain in resistance. But the determination was kept latent in these first moments by the heart-crushing sense that now at last she and Tito must be confessedly divided in their wishes. He was glad of her silence, for, much as he had feared the strength of her feeling, it was impossible for him, shut up in the narrowness that hedges in all merely clever unimpassioned men, not to over-estimate the persuasiveness of his own judgment. His conduct did not look ugly to himself, and his imagination did not suffice to show him exactly how it would look to Romola. . . .

"As that fluent talk fell on her ears, there was a rising contempt within her, which only made her more conscious of her bruised, despairing love, her love for the Tito she had married and believed in."

Compare these two illustrations of widely different types of humanity. Is it possible to give either the preference for truth and insight?

(1) From the Rainbow Inn discourse on Ghosts:

"'Ay, but there's this in it, Dowlais,' said the landlord, speaking in a tone of much candour and tolerance. 'There's folks, i' my opinion, they can't see ghos'es, not if they stood as plain as a pikestaff before 'em. And there's reason i' that. For there's my wife, now, can't smell, not if she'd the strongest o' cheese under her nave. I never see'd a ghost myself; but then I says to myself—Very like I haven't got the smell for 'em. I mean, putting a ghost for a smell, or else contrariways. And so, I'm for holding with both sides; for, as I say, the truth lies between 'em. And if Dowlais was to go and stand and say he'd never seen a wink o' Cliff's Holiday all the night through, I'd trade him; and if anybody said as Cliff's Holiday was certain sure for all that, I'd back him too. For the smell's what I go by.'

"The landlord's analogical argument was not well received by the farrier—a man intensely opposed to compromise.

"'Tut, tut,' he said, setting down his glass with refreshed irritation; 'what's the smell got to do with it? Did ever a ghost give a man a black eye? That's what I should like to know. If ghos'es want me to believe in 'em, let 'em leave off skulking i' the dark and i' lone places—let 'em come where there's company and candles.'

"'As if ghos'es 'ud want to be believed in by anybody so ignirant!' said Mr. Winny, in deep disgust at the farrier's crass incompetence to apprehend the conditions of ghostly phenomena."[2]

(2) From the work-a-day philosophy of *Adam Bede*:

"There's nothing but what is bearable, as long as a man can work. The nature of things doesn't change, though it seems as if one's own life was nothing but change. The square of four is sixteen, and you must lengthen your lever in proportion to your weight, is as true when a man's miserable as when he's happy: and the best of working is, it gives you a gripehold of things outside your own lot."

Just as in Paul, David, and Pip, Dickens had portrayed, partly of deliberation, partly no doubt unconsciously, his own self; so in Maggie, Romola, and Dorothea, has George Eliot described her own moral and spiritual growth; and in reading these studies we are reminded of the complex personality of the novelist. Maggie's cry was for fuller life, Romola's for ampler knowledge, Dorothea's for larger opportunity for doing good; and we can trace here the friend of Lewes, the admirer of Spencer, the follower of Comte. Truth to tell, George Eliot was half pagan and half Puritan, and the two sides never blended. She was a woman of a strong, passionate temperament, swept by tidal impulses; with a rich, full nature, keenly sensitive to the sensuous side of life. On this side she reminds one of Thomas Hardy's striking presentment of Eustacia Vye in *The Return of the Native*. This is the passionate, emotional woman, who hungered all her life for affection; craved, like a sensitive child, for the sympathy of friends; the woman who was ready to brave social convention for the man she loved; for whom no human being was too weak, too sinful, for her pitiful and affectionate compassion. This is the George Eliot who gave us Maggie Tulliver, Gwendolen Harleth, Tina, Janet.

But there was another side to George Eliot's nature. She discarded early the narrow exclusiveness in which she had been brought up. Intellectually, she was in touch with the most extreme of the Rationalist critics; but she never outgrew her Puritanism. It was too deeply ingrained in her character. Like Carlyle, she retained the austere ethical idealism of the Puritan long after she had thrown away the dogmatic expression of her faith.

In her life the Puritan side is always warring against the pagan side. She threw in her lot with Lewes while his wife was yet alive; but she was never easy about the step she had taken, though never regretting it. Radical and revolutionary in her outlook on life, she yet shrank from revolt. Agnostic in her views, she is none the less mystical in her sympathies. Sensitive and dependent on others, yet associated in many minds with the oracular sibyl who presided over those famous Sunday "At Homes" in North London, this medley of psychological contradictions gave her additional insight as a writer; but it spoiled her life as a woman.

Yet her work expresses a clear and definite outlook on life.

Full as George Eliot's stories are of the tragedy of life, it is not surely the tragedy of circumstance so much as the tragedy of lost opportunities.

In *Adam Bede*, *Romola*, and *Daniel Deronda*, to mention none other of her books, there are epochs in the lives of the characters which, taken at the flood, had led on to moral fortune. There were occasions—not merely one but several—when a stronger resolve would have changed the entire complexion of the future. Did Gwendolen Harleth enter upon her marriage with Grandcourt unwarned? Could any woman's eyes have been opened more convincingly with Lydia Glasher's impressive warning, than were Gwendolen's as to Grandcourt's character? Might not Tito time after time have repaired the injury done to his foster-father? No writer indeed more unswervingly upheld the trustworthiness of the moral instincts than did our author; even poor bewildered Dorothea exclaimed at a time of great difficulty:

"While desiring what is perfectly good, even though we don't quite know what it is, and cannot do what we would, we are part of the Divine power against the evil, widening the skirts of light, and making the struggle with darkness narrower."

"'I can't argue any longer: I don't know what is wise, but my heart will not let me do it,' cried Maggie.

[1] *Silas Marner*.

"'It's the will of them above,' observed Dolly Winthrop, 'as many things should be dark to us, but there are some things as I never feel in the dark about, and they are mostly what comes in the day's work.'"

At her worst George Eliot is laboured, self-conscious, and didactic, never trivial nor shallow. At her best she is rich in mellow wisdom and in sympathetic insight; and whatever her shortcomings as a story-teller, she has no rival and few peers in the power and poignancy of her psychology.

George Eliot is the last great name among the women writers of Victorian fiction, but there are many writers of the second and third rank, who achieved considerable popularity in their day. Among these may be mentioned that ingenious sentimentalist Mrs. Henry Wood, who sometimes showed, as in *East Lynne*, a genius for big emotional situations, and one may add a genius for reducing them to the commonplace by her saccharine treatment of them.

Less sensational in her devices, though no less sentimental, is Mrs. Craik, whose *John Halifax, Gentleman*, proved only second to *East Lynne* in its tear-compelling quality. Miss Charlotte Yonge was once a name to conjure with, and her blend of Tractarianism and sentimental portraiture proved vastly to the taste of many; but the *Heir of Redcliffe*, despite numbering Rossetti among its admirers, is not among the novels that count.

Mrs. Oliphant was a writer of great promise, whom commercial necessities spoiled; for undeniably she wrote far too much. That she did not do justice to herself in her plentiful and for the most part commonplace output, is evident, I think, from such a work of striking imagination as *The Beleaguered City*. Among her other volumes, the best is *The Chronicles of Carlingford*, which has an agreeable Trollope-like flavour.

Mrs. Oliphant's critical work is sound but undistinguished, but there is a good deal of merit in her posthumous book—*The House of Blackwood*.

Another woman with less artistic power than Mrs. Oliphant, but with a real sense of letters, is Mrs. E. Lynn Linton (1822–1898). Her essays in fiction by no means do justice to her gifts; but her power of incisive portraiture may be judged from her literary reminiscences and her trenchant, clever, though acrimonious article on George Eliot which she wrote for a volume dealing with some of the women novelists of the time. She was a bitter opponent of the feminist movement.

Two very popular writers of the later Victorian era deserve more than bare mention. These are M. E. Braddon (Mrs. Maxwell, 1837–1916) and Ouida (1840–1908) (Miss Louisa de la Ramée). Miss Braddon wrote a great deal of frankly sensational fiction, that makes little claim beyond that of pleasantly whiling away a railway journey. But among her many novels there are a few, *Vixen* and *Ishmael*, for example, that exhibit a more than average gift of delineating character, and real imaginative power; while in the art of constructing a story she has always proved a skilful adept. Equally facile, but more unequal as a craftswoman, the lady who called herself "Ouida," is none the less a far more important figure. Despite the garishness that informs her fictions, and the grotesque extravagance that made her an easy prey for the parodist, she shows, especially in her stories of Italian life, an intensity of imagination, and a power of pathos, denied to all but the great story-tellers. Had she only been possessed of the "Art to blot," and with a sense of humour, she might have ranked among the great novelists of the time. Some of her books, for example *Two Little Wooden Shoes*, *Pascarel*, *Tricotrin*, have a fresh, picturesque charm of a high order. Her stories of Society life, e.g. *Moths*, though lacking the charm of her peasant studies, are often remarkably clever; and although she can rarely resist tearing a passion to tatters, the passions she tears are real passions. Indeed, her skill in depicting certain moods of sexual emotion can only be equalled in the pages of George Sand. With no humour, little power of self-criticism, little insight into character, prolix as a story-teller, and inordinately fond of the loud pedal, she has produced a vast amount of fiction of the most tawdry kind, yet among the tinsel are considerable patches of unquestionable beauty and power. Her love of nature and power of visualising this may be matched in many contemporary story-tellers, but her love of art and the art atmosphere that she can create, is very rarely found among English novelists. To find its peer we must turn to the poets and artists of the Pre-Raphaelite school.

There are many other novelists of varying secondary merit, like Rhoda Broughton and Edna Lyall, who proved pleasant and wholesome story-tellers for their generation, but whose work is undistinguished and lacking in staying power. With these, in an age of such enormous fecundity of production, it is impossible to deal in this necessarily restricted record.

II. PROSE: (*a*) Fiction. George Meredith: His Life—His Work—The Poetic Impressionist—As a Critic of Life—His Courage—His Altruism.

GEORGE MEREDITH (1828–1909)

His Life

Almost the last link connecting the present generation with mid-Victorian literature is George Meredith, and of few distinguished men is less known personally. We may, to quote Thackeray, do our best "to find out under what schoolmaster's birch he was educated, where his grandmother was vaccinated, and so forth," but the natural reserve of the man precluded all possibility of gleaning personal details; in his whimsical way, he once threatened "to haunt" anyone who attempted to write his biography.

Born at Portsmouth on February 12, 1828, George Meredith was of Welsh and Irish descent, and

was naturally very proud of his double Celtic origin —a fact that is noticeable throughout his work.

When quite a small boy he had the misfortune to lose his mother, and for some years he attended a day-school in Portsmouth; but on being made a ward in Chancery he was sent, at the age of fourteen, to the Moravian School at Neuwied-on-the-Rhine, which he left when sixteen. On returning to England he turned his unwilling attention to the law, which he soon abandoned for literature.

In 1849 Meredith's first poem, to commemorate the battle of Chillianwallah, was published in *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* on July 7, and in the same year he married Mrs. Nicholls, the young widow of a naval officer and daughter of Thomas Love Peacock, "a singularly brilliant and witty woman," who died in 1860. After their marriage, which proved an unhappy one, the young couple lived much on the Continent; eventually they took rooms at Weybridge, near Peacock's house in Lower Halliford, where a son, Arthur Gryffydd, was born in 1853, to whom his father was devotedly attached, and who died in 1880 after a tedious illness. In 1862 Meredith furnished a room in the house where Rossetti and Swinburne were living in Chelsea, but he used it little and left all going there altogether after a short time. Two years later a second marriage, with Miss Vulliamy, a lady of French Huguenot descent on her father's side, brought with it twenty-one years of unclouded happiness, and another son and a daughter. When Meredith refused to adopt the law as a profession he turned to journalistic work, and for a period contributed regularly to, and for a short while edited, the *Ipswich Gazette*. During the late fifties and early sixties he was also contributing articles to the *Morning Post*. Nothing but dire necessity, however, kept him at journalism. "I detest the writing for money," he said. "Journalism for money is Egyptian bondage." In 1866, on the outbreak of the war between Austria and Italy, he became war correspondent for the *Morning Post*, and made good use of this experience in *Vittoria*, a novel dealing with the Italian rising of 1848.

Towards the end of 1867, on the departure for America of Mr. John Morley, then editor of the *Fortnightly Review*, Meredith was asked to undertake, and accepted, the editorship *pro tem.* He had succeeded John Forster as reader and literary adviser to the publishers Messrs. Chapman & Hall, and was known as a sympathetic and painstaking if exacting reader. The encouragement that he so generously gave to promising young writers was in no way accorded himself. The first volume he published was a book of *Poems* (1851), which included *Love in a Valley*, dedicated to his father-in-law, Thomas Love Peacock. The *Athenæum* reviewed these first-fruits as indicating "an artistic tendency in the singer, and to a certain extent a pledge, that one day he may be a poet." Then came the fantastic *Shaving of Shagpat* (1856), more kindly appreciated by George Eliot in the *Westminster Review*, as "a work of genius . . . an apple tree among the trees of the wood"; yet it was nearly eleven years before a second edition was called for. Two years later came *Farina. A Legend of Cologne*, a tale of mediæval days, which was followed by *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859) met with a cold reception generally, and took twenty years to pass into a second edition, notwithstanding that the *Times* devoted three columns to an appreciative review. His next volume, *Evan Harrington* (1861), was all but ignored by the critics. Then came *Modern Love* (1862), that brought forth the *Spectator's* scathing criticism, and Swinburne's memorable protest in which he estimated Meredith as "one of the three or four poets now alive whose work, perfect or imperfect, is always sensible in design as it is often faultless in result." *Emilia in England* (now known as *Sandra Belloni*) followed in 1864, *Rhoda Fleming* (1865), *Vittoria* (1867), all of which had a poor sale, and *Harry Richmond*, one of the longest of his novels, in 1871. With *Beauchamp's Career* (1875) we find Meredith received almost with enthusiasm, and in this book we have one of Meredith's favourite characters, Renée de Croisnel: "I should certainly follow Nevil Beauchamp's example," he once said, "and challenge anyone who dared to make love to her."

With the publication of *The Egoist* came home, in 1879. That forceful literary organ the *Athenæum*, which had reviewed *Farina* as "a full-blooded specimen of the nonsense of genius," now generously praises *The Egoist* as "a piece of imaginative work as solid and rich as anything that the century has seen,—one of the strongest and most original productions of modern literature."

Thus has George Meredith won recognition of his genius. He had suffered neglect, but never lowered his standard to court the approval of the man in the street. "The first time or two I minded," he once said to a friend, "then I determined to disregard what people said altogether, and since then I have written only to please myself."

Following *The Tragic Comedians* (1880) came *Diana of the Crossways* (1885), an instant success, with yet another favourite in the Irish heroine—"She is one of the women dear to me," was the comment of the author.

Meredith now collected some of his poems and two volumes were issued—*Poems of Tragic Life* (1887) and *A Reading of Earth* (1888)—then returned to the novel with *One of Our Conquerors* (1890), and *Lord Ormont and his Aminta* that ran serially in the *Pall Mall Magazine* in 1894. His last work, and one of the most popular, was *The Amazing Marriage* (1895). *Celt and Saxon*, issued posthumously, but written at a much earlier date, was left unfinished.

Up to the end Meredith took an active interest in political and public affairs, and when unable to walk was carried into the polling station to record his vote at the last election. In early years he had worked on the Conservative side of political journalism but eventually became an ardent Radical and Home Ruler, proudly quoting Gladstone as an instance of what a young man might become who started life as a Conservative. He had always a firm belief in the mission of woman; on his eightieth birthday he wrote to a correspondent, "We will hope that the days of the parasite woman are passing, however much they may delight a certain body of your sex and the greater number of mine."

A lover of all bodily exercise, walking was his

favourite recreation, and he indulged in long "spins" across the Surrey downs that he loved so well and likened to greyhounds in full career, until the accident that brought his walking days to a close.

In 1892, on the death of Tennyson, Meredith was chosen to succeed the Laureate as President of the Incorporated Society of Authors; to commemorate his seventieth birthday he was presented with an address signed by a representative body of literary men and women; and to his eminent satisfaction he received the Order of Merit in 1905.

Young at heart, the aged novelist never felt he was growing old. "People talk about me as if I were an old man," he said when seventy-six; "I still look on life with a young man's eye." Although an invalid for the last few years of his life, Meredith kept in touch with the world and its doings; and to Flint Cottage, Boxhill, where he had lived for forty years, most of the prominent men and women in literature, art, politics, and society found their way. He was not fond of strangers, but his intimates he welcomed with delight, and was quite ready to talk with them in his clear, penetrating voice.

On May 18, 1909, came the end, painlessly and quietly, just as the dawn was breaking, five weeks subsequent to the death of Swinburne. After cremation, all that was mortal of George Meredith was laid to rest in Dorking churchyard.

His Work

Meredith's early poems were published contemporarily with *In Memoriam*, and his early fiction mingles with the mature work of Dickens and the novels of George Eliot. *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, one of Meredith's finest books, was published in the same year as saw *Adam Bede*. Yet whereas the latter book was an overwhelming success, Meredith's book passed with scant notice. Indeed he had to wait thirty years for full recognition of his powers. Why was this?

It was due mainly to the eccentricities of the writer's style, that discouraged many at the outset from discovering the vigour and freshness of the thought or the bold imagination that would amply have compensated (had they but known it) for the close and patient attention demanded. It was due to a lesser extent also to an outlook on life which in no way repels the modern reader, but which failed to harmonise with some cherished Victorian ideals.

But the chief reason for the tardiness of recognition and the limited appeal lay in the style, and it must be frankly admitted that much of the difficulty here was gratuitous and wilful, since Meredith can be as musical as Tennyson, and as clear and straightforward as Fielding when he is so disposed. We must make full allowance, therefore, for a reading public that failed to recognise the great new force in fiction that had come among them. Meredith has written of Carlyle, what might well be applied to himself:

"A wind in the orchard style that tumbled down here and there an appreciable fruit with smooth bluster: sentences without commencements running to abrupt endings and smoke;—all the pages in a breeze, the whole book producing a kind of electrical agitation in the mind and the joints."[1]

The ordinary reader had to accustom himself to the electrical agitation before he could be grateful to the stimulating battery that produced it.

In considering the works of Meredith it will be useful to regard him from three points of view: as the satiric observer, as the poetic impressionist, and as a critic of life.

The Satiric Observer

There never has been a nimbler, shrewder observer of human nature than Meredith. His humour lacks the jolly geniality of Dickens, and the easy breadth of Fielding; but there is a keener intellectual vision behind. Less universal in his appeal as a humorist, he has no rival as a satirist; for his satire is keen, subtle, incisive; and never blunted as Dickens' occasionally was by over-emphasis, or as Thackeray's was by sentimentality. No Victorian novelist has a wider range of sympathy, or a shrewder vision. And in his *Essay on Comedy* we shall find a key to this satiric outlook:

"Folly is the natural prey of the Comic Spirit, known to it in all her transformations, in every disguise; and it is with the springing delight of hound after fox, that it gives her chase, never fretting, never tiring, sure of having her, allowing her no rest."

As a painter of contemporary English manners he has no peer. Inferior to his great contemporary, Hardy, in his treatment of the more elemental aspects of human nature, he transcends him, and indeed any other writer of his time, in the mixture of convention and primal instinct that go to make up the average civilised man. No one has given a more faithful picture of the Englishman with his merits and defects. The English, he said in one of his flashes of comic insight, are people requiring to be studied, who "mean well and who are warm somewhere below as chimney-pots are, though they are so still." He knew his aristocrats and "young barbarians," as Arnold called them, and saw clearly enough why and where they are found wanting:

> "Grandmotherly laws—
> Giving rivers of gold to our young.
> In the days of their hungers impure.
> To furnish them beak and claws,
> And make them a banquet's lure."[2]

In the criticism of the democratic German Professor in *Harry Richmond*, Meredith puts the case excellently:

"The Professor would invite me to his room, after the 'sleep well' of the ladies, and I sat with him much like his pipe-bowl, which burned bright a moment at one sturdy puff, but generally gave out smoke in fantastical wreaths. He told me frankly he had a poor idea of my erudition. . . . One night he asked me what my scheme of life was. . . . Have you no aim? You have, or I am told you are to have, fabulous wealth—a dragon's heap. You are one of the main drain-pipes of English gold. What is your object? To spend it?'

"'I shall hope to do good with it.'

"'To do good! There is hardly a prince or millionaire, in history or alive, who has not in his young

[1] *Beauchamp's Career.* [2] *The Empty Purse.*

days hugged that notion. Pleasure swarms, he has the pick of his market. You English live for pleasure.'

"'We are the hardest workers in the world.'

"'That you may live for pleasure! Deny it!'

"He puffed his tobacco-smoke zealously, and resumed: 'Yes, you work hard for money. You eat and drink, and boast of your exercises; they sharpen your appetites. So goes the round. We strive, we fail; you are our frog-chorus of critics, and you suppose that your brek-ek-kexs arrests us. I say we strive and fail, but we strive on, while you remain in a past age, and are proud of it. You reproach us with the lack of common sense, as if the belly were its seat. Now I ask you whether you have a scheme of life, that I may know whether you are to be another of those huge human pumpkins called rich men, who cover your country and drain its blood and intellect—those impoverishers of nature! Here we have our princes; but they are rulers, they are responsible, they have their tasks, and if they also run to gourds, the scandal punishes them and their order, all in seasonable time . . . bad enough!—bad enough!—but they are not protected by laws in their right to do nothing for what they receive. That system is an invention of the commercial genius and the English.'"

Harry Richmond, in defence, cited our House of Lords.

"'We have one aristocracy, Herr Professor.'"

But this only leads to another onslaught.

"'Your nobles are nothing but rich men inflated with empty traditions of insufferable, because unwarrantable, pride, and drawing substance from alliances with the merchant class. Are they your leaders? Do they lead you in letters? In the Arts? Ay, or in Government? No, not, I am informed, not even in military service! and there our titled wittings do manage to hold up their brainless pates. You are all in one mass, struggling in the scream to get out and lie and wallow and belch on the banks. You work so hard that you have all but one aim, and that is fatness and ease!'"

Yet no one is kinder to youth or more tolerant of its foibles than he. His best men are neither prigs nor sentimentalists; they are strong, self-reliant, and reserved. Richard Feverel is limned with no less sympathy than discernment. He is an attractive young fellow in many ways, but selfish as headstrong youth is apt to be, and regardless of others. He means to enjoy life at all costs.

"When we have gone out and seized it in the highways, certain inscrutable laws are sure to be at work to bring us to the criminal bar sooner or later. . . . Richard Turpin wanted both—singing 'Money or life' to the world: Richard Feverel has done the same, substituting 'happiness' for money, frequently synonyms. He was just as much a highway robber as his fellow Dick, so that those who have failed to recognise him as a hero, may now regard him in that light. Meanwhile the world he has squeezed, looks exceedingly patient and beautiful."[1]

Naturally poor innocent Lucy suffers; for there is always a Lucy somewhere to suffer, when thoughtless young Dicks go their own sweet way.

In Sir Willoughby Patterne we have another, a subtler and more dangerous type of egotist held up to our notice. For his selfishness is not transparent as is Feverel's; and at first sight he seems as attractive as he is prosperous. But a brief acquaintance discloses the portentous insincerity of the man. He is the sort of man who is always for purity in womanhood, and he is unhappy because his Clara has not come to him straight out of a cloister, unsullied by contact with the world, but he tries to comfort himself with the thought that she never (as he prays) will wed again. He loves to think of her as "My Widow." A chaste soul, say the foolish: not so, remarks Meredith. "This is not the cry of a noble austerity but the shriek of a gross voluptuousness." And Clara Middleton comes to see this, his overbearing vanity grates on her nerves; and she resolves to avoid the servitude so clearly marked out for her.

Through his mellow urbanity of manner she can see the tyrant, and she shivers:

"'You are cold, my love.'

"'I am not cold,' said Clara. 'Someone, I suppose, was walking over my grave.' The gulf of a caress hove in view like an enormous billow, hollowing under the curled wave. She stooped to a buttercup; the monster swept by."[2]

An admirable passage. How better describe the engulfing waters of Sir Willoughby's egotism than by the term "the gulf of a caress"!

Meredith is singularly happy in hitting off some character or quality in an epigrammatic phrase. How illuminating are such touches as these:

"Neat, insignificant and nervously cheerful, with the eyes of a bird that let you into no interior."[3]

"Algernon, the genius of champagne luncheons incarnate."[3]

"It will be found a common case, that when we have yielded to our instincts and then have to soothe conscience, we must slaughter somebody as a sacrificial offering to our own comfort."[4]

One of the most important tasks of Meredith as a satirist has been the de-sentimentalising of men and women. And just as he strips the prig and the sensualist of his tinsel, so with his women does he remove the conventional rose-pink that early Victorian writers particularly loved to cloak womankind in. What Fielding did for men, Charlotte Brontë did for women, drawing them frankly and sincerely from the life—and not from the conventions. Yet it is questionable whether many readers did not prefer the sentimental artificiality of Richardson and the literary Lowther Arcade of pink and white dolls, that most of the early Victorians, and mid-Victorians too, for that matter, provided for their readers' delectation. Neither Dickens nor Thackeray could escape from this absurd attitude towards woman—it needed another woman writer like George Eliot to lead back most story-tellers to a sound feminine psychology. Meredith, however, needed no leading. He was sound from the start. Admiring and reverencing passion; he had nothing but contempt for the washy sentimentality that so often did duty for passion; and for the unreal simpering puppets that passed for women. There is no better feminine company in English fiction than we may find in Meredith's women: some of Hardy's women are more fascinating, but they are also more wayward. Meredith's best women are both reliable

[1] *Ordeal of Richard Feverel.*

[2] Of Wilfred Pole in *Sandra Belloni.*

[3] *Rhoda Fleming.*

[4] *Beauchamp's Career.*

and attractive, not a whit less feminine and desirable for being clear-headed and sound-hearted. Indeed Meredith's view of human nature is essentially a sane one:

"Philosophy bids us to see that we are not so pretty as rose-pink, not so repulsive as dirty drab; and that instead of everlastingly shifting those barren aspects, the sight of ourselves is wholesome, bearable, fructifying, finally a delight. . . . And imagine the celestial refreshment of having a pure decency in the place of sham: real flesh; a soul born active, wind-beaten, but ascending. Honourable will fiction then appear; honourable, a fount of life, an aid to life, quick with our blood. . . . Worse than that alternative dirty drab, your recurring rose-pink is rebuked by hideous revelations of the filthy foul; for nature will force her way, and if you try to stifle her by drowning, she comes up, not the fairest part of her uppermost!"[1]

Meredith had a hearty belief in the beneficent antiseptic of humour.

"Comedy lifts woman to a station offering them free play for their wit, as they usually show it, when they have it, on the side of sound sense. The higher the Comedy, the more prominent the part they enjoy in it. . . . The heroines of Comedy are like women of the world, not necessarily heartless from being clear-sighted: they seem so to the sentimentally-reared only for the reason that they use their wits, and are not wandering vessels crying for a captain or a pilot. Comedy is an exhibition of their battle with men, and that of men with them: and as the two, however divergent, both look on one object, namely, Life, the gradual similarity of their impressions must bring them to some resemblance. The Comic poet dares to show us men and women coming to this mutual likeness; he is for saying that when they draw together in social life their minds grow like; just as the philosopher discerns the similarity of boy and girl, until the girl is marched away to the nursery."[2]

The Poetic Impressionist

Meredith's strength as a poet lies in his luxuriant imagination. Sometimes it proves too luxuriant for us; its crowded opulence fatigues while it delights; and the multiplicity of its beauties detract in place of impressing. "There are more ways of killing a cat than by choking it with cream," runs an old adage, and there are more ways of wearying a reader than by inundating him with beauties. But after all the end is the same, and it is small consolation to the drowning man to be told that he is being drowned in the choicest Malmsey wine. With this small grumble, let us offer an ample meed of praise to the extraordinary beauty and fresh suggestiveness of much of Meredith's poetry; to that Spring melody, *Love in a Valley*; to the fine tragic complexities of *Modern Love*; to the glorious *Hymn to Colour*; to the fresh vigour of *Juggling Jerry*; to the simple yet deep wisdom of *The Woods of Westermain*; to the inspiring *Reading of Life*, and to the technical brilliance of *The Spirit of Earth in Autumn*. Intellectual preoccupations do not mar his music in the same way as Browning's were sometimes wont to do; but the obscurities that baffle and worry the reader in certain poems are due no less to the recondite character of his images than to the rapidity with which he utters them. It is not his insistent intellectuality (that is part of the man's temperament, and if you object to that you will get little good from Meredith) but his unhappy syntax, crushed and breathless under the beauties he crowds so unpitying into it, that makes him no easy poet to construe. As Mr. Trevelyan aptly says in his admirable study of Meredith, "Metaphor is both his strength and his undoing." Browning baffles us because he tells us too little of what is in his mind; Meredith because he tells us too much, and it *is* quite possible to have too much of a good thing despite the whimsical Elia. But we must not be unmindful of the quality of the profusion; and the tangled growth contains sweet and precious things. Meredith was certainly a great poet; though he is too often not a great artist. No one but a great poet could have written "As lovers to whom Time is whispering," or "Maiden still the Morn is," and

> "Strange she is, and secret;
> Strange her eyes;
> Her cheeks are cold as cold sea-shells";[3]

or

> "So royal, unuttered, is Youth's dream
> Of power within to strike without."[4]

No one but a great poet could have given us so fine a sonnet as the following:

> "An inspiration caught from dubious hues,
> Filled him, and mystic wrynesses he chased;
> For they lead farther than the single-faced,
> Wave subtler promise when desire pursues.
> The moon of cloud discoloured was his Muse,
> His pipe the reed of the old mourning waste.
> Love was to him with anguish first suffused,
> And Beauty where she walked blood-shot the dews.
> Men railed at such a singer; women thrilled
> Responsively; he sang not Nature's own
> Divinest, but his lyric had a tone,
> As 'twere a forest-echo of her voice:
> What barrenly they yearn for seemed distilled
> From what they dread, who do through tears rejoice."[5]

and none but a wilful artist the chaotic *Ode to the Comic Spirit*.

Sometimes the poet and the critic in Meredith might have exchanged media, with advantage. *The Shaving of Shagpat* would have made an even better verse than prose romance; and *The Empty Purse* would have gained in effectiveness considerably by being written in prose.

Mention of *The Shaving of Shagpat*, with its luscious romanticism—just sharpened sufficiently by Meredith's keen humour, to prevent it from cloying—reminds us of the value of Meredith's poetic impressionism in his prose writings. With certain reservations, indeed, Meredith's imagination moves more easily and effectively in prose than in verse.

Romanticism and wit lie cheek by jowl in Meredith's nature. His keen satire is saved from cynicism by the warmth of his imagination. The poetic beauty of his novels is no less insistent than the wit. Indeed they serve as excellent foils the one for the other. Just as his romanticism keeps him human and largely sympathetic, so does his wit save him from sentimentality.

[1] *Diana of the Crossways.* [2] *Essay on Comedy.*
[3] *Love in the Valley.* [4] *The Night Walk.*
[5] *A Later Alexandrian.*

He uttered no more characteristic saying than this:

"You may estimate your capacity for comic perception by being able to detect the ridicule of them you love without loving them less."[1]

Meredith chides those he loves and scorns a passion that will not bear the breath of humour. Yet though he will laugh at his lovers he never laughs at love. Even adolescent passion is sacred to him. Take for instance this delightful passage from *Lord Ormont and his Aminta*:

"She had a nice mouth, ready for a smile at the corners; or so it was before Matcy let her see that she was his mark. Now she kept her mouth asleep and her eyes half down, up to the moment of her nearing to pass, when the girl opened on him, as if lifting her eyelids from sleep to the window, a full side-look, like a throb, and no disguise—no slyness or boldness either, not a bit of languishing. You might think her heart came quickly out.

"The look was like the fall of light on the hills from the first of morning. It lasted half a minute, and left a ruffle for a good half-hour."

Pitched in a more lyric key is the famous scene in *Feverel*:

"Lucy was simply dressed, befitting decency and the season. This blooming young person was regaling on dewberries. They grew between the bank and the water. . . . The little skylark went up above her, all song, to the smooth southern cloud lying along the blue: from a dewy copse standing dark over her nodding hat the blackbird fluted, calling to her with thrice mellow note: the kingfisher flashed emerald out of green osiers; a bow-winged heron travelled aloft, seeking solitude: a boat slipped toward her, containing a dreamy youth: and still she plucked the fruit, and ate, and mused, as if no fairy prince were invading her territories, and as if she wished not for one, or knew not her wishes. . . . Stiller and stiller grew nature, as at the meeting of two electric clouds. . . . To-morrow this place will have a memory—the river and the meadow, and the white falling weir; his heart will build a temple here; and the skylark will be its high-priest, and the old blackbird its glossy-gowned chorister, and there will be a sacred repast of dewberries."[2]

In his feminine characterisations, the wit and poet often blend with happiest results, as in the picture of Renée in Venice:

"She was like a delicate cup of crystal brimming with the beauty of the place. . . . Her features had the soft irregularities which run to rarities of beauty, as the ripple rocks the light; mouth, eyes, brow, nostrils, and bloomy cheek played into one another liquidly; thought flew, tongue followed, and the flash of meaning quivered over them like night lightning. Her age was but newly seventeen and she was French."[3]

Meredith excels especially in the delineation of women, uniting strong affection with nimble intelligence. His heroines have nothing of the early Victorian "Dolly" flavour about them. They are the true comrades and co-equals of men. Yet no one disliked the masculine type of woman more than he did. His contempt for the "waxwork sex" was only equalled by his dislike for the "pamphlet in petticoats"; of one of this kind he declared "that after a probationary term in the character of man she had become woman"; of another, "that she had relapsed upon religion and little dogs."

Meredith's romanticism is better expressed in prose than in verse. His ebullient and vital imagination moves more easily in the ampler margin of prose than when bound by rhyme and metre. Yet over intellectualised as is his verse, and more disturbed than his prose by distressing mannerisms, there is a wealth of power and beauty in his poetry. Nothing is more interesting here than his attitude towards nature. There is nothing of the transcendentalism in Meredith that we find in most poets of Nature. It were better to call it Earth worship than Nature worship. Nature for him was not a brooding spirit of peace as for Wordsworth, nor the swift-winged spirit of Love as with Shelley; nor on the other hand was it merely an exquisite mechanism, unmoral if not immoral, as with Tennyson—nor a cheery, amusing, joyful comrade as to Browning.

The Earth to Meredith is a kind, though Spartan mother—who attracts us to her by those elemental bonds that tell us that we came from her, yet repels us because she has nothing but silence or grim rebuffs for our desperate hopes and high aspirations. Man

"May entreat, aspire,
He may despair, and she has never heed.
She drinking his warm sweat will soothe his need—
Not his desire."[1]

Man cannot do without the rough, yet needful education of this great Mother. Something of what we may learn from her Meredith gives us in *Melampus* (the physician naturalist):

"For him the woods were a home
And gave him the Key of Knowledge."

Meredith's joy in earth, however, as a source of inspiration and strength, will be noted more fully later; here we may watch his joy in the sheer sensuous beauty of Earth. Fresh charms appear, new graces even to those familiar with Earth.

"A wonder edges the familiar face. . . .
Half strange seems Earth and sweeter than her Flowers."[2]

In such poems as *The Thrush in February*, *The South-Wester*, *The Lark Ascending*, the splendour and rapture of the physical world find eloquent speech.

Of the lark:

"He rises and begins to round:
He drops the silver chain of sound
Of many links without a break,
In chirrup, whistle, slur, and shake:

All intervolved and spreading wide,
Like water-dimples down a tide,
Where ripple, ripple overcurls
And eddy into eddy whirls."[3]

Then there is the magic of Spring—perhaps a shade too studied at times—in *Love in a Valley*; and the delicate and suggestive beauty of *The Orchard and the Heath*.

Of the longer poems, perhaps the fine and opulent

[1] *Essay on Comedy.* [2] *Ordeal of Richard Feverel.* [3] *Beauchamp's Career.*

[1] *Earth and Man.* [2] *Meditation under Stars.* [3] *The Lark Ascending.*

Hymn to Colour is the most remarkable for its artistic workmanship.

As a Critic of Life

In the first place we note his sense of Individuality. Meredith is full of life, ebullient life. A born fighter, and a lover of conflict, he holds:

"Nothing the body suffers, the soul may not profit by."

"Resolution is a form of light; our native light is this darkened world."

Yet self-confidence he distrusted; there you have the mere drum and the trumpet. Reliance should be moderate and quiet. A respect for nature is the beginning of wisdom.

"Our life is but a little holding
Lent to do a mighty labour." [1]

"In tragic life God wot, no villain need be!
Passions spin the plot;
We are betrayed by what is false within." [2]

"Fools run jabbering of the irony of fate, to escape the annoyance of tracing the cause."

With this Individuality comes Power to contend. There is no sentimental blindness about Meredith. Life to him is a hard business, but, as with Browning, its very hardness yields a joy to the brave heart.

Meredith is a born fighter. No maunderings for him. Laugh, he says,—Honest laughter purifies and uplifts, but the laughter must be with your fellows, not merely at them. Unlike Ibsen and Tolstoy, he does not despair of his age—or content himself with noting the "bad potatoes," or decrying the physical side of life.

The third quality on which he insists is the Greek quality of Temperance. Asceticism and sensuality are extremes to be avoided. Thus he parts way with the modern hedonist on the one hand and Tolstoy on the other.

Body and soul. Each is desirable: each has its place in the scheme of life. "We do not get to any heaven by renouncing the Mother we sprang from, and when there is an eternal secret for us, it is best to believe that Earth knows, to keep near her even in our utmost aspiration."

"Enter these enchanted woods, you who dare!" This is his cry. We must experience the harshness of Earth before we can understand her. She is both cruel and kind. Do not let us sentimentalise on the one hand, or make of her a monster on the other. We need her discipline: "Through Nature only can we ascend. St. Simon saw the Hog in Nature, and took Nature for the Hog." In Meredith's Earth worship we see happily illustrated the temperate outlook. He would neither bid us, like the elder Nature poets, find our chief inspiration and consolation in Nature; nor, like the town-lovers, plunge us into the stimulus of crowds. He deplores the life in great cities under existing conditions, but does not on that account sigh for the rural solitudes of the past.

"Not solitarily in fields we find
Earth's secret spoken, though one page is there;
Her plainest, such as children spell, and share
With bird and beast; raised letters for the blind,
Not where the troubled passions toss the mind,
In turbid cities, can the key be had.
It hangs for those who hither thither fare,
Close interbreathing nature with our kind." [1]

Each is man's heritage; from both may we learn wisdom and find strength. Not need we shun evil as the ascetic does; we must seek out the polluted spring and understand the source of the pollution. Not otherwise can we contend against it. If you want to defeat your enemy you must study his ways and habits first of all. But do not moan over the dark side of life. Fight it when necessity calls; for the rest, enjoy the good and sweet things of life, and keep your face in the sunshine.

Life depends not on self-satisfaction but on service to others. Without altruism we decay and rot. To live selfishly is not merely wrong, it is foolish; for the higher our aim the richer our power. There are insoluble problems to be faced; do not let us meander over them. After all, the most tragic thing is not death nor pain, but "an *unteachable spirit*." What man needs is—blood, brain, and spirit; each acting in co-operation.

"Blood and brain and spirit—three . . .
Join for true felicity—
Are they parted, then expect
Someone sailing will be wrecked." [2]

That is the test—we need the triad. Do not let us part them. Life is a mingled warp of good and bad—and if you would do your part, you must train your eye with every function of body and soul.

"Intellect and reverence," he once wrote, "must clash to the end of time if we persist in regarding the spirit of Life as a remote existence, who plays the human figures to bring about this or that issue, instead of being beside us, within us, our breath, if we will; marking in us where at each step we sink to the animal, and mount to the divine; we and ours who follow, offspring of body or mind."

Possess in yourself, says Meredith in effect, a love of the light, and you shall be enabled to read the secret of the darkness.

"Overhead, overhead
Rushes life in a race
As the clouds the clouds chase;
And we go.
And we drop like the fruits of the tree
Even we—Even so." [3]

It may be so, but our work does not drop, nor our influence.

Finally, Meredith admonishes us to combine cheerfulness with our courage. Let us fight gaily: look the world laughingly in the face. He believed profoundly in the beneficence of laughter:

"O thou reviver of sick Earth:
Good for the spirit, good for the body:
Thou to both art wine and bread." [4]

Fate is cruel, you say; well face the wind and take its keen edge without repining.

A gallant personality he; a stimulating novelist, an arresting poet certainly, but above all, a spiritual tonic influence in English life and letters.

[1] *Earth's Secret.* [2] *Woods of Westermain.*
[3] *Dirge in Woods.* [4] *Appeasement of Demeter.*

AND THIS IS THE TRUE STORY OF BHANAVAR THE BEAUTIFUL

Know that at the foot of a lofty mountain of the Caucasus there lieth a deep blue lake: near to this lake a nest of serpents, wise and ancient. Now it was the habit of a damsel to pass by the lake early at morn, on her way from the tents of her tribe to the pastures of the flocks. As she pressed the white arch of her feet on the soft green-mossed grasses by the shore of the lake she would let loose her hair, looking over into the water, and bind the braid again round her temples and behind her ears, as if had been in a lucent mirror: so doing she would laugh. Her laughter was like the falls of water at moonrise: her loveliness like the very moonrise; and she was stately as a palm-tree standing before the moon.

This was Bhanavar the Beautiful.

Now, the damsel was betrothed to the son of a neighbouring Emir, a youth comely, well-fashioned, skilled with the bow, apt in all exercises; one that sat his mare firm as the trained falcon that fixeth on the plunging hull of the plains; fair and terrible in combat as the lightning that strideth the rolling storm; and it is sung by the poet:

When on his desert mare I see
My prince of men,
I think him then
As high above humanity
As he shines radiant over me.

Lo! like a torrent he doth bound,
Breasting the shock
From rock to rock;
A pillar of storm, he shakes the ground,
His turban on his temples wound.

Match me for worth to be adored
A youth like him
In heart and limb!
Swift as his anger is his sword;
Softer than woman his true word.

Now, the love of this youth for the damsel Bhanavar was a consuming passion, and the father of the damsel and the father of the youth looked fairly on the prospect of their union, which was near, and was plighted as the union of the two tribes. So they met, and there was no voice against their meeting, and all the love that was in them they were free to pour forth far from the hearing of men, even where they would. Before the rising of the sun, and ere his setting, the youth rode swiftly from the green tents of the Emir his father, to waylay her by the waters of the lake; and Bhanavar was there, bending over the lake, her image in the lake glowing like the fair fulness of the moon; and the youth leaned to her from his steed, and sang to her verses of her great loveliness ere she was wistful of him. Then she turned to him and laughed lightly a welcome of sweetness, and shook the falls of her hair across the blushes of her face and her bosom; and he folded her to him, and those two would fondle together in the fashion of the betrothed ones (the blessing of Allah be on them all!), gazing on each other till their eyes swam with tears, and they were nigh swooning with the fulness of their bliss. Surely it was an innocent and tender dalliance, and their prattle was that of lovers till the time of parting, he showing her how she looked best—she him; and they were forgetful of all else that is, in their sweet interchange of flatteries; and the world was a wilderness to them both when the youth parted with Bhanavar by the brook which bounded the tents of her tribe.

It was on a night when they were so together, the damsel leaning on his arm, her eyes towards the lake, and lo! what seemed the reflection of a large star in the water; and there was darkness in the sky above it, thick clouds, and no sight of the heavens; so she held her face to him, sideways, and said, "What meaneth this, O my betrothed? for there is reflected in yonder lake a light as of a star, and there is no star visible this night."

The youth trembled as one in trouble of spirit, and exclaimed, "Look not on it, O my soul! It is of evil omen."

But Bhanavar kept her gaze constantly on the light, and the light increased in lustre; and the light became, from a pale sad splendour, dazzling in its brilliancy. Listening, they heard presently a gurgling noise as of one deeply drinking. Then the youth sighed a heavy sigh and said, "This is the Serpent of the Lake drinking of its waters, as is her wont once every moon, and whoso heareth her drink by the shooning of that light is under a destiny dark and imminent; so know I my days are numbered, and it was foretold of me, this!" Now the youth sought to dissuade Bhanavar from gazing on the light, and he flung his whole body before her eyes, and clasped her head upon his breast, and clung about her, caressing her; yet she slipped from him, and she cried, "Tell me of this serpent, and of this light."

So he said, "Seek not to hear of it, O my betrothed!"

Then she gazed at the light a moment more intently, and turned her fair shape towards him, and put up her long white fingers to his chin, and smoothed him with their softness, whispering, "Tell me of it, my life!"

And so it was that her winningness melted him, and he said, "O Bhanavar! the serpent is the Serpent of the Lake; old, wise, powerful; of the brood of the sacred mountain, that lifteth by day a peak of gold, and by night a point of solitary silver. In her head, upon her forehead, between her eyes, there is a Jewel, and it is this light."

Then she said, "How came the Jewel there, in such a place?"

He answered, "'Tis the growth of one thousand years in the head of the serpent."

She cried, "Surely precious?"

He answered, "Beyond price!"

As he spake the tears streamed from him, and he was shaken with grief, but she noted nought of this, and watched the wonder of the light, and its increasing, and quivering, and lengthening; and the light was as an arrow of beams and as a globe of radiance. Desire for the Jewel waxed in her, and she had no sight but for it alone, crying, "'Tis a Jewel exceeding in preciousness all jewels that are, and for the possessing it would I forfeit all that is."

So he said sorrowfully, "Our love, O Bhanavar? and our hopes of espousal?"

But she cried, "No question of that! Prove now thy passion for me, O warrior! and win for me that Jewel!"

Then he pleaded with her, and exclaimed, "Urge not this: The winning of the Jewel is worth my life; and my life, O Bhanavar—surely its breath is but the love of thee."

So she said, "Thou fearest the risk?"

And he replied, "Little fear I; my life is thine to cast away. This Jewel it is evil to have, and evil followeth the soul that hath it."

Upon that she cried, "A trick to cheat me of the Jewel! Thy love is wanting at the proof."

And she taunted the youth, her betrothed, and turned from him, and hardened at his tenderness, and made her sweet shape as a thorn to his caressing, and his heart was charged with anguish for her. So at the last, when he had wept a space in silence, he cried, "Thou hast willed it; the Jewel shall be thine, O my soul!"

Then said he, "Thou hast willed it, O Bhanavar! and my life is as a grain of sand weighed against thy wishes; Allah is my witness! Meet me therefore here, O my beloved, at the end of one quarter-moon, even beneath the shadow of this palm-tree, by the lake, and at this hour, and I will deliver into thy hands the Jewel. So farewell! Wind me once more about with thine arms that I may take comfort from thee."

When their kiss was over the youth led her silently to the brook of their parting—the clear, cold, babbling brook—and passed from her sight; and the damsel was exulting, and leapt and made circles in her glee, and she danced and rioted and sang, and clapped her

hands, crying, "If I am now Bhanavar the Beautiful, how shall I be when the Jewel is upon me, the bright light which bemoth in the darkness, and needeth to light it no other light? Surely there will be envy among the maidens and the widows, and my name and the odour of my beauty will travel to the courts of far kings."

So was she jubilant: and her sisters that met her marvelled at her and the deep glow that was upon her, even as the glow of the Great Desert when the sun has fallen; and they said among themselves, "She is covered all over with the blush of one that is a bride, and the bridegroom's kiss yet burneth upon Bhanavar!"

So, they undressed her and she lay among them, and was all night even as a bursting rose in a vase filled with drooping lilies; and one of the maidens that put her hand on the left breast of Bhanavar felt it full, and the heart beneath it panting and beating swifter than the ground struck by hooves of the chosen steed sent by the Chieftain to the city of his people with news of victory and the summons for rejoicing.[1]

[1] *The Shaving of Shagpat.*

THOMAS HARDY: His Life—His Work—The Interpreter of Nature—The Interpreter of Character—The Interpreter of Life.

THOMAS HARDY

His Life

MR. THOMAS HARDY was born on June 2, 1840, at Upper Bockhampton near Dorchester, in the neighbourhood of which he has lived a retired and secluded life, averse to the public gaze, for practically the whole of his long and busy life; and it is to him we are indebted for the revival of the old name of Wessex for that part of beautiful southern England.

Though destined by his parents for the Church, his own thoughts turned into a different channel. In 1857 he was articled to Mr. Hicks of Dorchester, an ecclesiastical architect, and his daily work entailed many professional jaunts to remote country churches. How characters and scenes accumulated in the notebook of his brain, to bear fruitful transcription in the future, can be readily traced throughout his writings.

A studious reader from boyhood of all that is best in our literature, in 1860 Mr. Hardy went up to London, became a student of modern languages at King's College, and at the same time pursued the study of modern Gothic architecture under Sir Arthur Blomfield. In 1863 he gained the prize and medal of the Institute of British Architects for an essay on *Coloured Brick and Terra Cotta Architecture*, and the Tite prize for architectural design. His first appearance in print, however, seems to have been an unsigned article, *How I Built Myself a House*, published on March 18, 1865, in *Chambers' Magazine*.

It is hoped we may be pardoned for recalling an interesting incident in connection with Mr. Hardy's first essay in novel writing.

In the late Mr. George Meredith's capacity as a publisher's reader a manuscript, entitled *The Poor Man and the Lady*, fell into his hands. He at once recognised its merit; but its general tone, in Meredith's opinion, was likely to militate against a successful future for an unfledged novelist, and a meeting took place between the two men who were to do so much for modern English fiction. Meredith's friendly criticism and advice, with the refusal of the manuscript, were taken in good part, and Mr. Hardy gave us *Desperate Remedies* (1871) in its stead. How interesting it would be to read that earlier effort to-day.

Mr. Hardy has given us a considerable amount of both prose and poetry, since *Desperate Remedies*; perhaps a classified rather than a chronological list may be found both interesting and helpful.

(1) Pastoral Tragedies: *The Return of the Native* (1878), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), *The Simpletons* and *Hearts Insurgent*, published serially in 1894 and 1895, revised and issued as *Jude the Obscure* (1896).

(2) Pastoral Comedies: *The Hand of Ethelberta* (1875), *A Laodicean* (1881), *Two on a Tower* (1882).

(3) Pastoral Romances: *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1875), *The Trumpet Major* (1880), *The Woodlanders* (1887).

(4) Pastoral Extravaganza: *The Well Beloved* (1897), published serially as *The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved* in 1892.

(5) The volumes of short stories uniting the above classifications: *Wessex Tales* (1883), *A Group of Noble Dames* (1891), *Life's Little Ironies* (1894), and *A Changed Man* (1913); the last volume includes *The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid*, which first appeared in the *Graphic* in 1883.

Between 1894 and 1913 Mr. Hardy turned his attention to poetry, and gave us *Wessex Poems* (1898), *Poems of the Past and Present* (1901), an epic-drama, *The Dynasts*, in three parts (1903, 1906, 1908), *Time's Laughing Stocks* (1909), and *Satires of Circumstance* (1914).

His Work

The key to Hardy's attitude as a literary artist may be found in an essay published by him in 1888:

"The conduct of the upper classes is screened by conventions, and thus the real character is not easily seen; if it is seen it must be portrayed subjectively; whereas in the lower walks, conduct is a direct expression of the inner life; and thus character can be directly portrayed through the act. . . In one case the author's word has to be taken as to the nerves and muscles of his figures; in the other they can be seen."

Reading this we realise at once how it is that he moves with such ease and sureness over the canvas when he is dealing with simple, primal natures; how it is that a certain awkwardness and theatricality show themselves whenever he has to deal with the more complex character of the highly civilised man and woman.

It is precisely here that he is at the opposite pole from Meredith. It was these complexities, this wavering between "Adam and Macadam," that delighted Meredith, and evoked his best work. To Meredith, and for the matter of that to Henry James too, character begins to be really interesting only when it is "not easily seen." Hardy's strength, as well as his inclination, lay in tracing the elemental things of life, and this is why he has annexed Wessex as his province and left London and town society, for the most part, severely alone.

Hitherto the West Country had been the special province of the Romancers, and as a rule—Jane Austen being the most notable exception—the writer of fiction, when he elected for incident, chose the country districts as his *milieu*; when he desired to emphasize character, he placed his story in a town setting. Was not the return to Nature itself a step towards the upsetting of many conventions and a restoration of the simpler, more primal, less artificial life of the open spaces? Hardy's great distinction lies in his putting on one side the romantic point of view, and adopting a deliberating and scientific observant method of treating the life of the country-side.

Interesting as Hardy's stories always are, arresting, even exciting as they are sometimes, the appeal to the reader does not lie in any skilful manipulation for incident. It lies in a treatment of character—*as the inevitable outcome of a special environment*. It is here that Hardy differs from George Eliot, with whose psychological methods his work shows certain affinities.

No English novelist of our age has been more affected by science than Hardy. The immutability of Nature, the mutability of human life; the bigness of Nature, the littleness of man; the inexorable character of natural laws, the puny struggles of human personalities trying to evade them. What Buckle did in history, Hardy has done in fiction; taken for his themes the unimportance of the individual man.

Now all this might conceivably have proved very unattractive in a story-teller, whatever criticism may be passed on it from a philosophic standpoint, if Mr. Hardy shows himself to be nothing more than a scientific observer. But he is also, and quite as emphatically, a poetic observer. He has a sensitive, brooding imagination, that loves to play over the past, and see in the mouldering relics of a bygone age symbols of a pomp and power that still can unconsciously affect the imagination and lives of men; he is for ever noticing those transmitted impulses of pagan feeling and religious sentiment that run through generations; watching with intense pre-occupation the mingling of the finer elemental qualities, sexual devotion, pity, courage, endurance, with the coarser "ape and tiger" instincts; showing a marked affinity as an observer of peasant life with the naturalism of writers like Zola, he suffuses his naturalism with a rarer delicacy and beauty.

Hardy's work may be considered under three aspects: as an interpreter of Nature—the descriptive artist; as an interpreter of Character—the analytical artist; as an interpreter of Life—the philosophic artist.

The Interpreter of Nature

Hardy's love of the earth is an intensely personal and local one. What Scott felt for the Tweed and Morris for the scenery of the Thames, Hardy feels for the heaths and pastures of Wessex. It has little in common with the transcendental love of nature felt by poets like Wordsworth and Shelley; though in its concrete expression it reminds us often of Wordsworth's brooding spirit, it is the reverse of Wordsworthian in its note of sadness and fatality.

But in sensitive tactility, he is supreme. Without overwhelming you with his intimate knowledge of natural phenomena, he can make you feel, by his delicate and multifold allusiveness, the significance of the country's life. The individuality of the damp and fragrant woods; the meaning of the wind's voice, whether for storm or peace; the premonition of the tempest, the spirit of the heath at every hour of the day and night; above all, the mystic relation between the toiling peasants and the hills and valleys where they live and move and have their being.

"Gusts in innumerable series followed each other from the north-west, and when each one of them raced past, the sound of its progress resolved into three: treble, tenor, and bass notes were to be found therein. The general ricochet of the whole over pits and prominences had the gravest pitch of the chime. Next there could be heard the baritone buzz of a holly-tree. Below these in force, above them in pitch, a dwindled voice strove hard at a husky tune, which was the peculiar local sound alluded to"—that is, the sound of the wind in the heather—"like the ruins of human song which remain to the throat of fourscore and ten. It was a worn whisper, dry and papery, and it brushed so distinctly across the ear that, by the accustomed, the material minutiæ in which it originated could be realised as by touch. . . . One inwardly saw the infinity of those combined multitudes; and perceived that each of the tiny trumpets was seized on, entered, scoured, and emerged from the wind as thoroughly as if it were as vast as a crater.

"The spirit moved them."

In fact, his interpretation of nature gives us the clue to his outlook on men and women. To understand the self-sacrificing love of Marty South we must realise the spell of the brooding woods, the magic of the quiet, enduring trees, whose life she knew so well. To understand the attraction of the Reddleman, with his vagrant aloofness, we must first be made to feel the fascination of Egdon Heath in all its moods.

Everywhere the life of the earth and of its denizens is subtly and inextricably interwoven. Take, for instance, this passage, where naturalistic knowledge is charged with poetic feeling, and ask yourself whether after reading it you do not see more intensely into the nature of the woodlander—Winterbourne.

Winterbourne's work sums up and explains the man—yet there are subtleties in tree-planting that Marty South's feminine nature seizes upon more readily:

"The holes were already dug, and they set to work. Winterbourne's fingers were endowed with a gentle conjuror's touch in spreading the roots of each little tree, resulting in a sort of caress under which the delicate fibres all laid themselves out in their proper directions

for growth. He put most of these roots towards the south-west; for, he said, in forty years' time, when some great gale is blowing from that quarter, the trees will require the strongest holdfast on that side to stand against it and not fall.

"'How they sigh directly we put 'em upright, though while they are lying down they don't sigh at all,' said Marty.

"'Do they?' said Giles. 'I've never noticed it.'

"She erected one of the young pines into its hole, and held up her finger; the soft musical breathing instantly set in, which was not to cease night or day till the grown tree should be felled—probably long after the two planters had been felled themselves.

"'It seems to me,' the girl continued, 'as if they sigh because they are very sorry to begin life in earnest—just as we be.'

"'Just as we be?' He looked critically at her. 'You ought not to feel like that, Marty.'

"Her only reply was turning to take up the next; and they planted on through a great part of the day, almost without another word."

The merest snatch of dialogue while the two are at work; yet, how it reveals their natures and how bound up it all is with the larger love of the earth.

Again, if we enter intimately into the human aspects of *The Return of the Native*, we must first know our Egdon. This passage helps us in the understanding:

"The sombre sketch of ridges and hollows seemed to rise and meet the evening gloom in pure sympathy, the heath exhaling darkness as rapidly as the heavens precipitated it. . . . . The place became full of a watchful intentness now; for when other things sank brooding to sleep, the heath appeared slowly to awake and listen. Every night its titanic form seemed to await something; but it had waited thus unmoved during so many centuries, through the crises of so many things, that it could only be imagined to await one last crisis—the final overthrow. Twilight combined with the scenery of Egdon Heath to evolve a thing majestic without severity, impressive without showiness, emphatic in its admonitions, grand in its simplicity."

As an Interpreter of Character

In his loving knowledge of the earth, we have the key to the Kingdom of Hardy. Possessing it, we may see more clearly into the character of the *dramatis personæ*. His figures are elemental forces on a background of vaster elemental forces; they are the natural expression of sleepy woodland places, gaunt, austere hills, purling streams, lonely open spaces.

And if this be the case we are prepared to find that their creator insists especially upon the emotional life of his characters. His very choice of types leads him away from those intellectual complexities that delight some novelists.

It has been said, "His greatest successes are with subtle characters." Is this so? Surely his men and women are the most vividly actualised when they are simple, primal characters. Rustics such as Poorgrass and Dewey; sturdy young countrymen like Winterbourne; passionate wayward women such as Eustacia Vye; plausible scamps like Sergeant Troy.

Admirable as many of his male characters are, they yield both in clarity and intensity of interest to his women; and since woman is more elemental than man, swayed far more by the instinctive life, their superiority is another illustration of Hardy's peculiar skill in dealing with the primal type.

The outstanding characters in Hardy's fiction are incalculable if you like, but that does not make them subtle. He is at his very best in dealing with what Charlotte Brontë so well called "The Stormy Sisterhood." But a thunderstorm is not subtle.

Subtle characters, it is true, he did essay at times, and he was too fine a psychologist to fail entirely in portraying them; but they are vastly inferior to his simple and more primal types. FitzPiers is a shadow beside Winterbourne; Paula and Mrs. Charmond are certainly less real and vital than Bathsheba or Tess.

But if his best characters are not subtle and complex, the art that depicts his characters assuredly is; for he can record the minutest fluctuations of emotional experience, and make them real and actual; it is this power which brings home to us with sureness the vital, full-blooded, and essentially fine-hearted Tess. I am not sure, however, that Eustacia Vye is not drawn with even greater power than Tess—for the philosopher obtrudes less often here than he does with the later creation.

The following pen picture of Eustacia Vye, in *The Return of the Native*, has no rival in Hardy's pages, for its convincing touches:

"Eustacia Vye was the raw material of a divinity. On Olympus she would have done well with a little preparation. She has the passions and instincts which make a model goddess—that is, those which make not quite a model woman. Had it been possible for the earth and mankind to be entirely in her grasp for a while, had she handled the distaff, the spindle, and the shears at her own free will, few in the world would have noticed the change of government. There would have been the same inequality of lot, the same heaping up of favours here, of customely there, the same generosity before justice, the same dilemmas, the same captious alternation of caresses and blows that we endure now.

"She was in person full-limbed and somewhat heavy; without ruddiness, as without pallor; and soft to the touch as a cloud. To see her hair was to fancy that a whole winter did not contain darkness enough to form its shadow. . . .

"She had Pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries. Their light, as it came and went, and came again, was partially hampered by their oppressive lids and lashes; and of these the under lid was much fuller than it usually is with Englishwomen. This enabled her to indulge in reverie without seeming to do so: she might have been believed capable of sleeping without closing them up. Assuming that the souls of men and women were visible essences, you could fancy the colour of Eustacia's soul to be flame-like. The sparks from it that rose into her dark pupils gave the same impression. . . .

"Her presence brought memories of such things as Bourbon roses, rubies, and tropical midnights; her moods recalled lotus-eaters and the march in *Athalie*; her motions, the ebb and flow of the sea; her voice, the viola. In a dim light, and with a slight rearrangement of her hair, her general figure might have stood for that of either of the higher female deities. The new moon behind her head, an old helmet upon it, a diadem of accidental dewdrops round her brow, would have been adjuncts sufficient to strike the note of Artemis, Athena, or Hera respectively, with as close an approximation to the antique as that which passes muster on many respected canvases. . . .

"To be loved to madness—such was her great desire. Love was to her the one cordial which could

drive away the eating loneliness of her days. And she seemed to long for the abstraction called passionate love more than for any particular lover. . . .

"Her high gods were William the Conqueror, Strafford, and Napoleon Buonaparte, as they had appeared in the Lady's History used at the establishment in which she was educated. Had she been a mother she would have christened her boys such names as Saul or Sisera in preference to Jacob or David, neither of whom she admired."

Somewhat less clearly—the multiplicity of detail is a shade overwhelming—but with fine art none the less, is Farmer Oak limned for us in *Far from the Madding Crowd*:

"When Farmer Oak smiled, the corners of his mouth spread till they were within an unimportant distance of his ears, his eyes were reduced to mere chinks, and diverging wrinkles appeared round them, extending upon his countenance like the rays in a rudimentary sketch of the rising sun.

"His Christian name was Gabriel, and on working days he was a young man of sound judgment, easy motions, proper dress, and general good character. On Sundays he was a man of misty views, rather given to postponing, and hampered by his best clothes and umbrella: upon the whole, one who felt himself to occupy morally that vast middle space of Laodicean neutrality which lay between the Communion people of the parish and the drunken section. . . .

"Since he lived six times as many working days as Sundays, Oak's appearance in his old clothes was most peculiarly his own—the mental picture formed by his neighbours in imagining him being always dressed that way. He wore a low-crowned felt hat, spread out at the base by tight jamming upon the head for security in high winds, and a coat like Dr. Johnson's; his lower extremities being encased in ordinary leather leggings and boots emphatically large, affording to each foot a roomy apartment so condensated that any weaver might stand in a river all day long and know nothing about it—their maker being a conscientious man who always endeavoured to compensate for any weakness in his cut by unstinted dimension and solidity. . . .

"But some thoughtful persons, who had seen him walking across one of his fields on a certain December morning—sunny and exceedingly mild—might have regarded Gabriel Oak in other aspects than these. In his face one might notice that many of the hues and curves of youth had tarried on to manhood: there even remained in his remoter crannies some relics of the boy. His height and breadth would have been sufficient to make his presence imposing, had they been exhibited with due consideration. But there is a way some men have, rural and urban alike, for which the mind is more responsible than flesh and sinew; it is a way of curtailing their dimensions by their manner of showing them. And from a quiet modesty that would have become a vestal, which seemed continually to impress upon him that he had no great claim on the world's room, Oak walked unassumingly, and with a faintly perceptible bend, quite distinct from a bowing of the shoulders. This may be said to be a defect in an individual if he depends for his valuation more upon his appearance than upon his capacity to wear well, which Oak did not.

"He had just reached the time of life at which 'young' is ceasing to be the prefix of 'man' in speaking of one. He was at the brightest period of masculine growth, for his intellect and his emotions were clearly separated: he had passed the time during which the influence of youth indiscriminately mingles them in the character of impulse, and he had not yet arrived at the stage wherein they become united again, in the character of prejudice, by the influence of a wife and family. In short, he was twenty-eight, and a bachelor."

Hardy's style is deliberate and characteristic. He impresses his scenes and characters upon us by the accentuation of a hundred little touches and details, not by any impressionistic gift. But although his narrative as a rule sweeps along in an orderly, progressive way, he has a real dramatic instinct that enables him at times to seize upon some crisis, and present in forms of subtle dynamic conflict the characters he has been gradually unfolding for us.

One of the best illustrations of this may be found in that chapter in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* where Henchard sells his wife. Presaming he has made us realise the natures of the husband and wife, and the lacerating exasperation that misfortune has effected, until the man, influenced by drink, becomes for the moment a brute, and the woman apathetic and indifferent through sheer despair: this is at the outset of the story. The rest of the tale deals with the man's gradual expiation of his mad act of drunken folly.

To turn to some lighter aspects of Hardy's characterisation.

Pre-occupied as the novelist is with the tragic aspects of life, yet he illustrates once again the truth of Carlyle's saying, that "Humour is a sympathy with the seamy side of things." As a rule the sympathy is too acute for laughter, but it often finds expression in irony—that half-way house between comedy and tragedy; but in his earlier books especially, where the vital joy of youth proves too strong at times for melancholy fatalism, the merely ridiculous aspects of the life about him are recorded with delightful particularity. What better material for this than the rustic type that Hardy knew so well. Here, he reminds us strongly at times of George Eliot's methods in *The Mill on the Floss* and *Silas Marner*; but Hardy's rustics are truer to nature; they are less intellectualised. We recall such flashes of humorous insight as "Nater requires her swearing regular at times."

"'Poor Charlotte! I wonder whether if she had the good fortune to get into heaven when she a'died? But she was never much in luck's way, and perhaps a'went down'ards after all, poor soul!'

"'And she was as white as marble stone,' said Mrs. Cuxsom. 'And likewise such a thoughtful woman, too—ah, poor soul—that a'minded every little thing that wanted tending. "Yes, says she, "when I'm gone, and my last breath's blowed, look in the top drawer o' the chest in the back room by the window, and you'll find all my coffin clothes; a piece of flannel—that's to put under me, and the little piece is to put under my head; and my new stockings for my feet—they are folded alongside, and all my other things. And there's four ounce pennies, the heaviest I could find, a'tied up in bits of linen for weights—two for my right eye and two for my left," she said. "And when you've used 'em, and my eyes don't open no more, bury the pennies, good souls, and don't ye go spending 'em, for I shouldn't like it. And open the windows as soon as I am carried out, and make it as cheerful as you can for Elizabeth-Jane."'

"'Ah, poor heart!'"

The stolid reserve of the rustic, misinterpreted by his sharper town brother for stupidity, is deliciously depicted:

This from *Under the Greenwood Tree*—a fragment of peasant charter:

"'Yes, Geoffrey Day is a clever man if ever there was one. Never says anything: not he.'

" 'Never.'

" 'You might live wi' that man, my maidies, a hundred years, and never know there was anything in him.'

" 'Ay; one o' these up-country folk-bottle fellers would call Geoffrey a fool.'

" 'Ye would never find out what's in that man, never. Silent? Ah, he is silent! He can keep silence well. That man's silence is wonderful to listen to.' "

As a rule, Hardy is content to observe and record, without probably, more than a bowdlerising touch here and there; but sometimes the grotesqueries of these rustic folk suggest, in their presentment, a little dressing-up by the literary artist. We wonder whether any Poorgrass put the matter of the "multiplying eye" really so neatly as this:

" 'A multiplying eye is a very bad thing,' says Mark Clark.

" 'It always comes on when I have been in a public-house a little time,' says Joseph Poorgrass meekly."

But whatever doctoring some of these humours may have, most of them impress us with a sense of delicious fidelity to the muddle-headed but not bad-hearted men they depict; who, for all their childishness and fatuousness, like children let fall many a word of sound wisdom at times.

Save when dealing with his rustic characters, Hardy's humour usually takes the form of irony; he is too much of a realist to take pleasure in caricature; too little of the moralist to make effective use of satire; and his natural reserve tends to make him, even when dealing with tragic issues, grimly ironical. His books abound in the irony of circumstance: *e.g.* the double pledging under the tree in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*; the proposal scene in *The Hand of Ethelberta* with the lovers in different rooms: the Power behind things wears always a mocking smile to Hardy; and finely devised as many of these ironies are, especially in his shorter stories, the note is somewhat too insistent. The author reversing the procedure of Mark Tapley, is too determined to be miserable in all possible circumstances, especially in his later books. But at its best the irony is very fine, and sometimes, as in *Two on a Tower*, it has a light, exquisite flavour that Anatole France himself could not have bettered.

As a story-teller he allies rich inventive power with a sense of symmetrical development, which as a rule characterises our lesser not our greater men. Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, so productively fertile in invention, show often little perspective on their constructive side. For all his minuteness of method, Hardy never loses sight of the harmonious whole; his detailed touches have ever their special significance in unfolding the burden of the story; here he shows the economy of the great artist. We shall find no loose ends in his work. He is almost equally great as a stylist—not quite, perhaps, for some of his writing shows a curious stiffness and lack of plasticity. But on the whole it is an admirable style, clear, straightforward, unpretentious, yet capable of carrying subtle implications, and always instinct with a simple dignity, and compelling sincerity. There is no straining after effect; no self-conscious attitudinising.

The Interpreter of Life

In reading Hardy's prose and verse one is inevitably reminded of Anderson's whimsical tale of *The Princess and the Pea*. No matter how many soft mattresses were piled upon that couch, the sensitive princess developed bruises.

Thus with Hardy. He is made sleepless by the pea, and the soft mattresses of comedy add no whit to his comfort. His own position he has frankly stated in the general preface to his collected works:

"Differing natures find their tongue in the presence of differing spectacles. Some natures become vocal by tragedy, some are made vocal by comedy, and it seems to me that to whichever of these aspects of life a writer's instinct for expression the more readily responds, to that he should allow it to respond."

In other words, Mr. Hardy's temperament has conditioned his pessimistic outlook on life. A man's philosophy of life is, when you probe it deep enough, an instinctive, temperamental thing. Optimism, meliorism, pessimism, are but endeavours to express in intellectual form the temperamental bias.

Now, in Hardy's outlook on life, there are two points especially insistent—his sense of law, and his sense of pity. The first gives him that conviction, that a spiritual logic governs men's lives, and the Greeks call it Nemesis; but we, affected by scientific formulæ, attribute it to law.

There is only one other novelist who has touched the logic of life with the same persistency as Hardy, that is George Eliot; but whereas she considers it rather from the standpoint of retribution, and treats it as a moralist, Hardy is affected rather by the injustice of its workings. He admits, as she does, the dreadful vitality of our deeds, but he dwells far longer on the disproportionate punishment:

"Our evil actions do not remain isolated in the past, waiting only to be reversed: like locomotive plants they spread and re-root, till to destroy the original stem has no material effect in killing them."[1]

"There are disappointments which wring us, and there are those which inflict a wound whose mark we bear to our graves. Such are so keen that no future gratification of the same desire can ever obliterate them; they become registered as a permanent loss of happiness."[2]

"A sensation of being profoundly experienced serves as a sort of consolation to people who are conscious of having taken wrong turnings. Contradictory as it seems, there is nothing truer than that people who have always gone right do not know half as much about the nature and ways of going right as those do who have gone wrong."[3]

His sense of pity is perhaps more acute than that of any modern writer. Realising as he does the terrible handicaps of life, he treats with gentle tolerance the passionate misdoings of men and women; and is better disposed to the sinner than to the saint.

He has no liking for what he calls the "well-proportioned mind":

"A well-proportioned mind is one which shows no particular bias; one of which we may safely say that

[1] *Life's Little Ironies.* [2] *A Pair of Blue Eyes.*
[3] *Ibid.*

it will never cause its owner to be confined as a madman, tortured as an heretic, or crucified as a blasphemer. Also, on the other hand, that it will never cause him to be applauded as a prophet, revered as a priest, or exalted as a king. Its usual blessings are happiness and mediocrity."[1]

There is a wholesome bitterness in these sayings, yet one cannot but feel that, at times, he shows too much bitterness of feeling. It is not that what he urges is not true; but there is another side to his picture which is equally true, and upon which he is silent. In his earlier writings the mingled sweetness and bitterness of life are admirably contrasted; but in the later novels—in *Tess*, and *Jude*, especially, rich in power and insight as these books are—the gloom is needlessly intensified.

They are expansions in prose, of Arnold's deeply melancholy lines—

> "We are here as on a darkling plain
> Swept by confused alarms of struggle and flight
> Where ignorant armies clash by night."

Few who have thought at all about life can help moods like these when the littleness and sordidness of life, and the great empire of pain and suffering, overshadow all else. But it is not merely a mood with Mr. Hardy, it is *the mood*—his prevalent way of looking at things; and he practically excludes from his writings any sense of the splendour and beauty of human life that visits us at other times, just as the sunrise chases away the gloom of night. The sublimities of life are as much a matter of human experience as its abysses. To take an example: Mr. Hardy sees clearly enough the hypocrisies and cruelties practised in the guise of religion; but he never notes the large integrating power (as George Eliot did) that springs from genuine emotion. Not content with picturing a tragic household, he ascribes the tragedy to "an unsympathetic First Cause"; and assures us that "the President of the Immortals had ended his sport with Tess."

This tenacious and bitter preoccupation with the futilities of life is even more evident in Mr. Hardy's verse than in his prose. He is too genuine an artist, too sincere and high-minded a man, not to touch his readers again and again with the imaginative subtleties and delicate insight that often distinguish his verse. But while mindful of passages of power and beauty in his *Dynasts*, and of the haunting charm and freshness of many vagrant lyrics, I cannot but feel that Mr. Hardy's genius is far better expressed in his prose; for the spacious background of prose allows for those qualities of rich comedy (quite other than the satiric humour of his verse), of characterisation and of description, that find, necessarily, little outlet in poetry.

Yet it would be churlish to leave so great a writer upon a note of dissatisfaction. All qualifications notwithstanding, there is a dignity and beauty about Mr. Hardy's best work, for which all lovers of literature may be grateful; to accuse him, as some have done, of lax morality in his presentment of life, is ludicrously beside the mark. Errors of taste there are no doubt; he has the blunt outspokenness of the countryman, and there is about his works something of the coarseness of Nature herself; but though sometimes coarse, he is never trivial or debasing. The furtive prurience that mars some fiction, the juggling with moral values that mars other fiction today, is absolutely alien to his stern and austerely noble attitude towards human life. Differences of opinion must naturally be held of Hardy as a critic of life; but as an artist—as a painter of certain concrete aspects of that life, he is among the greatest in English Literature.

II. PROSE: MISCELLANEOUS NOVELISTS OF THE VICTORIAN ERA. (a) *The Romancers.* William Ainsworth—William Carleton—Gerald Griffin—William Maginn—Theodore Hook—Samuel Lover—Samuel Lever—James Grant—Frederick Marryat—Michael Scott—James Morier—Samuel Warren—Bulwer Lytton—Henry Kingsley—J. Whyte Melville—Wilkie Collins—George Macdonald—"Fiona Macleod" (William Sharp)—R. D. Blackmore—William Black—Robert Louis Stevenson—J. H. Shorthouse.

(a) THE ROMANCERS

AMONG Scott's immediate successors was WILLIAM AINSWORTH (1805–1882), beloved by Victorian youth, though little read to-day. He had a real though crude sense of historical colour, and a vigorous and spirited style, tending to the two-penny coloured, yet effective enough in a rough-and-ready way. His best tales are *The Tower of London* (dealing with Tudor times), *Old St. Paul's* (dealing with the period of the Plague and Fire), and *Jack Sheppard* (dealing with the eighteenth century). The idealism of the criminal in the latter book is quite in the eighteenth century spirit, and most boys vastly preferred it because of its cleverly devised excitements, to the more wholesome but less enthralling *Oliver Twist*. The present writer recalls the delight and absorbed attention with which he devoured, as a boy, all of Ainsworth's fiction, but on turning to them recently he found—as no doubt many old admirers have found—what an astonishing amount of tawdry writing and mechanical melodrama they contain.

A writer of greater literary merit is WILLIAM CARLETON (1794–1869), whose *Autobiography* gives us an admirable picture of Irish life in the early century. As a writer of Irish sketches for the *Examiner*, Carleton made his first entrance into literature. These sketches were afterwards pub-

[1] *The Return of the Native.*

lished in volume form: *Father Butler* and *The Lough Derg Pilgrims* (1829), *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry* (1830). In longer and more elaborate tales of Irish life, such as *Valentine M'Clutchy* and the *History of Paddy-go-lucky and his wife Nancy* (1845), Carleton is somewhat less successful, though here his work contains lively and pathetic writing. If the liveliness becomes too broad and farcical at times, it never lacks "go," and is full of racy touches of the nation's ways and oddities.

Together with Carleton may be mentioned two other Irishmen—GERALD GRIFFIN (1803–1840), whose novel, *The Collegians*, obtained posthumous fame in the dramatic version of the story made by Dion Boucicault, and re-named by him *The Colleen Bawn*, and that versatile vagrant man of letters WILLIAM MAGINN (1793–1842), befriended by Thackeray, and embalmed by him in literary form as Captain Shandon.

The fiction of that humorous improviser, THEODORE HOOK (1788–1841), is of small account, but is interesting for the fact that his character Kekewich is clearly the prototype of Alfred Jingle, and some of his speeches, though less amusing than Jingle's, are in the same hurried, staccato style, while in another of his characters there is a clear suggestion of Mrs. Bardell.

In SAMUEL LOVER (1797–1868) and CHARLES LEVER (1806–1872) we have two Irish writers who enjoyed a good vogue in their day. Lover was the more versatile man, being a painter and something of a poet and musician as well as a story-teller. But Lever is certainly the better novelist. Both of them did well in light comic verse; and both of them are inclined to caricature in their stories. But whereas Lever relies mainly on caricature, as in *Rory O'More* (1837) and *Handy Andy* (1842), Lever relieves his burlesque flourishes by his nimble faculty of inventive imagination. Lever's best works are *Harry Lorrequer*, *Charles O'Malley* (1840), and *Jack Hinton* (1842). Neither Lever nor Lover show any sense of form, and even Lever's better written stories are more like good-humoured, happy improvisations than deliberately devised stories.

Where Lever celebrates the Irish soldier, JAMES GRANT (1822–1887) celebrates the Scottish, in his historical novel *The Romance of War* (1845), dealing with the Peninsular War. He was a careful and thorough craftsman, but is rather over-burdened by his historical material.

Captain FREDERICK MARRYAT (1792–1848) in his turn glorifies the British sailor. Marryat is a capital story-teller, thoroughly at home in his subject, and thus writes with greater success than either Grant, who worked up his subject, or Lever and Lover, who know their characters merely on the surface.

Marryat has an easy, effective style, and in such excellent yarns as *Peter Simple* and *Jacob Faithful* (1834), *Midshipman Easy* (1836) and *Masterman Ready* (1841), he is hard to beat on his own lines, of good, straightforward, genial story-telling. He is less successful when he tries to deal with the mysterious side of things, as in *The Phantom Ship*. His imagination is neither subtle nor profound; but it is quite adequate for the task he usually sets before him. If he does not make us realise the poetry and mystery of the sea, he gives us effective insight into the life of the average sailor. He is graphic and arresting without being tensely dramatic as Reade could be, and without being so crudely melodramatic as are many romancers. He has a hearty and healthy sense of fun, which for the most part shows itself in farce, but gives happy touches also to a number of his best characters: Mr. Chucks, Equality Jack, Terence O'Brien. One of the best story-tellers for boys, he can be read also with pleasure by all who like a good yarn, adequately told by a man who knows what he is talking about.

Inferior in breadth and narrative power was MICHAEL SCOTT (1789–1835), one of "Blackwood's" men. Yet his *Tom Cringle's Log* (1829–1833) and *The Cruise of the Midge* are excellently written stories of sea life.

The glamour of the East had attracted, as we have seen, many of the romantic school, both verse and prose men; but one of the very few who has an inside knowledge of the subject was JAMES MORIER (c. 1780–1849), who in his *Hajji Baba of Ispahan* (1824–1828) gave us a novel of the old picaresque type, and showed that the Orient has its "comedy" as well as its more conventionally romantic side. The book is written in a pleasant, lively, and genuinely informing manner.

Another romance of the comedy type, and more frankly farcical, is SAMUEL WARREN'S (1807–1877) *Ten Thousand a Year* (1839–1841), a book which was amazingly popular in its day, but has no outstanding merit.

EDWARD GEORGE BULWER, first Lord LYTTON, was born in London in 1803. He was the son of General Earle Bulwer and Elizabeth Lytton, heiress of Knebworth, whose name he added when he succeeded to her estate in 1843. After various tutors he went up to Trinity Hall, Cambridge, in 1822, where he won the Chancellor's medal for a poem upon "Sculpture." In 1827 his disastrous marriage to a penniless Irish beauty, against the wishes of his mother, resulted in the withdrawal of his allowance. For years the young couple endeavoured to make two hundred a year cover the expenditure of as many thousands, with its inevitable unhappy consequence. In 1836 they separated, but the intervening years were productive of much work, and were the period of the novels. After this he turned to the drama. *The Lady of Lyons* produced in 1838, and *Money* in 1840, still hold the stage to-day.

Entering Parliament as a Liberal member for St. Ives in 1831, Lytton gradually drifted to the Opposition, and in 1852 was representing Herefordshire as a Conservative, and in 1858–1859 was Colonial Secretary during Lord Derby's ministry.

A voluminous and rapid writer, Lytton is said to have written regularly from four to five thousand words a day, and has published some sixty works. Good-natured, and with a ready smile, he was, says a contemporary of his early years, "gay, quick, half-satirical, and always fresh and different from everybody else."

He died on January 18, 1873, and is buried in Westminister Abbey.

Lytton had one of those plastic imaginations ready to receive every impress of the age; each succeeding literary fashion finds its echo in his work. While romances were the vogue, Lytton did excellent work of the secondary order; and a measure of vitality lingers even to-day in his *Last Days of Pompeii*, *Rienzi*, and *Zanoni*. But from the time of *The Caxtons* (1849) he was conscious of a change in the drift of current tastes, and leaving the historical novel and the mystical fantasy alone, he turned his attention to English country life; describing its rural phases in *The Caxtons* and *My Novel*, its urban fashion in *Pelham* and *Paul Clifford*.

His work is distinctly imitative; but it is dexterous and showy, and exhibits a versatile if not a profound mind. He is most original when he gives his imagination rein; but, lacking humour, he is always overstepping the border-line between the sublime and the ridiculous.

An interesting figure to the literary student as a mirror of his time; but apart from this, it may be questioned whether, save to the young and unsophisticated (if any such exist to-day!), he has any vital force at the present time.

During the mid-years of the century, the novels of domestic life proved a serious rival to the romance in popularity, and skilled literary opportunists like Lytton, had, as we see, to trim their sails to suit the new demand. Kingsley and Reade are among the ablest romancers. On a somewhat lower level are HENRY KINGSLEY (1830–1876), whose *Ravenshoe* (1861), however, is not greatly inferior to *Westward Ho*, but who had little staying power as a novelist; and JOHN WHYTE MELVILLE (1821–1878), a soldier and a country squire of literary tastes, whose *Gladiators* is a clever and interesting story of Roman life.

Another writer belonging to the turn of the mid-century is WILKIE COLLINS (1824–1889), a writer of remarkable power at his best, though his later writings, partly owing to a mistaken choice of subject-matter, but largely owing to physical reasons, show an almost tragic decline of merit.

Collins was the son of the artist and Royal Academician, William Collins, the friend of David Wilkie. At twelve years old he was taken by his parents to Italy, where they resided for three years, and on their return the lad was, for a time, engaged in a city tea warehouse. Later he entered Lincoln's Inn, and was called to the Bar in 1851, but was drifting into literature.

In 1848 he published a *Life* of his father, and two years afterwards appeared his first novel, *Antonina*. A considerable friendship then sprang up between its author and Charles Dickens, and the two henceforth were more or less associated.

Collins produced two dramas, *The Lighthouse* (1855) and *The Frozen Deep* (1874), in both of which Dickens appeared as an actor. In 1860, *The Woman in White* was running as a serial in *All the Year Round*, of which Dickens was editor, and in collaboration they published *No Thoroughfare* in the same paper.

Wilkie Collins is so persistently underrated to-day, that it may prove interesting to inquire with some closeness into the quality of his work.

At its best, his work is distinguished by:

(*a*) Exceptional skill in the art of plot-construction.

(*b*) A remarkable gift of dramatic suggestion.

(*c*) Pictorial power of high order.

His technical skill is most happily shown in *The Moonstone*, where all the parts fit into one another with the neatness of those puzzle-pictures that were at once the agony and delight of our childhood; from the impressive opening scene, where the gem is shown in its splendid Eastern setting, through all the mazes of the story down to its final recapture by the Indians, there is not a scene which does not carry forward the tale, not a character that has not a part to play in the solution of the mystery.

The faculty of dramatic suggestion is a much rarer quality than is usually allowed. The expectant interest which Collins arouses so keenly in the reader is created not by incidental thrills—these, indeed, are singularly few—but because of the *atmosphere of suspense* that he creates, by cunning hints and suggestions. Murder looms seldom in his stories; of fighting there is next to nothing; hair-breadth escapes interest him but slightly; and out-of-the-way occurrences are few and far between. Eschewing these things on the one hand, and the psychological interest of the character novel on the other, it is surely a signal testimony to his power as a literary artist that he should hold us with such unmistakable enthralment. He is a master of dramatic *innuendo*; the Sterne of sensationalism. He can thrill you more by the posting of a letter than most of his school can by a lurid murder.

His pictorial power, again, is badly underestimated by many critics. Wilkie Collins was the son of a painter; he exhibited in 1849 a landscape of his own at the Royal Academy, and always retained a fine critical appreciation of the painter's art. His scenic backgrounds are an intergral part of his stories. Thus the supernaturalism in *Armadale* (1866) revolves round a series of dream-pictures; and even a sunset on the Norfolk Broads and the slanting rain of a passing storm are organic elements in the plot. The most dramatic scene in *No Name* (1862), where the heroine, Magdalen, meditates suicide, is presented in pictorial form—and peculiarly vivid pictorial form:

"She removed the cork, and lifted the bottle to her mouth.

"At the first cold touch of the glass on her lips, her strong young life leaped up in her leaping blood, and fought with the whole frenzy of its loathing against the close terror of Death.

. . . . . .

"Her cheeks flushed deep; her breath came thick and fast. With the poison still in her hand, with the sense that she might faint in another moment, she made for the window, and threw back the curtain that covered it.

"The new day had risen. The broad grey dawn flowed in on her, over the quiet eastern sea.

"She saw the waters, heaving large and silent in the misty calm; she felt the fresh breath of the morning flutter cool on her face. Her strength returned; her

mind cleared a little. . . . She resolved to end the struggle by casting her life or death on the hazard of a chance.

"On what chance?

"The sea showed it to her. Dimly distinguishable through the mist, she saw a little fleet of coasting vessels slowly drifting towards the house, all following the same direction with the favouring set of the tide. In half-an-hour—perhaps in less—the fleet would have passed her window. The hands of her watch pointed to four o'clock. She seated herself close at the side of the window, with her back towards the quarter from which the vessels were drifting down to her—with the poison placed on the window-sill, and the watch on her lap. For one half-hour to come, she determined to wait there, and count the vessels as they went by. If, in that time, an even number passed by—the sign given should be a sign to live. If the uneven number prevailed—the end should be death.

"With that final resolution, she rested her head against the window, and waited for the ships to pass.

. . . . . .

"Nineteen minutes: and five ships. Twenty minutes. Twenty-one, two, three—and no sixth vessel. Twenty-four; and the sixth came by. Twenty-five, twenty-six, twenty-seven, twenty-eight; and the next uneven number—the fatal seven—glided into view. Two minutes to the end of the half-hour. And seven ships.

"Twenty-nine: and nothing followed in the wake of the seventh ship. The minute-hand of the watch moved on half-way to thirty—and still the white heaving sea was a misty blank. Without moving her head from the window, she took the poison in one hand, and raised the watch in the other. As the quick seconds counted each other out, her eyes, as quick as they, looked from the watch to the sea, from the sea to the watch—looked for the last time at the sea—and saw the unseen ship.

"She never moved; she never spoke. The death of thought, the death of feeling, seemed to have come to her already. She put back the poison mechanically on the ledge of the window; and watched, as in a dream, the ship gliding smoothly on its silent way—gliding till it melted dimly into shadow—gliding till it was lost in the mist.

. . . . . .

"Her eyes closed, and her head fell back. When the sense of life returned to her, the morning sun was warm on her face—the blue heaven looked down on her—and the sea was a sea of gold."

Whatever the subject, rarely does Collins fail to paint his scene without the telling economy of the genuine artist. This, for instance, from *The Woman in White*:

"A white fog hung over the lake. The dense brown line of the trees on the opposite bank appeared above it like a dwarf forest floating in the sky. The sandy ground, shelving downwards from where we sat, was lost mysteriously in the outward layer of the fog."

And undoubtedly it was through this pictorial power that Collins was able to make so many of his characters vivid and striking—*e.g.* Count Fosco, Lydia Gwilt, "The Dream Woman," Captain Wragge, Marian Halcombe—no easy matter in a form of fiction where the characters exist for the story, and not the story for the characters, as in the novels of Meredith and Hardy.

And here limitations of space remind me that this apologia for Collins must draw to a close. At his best he had Poe's power to kindle the emotions of horror and suspense. Yet, despite his insistent interest in pathological types, there is a wholesome sanity about his outlook; and something of the man's own sensitive and kindly nature expresses itself in everything he wrote.

Certainly not the least tribute to Collins' powers is to be found in the countless imitations his writings have evoked. One has only to compare the best contemporary work of this kind with the work of Collins to realise that whatever his limitations may have been, he was, along his own lines, a vital and original force in English fiction.

In Wilkie Collins the novel of domesticity and the novel of romantic adventure are pleasantly blended. In GEORGE MACDONALD (1824–1905) the two are kept apart. His verse has already been noticed elsewhere. His novels deal with Scottish life, and show considerable humour, actuality, and deep religious feeling. Among the best are *Alec Forbes* (1865) and *Robert Falconer* (1868). In the art of story-telling, however, he is not an adept; constructively his tales are weak, and live by virtue of their imaginative strength and insight into character. The fine touches of romantic feeling that make themselves felt prepare us for the more exclusively romantic work of Macdonald. This may be studied in the delightful books he wrote for children: *On the Back of the North Wind, The Princess and the Goblin, The Princess and Curdie, Cross Purposes*, and in those books where his Gaelic mysticism found its richest expression: *The Portent, Phantastes, The Cruel Painter*, and other stories.

It is here rather than in the novels that the genius of the man is best exhibited. In all of these tales there are touches of eerie suggestion that Poe himself has never bettered, and they are blended with a delicate sense of beauty, a strength of passion, and a fine humanitarian feeling that place them in the very front rank as works of the romantic *genre*.

The were-wolf has been greatly in evidence of late years in fiction, but not one of the many tales dealing with this psychic myth are equal in artistic skill and delicate impressionism to Macdonald's story of "The Grey Wolf" that appears in the volume of tales entitled *The Cruel Painter*. Mr. Algernon Blackwood, whose spiritual borderland studies are so deservedly popular to-day, and who has no serious rival in tales of psychic influences, is in the line of descent from the author of *Phantastes*. The machinery of *Phantastes* is more old-fashioned, but the author of *Pan's Garden* is not more steeped in the magic of natural things than is the creator of *The Maiden of the Beech Tree*.

No less truly imaginative are those tales of Macdonald's more deliberately adapted for children. *The Shadows* is not unworthy of Hawthorne; *The Light Princess* is a happy fancy, more Teutonic perhaps than Celtic in its treatment; while the stories dealing with Curdie, The Princess, and the Goblin have no peer save in the pages of Grimm.

More limited in their art, but with the same mystic suggestion, are the Gaelic romances of "Fiona Macleod" (WILLIAM SHARP, 1856–1906).

Turning to a robuster type of romancer, we have RICHARD D. BLACKMORE (1825–1900) a story-

teller who in *Lorna Doone* (1869) wrote a romance that for breadth, imaginative beauty, and virile freshness cannot be equalled in modern fiction, save by Reade or Stevenson. He wrote other tales, but he is essentially the man of one book.

William Black (1841–1898) achieved success as a writer of romance about the same time as *Lorna Doone* had captured the reading public. A more versatile story-teller than Blackmore, he never wrote anything that could be put beside *Lorna Doone*. None the less he proved himself a spirited and picturesque writer, who excelled in descriptions of Scottish life and scenery.

The most considerable romantic force of the later half of the century is Robert Louis Stevenson, who was born in Edinburgh on November 13, 1850. He was the son of Thomas Stevenson, one of the family of famous lighthouse engineers. On leaving school the youth endeavoured to carry on the traditions of his family, and gave some attention to engineering at Edinburgh University, indeed going so far as to gain a prize from the Society of Arts for improvements in lighthouse mechanism; but neither inclination nor physical strength fitted him for the profession, and in 1871 he abandoned it with a view to letters, though not without regret for his father's disappointment:

> "Say not of me that weakly I declined
> The labours of my sires, and fled the sea,
> The towers we founded and the lamps we lit,
> To play at home with paper like a child."

At six years old we are told that Stevenson dictated a *History of Moses*; and while at the University he contributed to, and for a time edited, the College Magazine; he also published essays in other journals, and to literature he wished to devote his life.

As something to fall back upon if literature failed, his father persuaded him to read for the Scottish Bar, to which he was called in 1875. But Stevenson's temperament was too unconventional, too saturated with the vagabond spirit, to settle down to a life of routine, and after a short time the law was also abandoned. He then threw what physical strength he possessed into an arduous apprenticeship to literature, writing a number of short stories and essays for the *Cornhill Magazine*. "I slogged at it night and day," he wrote to a friend in 1887.

Stevenson's many journeys in search of health contributed to his literary resources. *An Inland Voyage* (1878) was the result of a canoe journey in Belgium, and *Through the Cevennes with a Donkey* (1879) tells its own story. But the public did not take kindly to Stevenson's work at this time, and partly owing to financial reasons, as an emigrant he set out for California in search of health. A certain measure of health was regained, and his marriage with an American lady, Mrs. Osbourne, whom he had previously met in France, added also to his happiness and future comfort.

In 1880, with his wife and her two children, Stevenson returned to Europe, and the following year published *Virginibus Puerisque*. He also made an unsuccessful application for the Chair of Constitutional Law and History at the University of Edinburgh.

To please his little stepson he had written *Treasure Island*, published in 1882; with this event the tide of prosperity for Stevenson may be said to have turned. *Kidnapped*, *Dr. Jekyll*, *Prince Otto*, *The Silverado Squatters*, and the immortal *Child's Garden of Verse* followed. Stevenson was becoming a more than popular writer when the growing disease of the lungs necessitated his seeking a warmer climate. In 1887, with his family, he left England never to return. For a time the little party travelled among the islands of the Southern Pacific, and at length settled in Samoa. Stevenson built himself a house and worked industriously until the end, dictating on his fingers in sign language when he found it too painful to speak for any length of time.

In the life of the Samoans, Stevenson took the keenest interest. Noting the cruelties and hardships to which the natives were subjected by the Governor and others, he did not rest until an inquiry was held; this resulted in the dismissal of more than one of the authorities.

On December 3, 1896, a day of intense heat, Stevenson died quite suddenly, and is buried among his friends of Samoa. Two fragments, *St. Ives* and *Weir of Hermiston*, left unfinished, were published in 1897.

Stevenson differs from other romancers of the Victorian era in two respects. He is a fastidious stylist, while the majority trouble themselves not a whit about their style; and he has an elusive and freakish humour, which again is alien to the usual temperament of the romancer. Both of these qualities impart a unique distinction to his work, though they carry with them also certain drawbacks. This sense of style gives Stevenson's best romantic work, whether in the more boyish moods of *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped*, or in the graver vein of *The Master of Ballantrae* and *Weir of Hermiston*, a splendour of workmanship and artistic appeal, fully counterbalancing the obvious indebtedness to masters like Scott and Dumas. But it affects a portion of his work with a sense of effort and artificiality that to some extent spoil our pleasure. The spacious ease and spontaneity of *Lorna Doone* are not to be found in his work, nor indeed has he the prodigal invention of Reade. On the other hand, there is a delicacy and finish in his best work that neither Blackmore nor Reade could reach.

Stevenson's humour, moreover, keeps him not merely from the pathetic pitfalls of the ordinary romancer, but from such gaucheries and crudities as we find in Reade; while in *The New Arabian Nights* the blend of gay humour and romantic feeling provides us with a work that has a delightfully bitter-sweet flavour about it. Yet this freakish humour is not wholly an advantage to the Romancer. It makes him too self-conscious; too afraid to let himself go in some of his stories; and his fine style, with its fun, its fancy, its subtlety of light and shade, finds its happiest medium in those discursive essays where he can display all his moods to his heart's content.

Perhaps the neatest critical impression of Stevenson's complex personality is to be found in Henley's well-known lines:

". . . In his face
There shines a brilliant and romantic grace,
A spirit intense and rare, with trace on trace
Of passion and impudence and energy.
Valiant in velvet, light in ragged luck,
Most vain, most generous, sternly critical,
Buffoon and poet, lover and sensualist:
A deal of Ariel, just a streak of Puck,
Much Antony, of Hamlet most of all,
And something of the Shorter Catechist."

Certainly, Ariel, Hamlet, and the Shorter Catechist cross and recross his pages as we read them. Probably each reader of Stevenson retains most clearly one special place. It is the Ariel in Stevenson that outlasts for me the other moods. If any one phase can be said to strike the keynote of his temperament, it is the whimsical, freakish, but kindly Ariel—an Ariel bound in service to the Prospero of fiction—never quite happy, longing for his freedom, yet knowing that he must for a while serve his master. One can well understand why John Addington Symonds dubbed Stevenson "sprite." This elfish element in Stevenson is most apparent in his letters and stories.

The figures in his stories are less flesh-and-blood persons than the shapes—some gracious, some terrifying—that the Ariel world invoke. It is not that Stevenson had no grip on reality; his grip-hold on life was very firm and real. Beneath the light badinage, the airy, graceful wit that plays over his correspondence, there is a steel-like tenacity. But in his stories he leaves the solid earth for a fantastic world of his own. He does so deliberately; he turns his back on reality, has dealings with phantom passions. His historical romances are like ghostly editions of Scott. There is light, but little heat in his fictions. They charm our fancy, but do not seize upon our imagination.

Borrow's characters do not speak Borrow so emphatically as do Stevenson's characters speak Stevenson. And with Stevenson it matters more. Borrow's picturesque, vivid, but loose, loquacious style, fits his subject-matter on the whole very well. But Stevenson's delicate, nervous, mannerised style suits but ill some of the scenes he is describing. If it suits, it suits by a happy accident, as in the delightful sentiment in *Providence and the Guitar*.

To appraise Stevenson's merits as a Romantic one has to read him after Scott, Dumas, Victor Hugo; or, better still, to peruse these giants after dallying with Ariel.

We realise then what it is that we had vaguely missed in Stevenson—the human touch. These men believe in the figments of their imagination, and make us believe in them.

Stevenson is obviously sceptical as to their reality; we can almost see a furtive smile upon his lip as he writes. But there is nothing unreal about the man, whatever we feel of the artist.

In his critical comments on men and matters, especially when Hamlet and the Shorter Catechist come into view, we shall find a vigorous sanity, a shrewd yet genial outlook, that seems to say there is no make-believe *here*; *here* I am not merely amusing myself: here, honestly and heartily admitted, you may find the things that life has taught me.

Perhaps it is that in the letters alone do we find the vagabond temperament of Stevenson fully asserting itself. Elsewhere it is held in check. As Sir Sidney Colvin justly says:

"In his letters—excepting a few written in youth, and having more or less the character of exercises, and a few in after years which were intended for the public eye—Stevenson, the deliberate artist, is scarcely forthcoming at all. He does not care a fig for order, or logical sequence, or congruity, or for striking a key of expression and keeping it, but becomes simply the most spontaneous and unstudied of human beings. He will write with the most distinguished eloquence on one day, with simple good sense and good feeling on the second, with flat triviality on another, and with the most shocking, often ultra-colloquial vehemency on the fourth, or will vary through all these moods, and more, in one and the same letter."

Fresh and spontaneous his letters invariably appear; with a touch of the invalid's nervous haste, but never lacking in courage, and with nothing of the querulousness which we connect with chronic ill-health. Weak and ailing, shadowed by death for many years before the end, Stevenson showed a fine fortitude, which will remain in the memory of his friends as his most admirable character. With the consistency of Mark Tapley (and with less talk about it), he determined to be jolly in all possible circumstances. Right to the end his wonderful spirits, his courageous gaiety, attended him; the frail body grew frailer, but the buoyant intellect never failed him, or if it did so the failure was momentary, and in a moment he was recovered.

No little of his popularity is due to the desperate valour with which he contested the ground with death, inch by inch, and died, as Buckle and John Richard Green had done, in the midst of the work that he would not quit. Romance was by him to the last, gladdening his tired body with her presence; and if towards the end weariness and heart-sickness seized him for a spell, yet the mind soon resumed its mastery over weakness. In a prayer which he had written shortly before his death, he had petitioned: "Give us to awake with smiles, give us to labour smiling; as the sun lightens the world, so let our loving-kindness make bright this house of our habitation." Assuredly in his case this characteristic petition had been realised; the prevalent sunniness of his disposition attended him to the last.

Another stylist in romantic fiction—though of inferior talent—is JOHN HENRY SHORTHOUSE (1834–1903), whose *John Inglesant* (1881) created quite a furore in certain circles when first it appeared. It is an able, thoughtful, and painstaking historical romance, steeped in Tractarian thought; and the "Oxford" atmosphere accounted largely for its cordial reception in certain directions.

II. PROSE: (b) *The Novelists of Social and Domestic Life.* John Galt—John Watson ("Ian Maclaren") —George Douglas Brown—George Gissing. (c) *The Vagrant Note in Victorian Prose.* Introduction—George Borrow—Sir Richard Burton—Laurence Oliphant—Richard Jefferies.

(b) THE NOVELISTS OF SOCIAL AND DOMESTIC LIFE

In the title of one of his books, *Annals of the Parish*, John Galt (1779–1839) exactly described his *métier* as a novelist. Precise and intimate as his pictures of Scottish life are, they serve rather as the raw material of fiction than as works of literary art. Yet they abound in admirable vignettes of character, and Laird Guppy is worthy of Scott himself. His books: *Annals of the Parish*, *The Ayrshire Legatees* (1821), and *The Entail* (1823) have points of resemblance with those of Susan Ferrier, but deal with a less affluent class. She is a better story-teller; but perhaps Galt has the keener insight into the life that he describes.

Galt's work, strictly speaking, is outside of the Victorian era, yet he is one of the pioneers of the domestic novel that played so important a part in Victorian fiction. The work of the greater novelists of the time has already been considered in dealing with the humanitarian novel and the novel of satire; it remains for us to notice some of the later writers of fiction.

John Watson ("Ian Maclaren") (1850–1907), and others of the "kailyard" school, produced sentimental pictures of Scottish life, more agreeable and artistic than Galt's, but far less true to life. They are as much one-sided in their facile sentiment and humour on the one side as was George Douglas Brown's (1869–1902) grim and dour *House with the Green Shutters* on the other.

One of the ablest of the non-romantic school was George Gissing (1857–1903). If we could imagine Dickens without a sense of humour, we should have no bad notion of the character of Gissing's work. It abounds in shrewd and close observation, it vibrates with the struggle for life in a great city; but on the whole, it is an arid, dusty, and cheerless world that the novelist describes. There is no geniality, no light-hearted extravagance, or, on the other hand, such intensity of imagination as may compensate for the pall of gloom that hangs over its denizens. Mr. Hardy's pessimistic outlook on life is chastened by his humour and his passion. Gissing is gloomy and dry-eyed. Yet the power and actuality (up to a point) of many of his books—for instance, *Demos* (1886), *New Grub Street* (1891), and *The Town Traveller* (1898)—is unquestionable. Had we not read *Thyrza* (1887), *Beside the Ionian Sea*, and *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, we might imagine he was untouched by art and by the beauty of life, and that he was lacking in tenderness.

But he had, deep down, a poetic imagination, though he kept it imprisoned and confined. A man of sensitive culture, he had for many years to fight against adverse circumstances, and the iron went into his soul. Privation and suffering mellow some natures; it embitters others—and Gissing was among these. Yet he was a fine artist, and never sought facile short cuts to popularity by insincerities and cheap sentimentalities.

Judging the man, as we may fairly do, through the obvious self-revelation of Ryecroft, we feel that, under happier conditions, Gissing would have given a far better account of his considerable talents. But he lacked that elemental soundness that, in the case of some men, triumphs over adverse fates; he was too great a man to become a literary opportunist; too small a man to shake himself free of the meanness, the pettiness, the drab horrors that he saw in the life about him. It obsessed him and at times overwhelmed him.

No mention of Gissing, however, can pass unnoticed the critical genius (for it is criticism of the highest quality) of his book on Dickens. It may seem strange that this artist in grey, this coolly deliberate and ironic exponent of the seamy-side of life, should not only have admired Dickens so immensely, but have analysed so powerfully and eloquently his essential greatness. But there is the fact for those who read his critical study. And the insight and beauty of this criticism give us a higher opinion of Gissing's potential gifts, and make us the surer that he is only partially revealed in his harsh, realistic studies of contemporary life.

Gissing is at his best in such passages as the following, where the imagination of the man, touched by some familiar sight, loses for the moment its cold rigidity of outlook, and glows with warmth.

"Do you know that inside of the obscure ways, to which children dance? Not if you have only heard it ground to your ears' affliction beneath your windows in the square. To hear it aright you must stand in the darkness of such a by-street as this, and for the moment be at one with those who dwell around, in the blear-eyed houses, in the dim burrows of poverty, in the unmapped haunts of the semi-human. Then you will know the significance of that vulgar clanging of melody; a pathos of which you did not dream will touch you, and therein the secret of hidden London will be half-revealed. The life of men who toil without hope, yet with the hunger of an unshaped desire; of women in whom the sweetness of their sex is perishing under labour and misery; the laugh, the song of the girl who strives to enjoy her year or two of youthful vigour, knowing the darkness of the years to come; the careless defiance of the youth who feels his blood and revolts against the lot which would tame it; all that is purely human in these darkened multitudes speaks to you as you listen. It is the half-conscious striving of a nature which knows not what it would attain, which deforms a true thought by gross expression, which clutches at the beautiful and soils it with foul hands."[1]

(c) THE VAGRANT NOTE IN VICTORIAN PROSE

The literary student who follows faithfully the well-beaten track of literature may happily find an occasional means of escape by turning off the high road into those adventurous bypaths where no sign-posts are visible; and the journey is an agreeably strange and unfamiliar one.

[1] *Thyrza*, by George Gissing

The romantic writer, be he poet or proseman, has usually furnished this way of escape; for romanticism always implies the annexing of fresh territory, new scenes, strange experiences. But just as the traveller finds the once lonely solitudes in the hands of the estate agent, cog railways on the mountains, and extended hotel luxuries on the sea, so does the literary wanderer find the romantic standpoint tending to become merely a literary track; its novelties stereotyped, and its thrills and excitements standardised. It is here that the true vagabond of letters may be hailed as a welcome intruder. He redresses the balance of an over-civilised literature; bringing with him that touch of wildness, that pleasant air of irresponsible disarrayedness, that flavour of sun-tan and the open air, that we all of us need at times.

Modern American letters, with its plethora of culture, found a welcome corrective in such men as Thoreau and Whitman; while in Victorian letters we can hail thoroughgoing vagrants like Borrow and Jefferies, Laurence Oliphant and Sir Richard Burton.

Although three of these men happened to be more or less extensive travellers, the vagrant spirit is not to be construed in terms of geography; it is an attitude of mind, not a capacity for globe-trotting. The literary vagabond is born with a gipsy strain in the blood, and the ever-infallible sign of his spiritual heritage is an ingrained distaste for the routine of ordinary life and the conventions of civilisation. Thoreau turned his back on society, and found a new joy of living in the woods at Maine; Whitman sought his ideal companions in rough and primal natures; Borrow's nature expands only when tramping along the open road and in the company of the gipsy alien.

For Jefferies, not the delights of the town, but the quiet joys of the Sussex hedgerows and the Wiltshire lanes. Burton is all his life warring with the civilised "official," kicking against routine, and it is this intractable restlessness that spoiled the brilliant promise of his life. Laurence Oliphant, a man of splendid parts, was constitutionally unable to fit into any civilised scheme of life; hence the interest of his career and its failure from the worldly point of view.

This vagrant quality is not confined to the men just mentioned; most men of genius have a touch of this attractive madness in their blood. Indeed, without the touch of wildness, the great writer comes perilously near being a dull dog. Most of the greater men of the Romantic Revival had their "vagabond" moods; indeed, it gives the flavour and relish to the table-talk of Hazlitt, the day-dreaming of De Quincey, the fancies of Elia. Southey and Wordsworth suffer from lack of it; it proves both a curse and a blessing to Byron; and sets fire to the genius of the Brontës. In Victorian letters, sentiment and domesticity exercise the vagabond spirit for a while. But he can always find his way back again into literary art through the gateway of romanticism. And thus it is that Browning, in many ways so thoroughly conventional and English, is never more attractive than in the vagrant mood that prompted *Time's Revenge*, *The Flight of the Duchess*, and *Fifine at the Fair*; while in Meredith, and Hardy also, there are touches of the "wild wise beast."

In dealing, however, with the men who more emphatically sound the vagrant note, we at once think of George HENRY Borrow, that strong, assertive, prize-fighting, and bright-eyed Norfolk giant. Born at East Dereham on July 5, 1803, he was the younger son of an army recruiting officer who had risen from the ranks; on his mother's side he came of Norman-Huguenot stock. The wandering life in search of recruits necessarily restricted educational advantages, and it was not till the captain retired and settled down in Norwich that any regular teaching was possible; he was then thirteen, and sent to Norwich Grammar School. Here among many notable contemporaries were James Martineau and Rajah Brooke of Sarawak.

At school Borrow was not an idler. "More idleness," he has said, "is the most disagreeable state of existence," but even education should be made congenial. The restraint and discipline of school did not suit him, so he ran away; the ordinary curriculum not appealing to him, he put it aside and substituted languages, for which he had a peculiar talent. Eventually he was able to translate in thirty-five languages and dialects. He was also fond of fishing and shooting, and as a boxer was coached by the well-known "bruiser" James Thurtell, who was afterwards hanged for the murder of Mr. Weare.

On leaving school Borrow was articled to a solicitor, but the law troubled him very little, and at the end of his time he knew more about Armenian, or the shoeing of a horse, than he did of jurisprudence. His love for horses brought him into touch with another considerable phase of his life, his friendship with Mr. Petulengro and the gipsies.

Captain Borrow died in 1824, and London now becomes the goal of his son's ambition. "I intend to live in London," he wrote to a friend, "write plays, poetry, &c., abuse religion and get myself prosecuted." So to London he wended his way, though he does not appear to have carried out the remainder of his programme. With a letter of introduction he called on Sir Richard Phillips, a publisher who readily employed him, but at starvation rates. For a record of four hundred *Celebrated Trials*, in six volumes, containing four thousand pages, he received £50; and even this sum had to be drawn upon for many out-of-pocket expenses. At length Borrow left London to ramble with the gipsies throughout the country, and of "the veiled period," as it has been called, *Lavengro* furnishes an interesting account.

In 1832 Borrow returned to Norwich. Here he made the acquaintance of the Rev. Francis Cunningham, who introduced him to the British and Foreign Bible Society, as "a person without university education who has read the Bible in thirteen languages . . . of no very defined denomination of Christians, but I think of certain Christian principles. . . . I could wish you should see him . . . he is of the middle order in Society, and a very producible person." Upon this recommendation Borrow was invited to London, walking the whole

distance of 112 miles. The Society, he tells us, were satisfied as to his "philological capabilities" and voted him ten pounds for immediate expenses.

Borrow's independent and self-confident manner produced some consternation among certain members of the Society, and their quiet admonition he seems to have taken in good part. In 1833 he was sent to Russia to "enlarge his acquaintance with the Manchu language" with a view to a translation of the New Testament, which he eventually accomplished. In 1835 his services were required in Spain and Portugal, "to direct his attention to schools, and to be liberal in *giving* New Testaments." After a year of struggle with the authorities, he was recalled to England. A later and longer visit saw his imprisonment in Madrid in 1838, and the renewal of his friendship with a widow lady, Mrs. Clarke, whom he had known at Oulton, where she possessed some property. In 1840 he left Lisbon for London with Mrs. Clarke, who was accompanied by her daughter, and on April 23rd they were married at St. Peter's, Cornhill. He then settled down to literary work at Oulton.

In 1869 Mrs. Borrow died in London, and for years afterwards Borrow was also believed to be dead; however, in 1874, he returned to Oulton, where he died in 1881.

Reading *Lavengro* (1851) and *The Romany Rye* (1857), the reader is no less struck by the remarkable interest that Borrow takes in the people—especially the rough, uncultured people—whom he comes across, than by the cheerful indifference with which he loses sight of them and passes on to fresh characters. There is very little objective feeling in his friendships; as flesh-and-blood personages with individualities of their own—loves, hopes, faiths of their own—he seems to regard them scarcely at all. They exist chiefly as material for his curiosity and inquisitiveness. Hence there is a curious selfishness about him; not the selfishness of a passionate, capricious nature, but the selfishness of a self-absorbed and self-contained nature. Perhaps there was hidden away somewhere in his nature a strain of tenderness, of altruistic affection, which was reserved for a few chosen souls. But the warm human touch is markedly absent from his writings, despite their undeniable charm.

Take the Isopel Berners episode. Whether Isopel Berners was a fiction of the imagination or a character in real life matters not. At any rate, his friendship with this Anglo-Saxon girl of the road is one of the distinctive features of both *Lavengro* and *The Romany Rye*. The attitude of Borrow towards her may safely be regarded as a clear indication of the man's character. She was a girl of fine physical presence and many engaging qualities such as were bound to attract a man of Borrow's type, who had forsaken her friends to throw in her lot with this fellow-wanderer on the road.

And what does he do?

He accepts her companionship just as he might have accepted the companionship of one of his landlords or ostlers; spends the time he lived with her in the Dingle in teaching her Armenian, and when at last, driven to desperation by his calculating coldness, she comes to take farewell of him, he makes her a perfunctory offer of marriage, which she, being a girl of fine mettle as well as of strong affection, naturally declines. She leaves him, and after a few passages of philosophic regret, he passes on to the next adventure.

Now Borrow, as we know, was not physically drawn towards the ordinary gipsy type—the dark, beautiful Celtic women; and it was in girls of the fair Saxon order, such as Isopel Berners, that he sought a natural mate.

Certainly, if any woman was calculated by physique and by disposition to attract Borrow, Isopel Berners was that woman. And when we find that the utmost extent of his passion is to make tea for her and instruct her in Armenian, it is impossible not to be disagreeably impressed by the unnatural chilliness of such a disposition. Not even Isopel could break down the barrier of intense egoism that fenced him off from any profound intimacy with his fellow-creatures.

I think it less a case, as Dr. Jessop seems to think, of want of passion as of a tyrannous egotism that excluded any element likely to prove troublesome. He would not admit a disturbing factor, such as the presence of the self-reliant Isopel, into his life.

No doubt he liked Isopel well enough in his fashion. Otherwise certainly he would not have made up his mind to marry her. But his own feelings, his own tastes, his own fancies, came first. He would marry her—oh yes!—there was plenty of time later on. For the present he could study her character, amuse himself with her idiosyncrasies, and as a return for her devotion and faithful affection, teach her Armenian. A touching picture!

But the episode of Isopel Berners is only one illustration, albeit a very significant one, of Borrow's calculating selfishness. No man could prove a more interesting companion than he; but one cannot help feeling that he was a sorry kind of friend.

It may seem strange at first sight finding this wanderer of the road in the pay of the Bible Society, and a zealous servant in the cause of militant Protestantism: but the violent "anti-Popery" side of Borrow is only another instance of his love of independence. The brooding egotism that chafed at the least control was not likely to show any sympathy with sacerdotalism.

There was no trace of philosophy in Borrow's frankly expressed views on religious subjects. They were honest and straightforward enough, with all the vigorous unreflective narrowness of ultra-Protestantism.

It says much for the amazing charm of Borrow's writing that *The Bible in Spain* is very much better than a glorified tract. It must have come as a surprise to many a grave, pious reader of the Bible Society's publications.

And the Bible Society made the Vagabond from the literary point of view. Borrow's book, *The Zincali, or an account of the gipsies of Spain*, published in 1841, had brought his name before the public; but *The Bible in Spain* (1843) made him

famous; doubtless to the relief of "glorious John Murray," the publisher, who was doubtful about the book's reception.

It is a fascinating book, and if lacking the unique flavour of the romantic autobiographies, *Lavengro* and *The Romany Rye*, has none the less many of the characteristics that give all his writings their distinctive attraction.

Can we analyse the charm that Borrow's books and Borrow's personality exercise over us, despite the presence of those unpleasing traits which repel?

In the first place, he had the faculty for seizing upon the picaresque elements in the world about him. He had the ready instinct of the discursive writer for what was dramatically telling. Present his characters in dramatic form he could not; one and all pass through the crucible of his temperament before we see them. We feel that they are genuinely observed, but they are Borrowized. They speak the language of Borrow. While this is quite true, it is equally true that he knows exactly how to impress and interest the reader with the personages.

Perhaps his power in this direction is more fully appreciated when he deals with material that promises no such wealth of colour as do gipsy scenes and wanderings in the romantic South. Cheapside and London Bridge suit him fully as well as do Spanish forests or Welsh mountains. True romancer as he is, he is not dependent on conventionally picturesque externals for arresting attention, since he will discover the stuff of adventure wherever his steps may lead him. The streets of Bagdad in the "golden prime" of Haroun Alraschid are no more mysterious, more enthralling, than the well-known thoroughfares of modern London. No ancient sorceress of Eastern story can touch his imagination more deeply than can an old gipsy woman. A skirmish with a publisher is fully as exciting as a tilt in a mediæval tourney; while the stories told him by a rural landlord promise as much relish as any of the tales recounted by Oriental barbers and one-eyed Calenders.

Thus it is that while the pervasive egotism of the man bewitches us, we yield readily to the spell of his splendid garrulity. It is of no great moment that he should take an occasional drink to quench his thirst when passing along the London streets; but he continues to make even these little details interesting:

"Notwithstanding the excellence of the London pavement, I began, about nine o'clock, to feel myself thoroughly tired: painfully and slowly did I drag my feet along. I also felt very much in want of some refreshment, and I remembered that since breakfast I had taken nothing. I was in the Strand, and glancing about I perceived that I was close by an hotel which bore over the door, the somewhat remarkable name of 'Holy Lands.' Without a moment's hesitation I entered a well-lighted passage, and turning to the left I found myself in a well-lighted coffee room, with a well-dressed and frizzled waiter before me. 'Bring me some claret,' said I, for I was rather faint than hungry, and I felt ashamed to give a humble order to so well-dressed an individual. The waiter looked at me for a moment, then making a low bow he bustled off, and I sat myself down in the box nearest to the window. Presently the waiter returned, bearing beneath his left arm a long bottle, and between the fingers of his right hand two purple glasses: placing the latter on the table . . . he set the bottle down before me with a bang, and then standing still appeared to watch my movements. 'You think I don't know how to drink a glass of claret, thought I to myself. I'll soon show you how we drink claret where I come from'; and filling one of the glasses to the brim, I flickered it for a moment between my eyes and the lustre, and then held it to my nose; having given that organ full time to test the bouquet of the wine, I applied the glass to my lips, taking a large mouthful of the wine, which I swallowed slowly and by degrees that the palate might otherwise have an opportunity of performing its functions. A second mouthful I disposed of more summarily: then placing the empty glass upon the table, I fixed my eyes upon the bottle and said nothing: whereupon the waiter, who had been observing the whole process with considerable attention, made me a bow yet more low than before, and turning on his heel retired with a smart chuck of the head, as much as to say, 'It is all right; the young man is used to claret.'"

A slight enough incident, but, like every line which Borrow wrote, intensely temperamental. How characteristic this of the man's attitude: "You think I don't know how to drink a glass of claret, thought I to myself." Then with what deliberate pleasure does he record the theatrical posing for the benefit of the waiter. How he loves to impress! You are conscious of this in every scene which he describes, and it is quite useless to resent it. The only way to escape it is by leaving Borrow unread; and this no wise man can do willingly.

One of his best character sketches is that of the delightful ostler in *The Romany Rye*, whose talk exhales what Borrow would call "the wholesome smell of the stable." His wonderful harangues (Borrowized to a less extent than usual) have all the fine, breathless garrulity of this breed of man, and his unique discourse on "How to manage a horse on a journey" occupies a delightful chapter. Here are the opening sentences:

"'When you are a gentleman,' said he, 'should you ever wish to take a journey on a horse of your own, and you could not have a much better than the one you have here eating its fill in the box yonder—I wonder, by the by, how you ever came by it—you can't do better than follow the advice I am about to give you, both with respect to your animal and yourself. Before you start merely give your horse a couple of handfuls of corn, and a little water somewhat under a quart, and if you drink a pint of water yourself out of the pail, you will feel all the better during the whole day: then you may walk and trot your animal for about ten miles, till you come to some nice inn, where you may get down, and see your horse led into a nice stall, telling the ostler not to feed him till you come. If the ostler happens to be a dog-fancier, and has an English terrier dog like that of mine there, say what a nice dog it is, and praise its black and tan; and if he does not happen to be a dog-fancier, ask him how he's getting on, and whether he ever knew worse times; that kind of thing will please the ostler, and he will let you do just what you please with your own horse, and when your back is turned he'll say to his comrades what a nice gentleman you are; . . . then go and sit down to breakfast, and before you have finished breakfast, get up and go and give your horse a feed of corn; chat with the ostler two or three minutes till your horse has taken the shine out of his corn, which will prevent the ostler taking any of it away when your back is turned, for such things are sometimes done—not that I ever did such

a thing myself when I was at the fun at Hounslow. Oh, dear me, no!

Borrow is emphatically an original force in letters. We may not always like him; never can we ignore him. Provocative, unsatisfying, fascinating—such is George Borrow. And most fascinating of all is his love of night, day, sun, moon, and stars, "all sweet things." Herein lies the spell of Borrow: for in his company there is always "a wind on the heath."

Sir Richard Francis Burton was born in 1821, and Swinburne's comparison of him with Raleigh is a suggestive one, for each man was a tireless adventurer—both in the physical and imaginative sense; but Burton had nothing of the courtier in him.

The son of an Army officer, Burton began to travel when he was a few months old, and his desultory and un-English education was carried on for the first few years in France and Italy; he was then sent to a school at Richmond in preparation for Oxford. From babyhood his temper was an ungoverned one, and at school he "was in one perpetual scene of fights." In 1841 he went up to Oxford; but here his obstinate defiance of all lawful authority quickly resulted in rustication. Of his want of veracity Burton made no secret. He admits to being "a resolute and unblushing liar," and at any time would go out of his way to spread unfounded reports of his own enormities.

On leaving Oxford in 1842, he entered the East India Service, and thereafter took the keenest interest in the different languages, manners, and customs of the Orientals. His mastery of Arabic was so complete that, unhindered and unharmed, he wandered in disguise through many parts of Arabia, where it would have been death to him had he been discovered to be an European. The outcome of this exploit was the famous *Pilgrimage to El Medinah and Mecca* (1855–1856). Shortly after its publication he accompanied Captain Speke to Central Africa; and to this journey we owe his discovery of Lake Tanganyika in 1858.

As British consul, Burton served in many countries; for his wonderful power as a linguist made him a valuable officer, despite a temper and originality that were continually bringing him into conflict with his superiors.

Both in physique and personality, Burton was a mass of contradictions. Of fine stature, his hands and feet were of the smallest, and his dark, piercing eyes separated a calm, dignified brow from a mouth and chin of saturnine expression. In temperament he was inordinately proud, without a tinge of conceit; courageous, yet keenly sensitive to emotion; of stoical calmness in the big things of life, yet with an uncontrollable rage under the smallest provocation. He was an indefatigable worker, and on his death in 1890 left a large amount of unpublished manuscripts, a considerable portion of which, with his private diaries, Lady Burton, from conscientious reasons, caused to be destroyed. After 1861 Lady Burton accompanied her husband on his travels, and between 1875–1879 published some interesting books on Syria, Palestine, Arabia, Egypt, and India, and an expurgated edition of *The Arabian Nights* in 1886. She died in 1896.

Burton had no great literary gifts; he has not Borrow's gift of self expression and self-revelation; and the fragmentary records of friends and companions give us a far more striking and modest expression of the man's remarkable personality than anything he ever wrote. Even his famous *Arabian Nights* (1885–1888) owes its fame far more to the audacious frankness of the traveller than to the literary beauty of the translation. Burton was a fine scholar, and a wonderful linguist; but in sheer artistic merit Lane's translation is preferable to Burton's, and what is best in Burton is largely inspired by Lane.

He is the author of some fifty volumes, including travels, translations, and novels.

Laurence Oliphant (1829–1888) is another case of a man whose arresting personality never found adequate expression in his writings. Educated for the Bar, for many years he lived a life of adventure, but in 1864 entered the diplomatic service as private secretary to the Earl of Elgin, with whom he travelled to China. In 1861, while acting as Secretary of Legation in Japan, Oliphant narrowly escaped assassination. He then returned to England. After a short spell in Parliament, where he showed considerable ability, he came under the influence of a mystic and adventurer named Harris, with whom he crossed to America. When at length he broke away from Harris and the "Brotherhood of the New Life," it was to found a community of Jewish immigrants in Palestine.

Oliphant was a voluminous writer; his more important works include: *The Russian Shores of the Black Sea* (1853), *Narrative of a Mission to China and Japan* (1857–1859), *Piccadilly* (1866), *Altiora Peto* (1883), and *Masollam* (1886).

Oliphant's travel books scintillate with satirical sallies; but they have not the intimate charm of Borrow's, nor the scholarly interest attaching to Burton's. He is far more of a visionary than Burton, and has nothing of Borrow's solid commonsense; this visionary element predominating in *Sympneumata* (1885) and *Scientific Religion* (1888). As philosophical works they are of little value; though their psychological interest, by the light they throw on Oliphant's temperament, is remarkable.

Richard Jefferies, born in 1848 at Coate Farm, Swindon, was the son of a Wiltshire farmer. His education was fitful, and at fifteen, when he left school, showed neither genius nor promise. He was a quiet, shy, dreamy boy, no talker, and "not particularly amiable"—to whom a sunrise or the flight of a bird appealed far more than cricket or any other game. The lonely walks he loved were regarded as indolence, and the gun he carried was viewed with particular disfavour. "That young Jefferies," the old squire would say, "is not the sort of fellow you want hanging about in your covers." Indeed, little sympathy was shown, even by his parents, with the sensitive youth who found his companions in books and the teeming life of Nature.

Jefferies began his literary career at seventeen,

as reporter for the *North Wilts Herald*, a new Conservative paper, but it was not until 1872 that his work attracted attention, when his letters to the *Times* on the condition of the Wiltshire labourer brought him into notice; after this he had little difficulty in finding a publisher to take his work, though financially he never reaped a big harvest.

Never robust, for six years before his death he suffered intensely, yet he never ceased working, and in 1887, a few weeks before he died, he wrote a prefatory essay for a new edition of White's *Natural History of Selborne*, regretting that he had no time to make it longer.

In many respects, obviously, Richard Jefferies differs very widely from the men just discussed. As a personality he had nothing of the challenging and cryptic quality that give special interest to them. His one link with them is as a literary vagrant. He is something more than a lover of Nature or a naturalist. He is a genuine earth-man with a passionate primal strain, and that quality of aloofness from his civilised brethren that characterises all these literary vagabonds. His love of the open differs from Borrow's open-air delight in being more sensuous in its intensity. Borrow's joy in the earth is more like Byron's. Jefferies reminds us of Keats; he responds to the pageant of summer with every nerve in his body.

Take, for instance, the opening to *Wild Life in a Southern Country*:

"The inner slope of the green fosse is inclined at an angle pleasant to recline on, with the head just below the edge, in the summer sunshine. A faint sound as of a sea heard in a dream—a sibilant 'sish-sish'—passes along outside, dying and coming again as a fresh wave of the wind rushes through the beneets and the dry grass. There is the happy hum of bees—who love the hills—as they speed by laden with their golden harvest, a drowsy warmth, and the delicious odour of wild thyme. Behind, the fosse sinks and the rampart rises high and steep—two butterflies are wheeling in uncertain flight over the summit. It is only necessary to raise the head a little way, and the cool breeze refreshes the cheek—cool at this height, while the plains beneath glow under the heat."

This, too, from *The Life of the Fields*:

"Green rushes, long and thick, standing up above the edge of the ditch, told the hour of the year, as distinctly as the shadow on the dial the hour of the day. Green and thick and sappy to the touch, they felt like summer, soft and elastic, as if full of life, more rushes though they were. On the fingers they left a green scent; rushes have a separate scent of green, so, too, have ferns very different to that of grass or leaves. Rising from brown sheaths, the tall stems, enlarged a little in the middle like classical columns, and heavy with their sap and freshness, leaned against the hawthorn sprays. From the earth they had drawn its moisture, and made the ditch dry; some of the sweetness of the air had entered into their fibres, and the rushes—the common rushes—were full of beautiful summer."

Jefferies' writings are studies in tactile sensation. This is what brings him into affinity with Keats, and this is what differentiates him from Thoreau, with whom he had much in common. Of both Jefferies and Thoreau it might be said what Emerson said of his friend, that they "saw as with a microscope, heard as with an ear-trumpet." As lovers of the open air and of the life of the open air, every sense was preternaturally quickened. But though both observed acutely, Jefferies alone felt acutely.

"To me," he says, "colour is a sort of food; every spot of colour is a drop of wine to the spirit."

It took many years for him to realise where exactly his strength as a writer lay. In early and later life he again and again essayed the novel form, but, superior as were his later fictions—*Amaryllis at the Fair*, for instance, to such crude stuff as *The Scarlet Shawl*—it is as a prose Nature poet that he will be remembered.

He knew and loved the earth; the atmosphere of the country brought into play all the faculties of his nature. Lacking in social gifts, reserved and shy to an extreme, he neither knew much about men and women, nor cared to know much. With a few exceptions—for the most part studies of his own kith and kin—the personages of his stories are shadow people; less vital realities than the trees, the flowers, the birds, of whom he has to speak. But where he writes of what he has felt, what he has realised, then, like every fine artist, he transmits his enthusiasm to others. Sometimes, maybe, he is so full of his subject, so engrossed with the wonders of the earth, that the words come forth in a torrent, impetuous, overwhelming. He writes like a man beside himself with sheer joy. *The Life of the Fields* gives more than physical pleasure, more than an imaginative delight, it is a religion—the old religion of paganism.

The points of affinity between Thoreau and Jefferies are sufficiently obvious; and yet no two writers who have loved the earth, and found their greatest happiness in the life of the woods and fields, as did these two men, have expressed this feeling so variously. Thoreau, quiet, passive, self-contained, has seized upon the large tranquillity of Nature, the coolness and the calm, "the central peace subsisting at the heart of endless agitation."

Jefferies, feverish, excitable, passionate, alive to the glorious plenitude of the earth, has seized upon the exceeding beauty of natural things. No scholar like Thoreau, he brings no system of thought, as did the American, for Nature to put into shape. Outside of Nature all is arid and profitless to him. He comes to her with empty hands and seeks for what she may give him. To Thoreau the earth was a kind and gracious sister; to Jefferies an all-sufficing mistress.

The reader who passes from Thoreau to Jefferies need have no fear that he will be wearied with the same point of view. On the contrary, he will realise with pleasure how differently two genuine lovers of the earth can express their affection.

In Jefferies' song of praise, his song of desire—praise and desire alternate continually in his writings—there are two aspects of the earth upon which he dwells continually: the exceeding beauty of the earth, and the exceeding plenitude of the earth. Apostrophes to the beauty have been quoted already; let this serve as an illustration of the other aspect:

"Everything," he exclaims, "on a scale of splendid waste. Such noble, broadcast, open-armed waste is delicious to behold. Never was there such a lying

proverb as 'Enough is as good as a feast.'[1] Give me the feast; give me squandered millions of seeds, luxurious carpets of petals, green mountains of oak leaves. The greater the waste the greater the enjoyment—the nearer the approach to real life. Casuistry is of no avail; the fact is obvious; Nature flings treasures abroad, puffs them with open lips along on every breeze; piles up lavish layers of them in the free, open air, packs countless numbers together in the needles of a fir tree. Prodigality and superfluity are stamped on everything she does." [2]

This is no chance passage, no casual thought. Again and again Jefferies returns to the richness and plenty of the earth. And his style, suiting itself to the man's temperament, is rich and overflowing, splendidly diffuse, riotously exulting, until at times there is the very incoherence of passion about it.

Ardent, shy, impressionable, proud, pagan and idealist, he is one of the interesting figures in later Victorian Literature.

II. PROSE: Criticism and the Essay: (a) *Art and Life.* Introduction—Benjamin Haydon—John Ruskin—Walter Pater—J. A. Symonds—Oscar Wilde.

(a) ART AND LIFE

Literature being an art, it is natural that writers who had special knowledge of the fine arts should not only express that knowledge in the art of letters, but should attempt to trace the connection between art and life, as others had done between letters and life.

Lamb's essay on *Hogarth*, Hazlitt's *Conversations of Northcote*, are among the earliest essays in this broader kind of art criticism, while that unhappy man of genius, Benjamin Haydon (1788–1846), did for the Elgin Marbles what Ruskin in a later age did for the painting of the Italian Mediævals, in trying to reveal their beauty and vital significance.

The Romantic Movement had one of its springs of sustenance in the art of the Middle Ages, another in Greek art, while both music, sculpture, and painting affected the poetic outlook of men like Byron, Shelley, Keats, Landor, and Hunt. But the first great art-critic is John Ruskin.

JOHN RUSKIN (1819–1900)

His Life

John Ruskin was the son of John James Ruskin, head of a firm of wine merchants; a Scot whose ancestress had once suffered for the National Covenants. His mother was a strict Evangelical and disciplinarian who hoped one day to see her son as an Evangelical clergyman. Toys were regarded askance, and all entertainments, save a mild conviviality in connection with the local chapel, were tabooed. There was an even more Evangelical and Spartan aunt, who reminds us of the terrible Miss Emerson, the terror of the youthful Ralph Waldo. Like her spiritual comrade, Ruskin's aunt believed in austerities, and on one occasion gave him cold mutton for his Sunday dinner, which, remarked the victim, as "I much preferred it hot—greatly diminished the influence of the *Pilgrim's Progress*."

Mrs. Ruskin's method of Bible teaching might well have turned her son into a defiant infidel, for she pushed him steadily through the whole course of Biblical history again and again, giving him to learn whole portions by heart. Yet he always spoke with enthusiasm of this drilling, considering it the most precious part of his education; and there was certainly some responsive chord in the boy's own heart that enabled him to turn this hazardous method of Bible teaching to good literary account. For in no writer of our age is the influence of the English Bible more pronounced than in Ruskin; it gave dignity to his rhetoric and body to his thought.

What his home life was like, with all its conventionalities and gloomy discipline, Ruskin himself has told us in his delightful *Præterita*—delightful because of the whimsical humour of his confidences and the visualising power of reminiscence which enabled him to reproduce for us those early formative years. Such power reminds us again and again of Dickens in *David Copperfield*, until we cannot help wishing that Ruskin had turned his hand to fiction—fiction inspired by autobiographical memories. Plainly much whipping was certainly an early rule of his existence, and when at last he was allowed the privilege of coming down to dessert it was to "crack other people's nuts for them and never to have any himself."

The paternal influence was less oppressive. He was a man of artistic tastes and broad literary sympathies. An admirer of Scott and Byron, Shakespeare and Cervantes, he was an excellent reader, and by his readings aloud stimulated his young son's literary tastes. Ruskin's knowledge of Scott, while yet a lad, was almost as thorough as that of Morris. The father had literary ambitions for his son, being desirous that he some day should "write poetry as good as Byron's, only purer." The "purer" touch is characteristic, for the elder Ruskin, though by no means so rigid a Protestant as his wife, was a sound Evangelical in theory, whatever he may have been in practice.

If the child regards his parents with awe rather than with affection, they on the other side were entirely wrapped up in their boy; he was diligent, even precocious; showed considerable power of memory, and the unusual combination of genuine artistic feeling with an exactitude of observation and absorption in scientific subjects.

And if he proved also a self-centred child, what

[1] Curious similarity of thought here with Elia's *Popular Fallacy*, though probably quite uninspired by Lamb. Jefferies was no great reader. It is said that he knew little or nothing of Thoreau.

[2] *The Life of the Fields.*

else could have been expected in those surroundings. In any case he was a credit to his various tutors, and certainly had some excuse for being what he stormly designates himself at the time, as "a conceited and troublesome little monkey." The wonder of it is that he did not become a hopeless young prig instead of an attractively egotistical youth, with abundant nervous energy, and a lively disposition.

On his thirteenth birthday, Henry Talfourd—his father's partner—gave him Rogers' *Italy*, with illustrations by Turner. This determined, he tells us, "the main tenour of his life." A year later Prout's *Sketches in Flanders and Germany* served as a prelude to the first of many delightful journeys abroad. Then his innate love of art and nature was encouraged and stimulated by familiarity in these Continental tours.

In January 1837 Ruskin was entered as a Gentleman Commoner at Christ Church, Oxford; hoping that in due course he would develop into a bishop of the approved Evangelical type. He proved an excellent student, developed a fine taste in sherry, and attracted many friends by his wit and hospitality. He won, moreover, the Newdigate Prize—but he showed no signs of budding clericalism, and when he left the university, though hazy as to what he precisely wished to become, he was quite clear in deciding both against an episcopal future and a future in the wine trade.

Oxford, as he himself frankly admitted, did nothing for him, save to afford him opportunities of academic distinction. She was no inspiration in his life as she was in the life of Matthew Arnold or of John Henry Newman.

Shortly after he left Oxford the first-fruits of his tours abroad and artistic tastes at home came in the shape of the first of the five volumes given to *Modern Painters*. Nobody cared for Turner, he had said, but "a retired coachmaker of Tottenham and I."

Although for the first twenty years of his literary life it is the art critic that occupies the stage, while the first of his explicit social strictures was not published until the early sixties, yet the social reformer was latent almost from the start, and so far back as 1849 his attitude towards social matters was explicit enough, as a passage from *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* will show:

"We have just spent, for instance, a hundred and fifty millions, with which we have paid men for digging ground from one place and depositing it in another. We have formed a large class of men, the railway navvies, especially reckless, unmanageable, and dangerous. We have maintained besides (let us state the benefits as fairly as possible) a number of ironfounders in an unhealthy and painful employment; we have developed (this at least is good) a very large amount of mechanical ingenuity; and we have, in fine, attained the power of going fast from one place to another. Meantime we have had no mental interest or concern ourselves in the operations we have set on foot, but have been left to the quiet vanities and cares of our existence. Suppose, on the other hand, that we had employed the same sums in building beautiful houses and churches. We should have maintained the same number of men, not in driving wheelbarrows, but in a distinctly technical, if not intellectual employment; and those who were more intelligent among them would have been especially happy in that employment, as having room in it for the development of their fancy, and being directed by it to that observation of beauty which, associated with the pursuit of natural science, at present forms the enjoyment of many of the more intelligent manufacturing operatives. Of mechanical ingenuity, there is, I imagine, at least as much required to build a cathedral as to cut a tunnel or contrive a locomotive: we should, therefore, have developed as much science, while the artistical element of intellect would have been added to the gain. Meantime we should ourselves have been made happier and wiser by the interest we should have taken in the work with which we were personally concerned; and when all was done, instead of the very doubtful advantage of the power of going fast from place to place, we should have had the certain advantage of increased pleasure in stopping at home."[1]

While in *The Stones of Venice* the art criticism is really subsidiary to the larger matters of life and conduct suggested by those eloquent stones.

Despite these clear indications, there was great dismay and indignation when the vigorous indictment of modern political economy appeared—and the papers which Thackeray was publishing then in the *Cornhill Magazine* aroused such opposition that the editor had to put an end to them. In 1869 Ruskin was elected Slade Professor of Art at Oxford, and Oxford never had a more provocative or stimulating lecturer. After a break in 1877, Ruskin resumed his lectures, and continued his association with Oxford until 1884. Bad health clouded his later years, and obscured his fine genius, but he lingered on, a wreck of his old self, till 1900.

Throughout his life he had been subject to severe break-downs in health, and these became more frequent and more severe in his later years.

An abnormally sensitive organisation, coupled with a fierce enthusiasm and absorbing devotion to the work he loved, brought on grave symptoms of brain trouble. Despite the material advantages that he enjoyed, his life was by no means a happy one. Too noble and high-minded, too deeply sympathetic to pass on one side the darker problems of modern life from which he had been so carefully shielded in his youth, he was yet too highly strung, too feminine in temperament, too impatient for the arduous work he had mapped out for himself. In his own character he combined an astonishing medley of contradictory qualities—arbitrary, tolerant, savage, gentle-hearted, a visionary of the visionaries, yet often intensely practical and clear-headed, broad in many of his sympathies, intensely narrow in others; now speaking with the illuminating inspiration of genius, again with the wilful one-sidedness of the ordinary crank, reminding us at one moment of St. Francis, at the next of the absurd White Knight in *Alice through the Looking-Glass*; those things, if they added to the interest of his complex personality, added also to his troubles as a critic and a reformer. Yet, at bottom, he is one of the most beautiful, great-hearted characters in modern life, and physical infirmities are responsible for the erratic course he often pursued. The final impression left upon our mind is that of a modern St. Francis, with a strong dash of Cromwell and a milder dash of Don Quixote in his composition. Certainly a highly interesting blend.

[1] *Seven Lamps of Architecture*: "Lamp of Obedience."

His Work

Tolstoy once declared that Ruskin was one of the greatest men of the age, and he was pained to note that the English were of a different opinion. Now, while it is often unhappily true that a prophet is not without honour save in his own country, yet the uncertainty in the public attitude towards Ruskin is in a measure accountable on other grounds than those of moral blindness. Few great personalities of the age have been so bewildering as was Ruskin. He has been art critic, literary critic, social reformer, educationist, revolutionary, reactionary, all in turns, and he has been these things with a pontifical assertiveness that has roused opposition. He has never troubled to explain himself or sought to reconcile inconsistencies in his attitude, and has persisted in treating us like spoiled, ignorant children who were to be scolded into right thinking and good behaviour.

Yet the genius of the man is beyond question, just as his essential lovableness is; but it lay far less in any one of the various rôles he assumed during his long life, than in a superb suggestiveness that he brought to bear on a host of subjects, apparently disconnected. Having acclaimed him as a master of rhetoric, they questioned his right to lay down the law on manual labour; having recognised him as an authority on Botticelli, they were affronted when he posed as an expert on a living wage. They failed to see that his real strength lay less in art criticism as such, or economics criticism as such, or literary criticism as such, but in the brilliant discursive comments on the multiform aspects of life as a whole. But it was this suggestiveness that most people resented.

Ruskin is often referred to as if he had been a great art critic who spoiled himself by meddling with social problems. Nothing could be wider of the mark than this. Indeed it would be less extravagant to call him a great social critic who wasted his time over art criticism. Certainly it is quite an arguable matter how far Ruskin may be called a great art critic. He was, without doubt, a brilliant one, though his idiosyncratic nature made him blind to some forms of art, unduly enthusiastic of others. What is not arguable, however, is the amazing versatility and suggestiveness of the man. He was neither pre-eminently a deep thinker, nor a man of supreme excellence in any one department of literature, but a man of high moral principles, of splendid though ill-co-ordinated intellectual power, of luxuriant imagination, all of which qualities he turned on to a rich variety of subject-matter.

Regarding the man's stock and upbringing, it is really amazing what he became. The spoiled child of narrow-minded well-to-do parents, he might, with his sensitive artistic temperament, have become a dreamer and dilettante. There was nothing, as there had been in Carlyle's case, to make him realise the ugly, crude things of life. Nonetheless, Carlyle had no abler or more whole-hearted follower than he, while he excelled his master in penetrating insight into the complex conditions of modern life. He never deserted art for sociology, as has been said of him. He took up sociology because of his love for art. His life was all a piece. His social teaching is a corollary of his art criticism—that "ideas of Truth are the foundation, ideas of imitation the destruction of all Art." For art meant to him the outward expression of the inward beauty that haunts the imagination of every great artist. And how could this beauty be realised while modern conditions of living were so ugly and deadening?

Ruskin as an Art Critic

Ruskin's value as an art critic lay chiefly in the impulse he gave to his generation to appreciate the beauty of natural phenomena; he showed them the absurdity of confounding the grandeur of Nature merely with her big scenic effects, when a blade of grass or an ordinary cloud can reveal as richly the possibilities of beauty. To this extent he supplemented the implicit teaching of Wordsworth and Shelley.

Approaching art with this underlying thought, he postulates that painting should be something more than an ingenious arrangement of pigments. Without undervaluing technique, he emphasizes passionately the importance of sincerity and truthfulness. "In these books of mine," he declared, "their distinctive character as essays on Art is bringing everything to a root in human passion or human hope."

From 1843 to 1860 he concerned himself with the fine arts generally, especially painting, sculpture, and architecture; from 1860 onwards he carried the principles underlying this criticism into social life, and just as Turner inspired his earlier work, so does Carlyle inspire his later.

Ruskin has summed up for us clearly and concisely the trend of his teaching in his *Fors Clavigera*:

"*Modern Painters*," he declares, "taught the claims of all lower nature in the hearts of men; of the rock, and wave, and bird, as a part of their necessary life: in all that I now bid you to do, to dress the earth and keep it, I am fulfilling what I then began. *The Stones of Venice* taught the laws of constructive Art, and the dependence of all human work on edifice for its beauty, or the happy life of the workman. *Unto this Last* taught the laws of that life itself, and its dependence on the sun of justice: the *Oxford Lectures* the necessity that it should be led, and the gracious laws of beauty and labour recognised by the upper, no less than the lower classes of England; and lastly, *Fors Clavigera* has declared the relation of these to each other, and the only possible conditions of peace and honour for low and high, rich and poor."

Hence we are fully prepared for the thesis maintained by Ruskin that a lack of feeling for beauty means more than blunted art sensibility, it means "a contempt for right sense—beauty is the concrete final expression of rightness."

The jerry builder symbolises for Ruskin the defective idealism that he found in the life of our day. In a corrupt age, he argued, you have corrupt art; in an age of noble aims and endeavours, great art. As stated by him, the generalisation seems too sweeping. The history of art can show periods of splendour when there was abundant moral depravity. Ruskin over-emphasizes the correspon-

dence between art and morality. Beauty may be the concrete final expression of rightness. But rightness of what? Not necessarily of conduct surely, but of feeling. High and enduring beauty cannot be the expression of a debased and low nature. But it may well be that the artist expresses here merely his feeling for what is good and great, although the evil influences in his nature conspire to prevent him expressing this feeling in action as a man. Few men are so vicious and rotten throughout as to have no gleam of rightness (to adhere to Ruskin's terminology), but they may be too poor and weakly to let the rightness dominate their lives.

The vision of beauty is by no means confined to the virtuous soul, any more than is spiritual intuition. The crafty and scheming Jacob sees a ladder ascending from earth to heaven, where his robuster moral brother sees only a heap of stones in a desert place. Even "the devils believe and tremble."

Ruskin therefore circumscribes his argument too narrowly, in identifying great art with the outward expression of a healthy conscience.

Ruskin as the Critic of Society

Mr. J. A. Hobson, in his admirable study of John Ruskin[1] as social reformer, has well pointed out the fallacy of the prevalent notion that Mr. Ruskin abandoned his proper work as an art teacher in order rashly to embark in political economy, for which he had neither aptitude nor the requisite training and knowledge. On the contrary, Ruskin possessed

"special qualifications for social and economic criticism: for he was a skilled specialist in the finer qualities of work which men put into the raw material supplied by Nature in order to furnish the necessaries of human consumption. His technical knowledge went far beyond a knowledge of the fine arts in architecture, and he was thoroughly acquainted with the practical bearing of weaving, wood and metal work, pottery and other handicrafts; moreover, he had made a lifelong study of animal and vegetable life and of the structure and composition of the earth, thus gaining an intimate acquaintance with the nature of the raw materials of that wealth which formed the chief subject matter of commercial economy."

In regarding Ruskin's work as a social critic, it is well to bear in mind his thorough qualification for the rôle of reformer. Whatever may be the defects of his teaching, they are not due to any ignorance about the subject-matter he is discussing. Ruskin had, indeed, approached social economics with none of the vague sentimentalities so often and so unjustly placed to his credit, but with a logical power and dialectical skill denied to many of his hostile critics.

What he has done, roughly speaking, is to humanise political economy, to express the jargon of the economist about "cost" and "utility" in terms of human life, and to do this not as an emotional moralist but as a keen scientific inquirer. He takes the term "utility" and weighs its significance. The ordinary economist, as he points out, interprets "utility" with reference entirely to the finished product, overlooking the far more important process of production.

In this way wealth is estimated by the economist as a question of material welfare only, whereas, as Ruskin truly maintains, material welfare must be balanced by the character of the labour that goes to produce it; its duration, monotony, wholesomeness or unwholesomeness. Work that debilitates a people, drawing away its best energies, can produce only a sorry kind of wealth. The only true wealth in fact is life. That is Ruskin's conclusion, and his entire social theory concerns itself with the relation between labour and life. He examines the doctrine of Wages, contesting the point that they are "universally or even generally determined by the exclusive action of competition." Other considerations enter in, such as custom and good feeling.

"Cheap labour is not merely bad from the standpoint of morality, it is bad even from the lower standpoint of economy. For cheap labour means impoverished lives, and impoverished lives mean inefficient work. The consumer gains at the outset but loses ultimately, for if you squeeze wages to starvation point you get inferior work and shoddy goods."

One other illustration from Ruskin's social theory:

"Specialisation is good up to a point, but over-specialisation is bad, for it deadens the worker. A man whose labour consists, say, in making a fractional part of a pin becomes a mere machine. Division of labour you call it, it is division of human beings—dividing men into segments."

Labour should be made healthy and pleasurable. From the failure to recognise this he maintained that the great evil of our civilisation to-day lay not in the fact (incontestable as that is) that men are half-starved, but that they take no pleasure in the work by which they earn their living, looking to the acquisition of money as the only means of pleasure. And they cannot possibly take pleasure while there is this over-specialisation and this worship of supply and demand.

"Nor must we blame the employer only for this state of things; the public—the consumer—are also at fault. They demand cheap things, not good things. Were they longer-sighted they would realise that in the long run the good thing is the cheap thing."

Passing from Ruskin's criticism of modern economics, let us see how he views the educational fallacies prevalent to-day.

The great fault here, in his opinion, lies in our insistence on quantity of information rather than quality of knowledge. "You do not educate a man by telling him what he knew not, but in making him what he was not."

Ruskin insists on the dominance of moral ideas in teaching in order to form character, and upon a greater adherence to the facts of nature and human life. The defect to-day lies in the fact that commercial considerations rise uppermost. We wish merely to "get on" in the world, meaning by getting on, making money. Education, there-

[1] *Ruskin*: J. A. Hobson (Nisbet).

fore, is vitiated by the money taint, and æsthetic considerations are undervalued. Ruskin would certainly endorse Herbert Spencer's dictum, that "To prepare us for complete living is the function which Education has to discharge."

So far as children are concerned, he points to the great value of field excursions and country rambles (a value that is now receiving serious attention in our elementary schools); and shows the advantage that a gracious and beautiful environment has upon impressionable youth. In short, Ruskin's whole aim is to justify as sober fact Wordsworth's poetic exclamation: "We live by admiration, hope, and love."

Ruskin and the Position of Women

Ruskin's views on the "Woman's Movement" would meet with scant respect in many quarters to-day. The conservative element in his nature is more clearly discernible here than anywhere. Not only is he opposed to the suffrage but he is opposed to women entering industrial life, and his domestic ideal has some of the sentimental weaknesses characteristic of the Mid-Victorian age. Whether industrial competition is bad or good for women need not be discussed. Under present-day conditions of life, women are compelled to enter the industrial arena; and the domestic virtues clearly cannot exhaust all the potential qualities of womanhood to-day.

So even if we sympathise with Ruskin's preferences we are bound to acknowledge that they fail to take into consideration existing conditions of life.

Yet while there are elements in Ruskin's views about women that seem narrow and somewhat absurd, there are elements also, especially in his psychological analysis, that are well worth the consideration of even the advanced modernist.

Nothing could be wiser than his advice as to her reading:

> "Turn her loose into the old library and let her alone . . . let her loose in the library, I say, as you do the fawn in the fields. It knows the bad weeds twenty times better than you, and the good ones too, and will eat some bitter and prickly ones, good for it, which you had not the slightest idea were good."

These are words of excellent wisdom.

Then, again, in differentiating the sexes, he points out what is too often forgotten by extremists to-day, that with man and woman each has what the other lacks, and that the happiness of both lies in each asking and receiving from the other what that other alone can give. Or as Tennyson put it more briefly, "Woman is not undeveloped man but diverse!"

The Sum and Substance of Ruskin's Teaching

Ruskin is as emphatic as Carlyle upon the Gospel of Work, but he premises that work should not be mechanical and uninspiring, but interesting and pleasurable, so far as is possible.

He is no enemy to manufacturing life, as some think; all he contends is that manufacturing life does not necessarily mean an ugly and sordid life. He would have an English city as beautiful as a mediæval town, without the scientific defects of the mediæval town. What we have to learn the most diligently is the art of wise and noble living; and to this end Ruskin has lent all the power of his eloquence and logic to show us exactly what constitutes wisdom and nobility. Recognising with Spencer that the State is a living organism, he would have the parts mutually dependent. The good of the whole, that is the burden of his cry: and to attain the good of the whole, public enterprise should supersede private endeavour.

No writer in Victorian times did more than Ruskin to draw attention to the terrible wastage going on in the social organism—under present economic conditions,—and to stir the individual to more serious effort in the cause of human brotherhood, not in the spirit of condescending charity, but in the surer and ampler spirit of common justice.

In order to appraise the content of Ruskin's work as a critic on art and social problems, we must always bear in mind that he was essentially a mediævalist. His mediævalism it is that gave him his passion for the Gothic; that led him to underrate Greek art, that attracted him to Pre-Raphaelitism, that coloured the eclectic Catholicism into which he finally drifted as a religious thinker; this mediævalism it is, moreover, which brought him into line with Carlyle's love of the Middle Ages and that made him with Carlyle (though more explicitly and elaborately) adopt a kind of aristocratic Socialism as his economic creed, and laud authority and obedience. With his successor, Morris, he disclaims the art for art's sake theory; but whereas with Morris it was art for life's sake, with Ruskin it is ultimately art for God's sake. For him all great art is praise.

An understanding of this strong mediævalist spirit in Ruskin will probably help to explain many of the strange inconsistencies and arbitrary pronouncements that often mar not only his immensely valuable art and social criticism, but his literary criticism also.

Judging his work as a whole it may be said that he is a highly brilliant and suggestive rather than a safe critic; where his sympathies are held as in the case of Turner and the Victorian painters, he is splendid; where his sympathies are not engaged, whether in dealing with an old-world master like Michael Angelo, or a modern genius like Whistler, he is erratic and unfair. And we might pursue the point through his economics and literary preferences. There will always be a difference of opinion as to whether his essential greatness lay in his æsthetic or his social criticism. Probably we are too near him to-day to get the right perspective. All we can say is that at the *present* time he is best remembered and valued *on the whole* as a critic of modern social conditions. Posterity must judge. Meanwhile let us bear in mind the intellectual force, the imaginative insight, the fundamental sincerity that—inconsistencies and extravagances notwithstanding—he has brought to bear upon every side of life.

The Treasures Hidden in Books

But granting that we had both the will and the sense to choose our friends well, how few of us have the power! or, at least, how limited, for most, is the sphere of choice! Nearly all our associations are determined by chance or necessity; and restricted within a narrow circle. We cannot know whom we would; and those whom we know, we cannot have at our side when we most need them. All the higher circles of human intelligence are, to those beneath, only momentarily and partially open. We may, by good fortune, obtain a glimpse of a great poet, and hear the sound of his voice; or put a question to a man of science, and be answered good-humouredly. We may intrude ten minutes' talk on a cabinet minister, answered probably with words worse than silence, being deceptive; or snatch, once or twice in our lives, the privilege of throwing a bouquet in the path of a princess, or arresting the kind glance of a queen. And yet these momentary chances we covet; and spend our years, and passions, and powers, in pursuit of little more than these; while, meantime, there is a society continually open to us, of people who will talk to us as long as we like, whatever our rank or occupation;—talk to us in the best words they can choose, and of the things nearest their hearts. And this society, because it is so numerous and so gentle, and can be kept waiting round us all day long—kings and statesmen lingering patiently, not to grant audience, but to gain it;—in those plainly furnished and narrow ante-rooms, our bookcase shelves, —we make no account of that company,—perhaps never listen to a word they would say, all day long!

You may tell me, perhaps, or think within yourselves, that the apathy with which we regard this company of the noble, who are praying us to listen to them; and the passion with which we pursue the company, probably of the ignoble, who despise us, or who have nothing to teach us, are grounded in this,—that we can see the faces of the living men, and it is themselves, and not their sayings, with which we desire to become familiar. But it is not so. Suppose you never were to see their faces;—suppose you could be put behind a screen in the statesman's cabinet, or the prince's chamber, would you not be glad to listen to their words, though you were forbidden to advance beyond the screen? And when the screen is only a little less, folded in two instead of four, and you can be hidden behind the cover of the two boards that bind a book, and listen all day long, not to the casual talk but to the studied, determined, chosen addresses of the wisest of men;—this station of audience, and honourable privy council, you despise!

But perhaps you will say that it is because the living people talk of things that are passing, and are of immediate interest to you, that you desire to hear them. Nay; that cannot be so, for the living people will themselves tell you about passing matters much better in their writings than in their careless talk. But I admit that this motive does influence you, so far as you prefer those rapid and ephemeral writings to slow and enduring writings—books, properly so called. For all books are divisible into two classes: the books of the hour, and the books of all time. Mark this distinction—it is not one of quality only. It is not merely the bad book that does not last, and the good one that does. It is a distinction of species. There are good books for the hour, and good ones for all time; bad books for the hour, and bad ones for all time. I must define the two kinds before I go further.

The good book of the hour, then—I do not speak of the bad one—is simply the useful or pleasant talk of some person whom you cannot otherwise converse with, printed for you. Very useful often, telling you what you need to know; very pleasant often, as a sensible friend's present talk would be. These bright accounts of travels; good-humoured and witty discussions of question; lively or pathetic story-telling in the form of novel; firm fact-telling, by the real agents concerned in the events of passing history;—all these books of the hour, multiplying among us as education becomes more general, are a peculiar possession of the present age; we ought to be entirely thankful for them, and entirely ashamed of ourselves if we make no good use of them. But we make the worst possible use if we allow them to usurp the place of true books: for, strictly speaking, they are not books at all, but merely letters or newspapers in good print. Our friend's letter may be delightful, or necessary, to-day; whether worth keeping or not, is to be considered. The newspaper may be entirely proper at breakfast time, but assuredly it is not reading for all day. So, though bound up in a volume, the long letter which gives you so pleasant an account of the inns, and roads, and weather, last year at such a place, or which tells you that amusing story, or gives you the real circumstances of such and such events, however valuable for occasional reference, may not be, in the real sense of the word, a "book" at all, nor, in the real sense, to be "read." A book is essentially not a talked thing, but a written thing; and written, not with a view of mere communication, but of permanence. The book of talk is printed only because its author cannot speak to thousands of people at once; if he could, he would—the volume is mere *multiplication* of his voice. You cannot talk to your friend in India; if you could, you would; you write instead; that is mere *conveyance* of voice. But a book is written, not to multiply the voice merely, not to carry it merely, but to perpetuate it. The author has something to say which he perceives to be true and useful, or helpfully beautiful. So far as he knows, no one has yet said it; so far as he knows, no one else can say it. He is bound to say it, clearly and melodiously if he may; clearly at all events. In the sum of his life he finds this to be the thing, or group of things, manifest to him;—this, the piece of true knowledge, or sight, which his share of sunshine and earth has permitted him to seize. He would fain set it down for ever; engrave it on rock, if he could; saying, "This is the best of me; for the rest, I ate, and drank, and slept, loved, and hated, like another; my life was as the vapour, and is not; but this I saw and knew; this, if anything of mine, is worth your memory." That is his "writing"; it is, in his small human way, and with whatever degree of true inspiration is in him, his inscription, or scripture. That is a "Book."[1]

The broad, human significance of art is revealed also in some of the writings of the Pre-Raphaelites, especially by Dante Rossetti in his lovely allegory, *Hand and Soul*, and by Browning in his poems and painting and music. But the lineal successor of Ruskin, though a man of more limited genius, is Pater.

Walter Horatio Pater, the son of a doctor of Dutch extraction, was born in London in 1839. With an exhibition won at King's School, Canterbury, he went up to Queen's College, Oxford, in 1858, where he was coached by Jowett, and took his degree in 1862. After acting as a private tutor for two years, he was elected to a Fellowship at Brasenose.

Under the influence of Keble and the Tractarians, Pater at first thought of taking orders in the Church of England; he then became attracted towards Martineau and Unitarianism; but with Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Pater was more akin temperamentally, and with them he definitely joined hands. He also became a member of the "Old Mortality" essay club founded by John Nichol, to which Swinburne, A. V. Dicey, Nettleship, and Caird belonged.

In 1865 Pater paid his first visit to Italy, and on his return "Winckelmann" appeared in the *West-*

[1] *Sesame and Lilies.*

minster Review, to be included in *Studies in the Renaissance*, published in 1873. Two years later, at Birmingham, he delivered some lectures on *Demeter and Persephone*, that appeared in *Greek Studies* in 1895. After the publication of *Marius* in 1885, upon which he had been engaged four years, Pater left Oxford, and from 1886 to 1893 was living in London and doing a considerable amount of critical work for the *Athenæum*, *Guardian*, and *Pall Mall*. In November 1891 he reviewed *Dorian Gray* for the *Bookman*, and began a course of lectures on *Plato and Platonism* that were published in 1893.

In 1894 Glasgow conferred upon him the degree of LL.D., which he valued very highly, and shortly afterwards Pater was taken ill with rheumatic fever; his recovery was thought to be complete, but he died quite suddenly from heart failure on July 30th.

Like Ruskin, Pater is intensely subjective in his writings, and eclectic in his style. But he owes much less to Italian influence, far more to Greek culture, than Ruskin, and is untouched by the wide social interests of the author of *Fors Clavigera*. Essentially a scholarly recluse, his prevalent mood is introspective and brooding; and he is at his best when dealing with temperaments akin to his own. In his fastidious culture he reminds us of Arnold; but in his outlook on life his Epicurean philosophy is in striking variance with Arnold's stoicism. Arnold is always a moralist; there is nothing of the moralist in Pater.

Pater delights in art for its own sake, and without any ulterior reference this differentiates him from art lovers and critics like Ruskin and William Morris, to whom art must connote some social service, otherwise it is of little account.

Pater's point of view is wholly alien to this; and Pater's delight in the voluptuous sensation arising from a work of beauty struck the ordinary Englishman as unhealthy. Thus we can appreciate the point of the amusing parody of Pater in Mr. W. H. Mallock's lively satire, *The New Republic* (1877), where he appears as Mr. Rose. "What an odd man Mr. Rose is," says one of the characters. "He always seems to talk of everybody as if they had no clothes on."

The parody is rather cruel at times; for it suggests that Pater is little better than a refined sensualist, and this is to do him an injustice. Whatever might be inferred from detached passages in Pater's writings away from their context, his æsthetic theory is clear enough. Art exists to afford us intense and noble pleasure; and the highest pleasure necessarily furnishes an ethical impulse.

So much for the main theory. In one of its amplifications he contends that the norm to which the best art tends is music, lyric verse being the highest form of literature; while even architecture and sculpture are but harmonies and rhythm in stone—music, statically expressed. This theory has been strenuously attacked; and strictly interpreted, an arbitrary exaltation of music over letters would be to maintain that music is the most "spiritual," because it is emotionally suggestive; and that literature, for instance, is less spiritual, because it is more definite and intellectual.

Pater did not push his theory thus far. It is for him a suggestive idea rather than a dogma; and as a suggestive idea it is surely valuable and illuminating. Keats unconsciously implied the same when he wrote "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter"; and there is no doubt that the appeal of any supreme form of beauty can never be categorically expressed, but is always something felt; none the less powerfully because it is vague and atmospheric. It is this vague and atmospheric magic that surrounds great art which fascinated Pater; and although he knew it could not be expressed in a formula, he bent all his powers to the minute analysis of this complex appeal so far as it could be expressed in words. No one has gone further than he in what may be called the logic of emotion. The function of the critic is clearly expressed by Pater, and the following passage gives us clearly and unmistakably what is his aim:

> "The function of the æsthetic critic is to distinguish, analyse, and separate from its adjuncts the virtue by which a picture, a landscape, a fair personality in life or in a book produces the special impression of beauty or pleasure, to indicate what the source of the impression is, and under what conditions it is experienced."

Now turn for a concrete illustration of this to his minute and subtle analysis of the attraction of Da Vinci's "La Gioconda":

> "*La Gioconda* is, in the truest sense, Leonardo's masterpiece, the revealing instance of his mode of thought and work. In suggestiveness, only the *Melancholia* of Dürer is comparable to it; and no crude symbolism disturbs the effect of its subdued and graceful mystery. We all know the face and hands of the figure, set in its marble chair, in that circle of fantastic rocks, as in some faint light under sea. Perhaps of all ancient pictures time has chilled it least. As often happens with works in which invention seems to reach its limit, there is an element in it given to, not invented by, the master. . . .
>
> "The presence that thus rose so strangely beside the waters is expressive of what in the ways of a thousand years men had come to desire. Here is the head upon which all the ends of the world are come and the eyelids are a little weary. It is a beauty wrought out from within upon the flesh, the deposit, little cell by cell, of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions. Set it for a moment beside one of those white Greek goddesses or beautiful women of antiquity, and how would they be troubled by this beauty, into which the soul with all its maladies has passed! All the thoughts and experience of the world have etched and modelled there, in that which they have of power to refine and make expressive the outward form, the animalism of Greece, the lust of Rome, the reverie of the middle age with its spiritual ambition and imaginative loves, the return of the Pagan world, the sins of the Borgias. She is older than the rocks among which she sits; like the vampire she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave; and has been a diver in deep seas and keeps their fallen day about her; and trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants; and, as Leda, was the mother of Helen of Troy, and, as Saint Anne, the mother of Mary; and all this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes, and lives only in the delicacy with which it has moulded the changing lineaments, and tinged the eyelids and the hands. The fancy of a perpetual life, sweeping together ten thousand ex-

periences, is an old one; and modern thought has conceived the idea of humanity as wrought upon by a summing up in itself all modes of thought and life. Certainly Lady Lisa might stand as the embodiment of the old fancy, the symbol of the modern idea."

As a stylist, we may regard, in the first place, Pater's theories; in the second place, his practice.

The theories may be read in the "Essay on Style" which appears in the volume entitled *Appreciations*. The end, in his view, was beauty of expression, and to achieve this end he advocated a consciously artistic prose, where all superfluities should be eliminated, and where the words should be chosen with jealous and loving care, so as to express clearly and precisely the underlying thought. Words for him were not merely connections of thought, but carried with them an aroma that might create the fitting mood for appreciating the drift of the writer's mind.

No man more conscientiously tried to put into practice his precepts than he. No essayist has been more sensitive to the colour and gradation of shade in words than he; and there is an amazing delicacy and subtlety in the critical nuances by which he endeavoured to actualise for the reader the object of his criticism. One has only to read the Essays on Lamb and Rossetti to appreciate this. His best critical work is happily expressed in the words which he applied to one of his volumes—*Appreciations*. They are, in the exact sense of the word, Appreciations—a subtly reasoned statement of the grounds for delighting in certain authors.

Pater treats artistic pleasure as Hawthorne treats ethical problems, by putting them under a microscope. It is a fascinating pursuit, but apt to become wearisome if pursued too long. Thus Pater is best enjoyed in modest snatches and instalments; to read him thus is both a joy and a discipline.

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS (1840–1893) is another representative of the same school of thought; but is inferior to Pater both as a critic and as a stylist. There is force and suggestive criticism in his big work *The Renaissance of Italy*, though the artistic side of his subject is developed out of all proportion to other aspects.

As a stylist he is attractive and picturesque, but over-ornate, and his diffuseness and lack of method compare unfavourably with Pater's concentrative lucidity. None the less he is often suggestive, and there is admirable matter in his *Shakespeare's Predecessors in the English Drama*—the criticism of Marlowe being particularly fine—and in his *Essays Speculative and Suggestive* (1890).

This survey of æsthetic criticism may conclude with the name of OSCAR WILDE (1854–1900).

There is no wittier or more insolent upholder of the "Art for art's sake" theory than Wilde. In Pater there is always the under-note of reserve. Wilde swept morality out of view altogether, and there is no grimmer comment upon his æsthetic creed than is supplied by his own tragic life.

His imitativeness, his wit, have given special prominence to his fantastic novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), and to his plays. Their cleverness cannot be disputed; but—with the exception of *The Importance of Being Earnest*—their merits are wholly superficial and derivative.

The structure of *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *A Woman of No Importance*, and *The Ideal Husband* is a skilful medley of Scribe and Sardou. Shorn of the brilliant talk (it is scarcely dialogue, for most of it could be transposed to other characters without causing the least feeling of incongruity), the characters reveal themselves as familiar figures of stageland—the stageland of domestic melodrama; and the comedy and pathos do not blend, but are superimposed the one on the other like the slabs of a Neapolitan ice. *Dorian Gray* is Balzac and Huysmans, sharpened by Wilde's wit. Of course it is clever. Wilde is always clever; but there is no originality or creative imagination about it.

Similarly, Wilde's verse, graceful, scholarly, melodious, is essentially the work of a sensitive and intensely imitative mind. There is no authentic note—nothing but echoes; echoes of Hood, Tennyson, Arnold, Rossetti, Swinburne.

Yet with all this imitativeness, this witty posing, this barefaced borrowing, the reader cannot help feeling that it is the work of a man of real power and imagination, who does not take the trouble to express *himself*. He played so long with affectation, cultivated so strenuously an insincerity of speech, that he found it easier and more agreeable to treat letters as he was treating life. Yet genius will out, and in one department the greatness of the writer is certainly exhibited—that is, in his criticism. His little volume, *Intentions* (1891), is a monument of sane and subtle criticism, expressed with admirable ease and pungency.

Wilde might have become a great playwright—certainly a great maker of artificial comedy. *The Importance of Being Earnest* (produced February 14, 1895) bears witness to that; for there he is himself, his witty paradoxes expressed with a fine sense of dramatic form, and not flung into the play as brilliant irrelevances.

But he certainly is a great critic, whose extravagant sallies conceal a level-headed sagacity. He can be both wise and entertaining—an admirable blend; though we English so often think it seemly to link wisdom with dull sententiousness.

How far Wilde's punishment and sufferings affected his character and conduct we cannot say; but their effect upon his literary work admits of no question. In its sincerity, its simple emotional power, its stern seriousness, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* is in startling contrast with Wilde's earlier verse. No posing here, no facile imitativeness, no playing with sensation. Wilde has been brought face to face with the hard, brutal realities of life, and as an artist he is incomparably the better for his awful experience. This is shown not only in the *Ballad* but in the *De Profundis*—a personal document, as intimate as De Quincey's *Confessions*, more sincere, and fully as effective as a piece of fine imaginative prose. Had he been merely the clever charlatan some people imagined him to be, he could never have written these things. That behind the flippancy and cynical exterior there lay a strain of real greatness, is unquestionable. This makes the tragedy of his wasted and broken life the greater.

II. PROSE: CRITICISM AND THE ESSAY: (b) *Letters and Life.* Leigh Hunt—Thomas Carlyle—Julius Hare Augustus Hare—W. R. Greg—W. B. Rands—John Skelton—Matthew Arnold—R. L. Stevenson—G. H. Lewes—Harriet Martineau—Walter Bagehot—R. H. Hutton—Leslie Stephen—H. D. Traill Andrew Lang—Richard Garnett—Stopford Brooke—William Courthope—George Saintsbury—Edmund Gosse—Henry Morley—William Sharp—William Minto—William Ainger—J. Churton Collins—F. J. Furnivall—W. W. Skeat—E. Arber—H. A. J. Munro—John Conington—John Rhys—J. W. Mackail—Gilbert Murray—J. P. Mahaffy—Edward Dowden—John Morley—W. Raleigh—Austin Dobson—W. E. Henley—T. Watts-Dunton.

(*b*) LETTERS AND LIFE

LEIGH HUNT was in direct lineal descent from the great critics of the Romantic Revival. With less imagination than Coleridge, less intellectual power than Hazlitt, he has the faculty of the great critic, the faculty of fine appreciation. His literary palate is as sure and delicate as that of the best. As a critic of poetry he ranks little below Coleridge, and is more reliable than Hazlitt. What he has to say of Dryden, Milton, Keats, and Coleridge is altogether admirable.

An agreeable and lucid writer, his critical essays are all worth reading, and of greater moment than his original work. A pleasant and graceful poet, a diverting trifler in literary chit-chat, and a fine critic, more especially in the art of just appraisement.

The greatest personality in criticism and the essay during the earlier part of the era was Thomas Carlyle. No one related letters more closely to life than he; and while he is excelled as a literary critic by many inferior to him in genius, there is no greater critic of life and letters, in the broader sense, than he.

THOMAS CARLYLE (1795–1881)

HIS LIFE

In the little village of Ecclefechan in Dumfriesshire, Thomas Carlyle was born on December 4, 1795, and after many years of conflict with poverty, physical pain and mental toil, he found a resting-place in the little churchyard.

His father, a hard-working stone-mason, was one of five brothers described as "a curious sample of folks, pithy, bitter-speaking bodies, an' awfu' fechters." His mother an affectionate, prudent, God-fearing woman, and proud of her son, it was her great ambition to see him a minister. From the village school he passed to Annan Grammar School, at fourteen entering Edinburgh University, and, probably from thriftiness, walked the intervening eighty miles.

Although destined by his parents for the Scottish ministry, mathematics rather than theology seems to have claimed his attention; in 1814 he left the University, without a degree, to become a teacher of mathematics first at Annan, then at Kirkcaldy, but decided "it were better to perish than continue schoolmastering."

In 1818 he returned to Edinburgh to study law, but with no happier result; and, having contributed a number of short biographies to Brewster's *Encyclopædia*, aspired to literature, began to learn German, became a devoted disciple of Goethe and Fichte, and greatly fascinated by German philosophy that quickly moulded his thought and work. A translation of the *Wilhelm Meister* appeared in 1824, and a *Life of Schiller* the following year.

An early love affair with Margaret Gordon had ended in this lady, in a farewell letter, bidding him "cultivate the milder disposition of the heart" and "subdue the more extravagant visions of the brain,"—but soon a fresh interest enters his life. Miss Jane Welsh, a lineal descendant of John Knox, to whom he had been attached for some time, agreed to marry him in 1826; she had inherited a small farm at Craigenputtock, "the dreariest spot in all the British Dominions," says Carlyle. Here, for six years he threw himself heart and soul into literary work, and gave us *Sartor Resartus*, and some of his best *Essays*. Himself a dyspeptic suffering from sleeplessness, his wife a clever, intellectual woman unused to domestic affairs; this, coupled with the lack of congenial friends, and the constant grind of poverty, makes it small wonder that in so depressing an environment Carlyle should become the irascible individual presented to us in Froude's *Life*.

In 1834 he turned his face toward the Mecca of all workers, London, and became a well-known figure in Chelsea, his home the resort of every distinguished man and woman worth knowing.

When his famous *French Revolution* was begun, the manuscript of the first volume was lent to his friend John Stuart Mill, whose servant used all but a few pages to light the fire. Reluctantly he accepted a sum of £100 from Mill, and set to work again, the two first volumes appearing in 1837; with these he won recognition. The following year, at the suggestion of Miss Martineau, he gave the first of several courses of lectures. "I hate lecturing," he wrote to Emerson in 1838, "I can only gasp and writhe, and stutter, a spectacle to gods and fashionables—being forced to it by want of money." The following year Mrs. Welsh died, leaving her daughter about £250 a year, and all fear of poverty was now at an end.

An indefatigable worker, it was not in Carlyle's nature to rest: *The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (1845), *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (1850), *Life of John Sterling* (1851), his *Lectures* revised and published, and his monumental *Frederick the Great* (1858–65), came in steady succession from his pen. In 1866, just as he had fought his way to the front and was honoured by being made Lord Rector of Edinburgh University, his life became clouded by the death of Mrs. Carlyle. While driving in Hyde Park she left her carriage, to walk with a favourite little dog, but on crossing the road it was nearly run over; Mrs. Carlyle at once returned, and on getting

into the carriage told the coachman to drive round the park; receiving no further instruction, he spoke to her and was horrified to find she was dead. Carlyle never recovered from this blow: "All of sunshine that remained in my life went out in that moment; all of strength too, seems to have gone." For fifteen years he lived on, the lonely, furrow-lined figure haunting Chelsea Embankment and Battersea Park, and writing the *Reminiscences* so blunderingly edited by Froude. In 1874 Disraeli offered him a baronetcy and the Grand Cross of the Bath, both of which he refused, and on 5th February 1881 he died; Westminster Abbey wished to honour him by burial within its walls, but by his own desire he was taken to Ecclefechan.

His Work

Although Carlyle lived to feel the influence of the Scientific Movement of the mid-century, he remained in spirit and attitude a Revolutionary of the elder period. Not an abstract Revolutionary like Shelley; not a mere literary radical like Lamb; but one thoroughly imbued with the revolutionary spirit, dissatisfied with modern commercialism, a champion of the simplicities of life, with keen admiration for the qualities of courage and endurance, a fighter rather than a critic, while in spirit he was far more attuned to the transcendentalism of Wordsworth than to the utilitarianism of Mill. Yet, like his friend Ruskin, he was a man of moods and of wild inconsistencies. Consequently he has been claimed as the friend of widely divergent schools of thought, and abused by all the political parties in turn.

The Liberals of the day were offended by his sarcastic gibes on Liberty, his contempt for the notion of Equality, and his contemptuous attitude towards the extension of the Franchise.

On the other hand, the Tories loved him no better. He was too furiously in earnest for them, too keenly sensitive to the social misery of the day.

A champion of the poor and an upholder of slavery; a despiser of the Franchise and a keen advocate of the organisation of Labour; a scoffer of Poetry and an admirer of Burns; a theological sceptic whose writings are none the less imbued with a fervent religious spirit; a distaste for literature as literature, and an admirer of Goethe. These and other paradoxes one might mention, till one might question, as indeed some have, whether there is any clear, intelligible outlook at the bottom of his strictures and criticisms. Yet the confusion, though real, is far less fundamental than one would imagine at a first survey. And there is a very real unity of purpose and of view underneath Carlyle's writings, when allowance has been made for the irascible temperament of the man, and his tendency to dot his *i*'s and cross his *t*'s.

Looking at his work as a whole, we are struck by the burning ethical enthusiasm that lights up every utterance. Literature is to him as chaff unless it be the medium of conveying some direct moral truth. History has no meaning save as the life experience of great personalities, and as a serial illustration of the prevalence of Might.

Whatever the subject, he always interpolated a few of his favourite precepts, and here we can get some definite outline of his teaching. Don't cant—Don't whine—Don't gush! On these he is always ringing the changes. Like many preachers, he was doubtful at times what we ought to do, but never doubtful about what we ought not to do.

Carlyle did not mince his words, and he gave his advice at the top of his voice. This has offended sensitive ears. But the shouting prophet has his advantages. A suggestion, a whisper, sufficient for some people; but for the majority, exaggeration is helpful.

Indeed, as a writer he is not merely great, but very great; less imposing than Ruskin, less perspicuous, but with an incisive force, an illuminating brilliance of phrase, that Meredith himself might have envied. The difference indeed between Carlyle and (the earlier) Ruskin as stylists is as considerable as that between Whistler and Burne-Jones. Ruskin's later style is less stately, less rhetorical, more flexible and idiosyncratic, and to that extent he approximates to the intensely idiosyncratic style of his friend and, in certain respects, mentor, Carlyle. But even then they are sufficiently distinctive and original to make an agreeable and lively contrast; Ruskin excelling in swift satire, Carlyle in elaborate irony.

The Development of Carlyle's Genius

When Carlyle came up to London with *Sartor Resartus* in his pocket and the determination to harass the "terrified owls" of publishers, Coleridge was the dominant spiritual force among those of the younger generation, and although Carlyle seized, with his customary satiric humour, on the weakness in Coleridge's transcendental philosophy, his own spiritual standpoint was much the same. Both he and Coleridge were impatient with the "cause and effect" philosophy of the eighteenth century, and both of them valued German idealists as providing the basis of a vital and practical religion. But whereas Coleridge sought to re-vitalise with his metaphysics the old forms of faith, Carlyle took away from them, seeking to construct a fresh ethic rather than to galvanise an old metaphysics.

> "It is a chronic malady," he exclaimed, "that of metaphysics . . . in action alone can we have certainty. Nay properly Doubt is the indispensable, inexhaustible material wherein action works, which action has to fashion into certainty, and Reality; only on a canvas of Darkness, such as Man's way of being, could the many-coloured picture of our life paint itself and shine."

In his German studies, therefore, he fixes upon Goethe as his hero. At first sight the choice is surprising and unaccountable, for Goethe was essentially an artist; and Carlyle's contempt for art was deeply ingrained.

But it was Goethe as philosopher that attracted Carlyle—Goethe's natural mysticism, his untheological transcendentalism, if I may use such a contradictory term, that appealed especially to one who was always a Calvinist without dogma. And *Sartor Resartus* is Carlyle's first and most elaborate attempt to state this position.

Carlyle's spiritual standpoint and his psychological standpoint were both formulated and emphasized in this first book of his, and it is scarcely any exaggeration to say that it supplies the text for all his future writings. His gospel of work, of action, is here: here also is his belief in personality, which he elucidates in more concrete form in his *Hero Worship* and later writings. "Great men," he wrote in *Sartor*, "are the inspired (speaking and acting) Texts of the Divine Book of Revelation whereof a chapter is compiled from epoch to epoch and by some named History." What are the *French Revolution*, *Cromwell*, *Frederick*, but elaborate studies of the dynamic influence of men like Robespierre, Mirabeau, Carlyle, and Frederick? What are his *Critical Essays* but attempts to get at the *Man* beneath his literary trappings, whether it be Richter or Burns, or Scott or Johnson? Why did he extol the Middle Ages at the expense of his own age as he does in *Past and Present*?—because in the Middle Ages, in his opinion, a finer and more forceful expression of the personal equation was possible. Why does he laud the strong man?—because of his belief in his personality. And if we ask why this insistence on the dynamic, we come back to his religion, his belief that in genuine men the Divine Idea is expressed; or, in theological terminology, that in Man, God (the spirit of the universe) is made flesh.

Sartor Resartus, with its explosive transcendentalism, met with no friendly reception save by a few like Emerson, who welcomed its anti-materialistic standpoint. Very different was the reception of the *French Revolution*, where he gives a concrete illustration of the thesis in *Sartor*. The *French Revolution* is not a history; indeed Carlyle had not the makings of an historian, for his vision is not panoramic; he never seeks to re-tell the story of the past, but to explain the significance of the past, and this he does in a series of pictures; externalises spiritual forces, rather than physical appearances.

But if he does this it is due to no intellectual indifference on his side to the historical detail—for even to-day, when so much has been discovered about that time that was hidden from Carlyle, the essential truth of his picture is untouched. It is due rather to that, that he gives us the *Revolution* in terms of poetry and not of prose. And a wonderful prose-poem the book remains—a dramatic poem that no student of history can afford to pass by. He will not learn the story of the Revolution from this book, but, having mastered the story, and the great sequence of events in any reliable text-book, he will understand the Revolution the better for reading Carlyle's poem.

The *French Revolution* appeared in 1837, then came his little book on *Chartism*, and *Heroes and Hero Worship* (1841). Of the latter book we have already spoken; Carlyle's historical standpoint is here illustrated in brief samples, in a pointed, lucid, and attractive manner. *Chartism* is best considered along with *Past and Present* and *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, for in these three volumes his social creed is fully expressed in its curious yet characteristic blend of radicalism and conservatism; its idealism of the past; its paean on the strong man whom the people should obey; its contempt for legislative forms; its denunciation of *laissez faire*. Amidst much extravagance, as, for instance, in the unrestrained denunciation of Political Machinery; amidst much wilful wrong-headedness, as, for instance, his defence of Slavery, there are many luminous suggestions on social politics that subsequent reformers have seized upon.

His condemnation of the drones of modern life; his insistence on the necessity for the "organisation of labour"; his clear perception that the privilege to vote is an empty enough one unless the Demos be educated to use this privilege wisely; his diatribes on the Cash-nexus that binds men together under modern capitalist conditions; in all such matters Carlyle spoke like a seer to his generation. Many of his phrases have become watchwords to-day for the worker—phrases such as "Justice before Charity"—"Permanence of Employment"—"A fair day's wage for a fair day's work."

Meanwhile, in 1845, came the big book on *Cromwell* and the re-discovery of the greatness of Puritanism; for that it was great is practically assented to. In its way the book is fully as fine from the intellectual point of view as the *French Revolution*; and when we consider the drabbier nature of the material, the absence of those picturesque dramatic episodes that help any man who writes of the age of Robespierre, it is then that we appreciate the patient industry, the artistic skill, the imaginative homogeneity of the performance.

The *Life of Sterling* (1851), that followed *Cromwell* and the *Social Essays*, has a distinctive place among Carlyle's writings; there is no thunder here, nothing of the fierce worship and hot intensity that inform most of Carlyle's works. There is an atmosphere of spiritual calm curiously unlike the prevalent mood of the writer; while those who find Carlyle's usual style an irritant rather than a stimulant may find here a clear, tranquil, and subdued prose that cannot upset their susceptibilities.

This tribute from a friend, charitable yet just, ranks among the best pieces of biographical writing in our language.

Then came a longish interval during which Carlyle was passing through, as his wife humorously called it, "the Valley of the Shadow of Frederick." Less attractive than the *French Revolution*, less direct in its appeal to most English readers than the *Cromwell*, *Frederick the Great* is the greatest intellectual feat performed by Carlyle. Indeed in its treatment of Frederick's military campaigns, it is regarded as a classic in Germany, and his industry, dexterity, and power of characterisation have never been shown to better advantage; none-the-less, Carlyle's admiration for his hero cannot command the same assent as other studies in hero worship have done, and special pleading in this class of work is often unconvincing. The book severely taxed Carlyle's powers, as we may believe when we consider its scope and content; and it is one of the hardest to construe of the author's writings, largely because Carlyle's mannerisms of style are nowhere more abundant.

There are two ways of regarding Carlyle's significance. We may regard him merely as a force

in letters, or we may look at him as a prophet to his age. In both capacities he deserves the attention of the literary student.

Let us consider these two aspects more fully than we have hitherto done. And first of all take Carlyle as a literary artist.

Even those who condemn his thought as confused, and esteem his ethical influence as over-rated, concede him greatness as an artist. His books abound in brilliantly vivid pictures. Whatever he touches, whether a bit of landscape, an historical character, a biographical detail, even a date, is made alive and significant. His style has serious defects, but actuality and intensity are not among them. With a few strokes of the pen he can vitalise the landscape.

"Waving, blooming country of the brightest green; dotted all over with handsome villas, handsome groves: crossed by roads and human traffic, here inaudible or heard only as a musical hum; and behind all swarm, under olive-tinted haze, the illimitable, limitary ocean of London."

Equally well can he paint the human element, as in this sketch of Coleridge's interminable monologues:

"He began anywhere: you put some question to him, made some suggestive observation; instead of answering this, or decidedly setting out towards an answer of it, he would accumulate formidable apparatus, logical swim-bladders, transcendental life-preservers, and other precautionary and vehiculatory gear for setting out; perhaps did at last get under way—but was swiftly solicited, turned aside by the flame of some radiant new game on this hand or on that into new courses, and ever into new; and before long into all the universe, where it was uncertain what game you would catch, or whether any."

In the case of Coleridge the blame exceeds the praise; if we turn to his picture of Cromwell, where his moral sympathies were more actually engaged, we may see how well he can penetrate the peculiarities of the man and get at the core of his greatness.

"And withal this hypochondria, what was it but the very greatness of the man, the depth and tenderness of his ideal affections; the quantity of *sympathy* he had with things? The quantity of insight he could get over things: this was his hypochondria. The man's misery, as men's misery always does, came of his greatness. Samuel Johnson is that kind of man. Sorrow-stricken, half-distracted, the wide element of mournful *black* enveloping him—wide as the world. It is the character of a prophetic man; a man with his whole soul *seeing* and struggling to see."

Carlyle's imagination is, as Emerson truly observed, of the stereoscopic order. He can give substance and perspective to his pictures. His figures are not embroidered decorations on flat surfaces. No writer of our time can more happily sum up the character of a man in a phrase. Take, for instance, the following felicities: "Bacon sees—Shakespeare sees through," Swift carried "sarcasm to an epic pitch"—Mazzini, "merciful and fierce, true as steel, the word and thought of him limpid as water; by nature a little lyrical poet." With what humorous insight he has referred to Dean Stanley as "knocking holes in the Church of England"; satirised the arguments of the imitative Tractarians as "spectral Puseyisms," and Coleridge's failure of will power as "a steam engine of a hundred horse-power with the boiler burst."

Small wonder that Emerson said of him, "Nothing seems hid from those wonderful eyes of yours; those devouring, those thirsty eyes; those portrait-eating, portrait-painting eyes of thine."

No two writers of divergent temperament better appreciated each other's greatness than Carlyle and Emerson. The opposite of Emerson in temperament and in method, no one has better appraised his style than Carlyle, in the following sentence:

"Brevity, simplicity, softness, homely grace, with such a penetrating meaning, soft enough, but irresistible, going down to the depths and up to the heights as silent electricity goes."

This brilliant intensity of style is occasionally blinding and leads the writer into violent contrasts that lack proportion; but this is only the defect of his virtue as a writer. For the writing is always individual and forceful, never dull, insincere, nor trivial.

Passing from the manner to the matter of his criticism, it may be noted how that he reduces every subject to a common moral denomination. His best criticisms are something much more than literary estimates, they are spiritual appreciations. Take, for instance, his admirable essay on Burns. Here he goes to the root of the matter at once:

"The excellence of Burns is, indeed, among the rarest, whether in poetry or prose; but, at the same time, it is plain and easily recognised; *his Sincerity*, his indisputable air of Truth. Here are no fabulous woes or joys; no hollow fantastic sentimentalities; no wire-drawn refinings, either in thought or feeling: the passion that is traced before us has glowed in a living heart; the opinion he utters has risen in his own understanding, and been a light to his own steps. He does not write from hearsay, but from sight and experience; it is the scenes that he has lived and laboured amidst, that he describes; those scenes, rude and humble as they are, have kindled beautiful emotions in his soul, noble thoughts, and definite resolves; and he speaks forth what is in him, not from any outward call of vanity or interest, but because his heart is too full to be silent. He speaks it with such melody and modulation as he can 'in homely rustic jingle'; but it is his own, and genuine. This is the grand secret for finding readers and retaining them: let him who would move and convince others be first moved and convinced himself."

The same applies to his finely suggestive essays on German literature. He had little of Coleridge's subtle metaphysical power, but had a ready instinct for expressing German thought in terms of human worth.

As a literary critic Carlyle has none of the lighter graces, for he is too stern a wayfarer to care to saunter along the highways of literature; his imagination, intense and concrete, finds no sustenance in the exquisite abstractions of a Shelley on the one hand, or the clear, logical presentment of a John Stuart Mill on the other. There must be passion, or pronounced ethical bias in a writer for Carlyle to value him. He valued the teacher in Goethe rather than the artist; the genial man in Scott rather than the story-teller, and where he could detect no distinct moral purpose, nor gripping emotional power, he was frankly uninterested and did less than justice

to his subject. Personality is everything to him. This supplies him with his motive as an historian. History to him is "the essence of innumerable biographies"—so he makes it his purpose to find out what the distinctive qualities are of the great man. With the anatomy of history he is not concerned, and if he is unduly contemptuous of the externals, at any rate few men have striven more earnestly to probe its soul. If blind to the fascination of its pageantry, he is fully alive to its drama.

History for him, therefore, is one long battle between the forces within and the forces without, and he is at his best in dealing with the fierce dramatic crises of history, such as the French Revolution or the Puritan revolt. He can forgive brutality; he will never condone weakness. The great man for him is the strong man: "It is the property of the hero that in every time in every place he comes back to reality."

Carlyle is at his happiest when the historical drama he is painting centres round a moral ideal—as in the case of Cromwell. There is much of Cromwell in Carlyle—and he brought the present generation face to face with the great Puritan; we have his words, we can hear the tone of his voice, we see him in his tent, in council; every detail, the most minute, is here.

He has done much to rescue the Puritans from obliquy; popular modern sentiment had decided they were half hypocrites, half fanatics. The hypocritical idea he quite exploded, and if he did not attempt to explain away the fanaticism he made of it a much more glorious thing than we had accounted it. Cromwell's fine conception of Justice, his noble ideal of Duty, his splendid Honesty; the grit, the patience, the compelling personality of the man are made manifest.

In reproaching England for her sloth, her Godlessness, and in sighing for the return of the Puritan ideals, one feels that Carlyle, just as he constitutionally exaggerated the evils of the day, exaggerates the value of his remedy. Extremes produce extremes. The Puritan despotism, excellent in many ways, produced the Restoration. The Middle Ages he so idealised in *Past and Present* had evils of their own quite as oppressive as those we have to-day, and the return of mediævalism sighed for by Carlyle can scarcely be considered seriously. He seized on certain features which he admired, the defects he never noticed.

The word Liberty had for him none of the glamour, the inspiration which it signified to the poet Shelley, nor even the more qualified political value which Mill attached to it. Revolutionary though he was in his preaching, he had not escaped the strong wave of reaction against the Revolution which swept over England after the Napoleonic war. That great banner of the Revolution, Liberty, was too blood-stained; he recoiled from it.

"In freedom for itself," he says, "there is nothing to raise a man above the fly: the first duty of a people is to find their chief, the second and last to obey him: we see to what men have been brought by liberty, equality and fraternity."

I think in his heart that Carlyle realised that the strong man is the wise man: the man who sees that the collective usefulness of a community lies in every part yielding up its quota. Force will not effect this: Persuasion and Sympathy may. But he was carried away by his love of Strength, and did not see that for a few to whom Might was the symbol of Right, there were many for whom no moral claim could be preferred.

Give them centuries to try it, he says, and Might and Right will be found to be identical. The strong thing will prove itself the just thing. But this is begging the question. A Might that dominates for centuries and then is "found out" does not cease to be Might: else we must approve the Spanish Inquisition. Mazzini failed at first: who would decry him as unjust? Carlyle sneered at him, but was obliged ultimately to admit his greatness.

No: Carlyle's doctrine carried out logically leads to an oligarchy subversive of mental and moral growth. It is useful in certain stages of a nation's history, but it is not for grown-up men and women.

Carlyle safeguards his claim for obedience by maintaining that we hold no obedience to tyranny but obedience to enlightened despotism.

"Of all 'rights of men' this right of the ignorant to be guided by the wiser, gently or forcibly, is the indispensablest. . . . Cannot one discern, across all democratic turbulence, clattering of ballot-boxes, and infinite sorrowful jangle, that this is at bottom the wish and prayer of all human hearts everywhere, 'Give us a leader'?"

"A leader" certainly, but may not the leader come from the very democracy of which Carlyle is so scornful?

Certainly, some of the strong men Carlyle admired were not just men, for he approved the Czar, unduly glorified Frederick, grievously idealised Governor Eyre.

Now it is not hard to see what is in Carlyle's mind when he applauds Force, especially the force of some potent personality; for strength, even when tyrannous, is better than weakness. It is better to do ill than to do nothing. Weakness, vacillation, indifference, timidity, these things make for anarchy and stagnation. In times of confusion the strong man is wanted. England needs a Tudor despot—and thrives. France requires a Napoleon—and order is restored. But what then?

The Stuarts failed—since England had ceased to need a despot. Despotism at best is a negative mood. It has no constructive power. It does not make the best of a race, it keeps them under. Napoleon accomplished a needful work—but in attempting to perpetuate force as a rule of statecraft, failed.

Carlyle's famous remark that the people of England consisted of thirty millions, mostly fools, certainly harmonises—whatever allowance be made for humorous exaggeration—with his distaste for "the divine right of democracy"; yet we must not overlook the fact that no one more warmly espoused the cause of the poor or more bitterly denounced the wealthy drones that abound in society.

"Oh, if you could dethrone that brute, god Mammon, and put a spirit God in his place!" he cries. "One way or other he must and will have to be dethroned. Supply and demand is not the one law of nature. Deep, far deeper, are law's obligations, sacred as man's life itself. . . . To make some human hearts a little wiser, manfully happier, more blessed, less accursed, it is work for a God."

He preached the doctrine of a moral change in society. He looks to the ruling classes for the initiative; and fails to understand the real significance of the democratic appeal. Far clearer in insight on this point was his contemporary, John Stuart Mill.

"The idea of rational democracy," said Mill, "is not that people themselves govern, but that they have security for good government. This security they can have only by retaining in their own hands the ultimate control. The people ought to be masters employing servants more skilful than themselves."

That surely is a sounder political ideal than Carlyle's enlightened despotism.

Obedience is good; so also is loyalty and hero-worship. But the sense of individual responsibility is, after all, the most important; as Emerson said, "It is a low benefit to give something; it is a high benefit to enable me to do somewhat of myself." George Eliot expressed it even more pithily when she said: "Those who trust us, educate us."

Carlyle's social philosophy is vitiated therefore by its extravagant dependence on authority. Apart from this, there are many admirable points in his dicta on political and social subjects.

Yet it is as an ethical force that Carlyle will be best remembered. Here scarcely ever is he at fault. Sincere and honourable in all his dealings, he preached a practical workaday creed that is as much a living force to-day as in the time when it was first delivered. If his hatred of compromise led him at times into intemperance of speech, the feeling at the bottom was incontrovertible enough. By a little trimming, and toning down, he might at more than one juncture in his career have secured a material position that would have saved him many a year of hard struggle. But he never compromised, never abated a jot of what he held to be right. And if he proved impervious to the blandishments of money, he was equally impervious to the seduction of praise. Success has spoiled many a good man; it never affected Carlyle.

I believe that the glowing sincerity of his *Sartor Resartus*, the moral suggestiveness of his *Hero Worship* and his *Cromwell*, and the large poetic imagination of certain of his *Essays* will exercise a more commanding and permanent influence than even the brilliancy of the *French Revolution* and *Frederick*, and that because, as Leigh Hunt said of him:

"What Mr. Carlyle loves better than his fault-finding, with all its eloquence, is the face of any human creature that looks suffering, and loving, and sincere."

In concluding this rough survey of his work, something may be said of Carlyle-ese that has troubled and will continue to trouble many readers. Carlyle's style is, save with a few exceptions, notably in the *Life of Sterling*, a disturbing, bewildering, and often exasperating style; it is at the same time a perfectly sincere and natural expression of the writer's temper of mind. The style is the man. Its defects are bound up with its virtues (for *Sterling* only exhibits one side of Carlyle's nature), and though we may regret its extravagances and contortions, they are part of the price we pay for his peculiar humour, satire, and tempestuous eloquence. The style, just as in Meredith's case, will necessarily limit his appeal, and in an age like ours of hurry and bustle, the writers who express themselves clearly and simply will have, undoubtedly, the wider influence. As a figure in our social literary history Carlyle will always loom a large and important figure, but as a maker of letters he will probably survive to the reading world at large rather in suggestive fragments.

George Fox

Perhaps the most remarkable incident in Modern History, says Teufelsdröckh, is not the Diet of Worms, still less the Battle of Austerlitz, Waterloo, Peterloo, or any other battle; but an incident passed carelessly over by most Historians, and treated with some degree of ridicule by others, namely, George Fox's making to himself a suit of leather. This man, the first of the Quakers, and by trade a shoemaker, was one of those to whom, under ruder or purer form, the Divine Idea of the Universe is pleased to manifest itself; and, across all the hulls of Ignorance and earthly Degradation, shine through, in unspeakable Awfulness, unspeakable Beauty, on their souls: who therefore are rightly accounted Prophets, God-possessed; or even Gods, as in some periods it has chanced. Sitting in his stall; working on tanned hides, amid pincers, paste-horns, resin, swine-bristles, and a nameless flood of rubbish, this youth had, nevertheless, a Living Spirit belonging to him; also an antique Inspired Volume, through which as through a window, it could look upwards, and discern its celestial Home. The task of a daily pair of shoes, coupled even with some prospect of victuals, and an honourable Mastership in Cordwainery, and perhaps the post of Thirdborough in his hundred, as the crown of long faithful sewing, was nowise satisfaction enough to such a mind: but even amid the boring and hammering came tones from that far country, came Splendours and Terrors; for this poor Cordwainer, as we said, was a Man; and the Temple of Immensity, wherein as Man he had been sent to minister, was full of holy mystery to him.

The Clergy of the neighbourhood, the ordained Watchers and Interpreters of that same holy mystery, listened with unaffected tedium to his consultations and advised him, as the solution of such doubts, "to drink beer and dance with the girls." Blind leaders of the blind! For what end were their tithes levied and eaten; for what were their shovel-hats scooped out, and their surplices and cassock-aprons girt on; and such a church-repairing, and chancering, and organing, and other racketing, held over that spot of God's earth,—if man were but a Patient Digester, and the belly with its adjuncts the grand Reality? Fox turned from them, with tears and sacred scorn, back to his Leather-parings and his Bible. Mountains of encumbrance, higher than Ætna, had been heaped over that Spirit: but it was a Spirit and would not lie buried there. Through long days and nights of silent agony, it struggled and wrestled, with a man's force, to be free; how its prison mountains heaved and swayed tumultuously, as the giant spirit shook them to this hand and that, and emerged into the light of Heaven! That Leicester shoe-shop, had men known it, was a holier place than any Vatican or Loretto-Shrine. "So bandaged, and hampered, and

hemmed in," groaned he, "with thousand requisitions, obligations, straps, tatters, and tagrags; I can neither see nor move: nor my own sin I, but the World's; and time flies fast, and Heaven is high, and Hell is deep: Man! bethink thee, if thou hast power of Thought! Why not; what binds me here? Want, want!—Ha, of what? Will all the shoe-wages under the moon ferry me across into that far Land of Light? Only Meditation can, and devout prayer to God. I will to the woods: the hollow of a tree will lodge me, wild-berries feed me; and for clothes, cannot I stitch myself one perennial suit of Leather!"

Historical oil-painting, continues Teufelsdröckh, is one of the Arts I never practised; therefore shall I not decide whether this subject were easy of execution on the canvas. Yet often as it seemed to me as if such first outflashing of man's Freewill, to lighten, more and more into Day, the Chaotic Night that threatened to engulf him in its hindrances and its horrors were properly the only grandeur there is in History. Let some living Angelo or Rosa, with seeing eye and understanding heart, picture George Fox on that morning, when he spreads out his cutting-board for the last time, and cuts cowhides by unwonted patterns, and stitches them together into one continuous all-including Case, the farewell service of his awl: Stitch away, thou noble Fox: every prick of that little instrument is pricking into the heart of Slavery, and world-worship and the Mammon-god. Thy elbows jerk as in strong swimmer-strokes, and every stroke is bearing thee across the Prison-ditch within which Vanity holds her Workhouse and Bagfair, into lands of true Liberty: were the work done, there is in broad Europe one Free Man, and thou art he!

Thus from the lowest depth there is a path to the loftiest height: and for the Poor also a Gospel has been published. Surely if, as D'Alembert asserts, my illustrious namesake, Diogenes, was the greatest man of Antiquity, only that he wanted Decency, then by stronger reason is George Fox the greatest of the Moderns, and greater than Diogenes himself: for he too stands on the adamantine basis of his Manhood, casting aside all props and shores; yet not, in half-savage Pride, under-valuing the Earth; valuing it rather, as a place to yield him warmth and food, he looks Heavenward from his Earth, and dwells in an element of Mercy and Worship, with a still Strength, such as the Cynic's tub did nowise witness. Great, truly, was the Tub; a temple from which man's dignity and divinity was scornfully preached abroad: but greater is the Leather Hull, for the same sermon was preached there, and not in Scorn but in Love.[1]

One has only to glance at any Victorian library to see what a popular figure the didactic essayist used to be; and yet how uninspiring and commonplace many of these writers turn out to be if we look at their pages to-day. Among the more notable of the crowd are the two HARES (Julius, 1795–1855; Augustus, 1792–1834), whose aphoristic *Guesses at Truth* was once so eagerly read. Neither they nor Sir ARTHUR HELPS (1813–1875), author of *Friends in Council* (1847–1859) and *Companions of my Solitude* (1851), show any depth or originality; and their popularity was due probably to the fact that they expressed sensibly, and with mild literary ability, sentiments held to be improving.

WILLIAM RATHBONE GREG (1809–1881) is a decidedly more interesting figure. He was a clear, vigorous writer on social and religious problems from a Radical standpoint. His *Creed of Christendom* is practically a Unitarian manifesto, and its chief merit lies in the forcible lucidity with which he states his case. Of greater interest to-day is the volume *Enigmas of Life*, which is more varied in its scope, and gives a good picture of the various social and ethical problems troubling his generation.

More interesting still, from the literary point of view, is WILLIAM BAGEHOT RANDS (1823–1882), of whom Professor Walker has justly said he was "as much under-rated as Helps has been over-rated." His delightful verse is treated elsewhere. Of his prose, the two volumes, *Henry Holbeach: Student in Life and Philosophy* (1865) and *Views and Opinions* (1866), give us of his best in wise, witty, and trenchant sayings on the life of his day.

But he was not merely a maker of aphoristic apothegms, he had the power of visualising certain types of character with a dry humour that reminds the reader of Oliver Wendell Holmes.

More concerned with letters, less with contemporary life, are Sir JOHN SKELTON (1831–1897), with his agreeable and sprightly *Noggs Critica* (1882) and *Table-Talk* (1894), and A. K. H. BOYD (1825–1899), whose *Recreations of a Country Parson* (1859–1861), and other volumes of miscellaneous essay work, contain a good deal of pleasant chatter.

The next critic of importance is MATTHEW ARNOLD; he has greater versatility and more body than Hunt, and although he is far less sympathetic and discerning in his appreciation of romantic poetry, his more considerable scholarship and accomplishment make him a figure of the first importance.

At first sight, Arnold's critical essays may disappoint the student. He has no aptitude for logical arrangement; cares little about presenting a live and definite portrait of the subject of the criticism, and makes no attempt to look round his subject; indeed, when his sympathies are "imperfect" (to use Elia's phrase), he does not try even to present the writer's own point of view. He doesn't like him, that is sufficient. He dismisses Shelley just as in another direction he dismisses miracles, with a shrug of the shoulders.

These are drawbacks which cannot be lightly passed over. None the less they are outweighed by the positive merits of Arnold's critical accomplishment.

To begin with, no one, with the exception of Mr. Watts-Dunton, proved so happy as he in the art of comparative criticism. His wide scholarship, reinforced by a delicate literary palate, make his remarks on foreign literature and his comparison of English and continental literature especially valuable. If he failed to do justice to some great romantic writers, he at any rate did much to restore a proper appreciation of classicism that the great outburst of romantic literature had tended to obscure and belittle. Then even his most fragmentary and disconnected critical work abounds in luminous flashes of insight. His work is never negligible; and what is almost as important, it is never dull.

To consider his critical work in greater detail.

Arnold's plea for classicism as opposed to romanticism may first be considered. Although he ignored or belittled much that was valuable in romanticism, he has pointed out very clearly its defects and weaknesses as a movement. He exposed the exaggerated importance attached to

[1] *Sartor Resartus.*

the Middle Ages, and the "grotesqueness" and "irrationality" of much literary mediævalism. He saw just as clearly, yet with more sympathy, the tendency toward eccentricity, formlessness, and lack of balance encouraged by romanticism; and held that, in the case of the English people, the excessive devotion to romanticism was especially harmful, since England was "the native home of intellectual eccentricity of all kinds." The defect of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, he held, was to imagine "that the peculiar effect of nature resides in the whole and not in the parts." What is the cure for this? Arnold gives it not only once (it first appears in the Preface to the Poems of 1853), but again and again in his writings. A return to the classical spirit is "calm cheerfulness, disinterested objectivity." If we wished to regain this, we must not only study the classics themselves, but pay less attention to German and more attention to French literature. Why? In his *Literary Influence of Academies* he gives the reason: "Openness of mind and flexibility of intelligence were very signal characteristics of the Athenian people in ancient times; everybody will feel that openness of mind and flexibility of intelligence are remarkable characteristics of the French people in modern times." Not that French literature is essentially greater than German or English literature. France for him was "famed in all great arts, in none supreme"; there is greater genius to be found in the land that produced Shakespeare and Milton; greater genius in the country that gave us Goethe. But we have so much natural affinity with the Teutonic peoples, we need a corrective. We don't need more ideas, more provocative thought, we need greater lucidity, harmony of presentment; these we shall find in French literature. Heine's greatness lay in the fact that he applied French methods to Teutonic thought.

One of the most important legacies of this classical spirit for the critic was the spirit of disinterestedness, of self-detachment. This is the spirit indeed that animates all Arnold's work, whether critical or creative. Suavity, as we saw, was a dominant note of his verse; the absence of violence—whether in laudation or disapprobation. Arnold is always in kid gloves; and if kid gloves are not exciting adornment for a poet, there is much to be said for the kid glove in criticism. You can be quite as deadly with the kid glove as with the naked fist if you know how to hit. Arnold certainly knew how to hit, and whether in prose letters or in social satire he proved a controversialist of remarkable power. In his *Essays in Criticism*, his *Culture and Anarchy*, his *Friendship's Garland*, his breeding is perfect, his voice is never raised; but the light banter, the courteous irony, the searching analysis, are of the highest quality.

There is a consistent point of view underlying all Arnold's writings. It may be seen in his well-known dictum on Culture:

"Culture seeks to do away with classes and seeks to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere; to make all men live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light, where they may use ideas as it uses them itself, freely, unmasked, and not bound by them. This is the social idea, and the men of culture are the true apostles of equality."

Again:

"The grand power of poetry is its interpretative power; by which I mean, not a power of drawing out in black and white an explanation of the mystery of the universe, but the power of so dealing with things as to awaken in us a wonderfully full, new, and intimate sense of them, and of our relations with them. When this sense is awakened in us, as to objects without us, we feel ourselves to be in contact with the essential nature of those objects, to be no longer bewildered and oppressed by them, but to have their secret, and to be in harmony with them; and this feeling calms and satisfies us as no other can."

Hence the famous remark that "poetry is a criticism of life" is an epigrammatic summing up of all that he contends for as a writer both of life and letters. It means that poetry is more than a matter of externals; more than the utterances of certain moods; it is an expression of the moral and intellectual attitude of the literary artist. Arnold's opinion of the high function of culture and anarchy, as supplied by poetry, is even more clearly seen if we turn to *Culture and Anarchy*, where he condemns the narrow restriction of culture to a smattering of the classics, and says he wishes to show what culture really is, what good it can do, and what is our especial need of it.

In the opening chapter he premises that culture, in part, is:

"A desire after the things of the mind for their own sakes and for the pleasure of seeing them as they are," but "there is another view," he says, "in which the love of our neighbours, the impulses towards action, help, and beneficence, the desire for removing human error, clearing human confusion, and diminishing human misery, the noble aspiration to leave the world better and happier than we found it—motives eminently such as are called social—come in as parts of the ground of culture, and the main and pre-eminent part."

Culture, therefore, is nothing more nor less than the study of perfection. It moves by the force not only of pure knowledge, but of the moral and social passion for doing good.

In a later chapter he points out how that:

"To walk staunchly by the best light one has, to be strict and sincere with oneself—not to be of the number of those who say and do not, to be in earnest—this is the discipline by which alone man can be enabled to rescue his life, to make it eternal. The intense and convinced energy with which the Hebrew threw himself upon his ideal of righteousness, and which inspired the incomparable definition of the great Christian virtue Faith—the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen—this energy of devotion to its ideal has belonged to Hebraism alone."

Hellenism he defines as "the intelligence driving out those ideas which are, after all, the basis of right practices, the indomitable impulse to know and adjust them perfectly." Hellenism aims at right seeing; Hebraism at right doing. Our aim should be to combine these, and not, as pantheism has done, emphasize conduct only.

Elsewhere Arnold applies this line of criticism to the various divisions of English society. He

condemns the "aristocratic" classes for their indifference to ideas; the middle classes for their preoccupation with money-making:

"Your middle-class men," he says with cutting scorn, "think it the highest pitch of development and civilisation, when their letters are carried twelve times a day from Islington to Camberwell, and from Camberwell to Islington; and if railway trains run to and fro between them every quarter of an hour."

Yet while condemning the attention of the average man to what he calls "practical considerations," Arnold is, in the higher sense of the term, a lover of practicality. Whether he is just to the "mystic" is a debatable point that need not be discussed here. But his dislike of any spiritual attitude that could not be expressed in definite, concrete usefulness is certainly to the point. No one has more admirably disengaged from its pantheistic setting the shrewd practicality of Emerson than he; or appraised more clearly the peculiar genius of Heine, or the healing power of Wordsworth. The great idealist in his view was always practical. His dream-castles have solid foundations, though their turrets may be in the clouds.

One of the best proofs of Arnold's practicality lies in the sagacity of his educational proposals. He was broad-minded, without being in the least cranky in his views as to elementary education. He would have the elements of French as well as of Latin taught in the schools, and also the beginning of natural sciences.

"We are all coming to be agreed," he wrote, "that an entire ignorance of the system of nature is as grave a defect in our children's education as not to know there was ever such a person as Charles the First."

He pointed out how that no one in England was taught to teach, while in France the State took over with greater thoroughness every kind of education, and exacted a higher standard of efficiency from their teachers. He particularised L'École Normale training college for teachers' methods, for its excellence. At the same time, though he compared greatly to its disadvantage the methodical and desultory character of English University teaching with the ordinary methods of the French University, he was not blind to the defects in some of the French schools.

Most of us have come to believe now in the necessity of systematic State education, and Arnold did much to convert us by his writings. He admired especially the methods of German education. The French Universities he considered needed liberty; the English needed sciences; German Universities had both. The University Extension Movement owed its primary inspiration to Arnold; and while many of the reforms he advocated still remain to be carried out, much has now been accomplished for which he contended. There were no more liberal-minded, clear-sighted educational reformers in the Victorian era than he and Thomas Henry Huxley.

In conclusion, something may be said of Arnold's philosophical position.

His most important point in theological controversy was the emphasis he laid upon a literary interpretation of the Bible, as opposed to a scientific interpretation. He has been criticised for encroaching as a layman upon the domain of the professional philosopher; but if lack of specialised scholarship rendered of doubtful value some of his conclusions, he was sufficiently equipped in the main for the end he had in view—that of disengaging ethics from religion, and from freeing current religion from its narrow dogmatic basis, its gloom, and its vulgarity. Arnold's treatment of controversial subjects is not free from flippancy, or from a certain cock-sureness. But in his final conclusions, which are best described as pantheistic, he arrived at a position which has many distinguished votaries to-day.

Of more practical importance perhaps is the earnest, sincere, and essentially spiritual interpretation of the Scriptures—destructive criticism notwithstanding—and the striking moral beauty of many passages in *Literature and Dogma* and *God and the Bible*.

Of Robert Louis Stevenson's work as a romancer and as a poet mention has been made elsewhere. There is not the same original force and intellectual body in his critical work that we find in the great critics of the Romantic movement; but in freshness, grace, and individuality he has few rivals. Especially attractive is the personal, idiosyncratic note. He does not lack either originality or depth; but these things are not the main things that compel our attention in Stevenson. What holds us most is his engaging manner. Examine his agreeable essays, *Virginibus Puerisque* and *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*, and this quality will manifest itself. Frequently we are reminded of Hazlitt, Lamb, and Montaigne. Yet despite his obvious indebtedness to these greater writers, there is an individual flavour about Stevenson's work—the flavour of an attractive personality. This is sufficient compensation.

As a critic of books his originality is perhaps more pronounced, but wise and large though many of his utterances are, here again it is the pleasant distinction of personality that gives salt and flavour to them. There are many critics less brilliant, less attractive in their speech, on whose judgment we should place greater reliance. Sometimes, as in the essay on *Victor Hugo's Romances*, his own temperament stands in the way; at other times, as in his *Thoreau* article, there is a vein of wilful capriciousness, even of impish malice, that distorts his judgment. Neither essays can be passed over, and both are extremely interesting. One cannot say they are satisfying. Stevenson does scant justice to the extraordinary passion, the Titanic strength of Hugo; and in the case of Thoreau, he dwells too harshly upon the less gracious aspects of the "poet-naturalist."

It is only fair to say, however, that in the case of Thoreau he made generous amends in the preface to the *Collected Essays*. Both the reconsidered verdict and the original essay are highly characteristic of the man. Other men have said equally harsh things of Thoreau. Stevenson alone had the fairness, the childlike frank spirit, to go back

upon himself. These are the things that endear us to Stevenson, and make it impossible to be angry with any of his paradoxes and extravagant capers. Who but Stevenson would have written thus:

"The most temperate of living critics once marked a passage of my own with a cross and the words, 'This seems nonsense.' It not only seemed, it was so. It was a private bravado of my own which I had so often repeated to keep up my spirits that I had grown at last wholly to believe it, and had ended by setting down as a contribution to the theory of life."

Touched by this confidence, one reads Stevenson—especially the letters—with a more discerning eye, a more compassionate understanding; and if at times one feels the presence of the Ariel too strong and longs for a more human, less elfin personality, then the thought that we are dealing with deliberate "bravado" may well check our impatience.

Men who suffer much are wont to keep up a brave front by an appearance of indifference.

The stylist sometimes is an embarrassment to Stevenson's romances; we feel he is so careful about his literary appearances that the subject-matter suffers. But his niceties of speech are all to the advantage of the essayist. Some readers lament the "Shorter Catechist" note in some of Stevenson's prose writings. I cannot share this feeling of disfavour. In the *Lay Morals and Christian Sermons*, the moralist is perhaps a shade tiresome; but the *Fables* are wholly delightful; and *Jekyll and Hyde*, if somewhat over-valued as a work of art, assuredly loses none of its interest and appeal because it happens to be a morality in thin disguise. It seems to me that the "Shorter Catechist" element in Stevenson is just the quality that gave him so fine a gripehold of life, and reinforced his art by imparting a strain of idealism to his work that gave it a body and power which otherwise it would have lacked.

Among the critics in the closing years of the Victorian era are several names of considerable interest.

George Henry Lewes (1817–1878) was a gifted and versatile man of letters, who wrote an excellent *Life of Goethe*, and touched with grace and distinction, if with fitful power, philosophy, fiction, and criticism.

Harriet Martineau (1802–1876) proved a keen and incisive critic of social politics. Of greater importance was Walter Bagehot (1826–1877), a fine economist who never lost sight of the human equation; and a fresh and stimulating literary critic, Richard Holt Hutton (1826–1897) of the *Spectator*.

As literary editor of the *Spectator*, Hutton wrote criticism on most of the important tendencies of his day and his criticisms are wide and diverse. Many of these have been reprinted, and although there is a certain journalistic scrappiness about the papers in *Contemporary Thought and Thinkers* (1894), there are no few luminous suggestions, and a high seriousness of treatment. He excelled especially in ethical estimates. With genuine, if somewhat restricted artistic sympathies, and a deeply religious nature, he was particularly successful in detaching the thought and general attitude from a writer's work. Consequently, when the writer had a more or less definite philosophy of life, none happier than Hutton in estimating and appraising it. One of his best volumes of criticism is his *Modern Guides of English Thought in Matters of Faith* (1887), where he reviews in turn the work and influence of Carlyle, J. H. Newman, Matthew Arnold, George Eliot, and Frederick Denison Maurice.

It is not in the least necessary to agree with the theological affinities in his nature that drew him to men like Newman and Maurice, in order to appreciate the psychological skill with which he visualises and presents these personalities to us; especially is this the case with the Newman Essay, which for its insight into the unquestionable and perplexing genius of the man, is unexcelled by any other critical estimate of this Oxford thinker.

The strength and weakness of Carlyle's religious position again is most admirably and fairly analysed and presented.

In his more purely literary essays, those on Wordsworth, Tennyson, Hawthorne, and Browning are perhaps the best. Much has been written on these great Victorians by other critics, more finely sensitive to their artistic qualities, but no critique with which I am familiar seizes with greater power on what may be called the moral dynamics, than Hutton. No doubt his weakness is to see life and letters too much through a stained-glass window; and constitutional peculiarities stood in the way of his doing full justice to such different writers as Shelley and Dickens.

But allowing for a certain rigidity of outlook, he is a broad and discerning critic.

As a religious thinker, he was an Anglican of the Maurician type. Starting as a Unitarian, he came under the influence of Maurice and became a Churchman. The influence of Maurice was not so strong in later years, and Newman's influence to an extent took its place, but though fascinated by Newman's personality, and immensely impressed by his spiritual standpoint, he could never reconcile himself to Newman's ecclesiasticism. Hutton's theological essays are remarkably suggestive and thoughtful.

If not one of our great critics, he is certainly one of our most interesting; for despite a rather disconcerting style, he rarely fails to arrest attention by the brainwork which he put into his articles, and to a high seriousness which never becomes portentous or merely didactic; and as an ethical force in weekly journalism he accomplished a fine and notable work.

There is nothing of the stained-glass window about Sir Leslie Stephen's (1832–1904) critical writings. Hutton wrote primarily as a religious moralist, Stephen as a thoughtful man of the world. Hutton was peculiarly in sympathy with the Victorian ideal in letters; Stephen's temperament is more akin to the eighteenth century; and some of his best critical work treats of eighteenth century writers. His studies of Johnson, of Swift, and of Pope in the "English Men of Letters" series, his articles on Sterne, Rousseau, Godwin and Shelley, Gray and his school, are unsurpassed in modern critical literature for their conciseness, their rationality, and their judicial urbanity. In two respects, however, Stephen resembled Hutton. He had little

sympathy with the esthetic school of criticism, distrusted literary impressionism, and always argues his case thoroughly. If we do not agree with him, he at any rate gives us chapter and verse for his likes and dislikes in literature.

In the second place, he is more interested in the quality of a man's thought than in his form of expression. He was admirably fitted for his editorial management of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, which he supervised from 1882 to 1891, when owing to failing health he shared the control with Sir Sidney Lee. The interest he invariably took in the man behind his writings, his taste for history, and his excellent scholarship, made him especially fitted for the task of biographer. A dry and pleasantly caustic humour added materially to the agreeable quality of his essay work. The same qualities that inform his essay work, characterise his more elaborate books: *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (1876–1878), and *The English Utilitarians* (1900), where the greatness as well as the littleness of the age, finds clear and convincing expression.

A word must be said also for his personal apologia —*An Agnostic's Apology* (1893); one of the frankest, fairest, and most touching documents of its kind in the language.

A critic of equal scholarship and insight, but lesser performance, is H. D. Traill (1842–1900). As a critic he excelled in satire, as, for instance, in *The New Lucian* (1884), and in *The New Humour, and Other Essays*. But even here he scarcely did justice to the breadth of his powers. A more solid piece of work is his *Coleridge* in the "English Men of Letters" series, where he is especially good in dealing with Coleridge as a proseman and as a thinker.

Andrew Lang (1844–1913) is a literary D'Artagnan in literature; he would edit a volume of fairy stories or learnedly ablook an historical myth; write on "Spooks," Mary Queen of Scots, or turn a neat Ballad, with equal ease and equal gusto. Probably the extent of his adventurous ranges in literature, and the time given to journalistic exigencies, will tell against the value of his work in any particular direction. Many of his critical essays make good reading; they are written with knowledge and enthusiasm; but they bear the marks of hasty writing, and give us little more than the efflorescence of the writer's culture.

Richard Garnett (1835–1906) has neither the versatility of Lang, nor the philosophic power of Hutton or Stephen. He was more essentially a scholarly man of letters like Traill, but differs from him in having a more sensitive, poetic temperament. As with Ruskin and many another writer, he found better expression in prose than in verse, though some of his lyrics are agreeable enough. His criticism of Coleridge, for instance, is a beautiful piece of work, finely sensitive to the imaginative greatness of his subject. No man had a finer literary palate than he where poetry was concerned.

Excelling especially in the historical side of literary development, are Stopford Brooke, George Saintsbury, William Courthope, and Edmund Gosse.

Dr. Stopford Brooke (1832), like Garnett, has a strongly poetic imagination, and is at his best when dealing with poetry. No one has written with more insight and sympathy than he on the pre-Chaucerian period of English verse, and on the poets of the Romantic Revival; while his primer on English Literature is a model of its kind. His critical writings are many and various, being marked always by enthusiasm for his subject. In his work dealing with modern literary developments, his essay on *Blake*, his various essays on *Shelley*, that on *Rossetti*, and his elaborate study of *Tennyson* merit particular attention.

Dr. William Courthope (1842) is best remembered for his fine scholarly *History of English Poetry* (1895–1909). His own temperamental taste makes him especially happy when dealing with the eighteenth century; and he is as happy when dealing with the Augustans as is Stopford Brooke when dealing with the Romantics.

Prof. George E. B. Saintsbury (1845) is an invaluable writer for the literary student; unapproachable in his extensive and exhaustive knowledge of the general development of English Literature. If his critical writings lack the charm and the lucidity that we find in other literary historians, he has no peer, far less any rival, in the extent of his learning and in the catholicity of his taste. No student can afford to ignore his masterly *Short History of English Literature*, his *History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe*, or his less ambitious but equally penetrating work on *Elizabethan Literature*. In tracing the historical development of various schools, in dealing with matters of prosody, he is peculiarly happy. When he leaves the historical background for the lighter texture of the Essay, his marked preferences and prejudices are indulged to a much greater extent, and the dogmatic way with which he lays about him is naturally irritating to those whose idols he ruthlessly tumbles from their pedestals. Yet, even here, he is stimulating, and the greater liveliness of style, flashes of humour, and out of the way knowledge make his critical essays always worth reading. Among these may be mentioned his *Corrected Impressions*; and his *Essays in English Literature* (1780–1860).

His delightful essay on *Cobbett*, for instance, is quite the best thing on that provocative yet attractive man that has been written.

Grace, wit, and distinction are the prevailing qualities in the work of Edmund Gosse (1849). He is a critic of flexible sympathies, as the personal estimates in his *Modern English Literature*, and his sympathetic *Study of Ibsen* (one of the first of its kind) testify; and he has a remarkable gift for psychological portraiture. This gift is the most happily expressed in his noteworthy fiction *Father and Son*. Mention must be made also of his agreeable and accomplished verse.

Other critics, of more modest and restricted accomplishment, are Henry Morley (1822–1894), a painstaking literary historian; William Sharp, whose best work lies in his imaginative prose; William Minto (1845–1893); Canon Ainger (1837–1904), who deserves the affection and respect of all lovers of Lamb and Crabbe; John Churton Collins (1848–1908); and Frederick Furnivall (1825–1913), especially noteworthy for his scholarly studies of Early and Middle-English literature.

On the philological side, the names of Professor W. W. Skeat (1836–1912), and Edward Arber, deserve special remembrance. Among classical scholars who have done much to kindle enthusiasm for the masterpieces of Greek and Roman literature are H. A. J. Munro, with his *Lucretius*; John Conington (1825–1869), with his prose translation of the *Æneid*; Sir John Rhys (1840), whose *Celtic Heathendom* (1886) is a worthy supplement to Lady Charlotte Guest's *Mabinogion* (1849); Professor Mackail (1859), who has done much to make us appreciate the intimate spirit of Latin literature, and Professor Gilbert Murray (1866), who has done the same for Greek letters. The name of Professor John Pentland Mahaffy (1839–1915), is more particularly associated with the social aspect of Greek life.

In an age of specialisation, it is natural that critics with marked temperamental affinities should mark out special fields for their labours:

Edward Dowden (1843–1913), one of our best analytical critics of romanticism; Lord Morley (1838), unexcelled for his studies in French literature, and always a fine and distinguished commentator on anything pertaining to life and letters; Professor Raleigh (1861), with his imaginative insight into the adventurous spirit of the Elizabethan age; and Austin Dobson (1840), who has revealed the manners of the eighteenth century, while Leslie Stephen has revealed its morals.

W. E. Henley (1849–1903) specialises in critical portraiture and in his power of visualising is akin to Gosse, though in tone and temper he is more like Jeffrey and the earlier reviewers. He had flashes of brilliant insight, and wrote with force and vitality; but much of his work is unsatisfactory by reason of its hard, superficial brilliance and ungenerous temper.

As a last illustration from the notable gallery of Victorian critics, we may take Theodore Watts-Dunton (1832–1914). As a personality he does not belong to the primary men; he is inferior to Ruskin and Carlyle in driving force; and lacks that arresting distinction that draws us to Matthew Arnold and Stevenson, and, to a lesser extent, to Walter Pater. But for a keen sagacity into comparative values, he has no rival and few peers. As an illustration of his analytical cunning, take the passage on Absolute and Relative Humour:

"That an apprehension of incongruity is the basis of both relative and absolute humour is no doubt true enough; but while in the case of relative humour it is the incongruity of some departure from the normal, in the case of absolute humour it is the sweet incongruity of the normal itself. Relative humour laughs at the breach of the accustomed laws of nature and the conventional laws of man, which laws it accepts as final. Absolute humour (comparing them unconsciously with some ideal standard of its own, or with that ideal or noumenal or spiritual world behind the cosmic show) sees the incongruity of those very laws themselves—laws which are the relative humourist's standard. Absolute humour, in a word, is based on metaphysics—relative humour on experience. A child can become a relative humourist by adding a line or two to the nose of Wellington, or by reversing the nose of the Venus de Medici. The absolute humourist has so long been saying to himself, 'What a whimsical idea is the human nose!' that he smiles the smile of Anaxarsis at the child's laughter on seeing it turned upside down. So with convention and its codes of etiquette—from the pompous harlequinade of royalty—the ineffable gingerbread of an aristocracy of names without office or culture, down to the Draconian laws of Philistia and bourgeois respectability; whatever is a breach of the local laws of the game of social life, whether the laws be those of a village pothouse or of Mayfair; whether it displays an ignorance of matters of familiar knowledge, these are the quarry of the relative humourist. The absolute humourist, on the other hand, as we see in the greatest masters of absolute humour, is so perpetually overwhelmed with the irony of the entire game, cosmic and human, from the droll little conventions of the village pothouse to those of London, of Paris, of New York, of Pekin—up to the apparently meaningless dance of the planets round the sun—up again to that greater and more meaningless waltz of suns round the centre—he is so delighted with the delicious foolishness of wisdom, the conceited ignorance of knowledge, the grotesqueness even of the standard of beauty itself, above all, with the whim of the absolute humourist Nature, amusing herself, not merely with her monkeys, her flamingoes, her penguins, her dromedaries, but with these more whimsical creatures still—these 'bipeds' which, though 'featherless,' are proved to be not 'plucked fowls'; these proud, high-thinking organisms—stomachs with heads, arms, and legs as useful appendages—these countless little 'me's,' so all alike and yet so unlike, each one feeling, knowing itself to be *the* me, the only true original me, round whom all other *me's* revolve—so overwhelmed is the absolute humourist with the whim of all this—with the incongruity, that is, of the normal itself—with the 'almighty joke' of the Cosmos as it is—that he sees nothing 'funny' in departures from laws which to him are in themselves the very quintessence of fun. . . . With Charles Lamb he feels, in short, that humour 'does not go out with life'; and in answer to Elia's question, 'Can a ghost laugh?' he says, 'Assuredly, if there be ghosts at all,' for he is as unable as Soame Jenyns himself to imagine that even the seraphim can be perfectly happy without a perception of the ludicrous."

What relation does Mr. Watts-Dunton's original work, his verse and his fiction, bear to his critical essays? They are, to a considerable extent, concrete illustrations of the author's abstract theorising. *Aylwin* is an elaborate and lengthy foot-note to the critic's happy generalisation in *The Renascence of Wonder*. *The Coming of Love* is a metrical and concrete version of the speculative ideas that underlie *Aylwin*. It is not given to every thinker to thus annotate his own felicities; and, having preached, to proceed to practice. Even as it stands (and *Aylwin* was originally far longer), the book suffers from superabundance of matter. But despite its excessive length and a consequent occasional failure of grip, it is a fine performance, full of cultured thought and an astonishing insight into gypsy life.

Freshness, technical skill, and alert mentality distinguish all his verse, and occasionally in one or two of his sonnets there are touches of high beauty. But, curiously enough, there is less of the romantic magic in his poetry than there is in his prose romance, *Aylwin*, and less in his fiction than in his criticism.

It is as a critic that Watts-Dunton will be best remembered; in other departments he has many competitors, and it is impossible to adjudge him a place in the front rank. As a critic he has few superiors in English Literature.

PHILOSOPHERS AND THEOLOGIANS OF THE VICTORIAN ERA.—Introduction—John Keble—J. H. Newman—E. B. Pusey—R. H. Froude—W. G. Ward—R. W. Church—H. P. Liddon—H. E. Manning—N. P. Wiseman—S. Wilberforce—F. D. Maurice—F. W. Robertson—C. Kingsley—A. P. Stanley—M. Pattison—B. Jowett—Bishop Colenso—D. Stewart—W. Hamilton—Dean Mansel—J. S. Mill—A. Bain—R. Sidgwick—George Eliot—R. Congreve—H. Martineau—G. H. Lewes—F. Harrison—J. and E. Caird—F. Newman—Prof. Drummond—Prof. Carpenter—Prof. Upton—James Martineau.

INTRODUCTION

THE general drift and particular fluctuations of speculative thought in the nineteenth century, can be gathered by all thoughtful students of English letters from the poetry, the fiction, and the critical essay work of the age. Calvinistic evangelicalism, for instance, that flourished in its earlier years, is reflected in the poetry of Burns and the hymns of Cowper, while its influence is clearly apparent in the earlier novels of Dickens and George Eliot, more faintly so in the outlook of Macaulay, and insistently so in Carlyle's view of life. Ruskin's strict evangelical training left ineffaceable impressions upon his mode of thought—although, like Carlyle, he shook off its dogmatic trappings—while Browning's religious poetry owes more to evangelicalism than to any other theological school. The effect of the so-called "Oxford Movement" and of neo-Catholicism, found also remarkable though less wide expression in letters; it coloured the writings of Froude, and is closely interwoven with the poetry of the pre-Raphaelite school—indifferent as many of the singers were to its theological implications—while in fiction it bore fruit in the novels of Charlotte Yonge and the mystical fiction of J. H. Shorthouse. A third development of philosophic speculation—rationalism, may be traced in the historical work of men like Seeley and Lecky; in the later novels of George Eliot, and in the work of modern men of letters such as Meredith and Hardy.

So much roughly for the influence of speculative thought on letters. What of its influence on other expressions of our life?

The practical tendency of Evangelicalism is to find expression in moral reform, of Tractarianism in art, of Rationalism in social politics.

The Church in the late eighteenth century had been roused from its apathy by those fiery souls, the two Wesleys and their co-worker, Whitfield. And in the opening years of the nineteenth century the most vigorous personalities in the religious world were men of the same type. To speak of the speculative thought of the Evangelicals is like the contents of that famous chapter "Snakes in Iceland—There are no snakes in Iceland."

There is practically no speculative thought in Evangelicalism; for the human reason was considered incapable of dealing with these high matters. There was the Infallible Book—with the rule of life set forth clearly, for all who cared to see, and the Evangelicals found sufficient emotional expression along moral and social channels. Here, indeed, notable work was accomplished, as the names of Wilberforce and Clarkson and Elizabeth Fry bear eloquent witness. In social history the Evangelicals did much, but in intellectual history their place is an insignificant one, and their contempt for culture and art, the narrowness of their outlook, put them out of sympathy with a great body of refined and intelligent men and women.

They never lacked great preachers, and in Scotland especially, the names of the fervid Robert Hall, and that fine administrative genius, Thomas Chalmers, remind us of the best traditions of the elder Puritans that moulded English life in the seventeenth century. But historical and philosophical problems and their bearing upon theology concerned them little.

Speculative thought in current theology began to stir now in two directions. On the one hand we have the so-called "Noetic School" headed by Whately, a hard-headed thinker of the matter-of-fact type, who did vigorous work in destructive criticism, exposing the narrowness of the Evangelicals and turning attention to historical methods. His weakness and those of his followers lay in the lack of that spiritual fervour which the great Evangelicals undoubtedly possessed. Yet he was a remarkable personality with a clear brain, and a trenchant wit, and certainly helped to bring about the reaction against the Evangelical supremacy.

A more potent and far-reaching influence was that of Coleridge and his Scots allies, Thomas Erskine and Edward Irving, who brought back mysticism into English theology, and assisted in pouring the wine of German philosophy into the worn-out wine-skins of orthodox Anglicanism—often, it must be admitted, with the result of bursting the wine-skins.

Coleridge's influence, then, was two-fold; on his mystical and poetical side he favoured the growth of the High Church or Tractarian movement; on his dialectical side he brought about the birth of the Broad Church movement.

In dealing with both these movements, it will be necessary to confine ourselves to those sides that touched most closely life and letters. Already we have seen in treating of Romanticism how important a part Mediævalism played both in verse and fiction; and a modern historian—Professor Gates of New York—has significantly said that "the Oxford Movement was in its essence an attempt to reconstruct the English Church in harmony with this romantic (mediæval) ideal."

Scott tried to recapture the external splendour of the Middle Ages; Coleridge its mystical beauty; Newman its ecclesiastical hierarchy.

The great names connected with the new Catholic movement are John Henry Newman, John Keble, W. G. Ward, Edward Bouverie Pusey. As Newman has traced the beginning of the movement to John Keble, who he said had made the English Church poetical—upon Keble and his influence we may dwell at this juncture.

JOHN KEBLE (1792–1866) was Professor of Poetry at Oxford, and an Anglican preacher. In his capacity as pastor he gave his famous discourse on *National Apostasy* (1833), which, in Newman's view, started the movement of the "Thirties."

Keble was a simple, sweet-natured soul, with no great power of thought and little originality; and his influence was almost entirely a personal one. His sensitive and pious mind absorbed eagerly floating ideas as to the authority of the Church in pre-Reformation times; and in his *Christian Year* we have a poetical expression of his saintly ideals, which appeal so strongly to men like Newman.

Keble gives us the emotional atmosphere of the movement; for its dialectics we must turn to others—and in the first place to JOHN HENRY NEWMAN.

JOHN HENRY, Cardinal NEWMAN (1801–1890) was the eldest son of a London banker, whose fortunes seriously declined during the financial crisis of 1815; and his mother, of French Protestant descent, brought up her family to revere the work of such men as Scott and Newton, as well as to love their Bible.

From a school at Ealing, Newman went up to Trinity College, Oxford, took his degree in 1820, and in 1823 was elected to an Oriel fellowship. Of his life at this time the late W. E. Gladstone thus records: "When I was an undergraduate of Oxford, Dr. Newman was looked upon rather with prejudice as, what is termed, a low churchman, but was very much respected for his character and his known ability," and "without ostentation or effort, but by simple excellence, he was constantly drawing undergraduates more and more around him." In 1824 Newman was ordained to the curacy of St. Clement's, Oxford, and four years later appointed vicar of St. Mary's.

But Newman was fast breaking away from the old evangelical traditions, and a tour with Hurrell Froude to the south of Europe in 1832 helped to fix more firmly the growing idea that his mission was to revive a more Catholic spirit in the Church of England. The well-known hymn, *Lead, kindly Light*, was written in 1833, while journeying back to England from this tour. On his return he threw himself into the Tractarian movement, inaugurated by Keble, and set to work upon the *Tracts for the Times*—his own Tract XC appearing in 1841.

With the mental and spiritual forces now in conflict, Newman decided that he could not conscientiously remain at St. Mary's, so in 1843 he resigned his cure and retired to Littlemore. In 1845, "I was hard at work," he tells us, "on the *Essay of Doctrinal Development*. As I advanced, my view cleared. . . . Before I got to the end I resolved to be received, and the book remains in the state in which it was then, unfinished." Thus in October 1845, Newman found a haven in the Roman Catholic Church, "after many storms." After his reception he spent some time in Rome, and returned to Birmingham during the cholera epidemic of 1848, and at once devoted himself to the sick poor of that city. As founder and first superior of the Community of St. Philip Neri, he settled in Edgbaston, where he passed the remainder of his life, and died in 1890.

Newman's imagination was more deeply poetic than was Keble's; and in addition he had a power of speculative thought alien to the author of the *Christian Year*.

Newman, says one of his severest critics,[1] is like Mill, a lover of clear, definite, tangible statements. There is no danger with him of losing ourselves in that mystical haze which irritates and bewilders the ordinary common sense of mankind. Indeed, his own admissions support his critic's contention. From the age of fifteen, he tells us, dogma had been the fundamental principle of his religion. Literature was his enemy, because by literature he meant the anti-dogmatic principle—the principle which would convert religion into a sentiment, and therefore for him into a dream, a mockery. No one, of course, could be more sensitive to the mysterious element in theology, but in his view dogma is not the less definite for being mysterious.

Let us notice some special points about Newman's personality as revealed in literature, which may serve to explain his remarkable influence.

In the first place, his literary style expressed most admirably the temper and tone of the writer. It was a beautiful style—not beautiful with the rhythmic opulence of Ruskin; nor with the graceful urbanity of Arnold; nor with the fantastic suggestiveness of De Quincey; but beautiful with a limpid lucidity, a chastened eloquence, a gentle persuasiveness.

None have written more happily about his style than Hutton:

> "He never said anything more characteristic than when he expressed his conviction that though there are a hundred difficulties in faith, into all of which he could enter, the hundred difficulties are not equal to a single doubt. That saying is most characteristic of his style, which seems to be sensitive in the highest degree to a multitude of hostile influences which are at once appreciated and resisted, while one predominant and over-ruling power moves steadily on."

Reading Newman's temperament through his delightfully pellucid style, we are struck by certain personal characteristics which help to explain the deep and far-reaching influence of the man.

First, I think, *a peculiar power of sensitive sympathy*.

His was not a dominating personality that sweeps everything before it. There are men—poets, social reformers—who are possessed by a few vital ideas, see those ideas under the brilliant light of enthusiasm to the exclusion of others, and make their mark in the world through their superb one-sidedness.

There is need of such men always. The great reformer is ever such an one, and much of the practical and constructive work of the world is done by such men.

There are others, critical by nature, who are keenly sensitive to the *pros* and *cons*, and whose subtle intellects expose them to difficulties of which the average man knows nothing. Newman was a man of this kind. None knew better than he that

[1] Leslie Stephen, *Agnostic's Apology*.

some kind of active faith was essential to a man who wishes to do some genuine work in life. He appreciated the paralysing effect of doubt: he was alive to the criticism of the scoffer, that religion makes little difference to many men's lives. He knew the seductive power of the senses, for he was an artist in his own way, and the possibilities of human nature for good and evil appalled him.

And a good deal that he wrote which seemed hesitating and casuistical, which provoked men of simpler, rougher natures, was due to his sensitiveness to every form of intellectual difficulty and to subtle moral temptations, and to his desire to meet them as far as possible.

And this brings me to the second characteristic of Newman: *his passionate sincerity.*

In stating this I am aware that I am on a highly controversial ground. He is held by some to have justified his theological and ecclesiastical position at the expense of his intellectual honesty. Many excellent men have held this—men so far apart as Charles Kingsley and Leslie Stephen. Therefore the charge cannot be met by mere denial or evasion.

Let us briefly examine the scope and character of Newman's important works. That will help us to understand his character better.

First of all there are the *Tracts*, by which he endeavoured to fix a *via media* between Romanism and Protestantism and to vindicate the Anglo-Catholic position. That he attempted to read into the "Thirty-nine Articles" more than they could fairly bear he would have admitted. Enthusiasm often leads a man to defend an indefensible position, but it does not follow that he is not perfectly sincere in his defence. He would have failed in sincerity if, on finding the weakness of his position, he had remained in the Anglican Church. This he did not do, and it cost him a bitter pang to follow the logical results of his own reasoning.

After his conversion, Newman published some remarkable books. The first, his *Autobiography*—his spiritual autobiography—*Apologia pro Vita Sua* (1865), perhaps the most significant of his writings. The keynote of the truth may be found in this statement:

"From the age of fifteen, dogma has been the fundamental principle of my religion. I know no other religion: I cannot enter into the idea of any other sort of religion. Religion as a mere sentiment is to me a dream and a mockery."

Here we have a very distinct point of view, and one that must be thoroughly grasped before we proceed further. There are three types of mind to which dogma appeals in a quite different way.

The first may be called *the passionate*; the second *the contemplative*; the third, *the critical temperament.*

The passionate temperament is an impulsive one. Feeling here is intense and predominant, where the overpowering need is felt of some great co-ordinating power outside ourselves to leash the impulses together and to give directing force to the character. St. Augustine, St. Francis d'Assisi, John Knox, John Bunyan, and Newman are examples of this type.

To such natures religion, when it appeals, must appeal as some external authority. Faith must express itself in a ritual belief crystallised into a dogma. Knowing the weaknesses of human nature, having gauged the cross-currents which deflect the will first this way and then that, conscious of the passion of inward effort to decide first hand in the great problems of life, they turn with a sigh of relief and aspiration towards some great Church that has continued down the ages; or towards some great Book that shall decide the questions that have bewildered and amazed them.

Obedience is one of the first duties they strive after. Those who trust to a Church rather than to a Book are Catholic; the Protestant turns to the Book as the external authority needed. In Newman's case, of course, it was "the Church" that appealed as an authority that quieted all questionings as the reputed medium of supernatural grace. With all his powerful intellect, with all his critical appreciation, he felt the necessity in his religious life for some external authority on which he could depend. Self-reliance in spiritual matters looked to him like puerile cocksureness.

The contemplative temperament is that of the Oriental mystic, whose instinct for the things that are unseen is so strong that he feels no need to resolve it into terms of logic. To the onlooker his attitude may seem incomprehensible, because of its essential subjectivity. But to the man himself his religion is as real and vital as the processes of his own body. No pontifical Church appeals to him; no special Sacraments claim his attention; for the whole Universe for him glows with spiritual fire; and Nature herself is his high-priest.

"The science of the Sufis," says a Persian philosopher of the eleventh century,[1] "aims at detaching the heart from all that is not God, and at giving to it for sole occupation the meditation of the divine being. . . . Just as the understanding is a stage of human life in which an eye opens to discuss various intellectual objects uncomprehended by sensation; just so in the prophetic the sight is illumined by a light which uncovers hidden things and objects which the intellect fails to reach. The chief properties of prophetism are perceptible only during the transport by those who embrace the Sufi life. The prophet is endowed with qualities to which you possess nothing analogous, and which consequently you cannot possibly understand. How should you know their true nature?—what one can comprehend? But the transport which one attains by the method of the Sufis is like an immediate perception, as if one touched the objects with one's hand."

The third temperament—the critical one—is obviously that of the scientific mind, that rejects dogma because it holds it superfluous, not since it accounts it mischievous. Clear intellectual comprehension is at once its test and its ideal. What cannot be verified by human experience is untrustworthy to such a mind. In such temperaments mentality is strong, emotionalism weak.

"The contemplation of God and nothing but it," wrote Newman, "is able to open and relieve the mind; to unlock, occupy and fix our affections. It is this feeling of simple and absolute confidence and com-

[1] Quoted by Professor William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience.*

munion which soothes and satisfies those to whom it is vouchsafed. We know that even our nearest friends enter into us but partially, and hold intercourse with us only at times, whereas the consciousness of a perfect and enduring presence, and it alone, keeps our heart open. If it be not bold to say it—He who is infinite alone can be its measure. He alone can answer to that mysterious assemblage of feelings and thoughts which it has within it."

This may have been written by a fanatic: by a sceptic—no. The dogmatic principle which he asserts so passionately in his *Apologia* is worked out with brilliant elaboration in two books—*The Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845), and *A Grammar of Assent* (1870).

The Development of Christian Doctrine takes as its main thesis the familiar principle of the gradual development that accompanies necessarily the growth of every doctrine or institution. Such development is hinted at indeed in such parables as the grain of mustard seed, and makes justifiable havoc of certain popular Protestant arguments.

This historical use made of the evolutionary idea anticipates to some extent Spencer's work. Newman's argument, however, that, in order to distinguish correct development from false, an infallible authority outside the development is required, stands on quite another footing, and no one has dealt more trenchantly with it than the German theologian, Dr. Pfleiderer:

"If Christianity is, as a whole, a revelation, the results of its development must share the guarantee of its credentials. Revealed religion is distinguished from Natural by the very fact that it substitutes the voice of a Law-giver—an objective authority, Apostle, Pope, or Church—for the voice of conscience. In Protestantism this authority is the Bible; but as it can be proved that this authority is insufficient, we must conclude that this required living and present source of revelation can only be the infallible arbiter of all true doctrines—the Church. Nor is personal judgment precluded by this infallible authority, but is only limited to its proper range and preserved from error. We must allow that this defence (following in the footsteps of the German Catholic theologian Möhler) of the principle of Catholic tradition and authority is conducted very cleverly. It rests, all the same, upon a great fallacy. The fact is overlooked that the alleged infallible authority is itself a product of the general development, and that it participates in its changes, and is therefore subject, like every historical phenomenon, to the law of relativity. Moreover, the false traditional idea of development is throughout taken for granted—namely, that development consists solely in positive growth, in an extension and more complete definition of older truth; we hear nothing of the great fact, that development has also a negative aspect, that new truth does not come merely as an addition to the old, but often abrogates the old, so that in reality there is accomplished in it the continuous criticism of mind in the process of its development. We readily grant that this process does not go on without obedience to an inner law of rationality; but precisely because reason is realised in the process of historic development, it does not require a special infallible institution to guide it, which can only become an impediment to the living spirit."[1]

But, criticism apart, Newman's essay is an extremely instructive one, raising many questions of practical interest, such as how far Christianity as taught to-day is the genuine outcome of primitive customs; how far our preservative additions, our doctrines, and our losses are corruptions; how far fairly derived.

In *A Grammar of Assent* Newman elaborated a principle derived probably from Keble, that religious conviction rests on emotional, not on intellectual grounds. That, further, these grounds cannot be theoretically proved, or logically justified, probability being converted into certainty by a voluntary assent.

The doctrine of probability is borrowed and developed from Butler, and Newman certainly has much to say that is stimulating and suggestive. There is a profound psychological truth in his contention that our opinions are so largely affected by instinctive prepossessions, temperamental likes and dislikes, and that, estimating our view, these peculiarities of our mental constitution, which no arguments can alter, must be taken into consideration:

"I do not like thee, Dr. Fell;
The reason why I cannot tell."

The subjective and idiosyncratic character of emotional certainty is, however, insufficient on which to build a theology. It may serve as a rule of faith to its possessor, but it holds no validity for others, unless it can appeal also to historical data or logical argument.

What was there about Kingsley's charge of dishonesty, and Huxley's suggestion of moral jugglery?

If Newman's position was a faithful expression of his own—the passionate temperament—how can he have provoked such widespread distrust? The reason for this will appear if we scrutinise his dialectics. When he argues that it is by imagination rather than by reason that we reach the truth, and that our deepest convictions cannot find adequate intellectual symbols, most of us will admit the force of his pleading, and warmly assent. We may even assent to the high importance with which he rates the dogmatic principle; taking temperaments such as his into account. But the dogmatic principle is one thing, the truth of specific dogmas quite another. These are matters, surely, for historical criticism. Imagination may transcend reason—but that is not to say it can dispense with it. Here comes in the weakness of Newman's position. He did not say: The Athanasian Creed appeals irresistibly to my imagination; to discuss it as an intellectual statement, therefore, seems to be superfluous. If so, the issue would have been a simple one. That is what the mystic does. But Newman's intellect was a subtle and restless one; he was for ever trying to justify on logical grounds what he had always accepted on intuitive grounds. He was not consciously dishonest in this; there was no deliberate insincerity. Otherwise he would not have shown his cards so ingenuously; he would not have so frankly provided us with the weapons with which to confute him. But a reasoner who, having arrived at certain conclusions without the aid of logic, suddenly invokes logic to justify these conclusions, should not complain if this tortuous method arouses suspicion in plain, straightforward minds as to his *bona fides*.

[1] *Development of Theology.*

The fact is that Newman's emotional appetite constantly desired every manner of external assistance, whether of creed or ritual, to satisfy it. And he confounded a matter of idiosyncrasy with a matter of conscience.

Yet there is much in Newman's writings that is both true and profound, much that gives a pleasant pasturage to the fancy, and a noble stimulus to the imagination. He is an agreeable and fascinating companion by the way so long as we do not trust him as a guide.

EDWARD BOUVERIE PUSEY (1800–1882) is no more reliable than Newman in theological controversy, for, despite his even more extensive learning, he makes no real use of it whenever his arguments lead up to Church authority and tradition. Lacking Newman's probing intellect, he did not even go so far as to try to reconcile faith and reason. His imagination was far less sensitive; and although he, like Newman, was honest and sincere enough, he is even more of the special pleader. In almost every way he is inferior to Newman; he is far less attractive as a personality, more questionable in his methods, and immeasurably inferior as a literary craftsman.

Other interesting figures of lesser note in the Tractarian movement, but none the less of genuine interest, are RICHARD HURRELL FROUDE, Dean CHURCH, Canon LIDDON, and W. G. WARD.

HURRELL FROUDE (1803–1836) was a man of brilliant parts who survives rather as a memory, for he died early, leaving nothing by which he could be fairly judged. He was a great friend of Newman's, wrote two of the *Tracts for the Times*, and some fair verse. But his personal influence far transcends his literary.

WILLIAM GEORGE WARD (1812–1882) was another personality with great intellectual gifts, personal charm, and indifferent literary parts. He was one of the most influential English Catholics after Newman.

RICHARD WILLIAM CHURCH (1815–1890), the friend of Newman, is second only to him in literary skill and charm. Certainly he is the most distinguished literary figure of the High Church party. He has written a clear and succinct account of the Oxford Movement and some monographs of the first order on Dante, Spenser, and Bacon. Here he shows the fullest appreciation of those diverse personalities. While never indiscriminate in praise, he can be both delicately sympathetic and coolly judicial—a combination of qualities as rare as it is welcome.

The last notable figure of the movement is that of HENRY PARRY LIDDON (1829–1890), who was a fine orator, a cultured scholar, but negligible as a thinker; for he simply ignored in his writings—for instance, his Bampton Lectures on *The Divinity of Jesus* (1867)—other lines of speculative thought outside of the High Church position.

Among the English Catholics who were affected by, but were not of, the Tractarian movement, are Cardinal MANNING (1808–1892) and Cardinal WISEMAN (1802–1865)—the original of Bishop Blougram—whose novel *Fabiola* (1854), a story of the Church of the Catacombs, enjoyed a European popularity. Wiseman was an able and genial man, but a poor literary craftsman. Manning was one of the High Anglicans who passed over to Rome, though he did not belong to the Tractarian group. He is better known as a man of affairs than as a thinker or writer.

SAMUEL WILBERFORCE (1805–1873), the famous Bishop of Oxford, was a moderate High Churchman, less by reason of any reasoned position than by force of a temperament that was practical and prone to compromise. He was an effective preacher, a good administrator, and a witty conversationalist, and in writing is most notable for his controversial articles in the *Quarterly Review*. As a thinker he is a clever, versatile, shallow man, and the part he played in the Darwin controversy is neither creditable to his taste nor his fair-mindedness.

There is no theological movement comparable with the Tractarian or neo-Catholic movement in its far-reaching influence on Art and Letters and the Life of the day. But the "Broad Church" movement can claim many distinguished adherents, and certainly ranks second.

Strictly speaking, this movement is composed of two sections, the first of which concentrated rather on social activities and centred round Maurice and Kingsley; the second, being more strictly intellectual, centring round Mark Pattison and Jowett. In the social wing may be numbered F. D. Maurice, C. Kingsley, and F. W. Robertson.

FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE (1805–1872) was a man of considerable personal charm and beauty of character, and a thinker whose intellectual power was far in excess of his clarity of presentment. Maurice's fundamental contention is that mysticism and rationalism are not incompatible, and his life is evidence to the harmony of a deep, living faith with a fair and candid examination of facts, illustrated by much that is profoundly suggestive, if never wholly satisfying. His indebtedness to Coleridge is obvious, and he has both the weakness and strength of his master. But his passionate attachment to the English Church does lead him into many ambiguities, and we are conscious, as we are in Newman, of the special pleader.

With slighter intellectual equipment is FREDERICK WILLIAM ROBERTSON (1816–1853), the great Brighton preacher, a much clearer exponent of the Broad Church position, especially in its social implications. His spiritual feeling is not a whit less inferior to Maurice's, but he is not disturbed by those subtleties which Maurice tried faithfully but unsuccessfully to unravel, and he gets to the root of the subject with admirable precision and definiteness.

Both Kingsley and Robertson, though inferior in original power to Maurice, excelled him as direct forces. Maurice is the leader of the Christian Social movement, but Kingsley was its populariser, and proved the more potent personality; while Robertson presented with supreme clarity the intimate connection between poetry and life, which Maurice felt and suggested but was never able to actualise.

The somewhat vague phrase "Christian Socialist," first identified with Maurice and his school, was in point of fact an attempt to realise in economic terms the contention of Coleridge that Christianity is a *life* and not a creed. If Christianity was to be

a force in modern life, it must concern itself with the pressing problems brought about by the unequal distribution of wealth; it must, in short, inspire the conditions of *this* life, and not merely talk at large about another life. Economically it sympathises with the Collectivist theory that in the mid century was displacing the old Utilitarian Individualism. But its exponents were not committed to any particular school of economic thought, and were essentially eclectic.

Passing now to the more exclusively intellectual wing of the Broad Church movement, we note the names of Dean Stanley, Mark Pattison, Benjamin Jowett, and Bishop Colenso.

Arthur Penrhyn Stanley (1815–1881), whom Carlyle once referred to as "knocking holes in the Church of England," showed his broad-mindedness by his treatment of ecclesiastical history. He was a picturesque and vigorous writer, and a man of wide sympathies, who, like so many of his school, never pressed his rationalistic methods to their logical conclusion. Huxley's description of him, despite its humorous exaggeration, undoubtedly hit off happily this failing:

"Stanley could believe in anything of which he had seen the supposed site, but was sceptical where he had not seen. At a breakfast at Monckton Milnes', just at the time of the Colenso row, Milnes asked me my views on the Pentateuch, and I gave them. Stanley differed from us. The account of creation in Genesis he dismissed at once as unhistorical; but the call of Abraham and the historical narrative of the Pentateuch he accepted. This was because he had seen Palestine, but he wasn't present at the creation."

Mark Pattison (1813–1884), Rector of Lincoln College, was essentially a scholar with a marked taste for philosophy. A man of great learning, he was a clear and dispassionate thinker, and it is extraordinary that his essentially analytical and non-controversial treatment of Deism, in the essay he contributed to the famous *Essays and Reviews*, should have been so violently attacked. In addition to this he wrote a biography of the great humanist *Isaac Casaubon*, his most learned work, and an admirable little monograph on *Milton*.

Benjamin Jowett (1817–1893) proved the most fearless and uncompromising of the ecclesiastical rationalists, and his attack on the popular doctrine of the Atonement in *Essays and Reviews*, as well as his treatment of many points of Biblical exegesis, brought him naturally into high disfavour with the orthodox. To-day his position seems inoffensive enough, and fully compatible with a genuine religious spirit, though whether such an attitude is reconcilable with a position in the Anglican Church is a more arguable matter.

Jowett recognised the storm of disapprobation by turning his attention from theological matters, and undoubtedly his name in literature will rest upon the wonderful translation of *Plato* which occupied the later years of his life. He was an interesting and remarkable figure in the intellectual world, and the friend of many Victorians; one whose influence in these days is personal and stimulating rather than deeply philosophical.

So far the theologians and philosophers treated belong either to the Anglican Church or the Church of Rome. We may turn now to those outside the Church.

Those remarkable Scotsmen, David Hume and Adam Smith, did much for philosophic thought in the late eighteenth century. Then came a period of mediocrities, though Dugald Stewart (1753–1828), if little of a force in speculation, affected living contemporaries by his attractive personality and oratorical power.

But the first important name in the history of modern thought is that of Sir William Hamilton (1788–1856), Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in Edinburgh University.

As in Jowett's case, however, the personal equation counted for much more in Hamilton's case than originality or profundity. His enormous appetite for reading led him to bolt his food without properly assimilating it; and this did not make for intellectual eupeptics. Though a wide reader of German philosophy, he seems to have derived no benefit from it; and his philosophy of common sense, set up to combat Hume's, is a very fragile concern. The most serious defect (from one who wishes to defend orthodoxy) in Hamilton's philosophy, however, is its pervading, underlying scepticism. That this is so will be more apparent if we turn to the work of an acute disciple of Hamilton's—Dean Mansel (1820–1871), particularly in his *Limits of Religious Thought*.

Mansel's position may be made clear by the following passages from the preface to his third edition:

"It has been objected by reviewers of very opposite schools, that to deny a man a knowledge of the infinite, is to make Revelation itself impossible, and to leave no room for evidences on which reason can be legitimately employed. The objection would be pertinent, if I had ever maintained that Revelation is, or can be, a direct manifestation of the infinite nature of God. But I have constantly asserted the very reverse. In Revelation, as in Natural Religion, God is represented under finite conceptions, adapted to finite minds; and the evidences on which the authority of Revelation rests are finite and comprehensible also. It is true that in Revelation, no less than in the exercise of our natural faculties, there is indirectly indicated the existence of a higher truth which, as it cannot be grasped by any effort of human thought, cannot be made the vehicle of any valid philosophical criticism. But the comprehension of this higher truth is no more necessary either to a belief in the contents of Revelation, or to a reasonable examination of its evidences, than a conception of the infinite divisibility of matter is necessary to the child before it can learn to walk."

Thus, as one of his critics has well said, "he believes in the veil even more intensely than in the revelation." Revelation, according to Mansel, can give us a conception of Deity true enough for ordinary practical purposes, but "how far that knowledge represents God as He is, we know not, and have no need to know." This, Mansel holds to be a useful regulative truth, but the more we examine the more shadowy it seems, for he suggests that the morality of God is not merely higher than Man's, but *different*. Surely, beside this mockery of a Revelation, Arnold's "something not ourselves that makes for Righteousness," seems delightfully definite and comforting.

The book shows great acuteness of thought, and the Agnostic will find within it an armoury of weapons. But as a guide to faith, nothing could well be more unsatisfactory. The best critical examination of it from the religious point of view will be found in the writings of James Martineau and F. D. Maurice, and from a more detached standpoint we may turn to John Stuart Mill. Hutton also has an able and lucid essay on the subject. There is no better criticism, however, than is implied in Huxley's terse and witty comparison of Mansel to the drunken man in Hogarth's *Contested Election*, who is sawing through the signpost on the outer edge of which he is himself sitting.

The influence of the Scottish school of theologians, despite Mansel's intellectual power, is not comparable with that of the Utilitarians, who owed their inspiration to the teaching of Jeremy Bentham. The influence of Bentham and of his friend James Mill, in morals, would have been greatly limited had it not been for the wider culture and far more considerable literary power of John Stuart Mill.

II. PROSE: Philosophy and Economics. Utilitarianism and Positivism.

JOHN STUART MILL (1806–1873)

His Life and Work

John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) is often referred to as if he had been a mere logic-chopping machine like his father, James Mill. It was quite otherwise; with his father's clear intellectual power he combined a power of imagination and an emotional intensity alien to his parent. Yet it was not till nearly middle life that he realised the potentiality of his powers. Schooled by his father to check the imagination and repress emotions, he had done so, until he realised that he was starving his nature and stultifying his powers.

Valuable as Mill's writings are to the student of politics and economics, his *Autobiography* is far more valuable to the literary student and general reader. In it he lays bare the whole tragedy of a one-sided education. It is a notable human document that should be scanned by every young man and woman, and supplies us with a psychological key to the man's writings.

In some ways his bringing up was admirable. If James Mill was too grudging in allowing his youthful son books of amusement, there is much to be said for the literature of forceful personalities overcoming difficulties which he impressed upon him. The father's habit of discussing these books with his son, and obliging him to give some account of them himself, was undeniably helpful. Sometimes he tested John's receptiveness indirectly. He obliged him to impart his knowledge of Latin to a young sister, and to ensure accuracy the father tested the sister's knowledge from time to time. The boy disliked this method but admitted its utility.

"It was a part," says Mill, "I greatly disliked: the more so, as I was held responsible for the lessons of my pupils, in almost as full a sense as for my own: I, however, derived from this discipline the great advantage of learning more thoroughly and retaining more lastingly the things which I was set to teach: perhaps, too, the practice it afforded in explaining difficulties to others may even at that age have been useful."

As a logician the father compelled the son to study logic at an early age, helped him to analyse a bad argument, discover a fallacy, use exact and definite in place of ambiguous terms. He taught him also the Socratic method, and the son became acquainted at an impressionable age with the Dialogues of Plato.

Poetry was little in James Mill's line; nor indeed did the son show any leaning for it, but Milton, Burns, and Cowper were tolerated. More serious than the comparative neglect of the poets was the neglect of concrete teaching and the exclusive reliance on abstract rules. For instance, in teaching elocution James Mill *taught* the boy by rules how to read; but never once thought of the superior utility of *showing* him by example how to read. Thus his education, with many good points about it, was too academic, too arid, too rigid; insufficient emphasis being placed on the human element that alone gives life.

The education was good in so far as it encouraged the student to think for himself; bad in so far as it narrowed the scope of his thinking and exaggerated the importance of logic. James Mill symbolised the strength and weakness of the anti-Romantic position. He was cautious in his judgments, cool in his opinions, temperate in his tastes, fair and just in his dealings with others. But the utter absence of enthusiasm in his nature nullified much of his power, and his lack of plasticity made him necessarily one-sided in his outlook. From the outset the son exhibited a warmer emotional nature. Early in life he was enamoured with the idea of becoming a reformer and improving the social conditions of his countrymen. Then, suddenly, at the age of twenty, an emotional crisis overtook him:

"I was in a dull state of nerves, such as everybody is occasionally liable to: unsusceptible to enjoyments or pleasurable excitement; one of those moods when what is pleasure at other times becomes insipid or indifferent: the state I should think in which converts to Methodism usually are when smitten by their first conviction of Sin." In this frame of mind he asked himself: "Suppose that all your objects in life were realised; that all the changes, and institutions, and opinions which you are looking forward to, could be completely effected at this very instant: would this be a great joy and happiness to you? And an irrepressible self-consciousness distinctly answered—No!

"At this my heart sank within me: the whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down. All my happiness was to have been found in the continual pursuit of this end. The end had ceased to charm and

how could there ever again be any interest in the means. I seemed to have nothing left to live for. At first I hoped this feeling was due to a passing mood—but continued week after week, month after month."

In later life, when he became acquainted with Coleridge's work, the lines on *Dejection* struck him as exactly describing his case:

"A grief without a pang, void, dark and drear:
A drowsy, stifled, unimpassioned grief,
Which finds no natural outlet or relief,
In word, or sigh, or tear."

He turned to his favourite books for cheer, but found none. His "enthusiasm of humanity" had suddenly and inexplicably cooled down. To turn to his father was, he knew, futile. James Mill would have little patience with such feelings. He worked on, but without pleasure, at his literary work. It was a case of

"Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve,
And hope without an object cannot live."

It was a remarkable state of mind for any son of the practical, stoical James Mill to undergo—and the more remarkable as it took no definite shape. Religion he had already settled in his own mind was a pious fiction: the only object in life worth pursuit, he had agreed with his father, was happiness—personal happiness in seeking the happiness of the greatest number. His mind had been occupied with literature—the reverse of emotional or depressing: his physique was healthy: his method of living healthy—or healthy at any rate for a literary man. And here he was almost as tempest-tossed as Carlyle in the Edinburgh days. Something was wanting in his life—What was it? He had sought happiness, but it had eluded him. And so, gradually, two effects upon his mind and character made themselves felt.

He still held that happiness was the test of all rules of conduct and the end of life. But he now thought this end was only to be attained by not making it the direct end. Those are only happy, he reflected, who have their minds fixed on some subject other than their own happiness; on the happiness of others, on the improvement of mankind, even on some art or pursuit, followed not as a means, but as itself an ideal end. Aiming thus at something else, they find happiness by the way. Ask yourself whether you are happy and you cease to be so. The only chance is to treat, not happiness but some end external to it, as the purpose of life. "Let your self-consciousness, your scrutiny, your self-interrogation exhaust themselves on that; and if otherwise fortunately circumstanced you will inhale happiness with the air you breathe, without dwelling on it, without either forestalling it in imagination or putting it to flight by fatal questioning." This theory now became the basis of his philosophy of life.

The other change which his opinions at this time underwent was, that he for the first time gave its proper place among the prime necessities of human well-being, to the internal culture of the individual. He attached less importance to the ordering of outward circumstances. He had learnt by experience that the passive susceptibilities needed to be cultivated as well as the active capacities, and required to be nourished and enriched as well as guided. And so, the cultivation of the emotions became one of the cardinal points in his ethical and philosophical creed. Hitherto, poetry and the fine arts had been practically neglected. Now he turned to them, with his imagination, hungering for inspiration and solace. Music had indeed furnished him some sort of pleasure in the past—but poetry, except as embodying some historical fact or ethical truth, seems to have bored him.

It is very characteristic of the youthful Mill, that much of the pleasure he derived from music was spoiled by the thought that the octave consists only of five tones and two semi-tones which can be put together in only a limited number of ways; of which but a small proportion are beautiful: most of them, he concluded, must have been already discovered. Here is a ludicrous example of the perils of devoting your mind exclusively to analytical work. The mind cannot passively enjoy without wishing to probe and analyse, and torture itself with the scientific basis for the enjoyment. Small wonder that he afterwards compared his anxiety at this time to the philosophers of Laputa, who feared lest the sun should be burnt up: though it reminds me rather of a child taking a rose to pieces, to discover where the fragrance came from.

But the real solace and comfort came not from music but from the poetry of Wordsworth.

Byron he had essayed, but Byron's passionate discontent had depressed rather than cheered. *Manfred* and *Don Juan* are not exhilarating companions, if you are suffering from spiritual depression.

The passage in which he described the effect of Wordsworth's poetry upon him—though well known—is so significant and remarkable, that it seems worth while quoting:

"These poems addressed themselves powerfully to one of the strongest of my pleasurable susceptibilities, the love of rural objects and natural scenery, to which I had been indebted not only for much of the pleasure of my life but quite recently for relief from one of my longest relapses into depression. In this power of rural beauty over me, there was a foundation laid for taking pleasure in Wordsworth's poetry; the more so, as his scenery lies mostly among mountains, which, owing to my early Pyrenean excursion, were my ideal of natural beauty. But Wordsworth would never have had any great effect on me, if he had merely placed before me beautiful pictures of natural scenery. Scott does this still better than Wordsworth, and a very second-rate landscape does it more effectually than any poet. What made Wordsworth's poems a medicine for my state of mind was that they expressed, not mere outward beauty but states of feeling and of thought coloured by feeling under the excitement of beauty. They seemed to be the very culture of the feelings which I was in quest of. In them I seemed to draw from a source of inward joy, of sympathetic and imaginative pleasure, which could be shared in by all human beings; which had no connection with struggle or imperfection, but would be made richer by every improvement in the physical or social condition of mankind. From them I seemed to learn what would be the perennial sources of happiness when all the greater evils of life shall have been removed. And I felt myself at once better and happier as I came under their influence. I needed to be made to feel

that there was real permanent happiness in tranquil meditation. Wordsworth taught me this not only without turning away from, but with a greatly increased interest in the common feelings and common destiny of human beings."

With the philosophy in the famous *Intimations of Immortality* Mill had no sympathy, but the imagery of this famous Ode thrilled him, and he was particularly drawn to the passages describing the first freshness of youthful enjoyment of life and the compensations of later life that come to take the place of this early exhilaration of feeling. It so exactly described his own experience and showed him a way out of his mental depression.

Shortly after this Mill came into contact with two enthusiastic disciples of Coleridge: F. D. Maurice and John Sterling (immortalised by Carlyle). Thence he was drawn into studying Coleridge. The comradeship of a mystic like Maurice did much to modify the hard and somewhat uncompromising rationalism of Mill. He approached religious problems now in a more sympathetic spirit, and although he could never understand what he thought to be the moral timidity of Maurice in trying to square all the great problems of faith with the Thirty-Nine Articles, the great driving power of some kind of religion was brought home to him, and he realised the inadequacy of the old utilitarianism in which he had been brought up.

The early writings of Carlyle interested him at this time, although James Mill saw in them nothing but "insane rhapsody"; but though he approved of much that Carlyle said, he deprecated the manner in which it was said.

To his more analytical nature, the condition of society, though it seemed to him highly unsatisfactory, demanded not so much fierce denunciation as a calm investigation into the Source of the evil.

"Logic be hanged," was Carlyle's attitude—"let us have a drastic moral revolution. Let us be more serious-minded, more responsive to the dictates of the conscience: let us reform ourselves, and then outward reformation will be of some value."

"Until Society is better constituted—grievances less pressing—inequalities less glaring—we cannot hope for any great reform of the individual"—that was Mill's attitude—"Little use to abuse a man for stealing—or lying—unless we make his circumstances such that the incentive is vastly diminished." And in this respect the social teaching of Dickens is much the same; "Feed before you moralise."

The weakness of Mill lay in expecting too much from external reform: of Carlyle in expecting too little.

Little surprise that neither Mill nor Carlyle—friendly though for some years they were—really appreciated one another. Of the two, Mill was the fairer—he was more receptive to other men's ideas, more just in his appraisement than Carlyle. And yet, there were several points in which they viewed life in the same way. John Mill responded in a surprising way to the imaginative fervour of mystics like Coleridge and Maurice; and Carlyle, with all his impatient contempt for Coleridge, was a mystic at heart himself.

But Mill, though his writings have little of the rich ethical inspiration of Carlyle, and are obviously inferior in literary art, was more satisfying as a political thinker. Carlyle, as we have seen, seemed to confuse liberty with licence—and in his passion for the strong man, was led into espousing the retrogressive elements in society, and carping at those reforms which would enable people at large to take a share in the government. Mill took an interest in all forward movements, and never flinched from an inconsistency or a change about, if he thought he had been in error.

As a political thinker Mill's reputation rests largely upon his same little treatise *On Liberty*, and that store-house of common-sense, *Representative Government*.

As a social thinker Mill exhibits the cleavage with the old Benthamite individualism. Note for instance this passage:

"Our ideal of ultimate improvement went far beyond democracy, and would class us decidedly under the general designation of socialists. While we repudiated with the greatest energy that tyranny of society over the individual which most socialistic systems are supposed to involve, we yet look forward to a time when society will no longer be divided into the idle and the industrious; when the rule that they who do not work shall not eat, will be applied not to paupers only, but impartially to all; when the division of the produce of labour, instead of depending, as in so great a degree it now does, on the accident of birth, will be made by concert on an acknowledged principle of justice. . . . The social problem of the future we considered to be, how to unite the greatest individual liberty of action with a common ownership in the raw material of the globe, and an equal participation of all in the benefits of combined labour."[1]

No wonder that the dry bones of the old political economy were shaken by a mind that could speculate like this: that his treatise on the subject should include a chapter like that on the "Probable Future of the Labouring Classes"; and that that treatise should also contain passages like the following:

"If the choice were to be made between communism, with all its chances, and the present state of society, with all its sufferings and injustices; if the institution of private property necessarily carried with it, as a consequence, that the produce of labour should be apportioned as we now see it, almost in an inverse ratio to the labour—the largest portions to those who have never worked at all, the next largest to those whose work is almost nominal, and so in a descending scale, the remuneration dwindling as the work grows harder and more disagreeable, until the most fatiguing and exhausting bodily labour cannot count with certainty on being able to earn even the necessaries of life; if this or communism were the alternative, all the difficulties, great or small, of communism would be but as dust in the balance."[2]

Mill's sympathies with the working classes brought him into collision with the capitalist; but there was nothing of the violent demagogue in his nature. He is always the patient and just observer, trying to hold the scales impartially between the various classes of the community. There is little to differentiate Mill's economic views from the socialistic opinions of the more moderate reformer to-day. Essentially his position is that of the modern Col-

[1] *Principles of Political Economy.* [2] *Ibid.*

lectivist. He looks to the State for bringing about the necessary reforms, though he thinks time is needed to bring about these reforms and deprecate revolution. Meanwhile he would advance gradually on the lines of State interference.

In his work as a social politician, he proved a man of high integrity and sincerity. Gladstone's tribute is worth recalling:

"We well know," said he, "Mr. Mill's intellectual eminence before he entered Parliament. What his conduct there principally disclosed, at least to me, was his singular moral elevation. I remember now that at the time, more than twenty years back, I used familiarly to call him the Saint of Rationalism, a phrase roughly and partially expressing what I now mean. Of all the motives, aims and stimulants that reach men through their egoism in Parliament, no part could move or even touch him. . . . For the sake of the House of Commons at large, I rejoiced in his advent, and deplored his disappearance. He did us all good. In whatever party, whatever form of opinion, I sorrowfully confess that such men are rare."

And we may add to this tribute—that Mill's memory will retain its freshness for the stimulus it gave to fair play, to a candid, open mind on every question great or small, to the fine sense of justice which dominated all his political writings; for his clear appreciation for the necessity of a patient, systematic inquiry into social grievances and weaknesses; finally, for that most excellent combination in a social reformer—a ready sympathy and shrewd common sense.

Among those who followed in the train of the Utilitarians are ALEXANDER BAIN (1818–1903) and HENRY SIDGWICK (1838–1900). Bain applied Utilitarian principles to psychology, as in his books *The Senses and the Intellect* and *The Emotions and the Will*. Sidgwick, Professor of Moral Philosophy at Cambridge, accepted the Utilitarian standpoint to a large extent, but to his case it was qualified by an admixture of Intuitionalism. His was both an intensely religious and an intensely critical nature; and the result of this was that his intellectual position only inclined to the *via media*. To state a problem invariably suggested to Sidgwick the objections to that problem, and for a clear, judicial presentment of pros and cons in the domain of ethics or social politics, no one excelled him. If this quality of intellectual equipoise made Sidgwick a somewhat tame Oracle, it had the advantage of assuring the reader that he would always find in him a fair, just, and scrupulously honest thinker.

In the earlier half of the Victorian era, Utilitarianism, both in religion and political philosophy, proved a considerable and widespread influence. But with the turn of the mid-century its influence began to wane both in politics and religious speculation.

The effect of the doctrine of Evolution, elaborated by Spencer in history and applied more particularly by Darwin and Huxley to Biology and Ethics, affected contemporary thought to an extraordinary extent. One result of this was to give prominence to the theories of Comte; and Positivism (as his teaching is called) to some extent superseded Utilitarianism.

POSITIVISM

Positivism, like Utilitarianism, accepted the methods of science as the determining factor in speculative thought. Both confined their inquiries to the study of phenomena, excluding causes other than phenomenal. Both, therefore, ruled metaphysics out of court. Positivism differed from Utilitarianism in its attempt to provide a more constructive philosophy of life, not only to rationalise knowledge, but to formulate a religion that should prove an emotional substitute for Christianity. The weakness of Utilitarianism had been its aridity of imagination. John Stuart Mill himself felt this, and consequently strained Utilitarianism beyond the logical limits set down by its earlier exponents. Comte felt that man must have some object of love and reverence, and for the idea of a Deity he substituted the idea of Humanity regarded as a collective unity. This was to include all men and women, past, present, and to come, whose lives should have been consecrated to social service and to high moral endeavour. George Eliot well expressed the idea in her lines:

"O may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence: live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge man's search
To vaster issues."

Christianity had been a useful transition phase for the human race. Mankind had now outgrown it. The worship of humanity signified ideals in common with the spirits of all the great dead—whatever their creed. This would prove a dynamic spiritual power to act as the old religion had done, but in a spirit of greater charity and finer comprehensiveness.

An important aspect of Positivism is its social side, and its insistence on the organisation of labour, and in State interference for the good of society as a whole—not merely, as at present, for one section of society. Positivism has therefore been a factor in the development of modern Socialism.

Among English Comtists may be mentioned the names of RICHARD CONGREVE (1818–99), founder of the first Positivist community in London, of HARRIET MARTINEAU, of GEORGE HENRY LEWES, GEORGE ELIOT, and Mr. FREDERIC HARRISON.

As a social leaven Positivism has exercised a considerable influence, but as a substitute for religion it has failed to appeal to the English people at large. The Utilitarian aim to work for the good of concrete Humanity was less imposing, but seemed more satisfactory to the practical Englishman, than to worship an abstract Humanity.

Speculative thought outside of orthodoxy was not, however, confined to Utilitarianism and Positivism. German philosophy, that had found its earlier exponents in Coleridge and his disciple, Thomas Hill Green, who, however, used it to bolster up orthodoxy, has in the brother Scots, JOHN and

Edward Caird (1820–98; 1835–1908), two more disinterested representatives.

John Caird won notice first of all as a preacher; then, after a period of retirement and hard study, he devoted the rest of his life mainly to formulating an idealistic philosophy based on Hegel. Although he aimed thereby at giving fresh vitality to the Christianity of his day, he did so in a thoroughly broad and unpolemical spirit. Whether his Hegelianism accomplished all he hoped for it is another matter.

Edward Caird, also a Hegelian, exceeded his brother in intellectual vigour and in power of literary expression, and equally with him excelled in the simple sobriety with which he sought to combat the materialism of his day. His mind was more concrete than that of his brother, and his range of inquiry wider. Among his studies were the teaching of Kant, Comtism, and the characteristics of Greek thought. His attitude was conciliatory and interpretative, and for this reason he was distrusted by the extremists of all schools.

The Rationalistic tendency that was partially accepted by theologians of the Broad Church school received an even more generous welcome from Unitarians.

It is impracticable here to deal even briefly with the many distinguished thinkers of the extreme radical wing of religious thought, such as Francis Newman (1805–97), brother of the Cardinal; Professor Drummond (1851–97), Professor Carpenter, Professor Upton. One name, and that the greatest, demands more than passing notice—that of James Martineau (1805–1900). Martineau's position among the philosophic writers of the Victorian era is so high that no excuse need be given for taking him as the best representative of the blend of Idealism and Rationalism that characterises the group as a whole.

James Martineau came of French Puritan stock, and was born at Norwich in 1805; his father was a business man of high integrity, but it was from his mother that he inherited his remarkable intellect. A delicate, refined, and highly-sensitive lad, he received a good education at Norwich Grammar School, and at Bristol under Dr. Lant Carpenter. On leaving school he studied engineering, but mechanics did not satisfy his mental energies. Having realised his true vocation as a preacher and teacher, he spent five years in preparation for the Unitarian ministry. In 1828 he made a happy marriage, and after four years' ministerial work in Dublin accepted a call to Liverpool, where he ministered for twenty-five years. In London he added still further to his high reputation as a preacher at the Unitarian Chapel in Little Portland Street.

In 1840 Martineau was appointed to a lectureship at Manchester New College; on its removal to London in 1857 he was made Professor of Moral Philosophy, and from 1869–85 its Principal; thus, for forty-five years, his influence was both important and far-reaching. In 1893 he was greatly concerned at the removal of the college from London to Oxford, and in the course of an address upon the subject said: "In natures and types of thought cast in a different mould from ours Oxford may furnish all that can be desired. Not yet is it the true nursery for the children of the Puritans. The mountain flower transported to the hothouse or the southern garden-bed, is not more sure to fade than would the simple veracities and hardy vitality of devotion which it is ours to transmit, were they exposed to the enervating spiritual climate which is proposed for their development."

During Martineau's early manhood his sister Harriet's influence was considerable; both had intellectual gifts of a high order, and had therefore much in common. In later years they quarrelled over some earlier correspondence that at James' request his sister refused to destroy, and on the publication, in 1851, of her *Letters on the Laws of Man's Social Nature*, her brother's unfavourable criticism of this atheistic work considerably widened the breach, and they never became reconciled.

Martineau's physical activity was remarkable. He was a magnificent walker, and in his eightieth year thought nothing of a twenty-mile ramble. In his ninetieth year he had to be seriously cautioned for alighting from an omnibus in motion; and often complained that he was not able to run upstairs as he had been wont to do.

Between London and his beautiful country home in Scotland he spent the last few years of his life, and "fell on sleep" in London in 1900.

Martineau's principal works include *Endeavours after a Christian Life* (1843–47), *Studies of Christianity* (1858), *Hours of Thought* (1876–80), *A Study of Spinoza* (1882), *Types of Ethical Theory* (1885), *A Study of Religion* (1888), *The Seat of Authority in Religion* (1890), his last word on religious philosophy. A collection of articles ranging over many years, entitled *Essays, Reviews, and Addresses*, was published in four volumes in 1891.

In discussing the outlook of Martineau, it may be well to treat him first as a critic, in the second place as a mystic, and thirdly as an ethical teacher, where the two sides meet and mingle.

With the exception of Sidgwick, there has probably never been any writer at once so able and so fair-minded in the realms of philosophy and kindred subjects.

"I could never be moved," he declared, "to give an account of a book by pure antipathy any more than by monotonous assent. The whole interest of literary intercourse, like that of all quickening friendship, is conditional on crossing veins of likeness and unlikeness in thought and character, deepening the zest and sympathy by the need and the possibility of more. And true criticism seems to me the recorded struggle of the reader's mind into closer relations with an author whose intermittent bursts, helpful as they are, still do not enable him clearly to see his way."

These sentences should be written in letters of gold and hung up as illuminated texts in the study of every literary man. For they go to the very root of all large-minded criticism.

Let us illustrate the method of his criticism. Here is a passage from a paper on Carlyle. Having warmly praised the moral fervour of *Sartor Resartus*, he analyses the "hero-worship" tendency.

"We know," says Martineau, "that where he discovers, as in Mirabeau, great force of mind, he is ready

to plead this as a bar to all objections against character, and to insist that in spite of appearance, such brightness of life must carry with it soundness of conscience. But will he turn the problem round and abide by it still? When he finds deep hid in the retreats of private life a goodness eminent and saintly, a moral clearness and force, great in their way as Mirabeau's keen-sightedness, will he accept the sign in evidence of mighty intellect? Will he say that, notwithstanding the meek and homely look, high genius must assuredly be there? For him as for many gifted and ungifted men, the force which will not be stopped by any restraint on its way to great achievement, the genius which claims to be its own law, and will confess nothing diviner than itself, have an irresistible fascination. His eye, overlooking the landscape of humanity, always runs up to the brilliant peaks of power, nor, indeed, without a glance of love and pity into many a retreat of quiet goodness that lies beneath their shelter: but should the sudden lightning or the seasonal melting of the world's ice-barriers bring down a ruin on that green and feeble life, his voice, after one faint cry of pathos, joins in with the thunder and shouts with the triumph of the avalanche. Ever watching the strife of the great forces of the universe, he no doubt sides on the whole against the Titans with the gods: but if the Titans make a happy fling, and send home a mountain or two to the very beard of Zeus, he gets delighted with the game on any terms and cries 'Bravo!'"[1]

A truer picture of Carlyle's general attitude it would be hard to find.

In passing from Martineau the critic to Martineau the preacher, we realise that behind the fine gauze-work of his dialectic is a white flame of powerful emotion, and it is a significant characteristic of the man that in the pulpit he should drop the weapons of the controversialist and don the robes of the mystic.

Martineau's sermons are devotional poems, breathing at one moment the spiritual fervour and beauty of Catholic piety, at the next the clear intellectual individualism of Protestant thought.

If they have any fault it is an undue compression of thought, and, however adapted for leisurely reading in the study, must have demanded the closest attention to the sermons when spoken in Liverpool or London. He was not a great preacher in the same way as were Newman and Robertson. His literary style is too heavily charged with ornament to give it that instantaneous power which the lucid periods of Newman invariably possessed. There was a lack of illustration and an avoidance of current problems which made them less attractive to the ordinary listener than the vigorous eloquence of Robertson. None the less, even when delivered—as many have testified—the sermons carried with them a singular charm and power.

Finally: What of Martineau as an ethical teacher?

In their religious philosophy both Newman and Martineau start from the same position—that in the sense of obligation or authority exercised by conscience we find the basis for our belief in a spiritual world. In Newman's case, however, this sense of conscience is too faint to be relied upon absolutely, it needs confirmation. The Being of God, he admits, is as certain to him as the certainty of his own existence. And yet his intellect remains dissatisfied with the mere assurance of God, or from arguments drawn from the general facts of human society and the course of history. And he sees in the vast accumulation of dogma and ritual provided by the Catholic Church a solution for his difficulties. Distrusting the unaided authority of his own mind, he leans for support on this infallible authority of the Church.

It is here that Martineau parts company with him. The conscience and intellect of man, he asserts, give the only reliable authority. Martineau sees in history the continual struggle between truth and error; the treasure is there, but it is in "earthen vessels," and he can see no literature nor institution into which errors both intellectual and moral have not crept.

There is no uncertainty in his verdict upon popular religion:

"A conclusion is forced upon me on which I cannot dwell without pain and dismay, *i.e.* that Christianity, as defined or understood in all the churches which formulate it, has been mainly evolved from what is transient and perishable in its sources; from what is unhistorical in its traditions, mythological in its traditions, and misapprehended in the oracles of its prophets. From the fable of Eden to the imagination of the last trumpet, the whole story of the divine order of the world is distorted and defaced. The spreading alienation of the intellectual classes of European society from Christendom and the detention of the rest in their spiritual culture at a level not much above that of the Salvation Army, are social phenomena which ought to bring home a very solemn appeal to the conscience of stationary churches.

"For their long arrear of debt to the intelligence of mankind they adroitly seek to make amends by elaborate beauty of ritual art. The apology soothes for a time, but it will not last for ever."

These are bold words, and might have been spoken by a Spencer or Huxley. But a few passages later we find this, the reverse of Spencerean:

"In the very constitution of the human soul there is provision for an immediate apprehension of God. But in the transient lights and shades of consistence we pass on, and 'know not who it is,' and not till we see in another the victory that shames our own defeat and are caught up by enthusiasm for some realised heroism or sanctity, do the authority of right and the beauty of holiness come home to us as an appeal literally divine. The train of the conspicuously righteous in their several degrees are for us the real angels that pass to and fro on the ladder that reaches from earth to heaven."

Here then we have a free critical spirit and a devotional spirit in juxtaposition. This is not the place for attempting to show how Martineau aims at justifying his position on intellectual grounds. I simply have to record the nature of his belief; to analyse the process by which he comes to his decision is obviously foreign to our purpose.

With Martineau, therefore, authority is internal, with Newman external. It is a mistake to urge, as do certain sympathetic critics—*e.g.* Dr. Mellone—that Martineau rejects entirely dogmatic systems. He does not do so. He realises that in the history of thought even the most rigid and uncompromising dogmas have contained germs of truth which have given them vitality. What he denies is their infallible authority. At the same time he imposes obviously upon the individual a far weightier re-

[1] *Essays and Reviews*, vol. i.

sponsibility than does Newman. We are not all so clear-sighted and fine-minded as Martineau. Some are dwellers in the valley, where *mists* and vapours sweep across the soul, obscuring the light that is never absent from the sun-flushed altitude of his mind, and one can understand why Catholicism or popular Protestantism found a far readier response with the majority of men than the Unitarian faith of Martineau.

This brings me to the central point of Martineau's individualism—his imperative sense of moral obligation.

It would be impossible with the space at my disposal to follow Martineau into the intricacies of his elaborate and powerful plea for moral intuition as opposed to the prudential hypothesis of Bentham, Mill, and Spencer. I will try and state shortly the points at issue, for they lie at the very root of Martineau's philosophy.

"Conscience," urges Spencer, in effect, "is a reflection of prudence. Man ever acts with reference to ends which must always be in some form his pleasure, happiness, welfare."

Again:

"Happiness," exclaims John Stuart Mill, "is the sole end of human actions and the promotion of it the test by which to judge all human conduct. Those who desire virtue for its own sake, desire it either because the consciousness of it is a pleasure, or because the consciousness of being without it is a pain, or for both reasons united."

This philosophy is a highly persuasive one, and has much to support it. Against this view, Martineau contends there are two criteria of judgment,—prudence and conscience. Prudence is our regulative principle in deciding upon the utilities of conduct, conscience our light and guide in settling between conflicting motives. The former appoints for our welfare, the latter for our character. Take an illustration of the difference. Shall I buy a piece of land? This question I answer rightly enough by reference to my circumstances and tastes. Shall I right a wrong? Here I am called to another judgment. Not, Is a certain course wiser? but, Is a certain course better? The pleasure that ensues from a right action is the fruit of our choice, not its incentive. But if pleasure be the end of action, how explain acts of heroism and self-sacrifice or urge them on others? Because, says the Utilitarian, the happiness of the greatest number is what we should aim at. But *why* should a man incur some privation when it conflicts with the only good at whose disposal you place him?

"By what persuasion are you to move him to throw away his all? Either you must tell him that the high consciousness condensed into an hour of self-immolation will transcend all the possibilities in foregone—in which case you bid him commit for himself under pretence of martyrdom for others—or else you must speak to him in quite another tone, must remind him that when he knows the true, when he sees the just, when he is haunted by the appeal for mercy, a constraint which he cannot question is put upon him to be their witness, however hard their dolorous way, however agonising their Calvary. And, speaking thus, you altogether change your value, and from casting up the account-book of greater happiness are caught and carried away into the hymn of all the prophets."[1]

Seeing the unsatisfactory character of the old Utilitarianism, Herbert Spencer has explained this intuition that bids us sacrifice ourselves for others, as an inheritance transmitted from the habits of our forefathers, and formed in them by slow accumulation of personal experiments. Certainly, admits Martineau, through the evolutionary process the right becomes clearer and more dominating, but an impulse originally selfish or calculated can never evolve into one that is unselfish. The constraint of society, you urge, originates the intuition. Transport yourselves to the Diet of Worms, and to whom shall we look for the purer moral light? Not to the Emperor and the vast concourse of princes and nobles and Church dignitaries, but to the one defiant hero there.

I have indicated the line of thought to be found in Martineau's writing, from his *Types of Ethical Theory*, *A Study of Religion*, and a *Seat of Authority in Religion*.

To turn in conclusion to the colour of Martineau's philosophy. That it is not pessimistic is, I think, apparent. But in terming it optimistic some qualification is necessary.

No student of Martineau's writings can resist the feeling that a certain melancholy underlies them; it might have been seen, indeed, in the pensive wistfulness of his fine brow; it haunts his devotional books and dominates his ethical teaching. Some, as R. H. Hutton, have traced it to his "attenuated" Christian faith. They think they can discern it in the conflict between his scientific tendencies and fervent piety.

This theological explanation does not seem to me quite satisfactory, for something of the same melancholy can be traced in the personality and writings of both Newman and Maurice. Is it not due rather to a certain Puritan element, a distinctive lack of joyfulness—inseparable, perhaps, from men whose vocation it is to be "voices" crying in the wilderness?

A hardiness of emotion, outside the range of religious experience, tended—I will not say to defective sympathies, but—to a want of flexibility in the sympathies.

In Maurice's case it was more an inability to adjust himself to the lighter amenities of life—a certain shyness and reserve. Martineau, however, if endowed with finer powers of adjustment to the ordinary duties and pleasures of everyday life, was by nature more of the scholar and recluse than Maurice, and less actively interested than he in social politics. With Maurice—the community; with Martineau—the individual.

Although Martineau's interests were wider than those of Wordsworth, yet there was in his nature the same stern, meditative rapture. Like Wordsworth's Michael:

> "His mind was keen,
> Intense and frugal: apt for all affairs,
> And wishful more than ordinary men."

[1] *Seat of Authority in Religion.*

Deeply as he loved mystics like Tauler and Pascal, there was more of the logician than the mystic in his own habits of thought. Despite his sensitive response to the influences of the arts, he seemed to be always posting moral sentries at each emotional outlet of the soul, and regarded perhaps with too grudging an eye the ebb and flow of ordinary desires and regrets. But his was a great and beautiful soul. For intellectual foresight, and moral insight, our age has seen no finer spirit than James Martineau.

II. PROSE. THE INFLUENCE OF SCIENCE IN THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF THE DAY. Charles Lyell—Hugh Miller—Robert Chambers—Herbert Spencer—Charles Darwin—Thomas Huxley—W. K. Clifford—John Tyndall.

THE INFLUENCE OF SCIENCE IN THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF THE DAY

THE adding of a new chapter to the history of science, as was done when Sir CHARLES LYELL (1797–1875) published his *Principles of Geology* (1830–33), had a far larger significance than at first appeared. Not only did it practically create Geology as a science, but it provided the first nail for the Rationalist to drive into the coffin of the older Evangelical theology. So much for Lyell's "testimony of the rocks." Yet although between the publication of this book and his *Antiquity of Man* (1863), Darwin had published the *Origin of Species*, and Spencer had applied the evolutionary theory to history and politics, Lyell never reconciled himself to this bold application of evolutionary doctrine, and was content with his more modest and cautious position of establishing the reign of law in geology, and by arguing from the present to the past, exhibiting the long history of the human race upon this planet.

HUGH MILLER (1802–56), though also a geologist, is better remembered for his pleasant *Autobiography*, since his scientific books are of no great value, and reactionary in tone, though showing keen observation and a genuine poetic feeling.

In his contemporary, ROBERT CHAMBERS (1802–71), we have the first scientific man to give us in a clear, straightforward form the evolutionary theory. Evolution was in the air. There are hints of it in Erasmus Darwin, traces of it in Lyell, and certainly it is implicit in Newman's *Development of Christian Doctrine*. But Chambers is the first to state it in his *Vestiges of Creation* (1844), and despite the scientific ignorance which aroused the wrath of Huxley, there is no gainsaying the fact that with agreeable clarity he certainly prepared the ground for Darwin and his successors by formulating a conception which he had not the knowledge adequately to support.

What Chambers applied to science HERBERT SPENCER took as the basis of a philosophy. He concentrated his entire life upon an innate study of the facts relating to the evolution of organic life.

Born at Derby on April 27, 1820, Spencer's boyhood was a singularly unboyish one. His parents were intellectual dissenters of the old-fashioned, vigorous type, and the atmosphere of political, social, and religious discussion that surrounded the lad helped considerably in moulding a temperament of marked individuality. Far from robust, his early education was much neglected, and at seven years old he was unable to read.

In 1833, owing to the family's finances, his father's brother, the Rev. Thomas Spencer, perpetual curate of Hinton—a celebrated anti-corn-law agitator and Radical politician—generously undertook to carry on the boy's education. At first this did not prove a particularly happy arrangement. The pupil's self-confident manner and disregard of authority made an unfortunate impression upon a relative who naturally expected obedience, and the firm rule considered necessary to combat youthful self-will, with perhaps a certain amount of home-sickness, decided the boy to run away to his home. He was, however, sent back, and soon settled down to his studies.

His uncle wished him to proceed to a university, but classics proving an insurmountable difficulty, the project was given up. For a while Spencer followed teaching as a profession, but this was soon relinquished for a post in the engineering department of the London and Birmingham Railway, and an incursion into journalism. In 1842 he had begun to write political articles for the *Nonconformist*, which soon brought him under public notice, and in 1848—two years after the railway crisis that had thrown him out of employment—he was offered and accepted the post of sub-editor to the *Economist*, a position he held for five years.

Spencer was gradually becoming more and more absorbed in the sociological and evolutionary problems occupying so prominent a place in the thought of the day, and in 1850 began a public exposition of his philosophy in the publication of *Social Statics*. His works have been translated into several European languages, as well as Japanese and Chinese.

Forty years of incessant toil resulted in many breakdowns. His early life, which had been nurtured in a religious atmosphere, drifted later into agnosticism. He never married, and although he had friends and acquaintances amongst the most notable men and women of the day, he preferred to live a quiet, lonely life; music and his daily visit to the Athenæum Club being among the few enjoyments of his closing years. He died at Brighton on December 8, 1903.

Spencer's agnosticism was in effect a convenient lumber-room into which he would throw metaphysical problems for which he had no use. He

started by formulating his principles of the Knowable and Unknowable. Having assailed the existence of the Unknowable, which he handed cheerfully over to the theologian, he proceeds with the Knowable. He deals with the differentiation of function in his *Principles of Biology* (1864–67), and with the characteristics of mind in his *Principles of Psychology* (1855), and the development of the social organism in his *Principles of Sociology* (1877–96). The ethical part of his scheme is formulated in the *Principles of Ethics* (1892–93).

This, broadly speaking, covers the various parts of his elaborate Synthetic Philosophy.

In his agnosticism it is clear that Spencer has derived to an extent from Hamilton and Mansel as to the unrecognisability of God; but there are important modifications. Force is constant in all phenomena that modern science reveals, and while it constantly modifies its method of expression, it remains unaltered. Light, heat, sound, motion, are but manifestations of this constant energy. Thus we can explain the Universe as a rhythmic alternation of attraction and repulsion, not only in what we call matter but in mental life as well. Integration and disintegration are universal laws. Spencer's Absolute Power, his Unknowable, therefore differs from the Unknowable of Hamilton and Mansel in the fact, paradoxical as it may sound, that it is much more Knowable.

Spencer's application and patient working out of the Evolutionary Doctrine in Social Politics is of high value; his application of it to the world of mental life is of more doubtful worth. Psychology is yet in its infancy, as the recent study of psychic phenomena certainly shows.

But if the Synthetic Philosophy has not that universal completeness which its author desired for it, its value to modern life, and to modern letters, has been great. The universality of law is a great conception, and the view of the State as a living organism, and not a mere mechanical contrivance, has done much to revolutionise history and political thought.

What Spencer did for science at large Darwin achieved in the narrower domain of physical science. In neither case did the central idea emanate from the individual in question; but it was Spencer who gave it so wide an application, and Darwin who furnished us with the wealth of illustrative material.

CHARLES ROBERT DARWIN was born at Shrewsbury in 1809; his mother was the daughter of Josiah Wedgwood, the celebrated potter, and his grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, the physician and poet, was also one of the pioneers of the theory of Evolution.

Educated at Shrewsbury, games and a mania for collecting specimens interested him more than the ordinary curriculum. At sixteen he proceeded to Edinburgh to study medicine, but here the wonders of sea life began to take prior claim to that of the dissecting-room. However, he went up to Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1828, and took a pass degree.

Medicine had now been definitely abandoned for natural history, and in 1831, when H.M.S. *Beagle* was being sent on a surveying expedition to South America, Darwin, at the instance of Professor Henslow, was invited by Captain Fitzroy to pursue his studies on this five years' cruise. "This," said Darwin, "was the most important event in my life, and has determined my whole career."

Although a martyr to sea-sickness during the whole voyage, the physical discomforts were more than counterbalanced by the joys of the naturalist, and his wonderful patience, and dogged, painstaking efforts in the cause of science are abundantly evident. One instance is recorded of an experiment, begun on December 20, 1842, for his book on *Earth Worms* (1881), that lasted for nearly forty years.

In 1839 Darwin married his cousin, Miss Emma Wedgwood, and to her loving care of the delicate scientist the world at large is greatly indebted.

In 1881 Darwin's health failed rapidly—the death of his brother in the same year being a great blow. "I feel so worn," he wrote to a friend, "that I do not suppose I shall ever again give reviewers trouble." Hard at work to the last, he died of heart failure on April 19, 1882, and is buried in Westminster Abbey.

Beside Spencer, Darwin's literary equipment shines with especial brightness. Some of Spencer's slighter writings—as, for instance, his *Introduction to Sociology*—are certainly not without literary power; but on the whole you will not find literary grace in his writings. Darwin, on the other hand, is nearly always a delightful craftsman. His monograph on earth worms—an unpromising subject for literary art, is an astonishingly fascinating work; his *Naturalist's Voyage round the World* is full of entertaining matter; and making allowance for the condensed thought and argument in *The Origin of Species* (1859), and *The Descent of Man* (1871), few readers would vote them dull. They are stiff reading, but that is unavoidable, and quite another thing. The doctrine of Natural Selection as applied to plants and animals must claim Alfred Russel Wallace as its co-discoverer. Each, quite independently of the other, had come to the same conclusion; where they differ is in their application of this doctrine to the spiritual life of man.

But though Darwin had literary gifts, he was not a ready or a brilliant writer, and in the storm of controversy evoked by his book, an exponent who should at once be clear, concise, and incisive was called for. The opportunity produced the man—THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY—"Darwin's Bull Dog."

His Life

Born at Ealing on May 4, 1825, Huxley was the son of an assistant master at a semi-public school. His unhappy schooldays gave him little inclination for all-round study; he was, however, an omnivorous reader, and spent much time in working out mechanical problems, and had he been consulted, would have much preferred to be an engineer. At thirteen he was apprenticed to his brother-in-law, with a view to the profession of medicine. Four years later he entered Charing Cross Hospital. Research work now occupied a good deal of his time, and his important discovery of a membrane

of the human hair hitherto unknown, and now called "Huxley's layer," was published in 1845.

Having taken his degree, he accepted an appointment at the Naval Hospital, Haslar. Like Darwin, he had become an enthusiastic zoologist, and this brought him under the special notice of Sir John Richardson, the Arctic explorer, who in 1846 recommended him for the post of assistant surgeon on board H.M.S. *Rattlesnake*, about to proceed on a surveying expedition to Australia.

During this voyage Huxley made numerous observations, not as a collector—for, unlike Darwin, he cared little for the identification and naming of species—but because his interest lay, he tells us, in "the architectural and engineering part of the business, the working out of the wonderful unity of plan in the thousands and thousands of living constructions."

These investigations he forwarded to the Linnean Society, but heard nothing further of them. In 1849 a memoir of the *Family of the Medusæ* was, curiously enough, in the view of future episcopal opposition, communicated to the Royal Society by the Bishop of Norwich, the father of Captain Stanley of the *Rattlesnake*. In 1850 he returned to England on leave to work out the results of his voyage; he found that the memoir had been published by the Society, who made him a Fellow in 1851, and conferred their gold medal upon him the following year.

In 1854 Huxley was appointed to the Professorship of Natural History at the School of Mines, and the wonderful laboratory system inaugurated by him during his tenure of office has been almost universally adopted.

Huxley was as keenly interested in elementary education as in the highest branch of science. He served on the first London School Board in 1870, and considered that the ideal of its members should be "to make a ladder from the gutter to the university along which any child may climb."

From this period Huxley was a recognised specialist in biological science, and for many years no Royal Commission on fisheries or scientific education was complete without the "grave, black-browed, and fiercely earnest" face with its obstinate chin and fascinating smile.

A lifelong sufferer from dyspepsia, mental and physical depression attacked him in the 'seventies, and necessitated a tour in Egypt. In 1876 he was so far recovered as to visit America, and delivered in New York his famous lecture on the evolution of the horse. Honours were showered upon him, first by Aberdeen, then Cambridge and Oxford. In 1883 he received the coveted honour of being elected President of the Royal Society, which his health obliged him to relinquish in 1885; he then retired from public life, and settled at Eastbourne, where he died on June 29, 1895.

His Work

To mention Huxley to the orthodox theologian in the 'eighties of the last century was like the proverbial red rag to the bull, and it must be added that the suggestion of theology upon the redoubtable scientist had a similarly exciting effect. He was the Mephistopheles of the Evangelical home, and occupied a position similar to Lord Byron in the earlier years of the century.

He had adopted Darwin's theories, and pressed them into notice with polemical vigour in much the same way as Kingsley had treated Maurice. There is little doubt that Huxley was fond of a fight. He had a fine, lucid, literary style, a natural aptitude for dialectics, and an impatience with the cautious peradventures and hair-splitting logic dear to many theologians.

Huxley's combative powers are well brought out by his connection with the Metaphysical Society. This famous society was founded in 1869, ten years after *The Origin of Species* had set the religious world ablaze; and during the time a lively battle had been waged by the theologians on one side and those who accepted the Darwinian theory on the other. The Society had its origin in a conversation between Mr. James Knowles, editor of the *Nineteenth Century*, and some friends, including Tennyson. Tennyson suggested the formation of a society, the main object of which should be the submitting to searching criticism the intellectual foundations of the spreading Agnosticism. "Something must be done," he said, in his abrupt, emphatic manner, "to put down these Agnostics." At first it was proposed to confine the membership to thinkers of a Theistic stamp. Well-known men were sounded as to their willingness to join, among them Dr. Martineau. It was characteristic of Martineau's fearlessness that he declined to join a society so constituted.

> "I feel," he wrote, "the deepest interest in these problems, and for the equal chance of gaining and giving light would gladly join in discussing them with Gnostics and Agnostics alike; but a society of Gnostics to put down Agnostics I cannot approve and would not join."

The scheme was accordingly altered to meet Martineau's wishes, and able Agnostics like Professor Tyndall and Huxley were invited and readily assented. That brilliant controversialist, Dr. W. G. Ward, played an active part in securing members, and certainly no society could boast of a more distinguished list of names. Of statesmen there were Mr. Gladstone, Lord Selborne, and the Duke of Argyll; prominent Churchmen, such as Dean Stanley and F. D. Maurice; Unitarians such as Martineau; Agnostic men of science like Tyndall and Huxley; Agnostic men of letters as John Morley and Leslie Stephen. For the rest, poets and journalists and lawyers of every shade of belief, such as Tennyson, Browning, Sir James Stephen, Sir Frederick Pollock, J. A. Froude, R. H. Hutton, Mark Pattison, Ruskin, Henry Sidgwick, Sir William Gull, Dr. Andrew Clark.

In an interesting article by Hutton in the *Nineteenth Century*, the writer says:

> "At the meeting of the Metaphysical Society which was held on the 10th December 1872, Dr. Ward was to have read a paper on the question, 'Can Experience prove the Uniformity of Nature?' *Middlemarch* had been completed and published a few days previously. The Claimant was still starring it in the provinces in

the interval between his first trial and his second. Thus the dinner itself was lively, though several of the more distinguished members did not enter till the hour for reading the paper had arrived. One might have heard Professor Huxley flashing out a sceptical defence of the use of the Bible in Board Schools at one end of the table, Mr. Fitzjames Stephen's deep bass remarks on the Chairman's adroit use of his committal for perjury at another, and an eager discussion of the various merits of Lydgate and Rosamund at a third. Father Dalgairns, one of Dr. Newman's immediate followers, who left the English Church and entered the Oratory of St. Philip Neri with him, a man of singular sweetness and openness of character, with something of a French type of playfulness in his expression, discoursed to me eloquently on the noble ethical character of George Eliot's novels, and the penetrating disbelief in all but human excellence by which they are pervaded. And as I listened to this eloquent exposition with one ear, the sound of Professor Tyndall's Irish voice descanting on the proposal for a 'prayer-gauge' which had lately been made in the *Contemporary Review* for testing the efficacy of prayer on a selected hospital ward, carnivated the other. Everything alike spoke of the extraordinary fermentations of opinion in the society around us. Moral and intellectual yeast was as hard at work in the men at that table as in the period of the Renaissance itself.

"We thought at first," said Huxley, "that it would be a case of Kilkenny cats. Hats and coats would be left in the hall before the meeting, but there would be no wearers left after it was over to put them on again. Instead of this we came to love each other like brothers. We all expended so much charity, that had it been money we should have been bankrupt. Indeed," he adds, "the society died of too much love."

It certainly made for a more tolerant spirit among men of every shade of opinion. If it did not "put down" agnosticism, at any rate it defined more clearly the points at issue.

What are Huxley's leading characteristics?

These seem to be two—his *passionate integrity* and his *idealism*.

His Passionate Integrity

He admitted that theologians had recognised realities, though in strange forms. Predestination, original sin, and the primacy of Satan in this world were a good deal nearer the truth, he imagined, than the comfortable optimism culminating in Pope's doctrine, "Whatever is, is right."

On the death of his little son, to whom he had been devoted, Charles Kingsley, in his warm-hearted, generous way had written him a letter of sympathy, and pointed out incidentally some of the belief in which he would himself have found consolation. In his reply, Huxley said he had no *a priori* objection to the belief in immortality. But "it is totally without evidence," and the assertion that an unproved and unprovable doctrine is necessary to morality is altogether repugnant to him. "The most sacred act of a man's life is the assertion of a belief in truth." Men may call him whatever hard names they please, but they shall not call him a "liar." He would have endorsed George Eliot's saying that "the highest calling and election is to do without opium, and live through all our pain with conscious clear-eyed endurance."

On educational matters there is the same plain speaking out, though he touches here on less controversial ground. In one of his most stimulating essays on *A Liberal Education* he remarks, "To every one of us the world was once fresh and new as to Adam. And then, long before we were susceptible of any other mode of instruction, Nature took us in hand, and every minute of waking life brought its educational influence, shaping our actions into rough accordance with Nature's laws, so that we might not be ended entirely by too gross disobedience. . . . The question of compulsory education is settled so far as Nature is concerned. Her bill in that question was framed and passed long ago. But like all compulsory legislation, that of Nature is harsh and wasteful in its operation; Nature's discipline is not even a word and a blow, but the blow without the word. It is left to you to find out why your ears are boxed.

"The object of what we commonly called education—artificial education—is to make good these defects in Nature's methods. And a liberal education is an artificial education which has not only prepared a man to escape the great evils of disobedience to natural laws, but has trained him to appreciate and seize upon the rewards which Nature scatters with as free a hand as her penalties. That man, I think, has had a liberal education who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will, and does with ease and pleasure all the work that as a mechanism it is capable of; whose intellect is a clear, cold logic engine with all its parts of equal strength and in smooth working order; ready like a steam engine to be turned to any kind of work, and spin the gossamers as well as forge the anchors of the mind; whose mind is stored with a knowledge of the great and fundamental truths of Nature and of the laws of her operations, one who, no stunted ascetic, is full of life and fire, but whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience; who has learned to love all beauty, whether of Nature or of Art, to hate all vileness, and to respect others as himself."

Sometimes his absolute sincerity led him to concede far more to the religious teacher than he was prepared to justify on logical grounds. But even at the risk of seeming inconsistent, he boldly gave expression to sentiments, instincts and promptings, that he felt were potent factors in moulding life; though they had no place in materialistic philosophy. Consequently, it is not accurate to call Huxley a materialist; for, as he says, "materialism and spiritualism are opposite poles of the same absurdity—the absurdity of assuming that we know anything about either spirit or matter."

This naturally leads us to *his idealism*, that so strongly colours his ablest work as a thinker—*Evolution and Ethics*—which, as he explained, was an effort to put the Christian doctrine that Satan is the prince of this world on a scientific foundation.

Man, the animal, has worked his way to the headship of the sentient world, and has become the superb animal which he is by virtue of his success in the struggle for existence. The conditions having been of a certain order, man's organisation has adjusted itself to them better than that of his competitors in the cosmic strife. In the case of mankind, the self-assertion, the unscrupulous setting of all that can be grasped, the tenacious holding of all that can be kept, which constitutes the essence of the struggle for existence, have answered. In his successful progress throughout the savage state, man has been largely indebted to those qualities

which he shares with the ape and the tiger; his exceptional physical organisation; his cunning, his sociability, his curiosity and his imitativeness; his ruthless and ferocious destructiveness when his anger is roused by opposition. But in proportion as men have passed from anarchy to social organisation, and in proportion as civilisation has grown in worth, these deeply ingrained serviceable qualities have become defects. "After the manner of successful persons," says Huxley, "civilised man would gladly kick down the ladder by which he has climbed." He would only be too pleased to see "the ape and the tiger die." But they decline to suit his convenience; and the unwelcome intrusion of these boon companions of his hot youth into the ranged existence of civil life, add pains and griefs innumerable and immeasurably great to those which the cosmic process brings on the mere animal. In fact, civilised man brands all these ape and tiger promptings with the name of "sins"; he punishes many of the acts which flow from them as crimes; and in extreme cases he does his best to put an end to the survival of the fittest of former days by axe and rope.

Now, whatever differences of opinion may exist among principles, there is a general consciousness that the ape and tiger methods of the struggle for existence are not reconcilable with sound ethical principles.

This is what he calls the "cosmic process." But social progress means a checking of "the cosmic process" at every stage and the substitution for it of another, which may be called "the ethical process," the end of which is, not the survival of those who may happen to be the fittest, in respect of the whole of the conditions which obtain, but of those who are ethically the best.

"The ethical process," adds Huxley in a note, "is, strictly speaking, also part of the general process of evolution." But how could ethical nature, as the offspring of cosmical nature, be at enmity with it? Huxley meets the question thus.

Taking, as an example, the ground on which his house was built, he shows how the industry of man has converted a patch of weed-choked, economically unproductive soil into a fruitful garden, and how, if the skill and labour by which this has been done, are withdrawn, Nature, whose action never pauses, will reassert her sway and convert the place into a wilderness. The garden is a work of art, as is the house which stands in it, as is everything that man has produced. And the effect of all that he does is to oppose and for a time arrest the cosmic process, limiting the area of ceaseless struggle and competition. Applying this to human society, which at its origin was as much a product of organic necessity as that of the bees, "the ape and tiger" instincts are found dominant. It was based on selfishness. The race was to the swift and the battle to the strong. Even then, however, in the earliest grouping of a few families into clans, the blood tie, whose source is in the parent, engendered a sympathy which assured unity, and therefore some restraint on individual assertion. For sympathy is the germ plasm of ethics. Knowledge, the only begetter of a wider sympathy, breaks down tribal divisions, and, with the obvious advantages which co-operation secures, enlarges the narrow borders of primitive altruism, limits the area of conflict, and mitigates the horrors of a state of warfare which, at the outset, was chronic. To this the state of mankind, after thousands of years of advance from the feral state, witnesses, since only in the minority of all who have ever lived has that advance been made, and even among these there needs small provocation to rouse the lightly-sleeping tiger. Hence, whenever self-restraint is practised, there is checking of the cosmic process of bitter struggle by the ethical, defined by Huxley as the "evolution of the feelings out of which the primitive bonds of human society are so largely forged into the organised and personified sympathy we call 'conscience.'"

The "human" note in Huxley is more vibrant than in Spencer. No man can repress his emotional nature as sternly as he did, year after year, without suffering some disruption in his nature. Spencer's was naturally a kindly disposition, and he was not blind to the suffering of his fellow creatures or careless of their welfare. But his social sympathies suffered from a kind of chilly timidity; and he could not have said, as did Huxley:

> "If I am to be remembered at all, I would rather it should be as 'a man who did his best to help the people' than by any other title."

> "Men, my dear," he remarked in one of his delightful letters to a friend, "are very queer animals, a mixture of horse nervousness, ass stubbornness, and camel malice, with an angel bobbing about unexpectedly like the apple in the posset, and when they can do exactly as they please are very hard to drive."

Some, I think, have seen only the "ass stubbornness" and "camel malice" in Thomas Henry Huxley. It is a mistake to overlook the "bobbing angel." This it was that gave fairness and sobriety to his exceptional power of controversy; that sweetened the fierce impatience of the man, that gave a fine elusiveness to his character—that did more than anything else to confute triumphantly those opponents who confound the agnostic position with that of the careless liver.

The same note of social fellowship that we find in Huxley accentuates the writings of another brilliant man of science, W. K. Clifford (1845–1879), cut off unhappily before his power had matured.

Clifford, who was Professor of Mathematics and Mechanics at University College, London, lacked Huxley's splendid literary equipment, and he was a man of colder imagination. But he was equally sincere and outspoken, and there is a pathetic ring about his wistful adjuration, "Let us take hands and help, for to-day we are alive together."

Another scientist, very little inferior to Huxley as a man of letters, was JOHN TYNDALL (1820–1893), who accomplished admirable work in physics and chemistry. The friend of Tennyson, he was a man of considerable culture, and in his literary style had perhaps more grace, if less vigour and humour, than Huxley. But he had an equal gift of popularising scientific discoveries, and came scarcely less frequently than he into sharp collision with the theologian.

One feature that the literary student cannot help noticing in the writings of Tyndall and Huxley, is the unmistakable sympathy with the ethical ideals underlying religious thought. This is a feature that was to become more noticeable at the close of the century and in the early years of the New Era.

One of the most remarkable features of modern thought is the gradual crumbling away of the hard materialism of the mid-Victorian Era, called out, no doubt, by the equally hard theological dogmatism of the day. At the present time, theology has borrowed many of the methods of science, and science has certainly assumed some of the trappings of the theologian. The sharp opposition that once existed has utterly disappeared. Many lament the decay of dogmatism to-day. It is hard to appreciate their position. Dogmatism is inimical no less to the best interests of Science than to those of religion—for it is alien to the sincere and patient search for Truth, that should be the ideal of every thinker.

II. PROSE.—HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY. (A.) History—Introduction. *I. The Romantic School.* T. B. Macaulay—C. Thirlwall—G. Grote—T. Arnold—G. Finlay—H. H. Milman J. A. Froude—J. R. Green. *II. The Scientific School.* E. A. Freeman—W. Stubbs—M. Creighton—S. R. Gardiner—F. W. Maitland—W. F. Napier. *III. The Philosophic School.* H. T. Buckle—H. S. Maine—J. F. M'Lennan—W. Bagehot—J. R. Seeley—W. E. Lecky—J. E. Acton. (B.) Biography. J. G. Lockhart—T. Moore—A. P. Stanley—Mrs. Gaskell—Mrs. Oliphant—J. Forster—G. O. Trevelyan—A. Lang—M. Hume—Lord Rosebery—Lord Morley—A. Webb—C. Wallas—H. Rose—J. H. M'Carthy—H. Paul.

INTRODUCTION

IT is not until we are well within the Victorian Era that the Romantic spirit exhibits itself unmistakably in historical literature; and we have the piquant sight of a fiction that is beginning under the influence of scientific pre-occupation to resemble history; and a history which in the hands of certain famous exponents begins to look very much like fiction.

Romanticism never leaves our letters high and dry again as had been the case after the Elizabethan age; but it ebbs and flows throughout the century, continually re-asserting itself—as in the case of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, just when it seemed to have receded into the distance.

In fiction we use the terms romance, realism, and romantic-realism, to explain certain specific influences. In history, let us speak of the Romantic, the Scientific, and the Philosophic historians. To the first, belong Macaulay and Froude; to the second, Stubbs and Gardiner; to the third, Buckle and Seeley.

The Romantic Historian differs from his cousin, the Historical Romancer, in this important respect: the latter uses historical material as a background for a picture that is in its main composition purely imaginary. The Romantic historian merely uses the arts of the storyteller to invest actual facts and actual scenes with colour and movement.

In both cases life is treated *dramatically*.

The object that the Romantic Historian has always in view is to make history a live and actual thing; to bridge the passage of years and convince the reader by making the past as familiar and vital as the present; and the supreme merit of this school lies in the interest which they have awakened in the general reader, to whom the past has been largely a dim and alien thing. The Scientific School, on the other hand, have argued that you cannot dramatise history without eking out scanty historical data with a great deal of guesswork. They have insisted, either categorically or inferentially, that in giving free play to the imagination it is fatally easy to sacrifice accuracy on the altar of dramatic effectiveness; and here, no doubt, they touch a real weakness in the Romantic standpoint. The attacks which Freeman made upon Froude give us in a nutshell the point of issue between the two methods, though Freeman himself has some of the grave defects for which he (not without justice) upbraided Froude.

A better representative of the Scientific School, with whom to oppose Froude, is Gardiner.

At the present juncture there is no necessity to inquire more closely into the credentials of the rival claimants. These will emerge necessarily into full light in the course of the present sketch. All I am concerned with here is to note the conflicting points of view.

The Romantic Historian says in effect:

"I am clothing the skeleton facts with flesh and blood, giving them corporal life."

To which his rival responds somewhat in this strain:

"But how do you know you're giving them the right life? What you call life seems largely an embodiment of your own personal predilection. Some of these skeletons are so imperfect, that the only justifiable thing is to leave them imperfect and content ourselves with describing the bones with their concomitant imperfections. History is not a shilling shocker; it is, or should be, a faithful investigation of actual facts. Give such facts as you find, and don't confound the function of the entertainer with the function of the seeker after truth."

There is, however, a difference between the point of view of the Scientific and the Philosophic Historian. The Scientific Historian agrees with his brother that the primary object of history is to deal with facts, but he disagrees in ruling out the imagination, postulating, however, that we need the imagination *not* to dramatise the facts

but to elicit ideas from them, such as may prove of service to us at the present day.

To put it briefly: the Romantic writer dramatises the facts, the Scientific writer classifies the facts, the Philosophic writer generalises from the facts.

Each, properly considered, has his place and importance, though from a literary point of view the first and last are necessarily more interesting than the second.

(A) HISTORY

I. *The Romantic School*

The first figure of importance is THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY, born at Rothley Temple, Leicestershire, on 25th October 1800. He was the son of Zachary Macaulay, a wealthy merchant whose self-sacrifice in the support of anti-slavery involved his later years in serious financial difficulties. The child's early years were spent at Clapham, among the strict Evangelical sect of which his father was so faithful an adherent.

Of boyish disposition and studious habits, the lad appears to have been a voracious reader.

"The quantity of reading that Tom has poured in," wrote Hannah More to his father in 1814, "and the quantity of writing he has poured out, is astonishing, . . . and he is as much amused with making a pat of butter as a poem."

From a private school, in 1818, the youth went up to Trinity College, Cambridge. Here he proved no mathematician, but was a fine classical scholar, wrote two prize poems, and was in 1824 elected to a fellowship.

In 1825 appeared the essay on *Milton*, his first contribution to the *Edinburgh Review*, a magazine with which he was connected for over thirty years. Literature had an almost irresistible attraction for him, but the failure of his father's business necessitated a more lucrative profession. He was called to the Bar in 1826, and two years later was appointed a Commissioner in Bankruptcy.

A sturdy upholder of the Whig party, he turned his attention to politics, and entered Parliament in 1830; and his speech on the Reform Bill in 1831 revealed his remarkable power as an orator; indeed, it was only necessary to remark that "Macaulay is up," to see members hurrying back to the chamber from all parts of the House.

While Macaulay was particularly interested in active political life, financial stress obliged him to accept a position in the Supreme Council of India there he did thorough and conscientious work for four years (1834–1838), drafting the Indian Penal Code, and organising Indian education. On his return to England in 1839 he again entered Parliament, with a seat in the Cabinet as Secretary of State for War, till the fall of the Ministry in 1841. He now turned his leisure to good literary account by publishing the *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842). Four years later, when the Whigs were again in office, Macaulay was appointed Paymaster-General of the Forces, but, failing to secure re-election in his Scots constituency in 1847—after supporting the Bill for a grant to the Roman Catholic College of Maynooth—he gave up active politics and devoted himself more assiduously to literature, and the publication of the two first volumes of his *History* (1848), of which thirteen thousand were sold in four months. In 1852 the historian was again in Parliament as member for Edinburgh, and in 1857 was raised to the peerage—"For which," he remarked, "I never directly or indirectly solicited the honour."

In 1855 two further volumes of the *History* were published, but the fifth, that carried the record down to the time of William III., did not appear until two years after the author's death, and was edited by his sister. On December 28, 1859, in the midst of his work, he died suddenly, and is buried in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.

His Work

Macaulay's passion for reading, and his marvellously retentive memory, are the two characteristics that affect his work the most. Both as an historian and essayist his range of knowledge and faculty for vivid presentment are always in evidence. From the storehouse of his wide reading he seizes upon illustrations and analogies that give striking effect to his writings; and so persuasive is his pen that we do not realise for a while that the brilliant surface of his mind is somewhat hard and unyielding, and that his power of reflection is vastly inferior to his power of observation.

For this reason, superficially attractive as are a number of his critical essays, there is little genuine criticism in them. Certain points he sees clearly, and these he can visualise in his captivating if pontifical manner; but he has little sense of the complexity of his subject-matter. The personal equation is everything with Macaulay, and with the skill of the advocate he can make out an excellent case from his own point of view. But he is frankly a partisan, and there is little perspective in his work.

Yet if not a great critic, he is certainly, within definite limits, a great historian. For he has that rare quality, that power of vitalising the past, which compensates for so many minor defects. To put it simply, Macaulay made history something actual and alive, made us realise the organic connection between past and present. His historical portraits may be over-coloured at times; they are never insignificant. His historical judgments may be provocative; they are never negligible. He has made history attractive and real to thousands of readers, and this surely is no mean thing.

The man who has read carefully the *History of England* may absorb not a few exaggerated estimates and a distorted view of certain sides of seventeenth century life, but he has gained an insight into the general life of the time that is of the highest importance. Nowhere in historical literature is there a clearer or more masterly picture of social London in the days of the Restoration than may be found in the opening pages of the *History*. In the faculty for condensed narrative he has no superior.

"Whoever examines the maps of London which were published towards the close of the reign of Charles the

Second will see that only the nucleus of the present capital then existed. The town did not, as now, fade by imperceptible degrees into the country. No long avenues of villas, embowered in filaes and laburnums, extended from the great centre of wealth and civilisation almost to the boundaries of Middlesex and far into the heart of Kent and Surrey. In the east, no part of the immense line of warehouses and artificial lakes which now stretches from the Tower to Blackwall had even been projected. On the west, scarcely one of those stately piles of building which are inhabited by the noble and wealthy was in existence; and Chelsea, which is now peopled by more than forty thousand human beings, was a quiet country village with about a thousand inhabitants. On the north, cattle fed, and sportsmen wandered with dogs and guns over the site of the borough of Marylebone, and over far the greater part of the space now covered by the boroughs of Finsbury and of the Tower Hamlets. Islington was almost a solitude; and poets loved to contrast its silence and repose with the din and turmoil of the monster London. On the south the capital is now connected with its suburb by several bridges, not inferior in magnificence and solidity to the noblest works of the Cæsars. In 1685, a single line of irregular arches, overhung by piles of mean and crazy houses, and garnished, after a fashion worthy of the naked barbarians of Dahomey, with scores of mouldering heads, impeded the navigation of the river. . . .

"Of the metropolis, the City, properly so called, was the most important division. At the time of the Restoration it had been built, for the most part, of wood and plaster; the few bricks that were used were ill baked; the booths where goods were exposed to sale projected far into the streets, and were overhung by the upper stories. A few specimens of this architecture may still be seen in those districts which were not reached by the great fire. That fire had, in a few days, covered a space of little less than a square mile, with the ruins of eighty-nine churches and of thirteen thousand houses. But the City had risen again with a celerity which had excited the admiration of neighbouring countries. Unfortunately the old lines of the streets had been to a great extent preserved; and those lines, originally traced in an age when even princesses performed their journeys on horseback, were often too narrow to allow wheeled carriages to pass each other with ease, and were therefore ill adapted for the residence of wealthy persons in an age when a coach and six was a fashionable luxury. The style of building was, however, far superior to that of the City which had perished. The ordinary material was brick, of much better quality than had formerly been used. On the sites of the ancient parish churches had arisen a multitude of new domes, towers, and spires which bore the mark of the fertile genius of Wren. In every place, save one, the traces of the great devastation had been completely effaced. But the crowds of workmen, the scaffolds, and the masses of hewn stone were still to be seen where the noblest of Protestant temples was slowly rising on the ruins of the old Cathedral of St. Paul."

Facts are, admittedly, invaluable things; but they can be made extremely dull things; and the accurate historian is often a desperately dull dog. Macaulay has been impugned for his inaccuracy, but his critics have not sufficiently realised how many of the facts with which his pages teem are accurate. No man who deals with a vast array of facts can help inaccuracy slipping in at times; but, putting aside errors due to lack of accessible information (as in *Frederick the Great* essay) for which he is not justly responsible, the wonder is not that he made mistakes, but that his mistakes were on the whole so few. Added to this, no man, with the exception of Froude, could make his facts so palatable and attractive as could Macaulay.

Within certain limits, then, Macaulay is a great historian. What are these limitations?

In the first place, Macaulay's imagination is panoramic, not stereoscopic. He can see with force and clearness the outlines of his pictures; but he rarely sees beyond the outline. He sees, but does not see through. His pages present us with a wonderfully varied and extensive surface of life. But it is only surface. He has scarcely anything of Carlyle's insight into character—that quality which gives stereoscopic body to *The French Revolution*.

In the second place, there is no philosophy in Macaulay's outlook. The world for him is a brilliant pageant; and admittedly, the aspects of pageantry are worth noting. But it is something more than a pageant, it is a play of elemental forces kept in fitful leash by the hand of civilisation; and breaking away at times with dramatic violence. Macaulay saw nothing of this; or if he did, it had no interest for him. Carlyle's heroes are sometimes the reverse of estimable, but their dynamic quality we cannot gainsay. Macaulay's heroes are more estimable, but infinitely more commonplace. He could realise the merits of the doughty warrior—for these are obvious and theatrically imposing. But rude force of another kind—such as animated the Puritans—merely repelled him. He is essentially conventional and mediocre in his general estimate of men and women. He could see—as anyone can see—the absurdities and weaknesses of Boswell; he could not realise that the author of that splendid biography was something much more than a tedious fool.

But these defects are helps rather than hindrances to him as historian of the reign of William and Mary; for here are no volcanic upheavals, no great disturbing personalities; the men and the time suit Macaulay's temperament and bring out his strongest points; for he could make ordinary people and ordinary matters interesting and attractive.

During Macaulay's life, a more scientific attitude to history had been growing up. Macaulay himself, though not uninfluenced by the development of modern science, exhibits its influence in one direction only; in the ease with which he marshalled his details. Unphilosophical by temperament, he never thought of applying scientific laws to history. But those historians of the ancient world, Thirlwall, Grote, and Thomas Arnold, all united more or less by utilitarian ethics, make a notable attempt in this direction.

Connop Thirlwall (1797–1875) was a great scholar, whose *History of Greece* (1835–47) was a solid column of learning, crowned by the lily-work of an attractive style. It was fair-minded, also more judicial, though less persuasive, than Grote's *History*, that so soon superseded it.

George Grote (1794–1871) devoted many more years to his subject than Thirlwall, and this more than balances the greater intellectual power of Thirlwall.

The great feature of Grote's *History* is the almost idolatrous attitude towards the Athenian democracy.

Thomas Arnold is certainly the most interesting

personality of the three. Born in 1795, the son of an officer of Inland Revenue, he was educated at Winchester and Oxford. After his ordination, in 1818, he settled at Laleham-on-Thames, and entered upon his career as an educationist by preparing young men for the University. In 1827 he was appointed head-master of Rugby School, where for fifteen years his learning, force of character, and powerful influence not only raised the tone and educational reputation of his own school, but exercised a remarkable reformation over the public school life of England. The fearless expression of his own religious and political opinions involved him in many controversies. "He was an ardent lover of truth," says a contemporary, "without a grain of vanity or conceit."

Appointed Professor of Modern History at Oxford in 1841, he died suddenly the following year, and his *History of Rome*, upon which he was at work at the time of his death, was left unfinished.

History, in Arnold's view, was a good method of teaching sound moral principles. Its picturesque appeal, even its intellectual inspiration, he thought of less account than its ethical values. For he held to the organic unity of history, assuming that what helped men in the past would help them in the present, and that life is one and the same for practical purposes in all ages. But he laid far less emphasis than Carlyle on the personality of its storms.

Arnold's most important work is his *History of Rome* (1838–1843). History, however, was in a transitional state during these years; so, whereas Macaulay survives by his recreative imagination, men like Arnold, Thirlwall, and Grote, whose literary power was inferior to their learning, have been superseded. A closer study of early institutions, anthropological, philological, and archæological researches, has resulted in the ear-marking of all these writers as old-fashioned. None the less these men played an important part in the more scientific development of history, and were not without their influence (Arnold especially) on the modern school.

The next writer of note is GEORGE FINLAY (1799–1875), whose elaborate and detailed *History of Greece* from its conquest by the Romans to the present time, was published in parts between 1843 and 1861.

Finlay's strength lay in his intimate knowledge of the people about whom he wrote. He was an indifferent man of letters; but he was a man not merely of great learning but of sagacious practicality.

What Finlay did for the Greeks, HENRY HART MILMAN (1791–1868) did for the Jews. His *History of the Jews* (1829) produced a great stir in many ecclesiastical dovecotes, and in those days the historical treatment of Biblical subject matter was looked upon as desperately wicked. Milman was discouraged, but refused to bow his head meekly to the storm, and adhered strictly to his point of view—that the fact that the Jews were a "chosen race" did not put them outside the ordinary methods of historical research.

Milman's significance lay in the pioneer work he accomplished (though unwittingly) for the rationalistic spirit in biblical criticism. He was quite orthodox himself, and did not pursue his own researches to their logical conclusions, though he enabled others to do so.

A more detailed and specialised investigation of historical phenomena marks all these writers; for a successor to Macaulay in literary power we must turn to JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE, third son of the Archdeacon of Totnes, Devonshire, where he was born in 1818.

Educated at Westminster School and Oriel College, Oxford, he came under the influence of Newman in 1836: Froude's elder brother, Hurrell, was also a pronounced Tractarian. Having given some slight assistance to Newman in preparing the *Lives of the Saints*, Froude found it difficult to bring his own thought into line with Newman's, and speedily severed the connection. He took deacon's orders in 1844, but, gradually becoming more and more unorthodox, never proceeded to the priesthood. At length he discarded all ecclesiasticism, and became a follower of Carlyle and the German school of philosophers.

In 1848 he published (anonymously) *The Nemesis of Faith*, thereby arousing a storm of indignation in clerical circles. The book was publicly burned in the hall of Exeter College, of which Froude was a fellow, and resignation was inevitable.

This candid avowal of his opinions was to cost him yet dearer. His father withdrew his allowance, and a recent appointment as head-master of Hobart Grammar School was cancelled. But for the anonymous gift of £200, through Professor Max Müller, Froude would have been in sore straits.

He now turned to literature as a profession, and became a regular contributor to the *Westminster Review* and *Fraser's Magazine*—the latter he edited from 1860–1874. The essays thus published were issued later as *Short Studies on Great Subjects*. The famous *History*, in twelve volumes, appeared at intervals between 1856 and 1870, after which Froude lectured in America, travelled as a Government Commissioner in Africa, and visited Australia and the West Indies—all of which experiences he used for literary purposes.

For forty-five years, Froude was the close friend and disciple of Carlyle, and at the latter's death in 1881, Froude found himself sole literary executor. He at once set to work and published the four volumes that provoked so much controversy.

Elected Lord Rector of St. Andrew's University in 1869, in 1884 Edinburgh conferred upon him their degree of LL.D., and in 1892—such is the march of tolerance—Froude was appointed Professor of Modern History at Oxford.

He died in 1894.

Froude is undoubtedly the most brilliant of the Romantic school of historians. It is this literary brilliance combined with his great unreliability in matters of fact, that made him the centre round which raged the battle between the picturesque and the scientific historian. A careful examination of Froude's writings, including his famous *Life of Carlyle*, must bring us to admit that his inaccuracies were both many and serious; but these inaccuracies were due to a constitutional obliqueness of vision

rather than to any deliberate effort to suppress the truth. In fact, Froude's unreliability seems to be due to the free expression he gave to his own personal feelings; the likes and dislikes he never tried to suppress, and instinctively he manipulated his material to suit his own temperamental views.

But it is a mistake to suppose, as some of his adverse critics have done, that his errors were due to negligence, or to slovenly research. He was a man of laborious scholarship, and his exhaustive examinations at Hatfield House and the Record Office when writing his *History of England*, opened up an entirely new road in historical research.

As against his distortions must be placed the fact that by his fine literary faculties he has given us some wonderful pen-pictures of Tudor times, and some extraordinarily vital portraits that add materially to our appreciation of the life of the Elizabethan age. His historical writings cannot be explained away merely as attractive yet misleading romances.

Froude made the Elizabethan period live; and if the circumstances surrounding the Spanish Armada were not all he suggests, no one has pictured for us more powerfully the *fact* of the invasion; if Henry's character is overcoloured and onesided, yet the man is alive, not a mere name. Like Macaulay, Froude can hold by sheer force of imaginative power, while he has a philosophic breadth quite beyond the reach of Macaulay.

If we turn to the study of Carlyle, the merits and defects of his method will be more clearly revealed. Froude had exceptional insight into character, and it never occurred to him to minimise the faults and failings of the man to whom he had been deeply attached. With his dramatic sense he felt the effectiveness to be gained by strong contrasts of light and shade; and so with all the art at his command he drew for us a figure of arresting interest that fell far short of the man worshipped by so many Victorians. The worshipper was horrified and indignant; even were it true, he argued, it said little for the loyalty of a man who had stood in such close relationship as Froude did to Carlyle. They did not understand that the arrogance and dogmatism that Froude had so relentlessly limned were qualities that fascinated the unassuming and sceptical biographer.

He could love and admire his old master despite these qualities, and he was amazed that others should be unable to do so. In its broad outlines, I do not see that the character of Carlyle has been materially affected by the evidence brought forward by friends who indignantly impugned the justice of the picture. No doubt, with the unconscious cruelty of the literary artist, he has given too much prominence to qualities that cannot be controverted but were counterbalanced by other traits, for Carlyle was an astoundingly complex and contradictory personality. None the less there is no reason to dispute Froude's sincerity; and his biographical methods are at any rate preferable to those official writers of great men who, by carefully eliminating and suppressing all the "knots" and little infirmities in the subjects of their biographies, produce colourless and lifeless portraits.

Carlyle *does* live in Froude's pages, just as his Henry VIII or his Erasmus lives. We may dislike the Carlyle he drew (though many find the picture by no means unlovable), but we all feel he has drawn a giant and not a pigmy. Henry VIII was scarcely such good company as Froude would have us think, but he was no lay figure; he is a dominant and masterful man. As indeed he must have been to achieve the work he did.

Passing to less controversial matters, none could dispute the high beauty of Froude's literary style. It is at once strong and restrained, simple and sumptuous. His periods glow with a subdued and chastened richness.

In place of the showy but metallic brilliance of Macaulay, we have a delicately plastic and exquisitely modulated style. It is less mannered than Arnold's, less artificial than De Quincey's, less florid than Ruskin's. Its perfect taste and sure art may be gathered from the fact that we are rarely made conscious of it. It arises so naturally out of the subject-matter that we do not realise at first that art has gone to the making of it. Nowhere is it seen to better advantage than in the *Short Studies of Great Subjects*.

Whatever views we may hold of Froude as an historian, he is certainly among the greatest writers of English in our language.

The Book of Job

Most of us, at one time or other of our lives, have known something of love—of that only pure love in which no *self* is left remaining. We have loved as children, we have loved as lovers; some of us have learnt to love a cause, a faith, a country; and what love would that be which existed only with a prudent view to after-interests. Surely there is a love which exults in the power of self-abandonment, and can glory in the privilege of suffering for what is good. *Que mon nom soit flétri, pourvu que la France soit libre*, said Danton; and those wild patriots who had trampled into scorn the faith in an immortal life in which they would be rewarded for what they were suffering, went to their graves as beds, for the dream of a people's liberty. Shall we, who would be thought reasonable men, love the living God with less heart than these poor men loved their phantom? Justice is done; the balance is not deranged. It only seems deranged, as long as we have not learnt to serve without looking to be paid for it.

Such is the theory of life which is to be found in the Book of Job; a faith which has flashed up in all times and all lands, wherever noble men were to be found, and which passed in Christianity into the acknowledged creed of half the world. The cross was the new symbol, the divine sufferer the great example; and mankind answered to the call, because the appeal was not to what was poor and selfish in them, but to whatever of best and bravest was in their nature. The law of reward and punishment was superseded by the law of love. "Thou shalt love God and thou shalt love man"; and that was not love—men know it once—which was bought by the prospect of reward. Times are changed with us now. Thou shalt love God and thou shalt love man, in the hands of a poor Paley, are found to mean no more than, Thou shalt love thyself after an enlightened manner. And the same base tone has saturated not only our common feelings, but our Christian theologists and our Antichristian philosophies. A prudent regard to our future interests, an abstinence from present unlawful pleasures, because they will entail the loss of greater pleasure by-and-by or perhaps be paid for with pain,—this is called virtue now; and the belief that such

beings as men can be influenced by any feelings nobler or better, is smiled at as the dream of enthusiasts whose hearts have outrun their understandings. Indeed, he were but a poor lover whose devotion to his mistress lay resting on the feeling that a marriage with her would conduce to his own comforts. That were a poor patriot who served his country for the hire which his country would give to him. And we should think but poorly of a son who thus addressed his earthly father: "Father, on whom my fortunes depend, teach me to do what pleases thee, that I, obeying thee in all things, may obtain those good things which thou hast promised to give to thy obedient children." If any of us who have lived in so poor a faith venture, by-and-by, to put in our claims, Satan will be likely to say of us (with better reason than he did of Job), "Did they serve God for naught, then? Take their reward from them, and they will curse Him to His face." If Christianity had never borne itself more loftily than this, do we suppose that those fierce Norsemen who had learnt, in the fiery war-songs of the Edda, of what stuff the hearts of heroes are composed, would have fashioned their sword-hilts into crosses, and themselves into a crusading chivalry? Let us not dishonour our great fathers with the dream of it. The Christians, like the Stoics and Epicureans, would have lived their little day among the ignoble scenes of an effete civilisation, and would have passed off and been heard of no more. It was in another spirit that those first preachers of righteousness went out upon their warfare with evil. They preached, not enlightened prudence, but purity, justice, goodness; holding out no promises in this world except of suffering as their great Master had suffered, and rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for His sake. And that crown of glory which they did believe to await them in a life beyond the grave, was no enjoyment of what they had surrendered in life, was not enjoyment at all in any sense which human thought or language or languages can attach to the words; as little like it as the crown of love is like it, which the true lover looks for when at last he obtains his mistress. It was to be with Christ, to lose themselves in Him.

How all this nobleness ebbed away, and Christianity became what we know it, we are partially beginning to see. The living spirit organised for itself a body of perishable flesh; and not only the real gains of real experience, but mere conjectural hypotheses, current at the day for the solution of unexplained phenomena, became formulæ and articles of faith; again, as before, the living and the dead were bound together, and the seeds of decay were already planted on the birth of a constructed polity.[1]

An even more attractive personality is JOHN RICHARD GREEN (1837–1883), and in so far as history touches literature he has no peer save Froude and Macaulay, no rival save Froude. He did not specialise to the extent that scientific historians like Stubbs, Creighton, and Gardiner had done; not for lack of intellectual equipment, but because the purpose he had in view necessitated his utilising much of the material garnered by other men, in order that he might present a general conspectus of our history. But that he had much of the equipment of the scientific historian may be seen by the two books published after his death—*The Making of England* and *The Conquest of England*.

Yet Green's real strength did not lie in this specialised work, for which sounder health and more extensive learning than he could boast of were required. His strength lay in his clear vision of the tidal aspects of English history. The very title "History of the English People" shows where he lays the emphasis.

[1] *Short Studies on Great Subjects.*

In the older popular historians, kings, queens, and governments had loomed so largely as to dwarf everything else. To Green, the springs of our national life lay in the history of the people at large. With his sensitive and poetic imagination he makes everything live: a date, a fragmentary record, a dull city charter; he touches them with the same vital significance which Ruskin accorded to economic facts.

He is akin to Macaulay and Froude in his faculty for dramatising history, though he is more humanistic than either of them. With an imagination so alert, a literary sense so acute, it may well be that some of his pictures do more credit to his artistic susceptibilities than to the chronicler's judicial impartiality. But this, after all, is the price one must always pay for an insistent personal equation, and, like both Froude and Macaulay, he has the supreme merit of making his pages live. The general reader is more indebted to Green than to any other man for a quick insight into the history of his own country.

THE NEW LEARNING

While England cowered before the horrors of civil war, or slumbered beneath the apathetic rule of Henry the Seventh, the world around her was passing through changes more momentous than any it had witnessed since the victory of Christianity and the fall of the Roman Empire. Its physical bounds were suddenly enlarged. The discoveries of Copernicus revealed to man the secret of the universe. The daring of the Portuguese mariners doubled the Cape of Good Hope and anchored their merchant fleets in the harbours of India. Columbus crossed the untraversed ocean to add a New World to the Old. Sebastian Cabot, starting from the port of Bristol, threaded his way among the icebergs of Labrador. This sudden contact with new lands, new faiths, new races of men quickened the slumbering intelligence of Europe into a strange curiosity. The first book of voyages that told of the Western World, the travels of Amerigo Vespucci, were, at the time of More's *Utopia*, "in everybody's hands." The *Utopia* itself, in its range of speculation on every subject of human thought and action, tells us how roughly and utterly the narrowness and limitation of the Middle Ages had been broken up. The capture of Constantinople by the Turks, and the flight of its Greek scholars to the shores of Italy, opened anew the science and literature of the older world at the very hour when the intellectual energy of the Middle Ages had sunk into exhaustion. Not a single book of any real value, save those of Sir John Fortescue and Philippe de Commines, was produced north of the Alps during the fifteenth century. In England, as we have seen, literature had reached its lowest ebb. It was at this moment that the exiled Greek scholars were welcomed in Italy, and that Florence, so long the home of freedom and of art, became the home of an intellectual Revival. The poetry of Homer, the drama of Sophocles, the philosophy of Aristotle and of Plato woke again to life beneath the shadow of the mighty dome with which Brunelleschi had just crowned the City by the Arno. All the restless energy which Florence had so long thrown into the cause of liberty she flung, now that her liberty was reft from her, into the cause of letters. The galleys of her merchants brought back manuscripts from the East as the most precious portions of their freight. In the palaces of her nobles fragments of classic sculpture ranged themselves beneath the frescoes of Ghirlandajo. The recovery of a treatise of Cicero or a tract of Sallust from the dust of a monastic library was welcomed by the group of statesmen and artists who gathered in the Rucellai gardens with a thrill of enthusiasm. Crowds of foreign scholars soon flocked over the Alps to learn

Greek, the key of the new knowledge, from the Florentine teachers. Grocyn, a fellow of New College, was perhaps the first Englishman who studied under the Greek exile, Chalcondylas, and the Greek lectures which he delivered in Oxford on his return mark the opening of a new period in our history. Physical, as well as literary, activity awoke with the re-discovery of the teachers of Greece, and the continuous progress of English science may be dated from the day when Linacre, another Oxford student, returned from the lectures of the Florentine Politian to revive the older tradition of medicine by his translation of Galen. The awakening of a rational Christianity, whether in England or in the Teutonic world at large, begins with the Florentine studies of John Colet.[1]

II. *The Scientific School*

Passing to Froude's contemporary and bitter opponent, EDWARD AUGUSTUS FREEMAN (1823–1892), we pass from the Romantic school of historians to the Scientific.

It is curious that the man who should so unsparingly have attacked the partisan Froude, should himself have been an even more violent partisan as an historian. By temperament he was equally as idiosyncratic as Froude, only his partisanship attached itself to institutions, not to individuals. Where he differs from Froude in method is that he never attempts to use historical data as pigments for his pictures: he merely retails the facts, and tells the reader to limn the picture for himself. He was a virile and sincere man, but he might well have borrowed something of Arnold's "sweet reasonableness." To differ from him on some points of history was to write yourself down at once as among the lost and damned. His best work was his *History of the Norman Conquest*, where he works out in considerable detail his favourite thesis about the triumphant persistency of the Teutonic element.

Freeman did good work in pointing out with such wealth of illustration the important work accomplished by the Saxon, but did scant justice to the Celtic and Latin influences. Indeed, Teutonism is quite as much an obsession to Freeman as Henry VIII's heroic qualities were to Froude.

Freeman did splendid spade-work in the accumulation of historical data; but he had neither the critical sagacity nor the visualising power of the great historian. His style is cumbrous and unattractive.

A doughtier representative of the scientific school is found in WILLIAM STUBBS (1825–1901), who became Bishop of Chester in 1884. His *Constitutional History of England* (1874–1878), in three volumes, which carried its subject to the close of the Middle Ages, is a storehouse of erudition, and especially in the later volumes throws fresh and valuable sidelights upon a tangled period of our history. In tracing the gradual development of town life; in discussing the relation between national and international politics; in actualising the power of the Mediæval Church, Stubbs has no peer.

His admirable pendants to the *Constitutional History* are the *Select Charters* (1870). From the literary point of view the defect of the history lies in its surplusage of detail. The dry bones are of scientific value, but he rarely troubles to make them live. He is far more reliable in his personal judgment than Froude, but much of this virtue is rendered nugatory because he did not vitalise his facts.

Freeman could not do so. Stubbs shows in his *Lectures on the Study of Mediæval and Modern History* that he can when he wishes. Here the humour, of which hitherto he had been too sparing, is used with excellent effect. His style is lighter and more plastic, and there is a greater wealth of generalisation.

It is not given to many historians to treat with such an agreeable, light touch so unpromising a subject as Taxation under Henry VII.

"In the session of 1487 Morton preached on 'Cease to do evil, learn to do well': a wonderful sermon in four heads, subdivided each into three arguments, illustrated from Cicero and other gentile philosophers, the moral of which was the vote of two tenths and fifteenths, and a poll-tax upon aliens, payable at the next Easter. In 1489 the text was 'The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous'; the sermon a miracle of subdivision; the demand a lump sum of £100,000."

Or to so suggestively discern the personality of the king:

"Why should a king with a good character and a romantic career subside into a historical fogey? Look closely at Frederick III, the splendid old gipsy, in name governor of the world, ever august, and increaser of the empire, yet owning no more territory than an English alderman: sitting in his study elaborating a horoscope with destiny of universal dominion for his grandchildren unborn, inventing the motto of empire for an Austria that was yet in embryo: honourable, perhaps, and careless about selfish gains, but a dreamer, about whom the strange thing is that so many of his dreams came true. Look at Maximilian, the most delightfully unprincipled hero of the age of transition; always in every feast and every fray, always wanting money and selling himself for promises, and never getting the money and never keeping his engagements; a good deal of the rake and a good deal of the knight-errant; to himself a portentous politician, a reformer of Church and empire, yet willing to set Church and empire to sale, and himself to retire from the Cæsarship, to accept the chair of S. Peter, and provide before his death for his own canonisation; yet with all that the founder of one of the great powers of modern history, grandfather of Charles V, and contriver of the scheme which placed half Christendom under his grandson's sceptre. I have often thought of Maximilian in contrast with Henry VII; all the balance of real goodness, what measure there is of politic honesty, purity of life, reality of character, straightforwardness in religion, intelligent appreciation of his people's needs, every moral consideration is in favour of Henry Tudor; yet we like Maximilian better. With all his undeniable faults, his absurd dishonesty which did more harm to himself than to anyone else, his grotesque pretensions, the astounding inconsistency between his undertakings and his fulfilments; there is an attractiveness about him which there is not about Henry VII."

Had Stubbs used this style more generously in his earlier works they would be important pieces of literature in place of being merely first-class books of reference.

As an authority on the Ecclesiasticism of the Middle Ages, Stubbs however has been seriously

[1] *History of the English People.*

called in question by F. W. Maitland, a scholar who specialised in the legal aspects of history and whose indictment of Stubbs on certain points of Church law has never been seriously combated by Stubbs' supporters.

A man of remarkable personality was Mandell Creighton (1843–1901), Bishop of London from 1896.

Bishop Creighton succeeded with disconcerting success in eliminating all that was attractive in his nature from his writings. He was more interesting as a lecturer than as a writer, for flashes of wit and parenthetic wisdom would often light up his spoken discourses. But both in his *magnum opus*—*The History of the Papacy during the Period of the Reformation*—and in his lesser writings, he is disappointingly flat and arid in style and treatment. This is more the pity, as his shrewd sense of fairness would have made him a very wide influence had he not disdained so entirely the art of the literary craftsman. Of the scholarly qualities of his work, it is unnecessary to speak here. They are universally recognised.

The tendency to specialisation among historians of the scientific school was carried to its greatest extreme by Samuel Rawson Gardiner (1829–1902), who concentrated the energies of a lifetime upon the earlier Stuart and Commonwealth periods. No man worked more conscientiously at his subject than he, no writer has succeeded in testing his facts more scrupulously, or preserving a more judicial detachment.

If the entire suppression of the personal equation be the goal of the historian, Gardiner certainly achieved it. But this fact, coupled with the microscopic treatment of his subject, put him out of court for the general reader. He belongs rather to what might be called the first-class reference writers.

That the presence of the personal equation and some feeling for literary presentment need not impair the scientific value of the historian's work, may be gathered from the writings of Frederic William Maitland (1850–1906), who, although he specialised in legal history—than which nothing is less attractive to the general reader—was able to impart the most astonishing charm and vivacity to his work. Had he dealt with the broad fields of history rather than the unfrequented byways, he might have become one of our most influential historians; for he united some of the signal merits of the Romantic school with those of the Scientific.

Maitland could be accurate without being dull. Of how few can this be said?

Among the military historians of the era, Sir William Francis Patrick Napier (1785–1860) and Alexander William Kinglake (1809–1891) may be mentioned. Napier is the more considerable figure, for he was not only a soldier—Kinglake being a civilian—but a man with a wide scientific knowledge of his subject. His *History of the Peninsular War* is, despite its obvious predilections and prejudices, a great book. Simple and direct in style, he can rise when fired by the dramatic dealings of his subject into descriptive writing of the highest kind; for he can be eloquent and impressive without being in any way flamboyant or verbose.

Kinglake was a man of letters and a traveller, and his *Eothen* (1844) is an admirable piece of travel-literature full of imaginative observation. He was in the near East at the time of the war, and had special access later to Lord Raglan's papers. Despite his non-professional training he could boast some inside knowledge of his subject. His book, *The Invasion of the Crimea*, is an extremely attractive one; it is spirited and picturesque in its writing, and rarely fails in clearness and force. Inferior to Napier in restraint and perspective, it has that journalistic quality of vivid concreteness which has made for its greater popularity.

III. *The Philosophic School*

The first of these to be noted is Henry Thomas Buckle (1821–1862). Buckle, like Macaulay, was a man of prodigious memory and voracious reading. A delicate lad, he left school at an early age, and for the most part his education was a self-imposed one. On the death of his father he followed the bias of his own mind, studied many languages, and directed his energies to the realisation of the big scheme with which his name is associated. Here is the gist of it—to disintegrate the laws that govern human progress, since "the progress of every people is regulated by principles—or, as they are called, laws—as regular, as certain, as those which govern the physical world." The outcome of this was *The History of Civilisation in England* (two volumes), 1857 and 1861, followed by a third volume after his death, including Scotland, Spain, and France.

Every man with the gift of bold and brilliant generalisation is acclaimed alternately as an inspired genius and as a charlatan. Buckle's fame was no different. Admitting that historical phenomena are far too complex to be explained away with such neat and confident finality as Buckle showed, we may be grateful to him for the fruitful suggestions of many of his ideas. Even if the data of history be too uncertain for us to speak of it as a science, Buckle none the less shows that a scientific treatment of its phenomena is both helpful and illuminating. The strength and weakness of Buckle's philosophic standpoint will be apparent if we contrast it for a moment with that of Carlyle. To Carlyle, as we know, history was "the essence of innumerable biographies." It is the record of great personalities. Buckle, on the other hand, held that, "In the great march of human affairs, individual peculiarities count for nothing." Take a wide enough view, he urges in effect, and personal dynamics are negligible. Society is conditioned by the laws of its environment. It must be admitted that Carlyle took too little heed of environment—of character, food, soil, and the general aspects of nature. If these matters do not condition man's activities, they greatly modify them. Moreover, profound as is the influence of the Great Man upon his Time, the Great Man is the product of his Age, as well as the moulder. Action and reaction are laws of life.

But Buckle pressed his point too far. He underrates the dynamics of the great personality. He

thought it possible to reason by averages if a wide enough view were taken of human society. He considered intellectual discoveries to be due to the progressive development of the world at large, and paid no heed to the intuition of genius that will hurry forward at certain stages the development of intellectual progress.

Both Buckle and Carlyle exaggerated their case; but Carlyle's Great Man theory is, of the two, open to less objection. The truth lies in the happy mean admirably expressed by George Eliot's "Our deeds are fetters that we forge ourselves, but it is the world that brings the iron." Buckle forgot the human power to forge; Carlyle overlooked the iron.

Buckle pioneered the way to a scientific treatment of sociological problems; therein lies his interest and historical value. He attempted on a big scale what Hume and economists like Adam Smith had merely hinted at.

What Buckle tried to do for society at large, Sir Henry James Sumner Maine (1822–1888) attempted for its political framework. More modest than Buckle, Maine is more successful in accomplishing his task. In *Ancient Law* (1861), *Village Communities in the East and West* (1871), and the *Early History of Institutions* (1875) he traced (in the now familiar evolutionary spirit) the development of laws and political institutions from their primitive to their complex modern forms. And not only does he trace the various stages, but he philosophises from these in a vital and suggestive manner. Just as Professor Owen could construct some prehistoric monster from a bone, so could Maine with some fragmentary survival rebuild the edifice of an ancient system of thought.

With Maine can be associated John Ferguson McLennan (1827–1881), another able sociological critic who on certain points challenges the conclusions of Maine. His special study was *Primitive Marriage*; a volume on this, published in 1865, first drew attention to his originality as a thinker. If in learning McLennan was equal to Maine, he was greatly inferior in literary power. Maine's writings, dry and unpromising as his subject-matter appears to many, are thoroughly vital and entertaining.

Walter Bagehot (1826–1877), whose literary criticism is noted elsewhere, does not bring with him that formidable array of scholarship that we find in the case of those writers just discussed. More journalistic in his methods, more discursive in his interests, it is easy to underrate him. For though his critical work, whether in literature, economics, or sociology, is comparatively slight, none of it is negligible, and the bulk is of first-class importance.

Bagehot's supreme faculty was his incomparably light touch in dealing with heavy subjects. Many a writer has skimmed the surface of politics or business, deftly and entertainingly; but to write airily yet accurately with the intricate problems of the money market, and to frolic entertainingly and illuminatingly in the distracting labyrinth of English political institutions, has only been vouchsafed to one man—Bagehot. His two best writings deal with these matters: *Lombard Street*, a description of the money market (1873), and *The English Constitution* (1867).

The attraction of Bagehot's writings lies in the fact that he always emphasizes the human note, and always writes in a simple, clear, unpretentious manner. His power of dealing with scientific technicalities may be compared with Professor William James' power in treating of philosophic technicalities. Each, in the best sense of the word, has the gift of popular appeal.

There is no better introduction to the study of English politics than the delightful book on *The English Constitution*, where Bagehot puts into amusing opposition the theory of Government and the fact of Government—and makes us realise as no other writer has done where the real power of Government lies.

In John Robert Seeley (1834–1895), we have a man whose writings, whether on religion or on history, are crowded with ideas. The investigation of facts he leaves to others; he is content to accept certain undisputed facts and to generalise from these. His best historical works are his *Expansion of England* (1883) and his *Growth of British Policy* (1895). When most contemporary historians were investigating national politics, Seeley seeks to show the interrelation between national and foreign politics. His method is comparative. While the constitutional historians were raking us from room to room in the house, and poring out their utilities, Seeley bids us come into the garden and view the house as compared with other houses, note its size, situation, general merits and defects, as compared with neighbouring dwellings. From the general reader's point of view, Seeley's outlook with its wider range is certainly more interesting. He writes also for the most part in a clear, agreeable, and arresting style.

A sane Imperialism is the prevalent note of Seeley's treatment of the Colonies, while the philosophic conservatism that marks his work generally is challenging and arresting rather than reactionary.

Another philosophic historian is William Edward Hartpole Lecky (1838–1903) who, after sowing his literary wild oats in verse, settled down as a philosophic writer of striking ability. His *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe* (1865) was a remarkable piece of work for a man under thirty, and its freshness of outlook attracted general attention. Fully as fresh, and even surer in its handling, was the *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne* (1869). The same freshness and philosophic detachment marks the *History of England in the Eighteenth Century* (1878–1890). The best work of his later years was his thoughtful and critical examination of the democratic problems, in *Democracy and Liberty* (1896). In his sympathies Lecky is more Whig than Liberal, and he has little sympathy with the Socialistic tendencies of the age. But whatever the reader's own views he will find in Lecky a cool and reasonable debater, slave to no theory—in short, an almost ideal political philosopher.

Lord Acton (1834–1902) is an historical scholar

whose miscellaneous writings do scant justice to his monumental learning. All who came into contact with him testify not merely to his profound scholarship but to his breadth of philosophic thought. Unhappily, the world at large can form little idea of this, for Acton published nothing of primary importance. But those who wish to gain some slight idea of the fertility of his thought may well turn to the inaugural lecture he gave at Cambridge on his appointment to the Professorship, on the death of Seeley.

His outlook on historical phenomena is strongly ethical, and it is the moral problems raised by history rather than the actual occurrences that interested him the most.

"Judge not according to the orthodox standard of a system, religious, philosophical, political, but according as things promote or fail to promote the delicacy, integrity, and authority of conscience."

(B) BIOGRAPHY

Biography, though allied to History, is more in the nature of a distant relation. Playing so important a part in modern letters, it is largely a latter-day product, and it owes much to the extraordinary development of the novel.

The eighteenth century, which witnessed the real beginning of modern fiction, and the popularity of the character-study, witnessed also the first great biography, Boswell's *Johnson*.

During the earlier years of the nineteenth century, JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART (1794–1854) is easily first in the art of biography—an art that demands sympathy, self-detachment, and psychological insight; and the super-excellence of his *Life of Scott* (1837–1838) must not make us unmindful of his careful and discriminating *Life of Burns* (1828). On a lower plane is THOMAS MOORE'S *Life of Byron* (1830)—it is a spirited and skilful piece of work; but though it does not lack sympathy, it certainly lacks the insight into the complexity of Byron's genius and personality. CARLYLE on the other hand, wilfully erratic as sometimes he was in his estimates of men, had a wonderful instinct for characterisation, and indeed much of his work is a series of elaborate biographies—the biographic element he is constantly employing. His one actual biographic study ranks among the best of his writings and among biographies of the first order—that is, *Sterling*.

ARTHUR PENRHYN STANLEY (1815–1881), Dean of Westminster, in his *Life of Arnold* (1844) owes more to his subject than to his own methods; but he was too agreeable and picturesque as a man of letters to make a failure of it. Of greater interest is LEWES' *Life of Goethe* (1855), for Lewes had the makings of a novelist in him and knew how to present his material.

Coming to Victorian times, the place of honour in the earlier period must be given to MRS. GASKELL'S *Life of Charlotte Brontë*. Here again we see the value of the novelist's equipment. Sympathy, insight, and tact are all found here.

Another novelist, later in the era, did also excellent, if less memorable work in biographical literature, and MRS. OLIPHANT'S *Life of Edward Irving*, of *Laurence Oliphant*, and *The Blackwood Family*, show a fine instinct for visualising character.

Few men have proved more industrious in biography than JOHN FORSTER (1812–1876). He had certainly a gift for characterisation—though anything but a subtle one—and none of his numerous studies are of first-class importance. Dealing as he does with some of the most interesting personalities in literature—Goldsmith, Swift, Lamb, and Dickens—Forster never succeeded in seeing round his subject. Industrious and sincere, he tells us a great deal that is of considerable interest, and provides us with ample material for estimating the subject of his biography—he does everything in fact except make that subject live. Dickens perhaps does live in a spasmodic and partial kind of way, but considering the exceptional advantages which Forster had here and the amazing vitality of "Boz," one cannot feel he has satisfactorily succeeded.

Worthy of a place beside Mrs. Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë* is Sir GEORGE OTTO TREVELYAN'S *Life of Macaulay*. Trevelyan is one of our best modern biographers, for he has, what so many painstaking biographers have not, a real sense of perspective as well as a lucid and cultured pen.

The tendency of late years towards an increasing specialisation in history has been accompanied, happily, by a larger measure of literary power than the earlier specialists exhibited, and this power has been used to put the results of historical and archæological research into a clear and simple form such as may be understood by the large mass of laymen. An excellent illustration of this may be found in the series of monographs on *Twelve English Statesmen*. Particularly good are the volumes on *Henry VII*, *Wolsey*, *Elizabeth*, and *Cromwell*—by JAMES GAIRDNER (1828–1912), CREIGHTON, E. S. BEESLEY, and FREDERIC HARRISON. Mention must be made also of LORD BRYCE, whose wide historical knowledge has been allied with literary force and lucidity. As a result of this, *The Holy Roman Empire* (1862) proved not merely a notable addition to our continental history, but supplied a key to mediæval politics which few but scholars had hitherto possessed. ANDREW LANG and MARTIN HUME have done excellent work in popularising respectively Scottish and Spanish history; while Lord ROSEBERY, Lord MORLEY, and Sir GEORGE TREVELYAN have written with brilliance and lucidity on outstanding personalities in the English and French history of the eighteenth century—such as Chatham, Burke, and Fox.

Special and increasing prominence has been given to the unravelling of the social history of our own era by men like SIDNEY WEBB, GRAHAM WALLAS, and HOLLAND ROSE; whilst a broad and clear view of Victorian politics has been supplied by JUSTIN HUNTLY MCCARTHY and HERBERT PAUL.

In the department of general biography, the most noticeable feature is the rapidly increasing number of sound and efficient monographs.

PART VII

AMERICAN LITERATURE

I. POETRY: INTRODUCTION. Mrs. Bradstreet—Mather Byles—Joseph Green—Benjamin Church—Nathaniel Evans—Joseph Stansbury—Francis Hopkinson—Philip Freneau—John Trumbull—Timothy Dwight—Joel Barlow—William Clifton—Robert Paine—William Cullen Bryant—Joseph Rodman Drake—Fitz-Greene Halleck—Richard Henry Dana—Washington Allston—Mrs. Brooks—Mrs. Sigourney—Francis Scott Key—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow—John Greenleaf Whittier—Walt Whitman.

INTRODUCTION

THE Pilgrim Fathers set foot on American soil in the seventeenth century, but it was not until the nineteenth that America could claim a place of importance in the development of English literature. The reason for this is twofold.

In the first place, great literature is determined largely by a nation's leisure and prosperity; and in studying the literature of our own country we have seen how that the great periods of our literature synchronise with our freedom from political and international worries. While a people is fighting for its physical well-being it has no time for letters, and the old Puritan settlers were more concerned with felling trees than with making lyrics. They were content to live epics before they wrote them; for the stimulus of Art sank into insignificance before the stimulus of the encroaching Indian.

In the second place, Puritanism at best is not a favourable soil for the blossoming of literary art. The Puritan did not interest himself with the sensuous manifestations of life; he shunned it. The world for him was not a place of glorious adventure, but rather a place of tribulation, a preparation for another and better world.

In England there are a few names, notably Milton and Bunyan, who showed, given leisure and opportunity in the one case, and spiritual turmoil in the other, what Puritanism could do for letters. Yet Milton, after all, belonged partly to the Renascence, and Bunyan's literary work was a happy accident. So if the Puritans, as a body, in England did little, the Puritans across the Atlantic were likely to do still less, for they represented the most uncompromising of their kind. Cromwell had some feeling for the fine arts; but many of his followers, as we know, hated the arts as they hated loose living, and in New England there was no Puritan reaction such as came over England at the time of the Restoration.

This being the case, we need not be surprised to find that the first book to be printed in New England is a hymn book—the *Bay Psalm Book*; and that the first notable writers were religious, like Jonathan Edwards. Puritanism, when it does express itself in literature, instinctively does so in terms of religion; but there was another and subsidiary reason for the religious note in New England letters.

Among the settlers the one class the least bound down to manual labour was the clergy. They, at any rate, enjoyed comparative immunity from the arduous work of colonisation. They, therefore, are the first to break the silence.

What are the centres from which American literature has sprung? Roughly speaking, we may say two—one at Virginia, the other at Massachusetts. Virginia was the home largely of the better-bred settler; Massachusetts of the more humbly bred—or, as Professor Trent has well put it, "Virginia may be regarded as an extension of county England with its Cavalier qualities, and Massachusetts as an extension or rather a culmination of borough England with its Puritan qualities."[1] Puritanism affected both, but it is much less marked in Virginia than in Massachusetts.

The indifferent ballads of gentlemen adventurers, and the poorer doggerel of clerical Puritans that served as somewhat doubtful diversions for the early colonists, need not detain us here. Their character may be gathered from the lines of Cotton Mather, on one of these painstaking craftsmen:

"He came to guide his flock and feed his lambs
By words, works, prayers, psalms, alms and anagrams";

and their rhythmic charm and fancy from a couplet of Mrs. BRADSTREET (1612–1672), one of their most ambitious verse writers—intended as a tribute (?) to Queen Elizabeth:

"'Mongst hundred hecatombs of roaring verse
Mine bleating stands before thy royal hearse";

which for its infelicity is only excelled by one of this lady's literary admirers, who, wishing to testify to the entrancing effect of her verse, declared:

"Thus weltering in delight, my virgin mind
Admits a rape."

American humour was obviously still a thing of the future!

Nor is there any material improvement in American verse during the major part of the eighteenth century. During this period New England was engaged in a fierce struggle against

[1] *American Literature*, by W. P. Trent (Heinemann).

the Indians and the French, a struggle culminating in the success of the New Englander and the downfall of French power. The moral grit that stood its possessor in better stead as citizens than as literary artists is still undiminished, and a stern Calvinism broods over the theology. The influence of Pope percolated through during these years, and had some chastening effect upon the verse writers; but if we sample the work of two of the most illustrious names of the time—Rev. Mather Byles (1707–1788) and Joseph Green (1706–1780)—we shall see how very far behind not merely Pope, but lesser men such as Prior and Gay, these Boston worthies were.

One change, however, may be noted. A lighter style is creeping unmistakably into American letters. American humour is dawning; though the dawn is somewhat grey. Yet the intense seriousness of the Puritan outlook is touched with a livelier and more flippant spirit. The satirical vigour of Benjamin Church (*c.* 1739), and the agreeable *Odes* of Nathaniel Evans (1742–1767), mark, at any rate, a progress in the art of verse.

The period of the Revolution is more provocative of prose than of verse; but the verse, such as it is, exhibits a higher literary quality than had hitherto been shown. Joseph Stansbury (1750–1809), a loyalist, proved a humorous and effective singer. Francis Hopkinson (1737–1791) is a pleasant ballad writer—by fits and starts—notably his *Battle of the Kegs*, while his son Joseph is familiar through his well-known lyric, *Hail, Columbia!* On a higher plane is Philip Freneau (1752–1832), of Huguenot stock, a patriotic poet of genuine power, who turned his eventful and stormy life to literary account. A good illustration of his work may be found in his verses, *The Indian Burying-Ground*.

John Trumbull (1750–1831) is another figure of note—a precocious youth of good family, who soon showed a marked aptitude for rough and ready satire in the vein of Butler, and whose poem, *McFingal*, with its Hudibrastic methods, proved extremely to the taste of his countrymen. With Trumbull is associated Timothy Dwight (1752–1817), also somewhat of a youthful prodigy, but more artificial and imitative in his style, and Joel Barlow (1754–1812), who had a stirring and adventurous career; he showed skill in the treatment of the heroic couplet, and is best remembered for his mock-heroic, *Hasty Pudding*.

During the Revolutionary period Philadelphia had been the literary centre of importance, and this primacy continued down to 1809.

From the little crowd of undistinguished verse writers in this early post-Revolutionary period may be excepted William Clifton (1772–1799), who continued to uphold the forceful, satirical traditions of New England, proving in addition an agreeable song writer; and that versatile Bohemian, Robert Paine (1773–1811).

There is no need to particularise other writers; the verse of the time was almost entirely polemical and political, and dealt in a coarse and noisy spirit with the rival claims of Federal and Democratic Republicanism.

But the period of apprenticeship to letters was about to close, and of vital poetic literature to start in the person of William Cullen Bryant (1794–1878).

Bryant, the son of a physician, was brought up in quiet, rural surroundings, where he could browse to his heart's content on Cowper and Wordsworth. His father, unlike many of his kind, indulged his son's boyish excursions into verse, even to the questionable extent of publishing his satire on *Deficies*, written when he was in his early teens. After a brief college course, he studied law—thus following the true biographical tradition of poets—with the youthful poet's customary lack of enthusiasm, and wrote his first important poem, *Thanatopsis*, a favourable specimen of what has been called "The Churchyard School." This poem appeared in the *North American Review*, 1817. In 1825 Bryant took up the editorship, at New York, of the *Evening Post*, and journalistic duties reduced his poetic output very considerably. Yet he continued to write verse from time to time—verse invariably dignified and reflective in its character, and, like Wordsworth, concerned with Nature and the primal qualities of men and women.

He exercised a considerable influence with his countrymen as a poetic moralist, and if never an object of warm affection or enthusiasm, was regarded with respect and sober admiration. He died in 1878.

Though inferior to Wordsworth in poetic genius, one instinctively associates these poets with each other, for the large restfulness of Wordsworth, his austere morality, and cool, benignant power are equally characteristic of Bryant.

Yet though an admirer of Wordsworth and naturally influenced by him, his work is more reminiscent of Cowper and Collins. But he is in no sense an echo, and there is a quiet, insistent individuality about his work, which is essentially the product of a thoughtful, high-minded, self-contained, and not very flexible nature.

Bryant's blank verse is always workmanlike, sometimes, as in *Thanatopsis*, finely effective. Indeed, in these lines we have Bryant's muse at its happiest, with a sober beauty and easy mastery of its material.

> "So live that, when thy summons comes to join
> The innumerable caravan which moves
> To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
> His chamber in the silent halls of death,
> Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
> Scourged to his dungeon; but, sustained and soothed
> By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
> Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
> About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

Some of his shorter poems, idyllic, descriptive, hortatory, like *The Death of the Flower*, *The Crowded Street*, and *Oh, Mother of a Mighty Race*, exhibit tender sympathy and noble patriotic feeling. But his genius seems the most fully expressed in his blank verse, for most of his rhymed verse just lacks that lyric warmth and sweetness which would have transformed it from good into great.

Lowell's jocular reference to him in his *Fable for Critics*, as a

"Smooth, silent iceberg, that never is ignified,
Save when by reflection 'tis kindled o' nights
With a semblance of flame by the chill Northern Lights,"

is, if a shade unkind, not essentially unjust.

Nor is it essentially a reproach, as some might imagine. There is room in literature, as was pointed out in the article on Wordsworth, for the light rays as well as for the heat rays.

"Ye have no history. I ask in vain
Who planted on the slope this lofty group
Of ancient pear-trees that with spring-time burst
Into such breadth of bloom. One bears a scar
Where the quick lightning scorched its trunk, yet still
It feels the breath of Spring, and every May
Is white with blossoms. Who it was that laid
Their infant roots in earth, and tenderly
Cherished the delicate sprays, I ask in vain,
Yet bless the unknown hand to which I owe
The annual festival of bees, these songs
Of birds within their leafy screen, these shouts
Of joy from children gathering up the fruit
Shaken in August from the willing boughs." [1]

Contemporary with Bryant are FITZ-GREENE HALLECK (1790–1867) and JOSEPH RODMAN DRAKE (1795–1820). Drake was a young physician with a talent for descriptive writing, and, like so many of his countrymen, a talent for political satire; the latter he satisfied in collaboration with his friend Halleck—the upshot being *The Croaker Papers* (1819). Halleck's gifts were more lyrical than descriptive, and he showed considerable aptitude in that department of light ephemeral verse of which Praed and Mr. Austin Dobson are the acknowledged masters. RICHARD HENRY DANA, senior (1787–1879), is a cultured writer of Massachusetts, a better critic than poet, who followed faithfully, as a rule, in the footsteps of Cowper and Wordsworth. In his most considerable poem, *The Buccaneer*, he makes an excursion into Gothic romance, and his poem was referred to favourably by Wilson, in *Blackwood's Magazine*. But he is more at home in simple Wordsworthian themes. More interesting as a poet, though less solid as a man of letters, is the painter WASHINGTON ALLSTON (1779–1843), Dana's brother-in-law. He had more fancy than imagination, but could turn a pretty lyric, and a spirited stanza, with good effect. Yet perhaps the most interesting thing about him is that he was a valued friend of the poet Coleridge.

While we had our Mrs. Hemans and Eliza Cook, New England could seek edification and sentimental thrills in the gushing of Mrs. BROOKS (1795–c. 1845), approved by Southey; and the amazing fluency of Mrs. SIGOURNEY (1791–1865). One other name may be mentioned—that is, FRANCIS SCOTT KEY (1780–1843), of Maryland, who will always be remembered by his countrymen for his patriotic song, *The Star-Spangled Banner*, a ditty remarkable, like many of its kind, more for its vigorous sentiment than any artistic merit.

We now come to a group of poets familiar to all readers of literature—Longfellow, Whittier, Poe, Holmes, Lowell, Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman. Of these, Longfellow, Whittier, and Whitman are the only three poets whose verse is of greater importance than their prose. With the others, prose proved the more effective medium, and their verse is considered in connection with it.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW (1807–1882)

His Life

On February 27, 1807, Longfellow was born at Portland, Maine. His father, Stephen Longfellow, of good Yorkshire stock, was a shrewd and capable lawyer, who died in 1849; his mother, a gentle, loving woman of romantic temperament, died suddenly in 1851. The future poet was their second son—an amiable, sensitive, studious boy, with no interest in sports or any kind of exercise, save walking. In a sudden burst of youthful patriotism he looked forward to shouldering a rifle and fighting on behalf of his country, but his first and last expedition with a gun was into the Maine woods, for having there shot a robin, he returned home in tears, and never afterwards pulled a trigger.

Having finished his schooling at Portland Academy, Henry, accompanied by his elder brother, Stephen, entered Bowdoin College, where for three years the tall, slender, blue-eyed youth ranked high in scholarship. His father was aiming to make him a lawyer, but the youth's opinion was that "I do not, for my own part, imagine that such a coat would suit me. . . . I am altogether in favour of the farmer's life"; however, he shortly wrote again to his father, saying, "Of divinity, medicine, and law, I should choose the last. Whatever I do study ought to be engaged in with all my soul—for *I will be eminent* in something."

Having graduated in 1825 and delivered a seven-minutes oration on "Native Writers," this promising young student was recommended for the proposed Chair of Modern Languages. With this end in view he studied in Europe for four years, returning to Bowdoin in 1830 to take up his duties.

Another interest now enters his life. In 1831 he married Mary Storer Potter, an intelligent and beautiful girl he had known for some years; unfortunately their happiness was short-lived, for while on a second tour in Europe in 1835 she fell ill in Holland and died. Shortly afterwards he returned to America and assumed the post of Professor of Modern Languages at Harvard University in succession to Professor Ticknor, and having made his home in Craigie House, famous as the residence of George Washington, he settled down to steady, conscientious work.

In 1833 he had published *Coplas de Manrique*, with an introductory essay on the Moral and Devotional Poetry of Spain; and in 1834, *Outre-Mer*, a prose description of his European travels. His first important publication, *Voices of the Night* (1839), was a collection of poems several of which had made an earlier appearance in the *Knickerbocker Magazine*; this volume included *The Psalm*

[1] *Among the Trees.*

of Life, *The Belaguered City*, and *The Midnight Mass of the Dying Year*. *Hyperion*, a prose romance, followed in the same year; the heroine, Mary Ashburton, easily identified as Miss Frances Appleton, whom the author married in 1843.

For eighteen years Longfellow lived a happy, uneventful, busy life. He was successful and popular in his academic work, and winning fame as a poet, when his tranquil life was overshadowed by the tragic death of his second wife. Her dress, of some light material, became accidentally ignited and she was burned to death.

In 1868 Longfellow visited England and became the guest of Charles Dickens, and together they visited Lander at Bath. Longfellow was at all times fastidious as to his personal appearance, and Dickens in his whimsical way was unable to let an opportunity pass of making a humorous reference to the poet's weakness. "McDowall the boot-maker, Beale the hosier, Laffin the trousers-maker, and Blackmore the coat-cutter," wrote Dickens to him after his return to America, "have all been at the point of death, but have slowly recovered. The medical gentlemen agreed that it was exhaustion occasioned by early rising—to wait upon you at those unholy hours!"

Longfellow was a hard worker; he filled his post of professor at Harvard with honour until, finding the duties becoming irksome and wishing to devote his whole time to poetry, he resigned in 1854. He had published several volumes, among them: *Poems on Slavery*, written on the way home from England, and published in 1842; *The Spanish Student* (1843), *Belfry of Bruges* (1846), *Evangeline* (1847), *Kavanagh* (1849), *The Golden Legend*, a story of the Middle Ages (1851), and *Hiawatha*, dealing with Indian traditions (1855). The world-famed *Village Blacksmith* had made its appearance in 1841 in *Ballads and Poems*.

Shortly after his marriage in 1843 he began to arrange his book on *The Poets and Poetry of Europe*, published in 1845. At this time the poet's eyesight gave him trouble; it proved, fortunately, to be of a temporary character, but during this period Mrs. Longfellow's loving help was found to be invaluable.

In course of time came *Miles Standish* (1858), *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (1863), and a translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy* (1867–1870); the *Divine Tragedy*, published in 1871, that had occupied him for twenty years, proved a failure; *Three Books of Song* and *Christus* (1872) *Aftermath* (1873); and *Hanging of the Crane*, for which the *New York Ledger* had paid him three thousand dollars, was published in book form in 1874; *Masque of Pandora* (1875), *Kéramos* (1878), and *Ultima Thule*, in two parts (1880 and 1882), a collection of poems including many patriotic farewells.

A unique presentation gladdened his closing years. This was an arm-chair made from the chestnut tree under which had stood the famous smithy—a gift bought with the pence of child-lovers throughout the country.

Longfellow had lived five years beyond the allotted span, when he was attacked by peritonitis, which hastened his death. He passed peacefully away on March 24, 1882, and was buried, amid falling snow, in Mount Auburn Cemetery near Cambridge.

His Work

Longfellow's popularity, both in his country and our own, has probably been rivalled only by that of Tennyson, and, as is the case with many very popular reputations, a reaction has set in, which threatens to do less than justice to a writer who, despite fluent mediocrities, has achieved some really fine and notable things.

Many, moreover, who speak slightingly of Longfellow to-day, do so through memories of a few threadworn, hackneyed minor pieces that have been parodied to death, such as *Excelsior*, *The Village Blacksmith*, or *The Psalm of Life*. But it is as unfair to judge Longfellow by these as it would be to judge Tennyson by *The May Queen*, *The Brook*, or *The Supposed Confession of a Second-rate Sensitive Mind*.

The first insistent impression conveyed to us by Longfellow's verse is its deft and delicate grace. Take, for instance, such illustrations as these:

This of night:

> "Then layest thy fingers on the lips of care,
> And they complain no more."

This of tardy inspiration:

> "Becalmed upon the sea of thought,
> Still unattained the land it sought,
> My mind with loosely-hanging sails,
> Lies waiting the auspicious gales.
>
> . . . . .
>
> Blow, breath of song! until I feel
> The straining sail, the lifting keel,
> The life of the awakening sea,
> Its motion and its mystery."

Longfellow's briefer pieces throughout his long career ripple with graceful fancies; and if these are not always fresh enough to fill the "loosely-hanging sails," they are often sufficiently animated to give an agreeable vitality and dainty movement to the verse.

It is this gift that delights us in his touching lines on Hawthorne, with its happy allusiveness: "The unfinished window in Aladdin's tower, unfinished must remain," and that lifts out of the commonplace the myriad little pictures of Nature scattered throughout his writings.

> "Morn on the mountain, like a summer bird,
> Lifts up her purple wing." [1]
>
> "Her hair
> Is like the summer tresses of the trees
> When twilight makes them brown." [2]

"Softly the evening came. The Sun from the western horizon
Like a magician extended his golden wand o'er the landscape;
Twinkling vapours arose; and sky, and water, and forest
Seemed all on fire at the touch, and melted and mingled together." [3]

Longfellow is not at his best as a sonneteer, for the magical felicity that blends thought and ex-

[1] *Autumn.* [2] *The Spirit of Poetry.* [3] *Evangeline.*

pression into an harmonious pattern was beyond him. His sonnets too often are merely things of shreds and patches, and the few glimmering threads of gold are not sufficient recompense for the abundance of honest, yet unattractive fustian. But even here his grace of fancy has come to the poet's rescue more than once, and such sonnets as to *Shakespeare* and *The Tides* have certainly some claim to affection and remembrance.

"I saw the long line of the vacant shore,
The seaweed and the shells upon the sand,
And the brown rocks left bare on every hand
As if the ebbing tide would flow no more.
Then heard I, more distinctly than before,
The ocean breathe and its great breast expand,
And hurrying came on the defenceless land
The insurgent waters with tumultuous roar.
All thought and feeling and desire, I said,
Love, laughter, and the exultant joy of song,
Have ebbed from me for ever! Suddenly o'er me
They swept again from their deep ocean-bed,
And in a tumult of delight, and strong
As youth, and beautiful as youth, uprose me."

The play of fancy is even more happily expressed in his prose. Longfellow was not a great prose-man, and his little romances, *Hyperion* and *Kavanagh*, are negligible as essays in fiction; but they are well worth reading for the delightful fancies with which they abound, to say nothing of flashes of humour that never see light in his verse.

Sometimes he reminds us curiously of Holmes, as when describing the old servant in *Kavanagh* engaged to a travelling dentist who, in filling her teeth with amalgam, had "seized the opportunity to fill a soft place in her heart with something still more dangerous and mercurial."

Here are a few detached sayings, grave and gay, further illustrating this characteristic:

"Silence is a great peacemaker."

"In youth all doors open outward; in old age they all open inward."

"When looking for anything lost, begin by looking where you think it is not."

"'The Spring came suddenly bursting upon the world; as a child bursts into the room, with a laugh and a shout and a hand full of flowers."

"They saw him daily mailing and delving in the common path, like a beetle, and little thought that underneath that hard and cold exterior lay folded delicate golden wings wherewith, when the heat of the day was over, he soared and revelled in the evening air."

"The passing years had drunk a portion of the light from her eyes, and left their traces on her cheeks; as birds that drink at lakes leave their footprints on the margin."

With this play of graceful fancy there is a singing quality in Longfellow's verse that is often underrated. His melodies may have nothing in them of the opulent splendour of Swinburne's or the haunting sweetness of Tennyson's; the music is thinner. But music it is, none the less, pleasant and appealing in its note.

"Stay, stay at home, my heart; and rest,
Home-keeping hearts are happiest;
For those who wander, they know not where,
Are full of trouble and full of care:
To stay at home is best."

"How beautiful it was, that one bright day
In the long week of rain."

. . . . . .

"Loud from its rocky cavern, the deep-voiced mighty Ocean
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of the forest."

. . . . . .

"Good-night! good-night, beloved!
I come to watch o'er thee;
To be near thee—to be near thee
Alone is peace for me."

. . . . . .

"Pleasant it was, when woods were green,
And winds were soft and low,
To be amid some sylvan scene
Where, the long drooping boughs between,
Shadows dark and sunlight sheen
Alternate come and go."

"Blind Bartimeus at the gates
Of Jericho in darkness waits;
He hears the crowd;—he hears a breath
Say, 'It is Christ of Nazareth';
And calls in tones of agony,
'Ἰησοῦ, ἐλέησόν με!'"

. . . . . .

"The book is completed,
And closed, like the day;
And the hand that hath written it
Lays it away.

Dim grow its fancies,
Forgotten they lie;
Like coals in the ashes,
They darken and die."

. . . . . .

"All the stars of night looked at them,
Watched with sleepless eyes their slumber;
From his ambush in the oak-tree
Peeped the squirrel, Adjidaumo,
Watched with eager eyes the lovers;
And the rabbit, the Wabasso,
Scampered from the path before them,
Peering, peeping from his burrow . . .

. . . . . .

Pleasant was the journey homeward!
All the birds sang loud and sweetly,
Songs of happiness and heart'sease;
Sang the blue-bird, the Owaissa,
'Happy are you, Hiawatha,
Having such a wife to love you!'
Sang the Opechee the robin,
'Happy are you, Laughing Water,
Having such a noble husband!'

Thus it was that Hiawatha
To the lodge of old Nokomis
Brought the moonlight, starlight, firelight,
Brought the sunshine of his people,
Minnehaha, Laughing Water."

Whatever may be the faults of these poems from which snatches have been culled, they are certainly instinct with rhythmic melody. Longfellow's poems lend themselves to a musical setting better than do most poets, better than Shelley or Tennyson, because he did not pack them with too much music. They are just musical enough to crave the complement of a sister art to bring out their full charm. Tennyson, Shelley, Swinburne, lose rather than gain by a musical setting, for *they have all the music they need*. The very perfection of their art stands in their way as song-writers. Longfellow's cruder art and homelier methods give him the advantage here.

The Puritanism of New England is mellower in Longfellow than in Bryant, but it is there unmistakably; he is at bottom a moralist, as nearly all American writers are; and it is this in combination with his homely sentiment that has assured him such great popularity. That its urgency at times spoiled his art, is obvious enough; but it was a source of his strength as well as of his weakness; especially when informed by the genial, buoyant spirit of the man. Poe had said some very bitter things about him, but after Poe's death, when someone commented on this to Longfellow, his only reply was: "He is dead: I am alive and writing: that is an end of the matter."

And this tolerant charity is reflected in everything that he wrote. In spite of his didactic tendency, there is no obtrusion of the personal point of view; in fact, he is as impersonal often as Emerson himself. This is well exhibited in his lyrics, where most poets give expression to their minds and idiosyncrasies. But Longfellow's lyrics are local, not personal, as we shall see if we run over the titles: *The Bridge, The Belfry at Bruges, The Lighthouse, The River Charles*, &c. The emotions he expresses are general, not particular. This may blunt at times the interest we feel in his work. The sunshine is so evenly distributed that we long peevishly for a storm or momentary eclipse. But it adds to the charm of the engaging friendliness of which I have spoken. What could be better in its intimate ease, than the prelude to the pleasant *Tales of a Wayside Inn*:

> "One Autumn night in Sudbury town,
> Across the meadows bare and brown,
> The windows of the wayside Inn
> Gleamed red with firelight through the leaves
> Of woodbine, hanging from the eaves,
> Their crimson curtains rent and thin.
>
> As ancient is this hostelry
> As any in the land may be,
> Built in the old Colonial day,
> When men lived in the grander way,
> With ampler hospitality;
> A kind of old Hobgoblin Hall,
> Now somewhat fallen to decay,
> With weather-stains upon the wall,
> And stairways worn, and creaky doors,
> And creaking and uneven floors,
> And chimneys huge and tiled and tall.
>
> A region of repose it seems
> A place of slumber and of dreams,
> Remote among the wooded hills!"

A word must be said in conclusion as to the wide range over which his benignant spirit passes. As the poet of American life, he touches on one side the Indian epic of *Hiawatha*; on the other, the doings of his Puritan ancestry in *Evangeline* and *The Courtship of Miles Standish*.

As a scholar and translator he did much to familiarise the reader with French, Spanish, German, and Italian poets. His own genius was more akin to the German than to any other European people; he is especially happy in dealing with Richter; and his cosmopolitan interests contributed greatly to the appreciation of Longfellow on the Continent.

Another aspect of his work is revealed in his concern with children and child life. He has been fitly called "The Children's Poet"; and his simple directness, his tenderness, his unpretentious sentiment are at their best here.

There is no poet more readily understood and loved by children than he. The *Tales of a Wayside Inn* can be appreciated by both young and old; but *The Wreck of the Schooner Hesperus, Pegasus in Pound, The Leap of Roushon Beg, The Three Kings, The Emperor's Bird's Nest*—to mention a few only—have a peculiar appeal for children. Indeed, who can doubt that the man who wrote *The Children's Hour* knew how to warm young hearts and fire young imaginations?

After all, Longfellow's appeal lies chiefly in his intimate simplicity and tender humanity. He does not deal with recondite aspects of human life, but with the universal emotions of love, pity, faith, and hope. Whether in his domestic pictures, in his unpretentious moralities, his picturesque narratives, or his lyrics of everyday life, there is a direct and engaging friendliness and a sweet sanity of outlook that, though easily ridiculed, are matters for grateful remembrance. The very titles he gave to his collections of verse are eloquent of this homely simplicity—*Voices of the Night, The Seaside and the Fireside, In the Harbour*.

And thus we come back to Longfellow's power of dealing with simple, human characteristics. His faults and limitations as a literary artist are clear enough—I am not concerned to dispute them. But Longfellow is emphatically not to be dismissed as some have tried to do, as merely a facile writer of commonplace sentimentalities. He was a versatile scholar who did much to develop the culture of young literary America; a vigorous ballad writer with peculiar force and charm when the sea is his subject; a narrative poet of abundant force and clarity; above all, a kindly and gracious personality, whose kindliness and graciousness diffused themselves over everything that he wrote. If not a great poet, he was a genuine one, with a power of swift and direct appeal to thousands whom our greater poets would have left cold.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER (1807–1892)

His Life

The descendant of a long line of New England Quakers, John Greenleaf Whittier, the son of a farmer, was born on December 17, 1807, at East Haverhill, Massachusetts. His father's narrow means necessitated the boy's help in the fields at an early age, so that his education, carried on only during the winter months, was extremely limited.

Yet even at school he began to write verse, and it was a red-letter day in the history of the Whittiers when a volume of Burns' poems was brought to the farmstead, and lent to the boy, who devoured them eagerly.

In 1827 he sent his first poem to the *Free Press*. The editor, William Lloyd Garrison, recognising that there was a future for the young poet, journeyed to Haverhill and suggested further schooling. The farmer, however, was against "putting notions in the boy's head," and said there was no money to

spare for such a purpose. But the youth was not to be daunted. He took up shoemaking during the winter evenings, and by this means saved sufficient to pay for a six months' course at the new Haverhill Academy, where he was known by the name of "Uncle Toby." On his entrance in April 1827, which was also the inauguration of the Academy, Whittier wrote the dedicatory Ode.

Following this course at the Academy, Whittier taught in the district school at Merrimac, to find the wherewithal for another six months' training at Haverhill. During these years he wrote considerably in prose and verse, then became editor of the *Haverhill Gazette* in succession to Mr. Thayer, and in six months had left the *Gazette* for the more important *New England Review*, in which were published over forty of his poems, among them *The Frost Spirit*, *The City of the Plain*, and *The Vaudois Teacher*.

On the death of his father in 1831, Whittier was recalled to the farm, and much of his editorial work was carried on at home. But his health at this time began to give cause for anxiety, and for a time the newspaper work was abandoned. In this year (1831) was published the prose and verse *Legends of New England*, which he endeavoured afterwards to buy up and destroy.

The subject nearest to Whittier's heart and which subsequently became his mission in life, was the crusade against the slave trade. Notwithstanding his Quaker ancestry, Whittier threw himself into the thick of the fight, but it was on the side of Freedom.

It is interesting to note that although the citizens of Haverhill were opposed to his views as an Abolitionist, they nevertheless elected him as their representative in the State Legislature in 1835–36, but he declined a like honour in 1837.

For twenty years Whittier, by his whole-hearted devotion to the Anti-Slavery Movement, was "shut out from the favour of booksellers and magazine editors," and the majority of his work appeared in the organs of those periodicals favourable to the cause he had at heart, or those of which he was acting as editor.

As one of the secretaries of the Philadelphia Convention in 1833 he assisted in drafting the *Declaration of Principles* of the American Anti-Slavery Society, and began his crusade with a pamphlet, *Justice and Expediency*, printed at his own expense in 1833, that made a considerable stir in political circles. He then became editor of the *Pennsylvania Freeman*. During the riots in Philadelphia, the pro-slavery mob burned his office and sacked the Pennsylvania Hall, a new building where the office of the paper was situated; however, Whittier managed to save some of his effects, and published his paper next day as if nothing had happened.

In 1865 slavery virtually came to an end, at least so far as State recognition was concerned. Whittier had applauded or denounced every incident during the conflict; the gradual defection of Webster in 1850 from the Abolitionist party inspired his *Ichabod*.

In 1857, at the time of the launching of the *Atlantic Monthly*, Whittier joined the staff, and for twenty years scarcely a number was published without a contribution from his pen.

Never of robust health, overwork in youth and early manhood told its tale at the last. For years he was unable to write for even half an hour, without acute neuralgia and headache. In September 1892 he was seized with paralysis, and on December 7th he breathed his last, but conscious to the end. At his burial the greatest honour was accorded him, the City Government of Haverhill attended in a body, and many eulogistic speeches were made over his grave.

His Work

In intensity of imagination and emotional power, Whittier ranks higher as a poet than Longfellow; indeed, he has no peer among American poets in the strength of his imaginative sympathies. But his artistic skill is not commensurate with his native endowment; and it is only by fine flashes here and there in the considerable body of his verse that we realise that his art matches his inspiration. Sometimes, as in that lovely idyll, *Snowbound*, or in the passionate lament over Daniel Webster's attitude towards the Abolitionist problem, Whittier rises to the heights of great poetry. But his emotions, though intense, have little plasticity; his imagination, though deep, is narrow and restricted. Given a cause that touched him to the quick, like Anti-Slavery, or certain aspects of New England life, he can rise to the occasion. Unfortunately, he has written a great deal of verse that, though workmanlike and agreeable, lacks distinction and fire; and has neither the simple, sentimental charm of Longfellow's ordinary verse nor the intellectual suggestiveness that reconciles one to some extent to the rough artistry of Emerson and Thoreau.

Taking him at his best, and selecting a score of poems from the hundreds that he wrote, Whittier is assuredly one of the greater poets of America, with a virility that can only be matched by the rarer ballad writers of English Literature. *Snowbound*, *Randolph of Roanoke*, *Moloch in State Street*, *Ichabod*, *Barbara Frietchie*, *Maud Muller*, *The Hunchback*, *The Barefoot Boy*, *Taking the Bees*, and *Prem* are poems, for instance, full of tenderness, strength, and passionate scorn for the tyrant and the base. We may add also that beautiful hymn, *Dear Lord and Father of Mankind*, than which no lovelier expression of the Quaker spirit exists in our sacred verse.

"Drop Thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease—
Take from our souls the strain and stress;
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy Peace.

Breathe through the pulses of desire
Thy coolness and Thy balm;
Let sense be dumb, its heats expire;
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still small voice of calm."

Ichabod

So fallen! so lost! the light withdrawn
Which once he wore!
The glory from his gray hairs gone
For evermore!

Revile him not,—the Tempter hath
A snare for all;
And pitying tears, not scorn and wrath,
Befit his fall.

O, dumb be passion's stormy rage,
When he who might
Have lighted up and led his age,
Falls back in night.

Scorn! would the angels laugh, to mark
A bright soul driven
Fiend-goaded, down the endless dark,
From hope and heaven!

Let not the land once proud of him
Insult him now,
Nor brand with deeper shame his dim,
Dishonoured brow.

But let its humbled sons, instead,
From sea to lake,
A long lament, as for the dead,
In sadness make.

Of all we loved and honoured, nought
Save power remains,
A fallen angel's pride of thought,
Still strong in chains.

All else is gone; from those great eyes
The soul has fled:
When faith is lost, when honour dies,
The man is dead!

Then, pay the reverence of old days
To his dead fame:
Walk backward, with averted gaze,
And hide the shame!

Proem

(To introduce the first collected edition of his Poems)

I love the old melodious lays
Which softly melt the ages through,
The songs of Spenser's golden days,
Arcadian Sidney's silvery phrase,
Sprinkling our noon of time with freshest morning dew.

Yet vainly in my quiet hours
To breathe their marvellous notes I try;
I feel them, as the leaves and flowers
In silence feel the dewy showers,
And drink with glad, still lips the blessing of the sky.

The rigour of a frozen clime,
The harshness of an untaught ear,
The jarring words of one whose rhyme
Beat often Labour's hurried time,
Or Duty's rugged march through storm and strife, are here.

Of mystic beauty, dreamy grace,
No rounded art the lack supplies;
Unskilled the subtle lines to trace,
Or softer shades of Nature's face,
I view her common forms with unanointed eyes.

Nor mine the seer-like power to show
The secrets of the heart and mind;
To drop the plummet-line below
Our common world of joy and woe,
A more intense despair or brighter hope to find.

Yet here at least an earnest sense
Of human right and weal is shown;
A hate of tyranny intense,
And hearty in its vehemence,
As if my brother's pain and sorrow were my own.

O Freedom! if to me belong
Nor mighty Milton's gift divine,
Nor Marvell's wit and graceful song,
Still with a love as deep and strong
As theirs, I lay, like them, my best gifts on thy shrine;

WALT WHITMAN (1819–1892)

His Life

Walt Whitman was born at West Hills, Long Island, on May 31, 1819, of yeoman stock. His father, a wood-cutter and carpenter, was a hard-working, kindly, but taciturn man, to whom the boy was a veritable thorn in the flesh, by reason of his wayward, self-willed, idle habits. His mother, of Dutch Quaker descent, was a loving, practical woman, whose unselfish disposition had a wonderful attraction for those with whom she came into contact; to her the lad was ever affectionate and obedient.

An elementary education at Brooklyn, whither the family removed about 1823, was all that could be secured for the boy; even this was brought to an end after a few years, when he was put to work in a lawyer's office; two years later the office stool was exchanged for the printing works.

Having learned his trade, he started on a fresh experience. He took up teaching. In this he was both successful and popular, and a prime favourite with his scholars. In fact, his self-reliant, manly, and sunny nature was always singularly attractive to men, women, and children alike.

He had ideas of his own on the subject of school punishments: his own procedure was to relate a history of the crime in the form of a story to the whole school, leaving it with the delinquents to feel self-condemned and ashamed—a method that seldom failed in its effect.

From teaching he turned to journalism. He had contributed to *The Mirror*, a high-class weekly journal, while he was at the printing works. In 1838 he started a weekly paper, the *Long Islander*, of which he became editor, printer, and publisher. While the paper was a novelty Whitman was an assiduous worker, but as the novelty wore off the *Long Islander* became more and more irregular in its appearance, until in a few months it ceased to exist so far as Walt Whitman was concerned. He then returned to teaching.

In 1841 we see him in the rôle of compositor in the *New World*, and for twenty years a well-known figure among New York journalists.

Until February 1849 Whitman was a stay-at-home, but a chance conversation interested him in the "magnetic South." Shortly afterwards he boarded a small steamer and journeyed as far as Mexico, to return after three months as editor of the *Daily Eagle* at Brooklyn. The following year he went on the staff of the *Daily Crescent* in New Orleans. Here he studied the teeming life of the city as he had done in New York. He made friends with the stevedores and boatmen at the quay-side and the frequenters of the bar-room in the large hotels, while most mornings he took his coffee and biscuit at the stall of a mulatto woman in the French market-place.

Politics interested him, but never so whole-heartedly as with Whittier. Social functions took their place, and a prominent one, with Whitman, "He frequented lectures and races," says his friend, Dr. Bucke, "churches and election rooms,

weddings and clam-bakes," with strict impartiality while following the politics of the Free Soil Democrats. He gave us his political creed in *Democratic Vistas* (1870).

In 1853 he turned to carpentering. Two years later, on the death of his father, he gave up carpentering and set to work on publishing his *Song*.

The first edition of this characteristic work was a small volume of twelve poems that he named *Leaves of Grass*, bound in sea-green cloth, the type of which he had set up himself: this appeared in July 1856. The following year he reissued the volume with thirty-two new poems. Some of the poems gave great offence, and there was a hint of prosecuting the author, which caused the publishers to withdraw the book from circulation. Emerson took upon himself the task of remonstrating with Whitman upon his frankness; the poet listened calmly, but the friendly advice had no further effect.

In 1863, when the country entered upon the disastrous Civil War, Whitman offered his services as nurse to the wounded; for over two years he devoted his life, in camp and hospital, to his sick and dying countrymen. When the war was over he was offered and accepted a Government clerkship.

While the poet was preparing a fresh edition of the *Leaves*, his copy fell into the hands of Mr. Harlan, Secretary of the Interior, who immediately wrote a curt note and without assigning any reason dismissed Whitman from his post. This action was far from popular in Washington, where Whitman was well known. Friends threw themselves into the breach, and Whitman was reinstated in office but in another department.

In 1871 a fifth edition of the *Leaves*, which included *Drum Taps*, was published, and a few years later the poet was seized with paralysis. He resigned his clerkship and retired to New Jersey. Here he resumed his old comradeship with Nature, and in 1877 was able to write:

"I have been almost two years, off and on, without drugs and medicines, and daily in the open air. Last summer I found a particularly secluded little dell off one side by my creek, originally a large dug-out marl-pit, now abandoned, filled with bushes, trees, grass, a group of willows, a straggling bank and a spring of delicious water running right through the middle of it, with two or three little cascades. Here I retreated every hot day, and follow it up this summer. Here I realise the meaning of that old fellow who said he was seldom less alone than when alone. Never before did I come so close to Nature, never did she come so close to me. By old habit I pencilled down from time to time almost automatically, moods, sights, hours, tints, and outlines on the spot."

During the "early candle-light of old age," as he so beautifully expressed his declining years, he gave us *Memoranda during the War* (1875), *Specimen Days* (1882), *November Boughs* (1888).

On his birthdays a dinner was given in his honour, when friends from all parts of the world either wrote or journeyed to congratulate the veteran. The greetings from friends in England particularly delighted him, but, he said, "Don't let them think of me as a saint, or a finished anything."

Goodbye, my Fancy—that he called his "last chirps"—appeared in 1891; in December he was ill with congestion of the lungs and lingered till March 26, 1892, when he passed quietly into the Unknown.

His Work

Perhaps the chief defect in American verse, up to Whitman, lies in its excess of culture. The majority of the poets are men of scholarly attainments, steeped in literature rather than in life; and although some of them, like Whittier and Lowell, found inspiration in the social and political development of their time, they were lacking on the whole in a large, virile grasp of life, a first-hand elemental vigour that comes to those who have lived widely and deeply, and whose song is the direct product of their intimate experiences. Emerson counselled a return to Nature; but it was Nature in terms of philosophic abstraction. Thoreau, it is true, literally did return to Nature, for he had a touch of the wild and elemental about him: he knew what it was to come into direct relation with Nature, and counselled every man to do so as a necessary part of his education. Yet his scholarship and culture determined the form and scope of his Art. Poe is an intellectual hedonist, Bryant and Whittier cultured moralists; Holmes and Lowell were scholarly men of the world, Longfellow a scholarly sentimentalist; one and all were more or less derivative poets inasmuch as they were steeped in the ancient traditions of English Literature, and followed well-beaten paths. And then came Whitman, in aim a literary revolutionary. Whitman is essentially a loafer, a loafer along the crowded streets, a loafer along the countryside, a loafer both in the spiritual and physical sense; and his writings are the frankly direct expression of his loafings. He is the Orson of literature. Unconventionality he carries out to its logical conclusion, and strides stark naked among our academies of learning. A strange, uncouth, surprising figure, it is impossible to ignore him, however much he may shock our susceptibilities. His songs are no mere paeans of rustic solitudes, they are songs of the crowded streets, as well as of the country roads; of men and women of every type—no less than of the fields and the streams. In fact, he seeks the elemental everywhere. His business is to bring it to the surface, to make men and women rejoice in—not shrink from—the great primal forces of life. But he is not for moralising:

"I give nothing as duties,
What others give as duties I give as loving impulses.
(Shall I give the heart's action as a duty?)"

He has no quarrel with civilisation as such. The teeming life of the town is as wonderful to him as the big solitude of the Earth. Carlyle's pleasantry about the communistic experiments of the American Transcendentalists would have no application for him. "A return to Acorns and expecting the Golden Age to arrive."

Here is no exclusive child of Nature:

"I tramp a perpetual journey. . . .
My signs are a rainproof coat, good shoes, and a staff cut from the woods. . . .
I have no chair, no church, no philosophy."

People talk of Whitman as if he relied entirely on the "stuff cut from the woods"; they forget his "rain-proof coat and good shoes." Assuredly he has no mind to cut himself adrift from the advantages of Civilisation.

First of all, Whitman's attitude towards Art.

It has been urged by some of Whitman's admirers that his power as a writer does not depend upon his artistic methods or non-artistic methods, and he himself protested against his *Leaves* being judged merely as literature. And so there has been a tendency to glorify his very inadequacies, to hold him up as a poet who has defied successfully the unwritten laws of Art.

This is to do him an ill service. If Whitman's work be devoid of Art, then it possesses no durability.

In other words, Whitman must be judged ultimately as an artist. And on the whole he can certainly bear the test. His Art was not the conventional Art of his day, but Art it assuredly was.

Who could deny the title of artist to the man who wrote those noble verses, *On the Beach at Night*:

"On the beach at night,
Stands a child with her father,
Watching the east, the autumn sky.

Up through the darkness,
While ravening clouds, the burial clouds, in black masses spreading,
Lower sullen and fast athwart and down the sky,
Amid a transparent clear belt of ether yet left in the east,
Ascends large and calm the lord-star Jupiter,
And nigh at hand, only a very little above,
Swim two delicate sisters the Pleiades.

From the beach the child holding the hand of her father,
Those burial clouds that lower victorious soon to devour all
Watching, silently weeps.

'Weep not, child,
Weep not, my darling,
With these kisses let me remove your tears,
The ravening clouds shall not long be victorious,
They shall not long possess the sky, they devour the stars only in apparition,
Jupiter shall emerge, be patient, watch again another night, the Pleiades shall emerge,
They are immortal, all those stars both silvery and golden shall shine out again,
The great stars and the little ones shall shine out again, they endure
The vast immortal suns and the long-enduring positive moons shall again shine.

'Then, dearest child, mournest thou only for Jupiter?
Considerest thou alone the burial of the stars?

'Something there is,
(With my lips soothing thee, adding I whisper,
I give thee the first suggestion, the problem and indirection)
Something there is more immortal even than the stars,
(Many the burials, many the days and nights, passing away)
Something that shall endure longer even than lustrous Jupiter,
Longer than sun or any revolving satellite,
Or the radiant sisters the Pleiades.'"

Or those touching lines, *Reconciliation*:

"Word over all beautiful as the sky,
Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage must in time be utterly lost,
That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly
Wash again, and ever again, this soil'd world;
For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead,
I look where he lies white-faced and still in the coffin—
I draw near
Bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the coffin."

Or the song of Death in that splendid dirge in commemoration of President Lincoln:

"Come, lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later delicate death.

Prais'd be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,
And for love, sweet love—but praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.

Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unfalteringly."

This is not only Art, but great Art. So fresh in their power, so striking in their beauty, are Whitman's utterances on Death, that they take their place in our memories beside the large utterances of Shakespeare, Milton, and Shelley.

It is a mistake to think that where Whitman fails in expression it is through carelessness; that he was a great poet by flashes, and that had he taken more pains he would have been greater still. We have been assured by those who knew him intimately that he took the greatest care over his work, and would wait for days until he could get what he felt to be the right word.

To the student who comes fresh to the study of Whitman it is conceivable that the rude, strong, nonchalant utterances may seem like the work of an inspired but careless and impatient artist. It is not so. It is done deliberately.

"I furnish no specimens," he says; "I shower them by exhaustless laws, fresh and modern continually, as Nature does."

He is content to be suggestive, to stir your imagination, to awaken your sympathies. And when he fails, he fails as Wordsworth did, because he lacked the power of self-criticism, lacked the faculty of humour—that saving faculty which gives discrimination and intuitively protects the artist from confusing pathos with bathos, the grand and the grandiose. Nowhere is this more apparent than in his treatment of Sex. Frankness, outspokenness on the primal facts of life are to be welcomed in literature. All the great masters—Shakespeare, Dante, Dostoievsky, Tolstoy—have dealt openly and fearlessly with the elemental passions. There is nothing to deplore in this, and Swinburne was quite right when he contended that the domestic circle is not to be for all men and writers the outer limit of their world of work. So far from regretting that Whitman claimed right to

equal freedom when speaking of the primal facts of procreation as when speaking of sunrise, sunsetting, and the primal fact of death, every clean-minded man and woman should rejoice in the poet's attitude. For he believed and gloried in the separate personalities of man and woman, claiming manhood and womanhood as the poet's province, exulting in the potentialities of a healthy sexual life. He was angry, as well he might be, with the furtive snigger which greets such matters as motherhood and fatherhood, with the prurient unwholesomeness of a mind that can sigh sentimentally over the "roses and raptures of Vice" and start away shamefaced from the stark passions—stripped of all their circumlocutions. He certainly realised as few have done, the truth of that fine saying of Thoreau's, that "for him to whom sex is impure there are no flowers in Nature."

But at the same time, one cannot help feeling that Stevenson was right when he said that Whitman "loses our sympathy in the character of a poet by attracting too much attention—that of a Bull in a China Shop."[1]

His aim is right enough; it is to his method one may take objection. Not on the score of morality. Whitman's treatment of passion is not immoral; it is simply like Nature itself—unmoral. What shall we say then about his sex cycle, *Children of Adam*? Whitman, in his anxiety to speak out freely, simply, naturally, to vindicate the sanity of coarseness, the poetry of animalism, seems to me to have bungled rather badly. There are many fine passages in his *Song of the Body Electric* and *Spontaneous Me*, but much of it impresses as bad art, and is consequently ineffectual in its aim. The subject demands a treatment at once strong and subtle—I do not mean finicking—and subtlety is a quality not vouchsafed to Whitman. Lacking it, he is often unconsciously comic where he should be gravely impressive. "A man's body is sacred, and a woman's body is sacred." True; but the sacredness is not displayed by making out a tedious inventory of the various parts of the body. Says Whitman in effect: "The sexual life is to be gloried in, not to be treated as if it were something shameful." Again true; but is there not a danger of missing the glory by discoursing noisily on the various physiological manifestations? Sex is not the more wonderful for being appraised by the big drum.

The inherent beauty and sanctity of Sex lies surely in its superb unconsciousness; it is a matter for two human beings drawn towards one another by an indefinable, world-old attraction; scream about it, caper over it, and you begin to make it ridiculous, for you make it self-conscious.

Animalism merely as a scientific fact serves naught to the poet, unless he can show also what is as undeniable as the bare fact—its poetry, its coarseness, and its mystery go together. Browning has put it in a line:

> ". . . savage creatures seek
> Their loves in wood and plain—*and God renews*
> *His ancient rapture.*"

It is the "rapture" and the mystery which Whitman misses in many of his songs of Sex.

I have another objection against *The Children of Adam*. The loud, self-assertive, genial, boastful style of Whitman suits very well many of his democratic utterances, his sweeping cosmic emotions. But here it gives one the impression of a kind of showman, who with a flourishing stick is shouting out to a gaping crowd the excellences of manhood and womanhood. Deliberately he has refrained from the mood of imaginative fervour which alone could give a high seriousness to his treatment—a high seriousness which is really indispensable. And his rough, slangy, matter-of-fact comments give an atmosphere of unworthy vulgarity to his subject. Occasionally he is carried away by the sheer imaginative beauty of the subject; then note how different the effect:

> "Have you ever loved the body of a woman,
> Have you ever loved the body of a man,
> Do you not see that these are exactly the same to all in all
> Nations and times all over the earth?
>
> If anything is sacred, the human body is sacred,
> And the glory and sweet of a man is the token of manhood untainted,
> And in man or woman a clean, strong, firm-fibred body is
> More beautiful than the most beautiful face."

If only all had been of this quality. But interspersed with lines of great force and beauty are cumbrous irrelevances, wholly superfluous details.

It is not, then, because Whitman treats love as an animal passion that I take objection to much in his *Children of Adam*. There are poets enough and to spare, who sing of the sentimental aspects of love. We need have no quarrel with Whitman's aim as expressed by Mr. John Burroughs: "To put in his sex poems a rank and healthy animality, and to make them as frank as the shedding of pollen by the trees, strong even to the point of offence." All we ask is for him to do so as a poet, not as a mere physiologist. And when he speaks one moment as a physiologist, next as a poet; at one time as a lover, at another as a showman; the result is not inspiring. "He could not make it pleasing," remarks Mr. Burroughs, "a sweet morsel to be rolled under the tongue; that would have been levity and sin, as in Byron and the other poets. . . . He would sooner be bestial than Byronic, he would sooner shock by his frankness than inflame by his suggestion." This vague linking together of "Byron and the other poets" is not easy to understand. In the first place, not one of the moderns has treated love from the same standpoint. Shelley, for instance, is transcendental, Byron elemental, Tennyson sentimental; Rossetti looks at the soul through the body, Browning regards the body through the soul. There is abundant variety in the treatment. Then, again, why Byron should be singled out especially for opprobrium I fail to see, for love is to him the fierce, elemental passion it is for Whitman. As for frankness, the episode of Haidee and Don Juan does not err on the side of reticence. Nor is it pruriently suggestive. It is a splendid piece of poetic animal-

[1] *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*, by R. L. Stevenson.

ism. Let us be fair to Byron. His work may in places be disfigured by an unworthy cynicism; his treatment of sexual problems be marred by shallow flippancy; but no poet had a finer appreciation of the essential poetry of animalism than he, and much of his cynicism, after all, is by way of protest against the same narrow morality at which Whitman girds.

It may be objected, of course, that Whitman does not aim in his sex poems at imaginative beauty, that he aims at sanity and wholesomeness; that what he speaks—however rank—makes for healthy living. Maybe; I am not concerned to deny it. What I do deny is the implication that the wholesomeness of a fact is sufficient justification for its treatment in literature. There are a good many disagreeable things that are wholesome enough, there are many functions of the body that are entirely healthy. But one does not want them enshrined in Art.

On the other hand, to attack Whitman on the score of morality is unjustifiable; his sex poems are simply unmoral. But had he flouted his art less flagrantly in them they would have been infinitely more powerful and convincing, and given the Philistines less opportunity for blaspheming.

I have dwelt at this length upon Whitman's treatment of Sex largely because it illustrates his strength and weakness as a literary artist. In some of his poems—those dealing with Democracy, for instance—we have Whitman at his best. In others, certainly a small proportion, we get sheer, unillumined doggerel. In his sex poems there are great and fine ideas, moments of inspiration, flashes of beauty, combined with much that is trivial and tiresome.

But this, I think, is the inevitable outcome of his style. The style, like the man, is large, broad, sweeping, tolerant; the sense of "mass and multitude" is remarkable; he aims at big effects, and the quality of vastness in his writings struck John Addington Symonds as his most remarkable characteristic.[1] This vast, rolling, processional style is splendidly adapted for dealing with the elemental aspects of life, with the vital problems of humanity. He sees everything in bulk. His range of vision is cosmic. The very titles are suggestive of his point of view: *A Song of the Rolling Earth*, *A Song of the Open Road*. There are no detailed effects, no delicate points of light and shade in his writings, but huge panoramic effects. It is a great style, it is an impressive style, but it is obviously not a plastic nor a versatile style. Its very merits necessarily carry with them corresponding defects. The massiveness sometimes proves mere unwieldiness, the virile strength tends to coarseness; the eye, fixed on certain broad, distant effects, misses the delicate by-play of colour and movement in the foreground. The persistent unconventionality of metre and rhythm becomes in time a mannerism as pronounced as the mannerism of Tennyson and Swinburne.

I do not urge these things in disparagement of Whitman. No man can take up a certain line wholeheartedly and uncompromisingly without incurring the disabilities attaching to all who concentrate on one great issue.

And if sometimes he is ineffectual, if on occasion he is merely strident in place of authoritative, how often do his utterances carry with them a force and conviction which compel us to recognise the sagacious genius of the man.

Indeed, it is when we examine Whitman's attitude towards Humanity that we realise best his strength and courage. For it is here his qualities find their fittest artistic expression. Nothing in Whitman's view is common or unclean. All things in the Universe, rightly considered, are sweet and good. Carrying this view into social politics, Whitman declares for absolute social equality. And this is done in no doctrinaire spirit, but because of Whitman's absolute faith and trust in man and woman—not the man and woman overridden by the artifices of convention, but the "powerful uneducated person." Whitman finds his ideal not in Society (with a capital S), but in artisans and mechanics. He took to his heart the mean, the vulgar, the coarse, not idealising their weaknesses, but imbuing them with his own strength and vigour.

"I am enamoured of growth out of doors,
Of men that live among cattle, or taste of the ocean or woods,
Of the builder and steerers of ships, and the wielders of axes, and
The drivers of horses.
I can eat and sleep with them week in week out."

Such are his comrades. And well he knows them. For many years of his life he was roving through country and city, coming into daily contact with the men and women about whom he has sung. Walt Whitman—farm boy, school teacher, printer, editor, traveller, mechanic, nurse in the army hospital, Government clerk. Truly our poet has graduated as few have done in the school of Life. No writer of our age has better claims to be considered the Poet of Democracy.

"Whitman," wrote the late Mr. William Clarke, in his stimulating study of the poet,[1]

"sings of the Modern Man as workman, friend, citizen, brother, comrade, as pioneer of a new social order, as both material and spiritual, final and most subtle, compound of spirit and nature, firmly planted on this rolling earth, and yet 'moving about in worlds not realised.' As representative democratic bard Whitman exhibits complete freedom from unconventionality, a very deep human love for all, faith in the rationality of the world, courage, energy, and the instincts of solidarity."

But he is not concerned to convert you to his way of thinking. He throws out a hint, a suggestion, the rest you must do for yourself.

"I am a man who, sauntering along without fully stopping, turns a casual look upon you, and then averts his face. Leaving you to prove and define it. Expecting the main things from you."

Nowhere are Whitman's qualities more admirably shown than in his attitude towards the average

[1] *Walt Whitman.* A Study by J. A. Symonds.

[1] *Walt Whitman*, by William Clarke, p. 79.

human being. As a rule, the ordinary man is not a person whom the Poet delights to honour. He is concerned with the exceptional, the extraordinary type. Whitman's attitude, then, is of special interest.

"I will leave all and come and make the hymns of you;
None has understood you, but I understand you;
None has done justice to you—you have not done justice to yourself.
None but has found you imperfect; I only find no imperfection in you.
None but would subordinate you; I only am he who will never consent to subordinate you."

. . . . . .

Painters have painted their swarming groups, and the centre figure of all;
From the head of the centre figure, spreading a nimbus of gold-coloured light.
But I paint myriads of heads, but paint no head without its nimbus of gold-coloured light.

From my hand, from the brain of every man and woman it streams effulgently flowing for ever.
O! I could sing such grandeurs and glories about you!
You have not known what you are; you have slumbered upon yourself all your time. . . ."

And so on, in a vein of courageous cheer, spoken with the big, obtrusive genial egotism that always meets us in Whitman's writings. Whitman's egotism proves very exasperating to some readers, but I do not think it should trouble us much. After all, it is the egotism of a simple, natural, sincere nature; there is no self-satisfied smirk about it, no arrogance. He is conscious of his power, and is quite frank in letting you know this. Perhaps his boisterous delight in his own prowess may jar occasionally on the nerves; but how much better than the affected humility of some writers. And the more you study his writings, the less does this egotism affect even the susceptible. Your ears get attuned to the pitch of the voice, you realise that the big drum is beaten with a purpose. For it must be remembered that it is an egotism entirely emptied of condescension. He is vain certainly, but mainly because he glories in the common heritage, because he feels he is one of the common people. He is proud assuredly, but it is pride that exults in traits that he shares in common with the artist, the soldier, and the sailor. He is no writer who plays down to the masses, who will prophesy fair things—like the mere demagogue—in order to win their favour. And it is a proof of his plain speaking, of his fearless candour, that for the most part the very men for whom he wrote care little for him.

"The art of Art, the glory of expression, and the sunshine of the light of letters is simplicity. Nothing is better than simplicity, nothing can make up for excess or for the lack of definiteness. To carry on the heave of impulse, and pierce intellectual depths, and give all subjects their articulations, are powers neither common nor very uncommon. But to speak in literature with the perfect rectitude and insouciance of the movements of animals and the unimpeachableness of the sentiment of trees in the woods, and grass by the woodside, is the flawless triumph of Art."

A fitting attitude for a Poet of Democracy, one likely to bring him into direct contact with that broad, variegated stream of human life

As a panacea for social evils, Whitman believes in the remedial power of comradeship, in a large-hearted charity.

"You felons on trial in courts,
You convicts in prison cells, you sentenced assassins chained and handcuffed with iron,
Who am I, too, that I am not on trial or in prison?
Me ruthless and devilish as any, that my wrists are not chained with iron, or my ankles with iron?"

Mark the watchful impassiveness with which he gazes at the ugly side of life.

"I sit and look out upon all the sorrows of the world, and upon all oppressions and shame;
I hear convulsive sobs from young men at anguish with themselves, remorseful after deeds done;

. . . . . .

I see the workings of battle, pestilence, tyranny;
I see martyrs and prisoners—
I observe a famine at sea—I observe the sailors casting lots who shall be killed, to preserve the lives of the rest.
I observe the slights and degradations cast by arrogant persons upon labourers, the poor, and upon negroes and the like;
All these—all the meanness and agony without end,
I sit and look out upon,
See, hear, and am silent."

No one is too base, too degraded for Whitman's affection. This is no mere book sentiment with him; and many stories are told of his tenderness and charity towards the "dregs of humanity." That a man is a human being is enough for Whitman. However he may have fallen, there is something in him to appeal to. He would have agreed with Browning that:

"Beneath the veriest ash there hides a spark of soul,
Which, quickened by Love's breath, may yet pervade the whole
O' the grey, and free again be fire; of worth the same
Howe'er produced, for great or little flame is flame."

Like Browning, also, Whitman fears lassitude and indifference more than the turmoil of passion. He glories in the elemental. At present he thinks we are too fearful of coarseness and rankness, lay too much stress on refinement. And so he delights in "unrefinement," glories in the woods, air-sweetness, sun-tan, brawn.

"*So long!*
I announce a life that shall be copious, vehement, spiritual bold,
And I announce an old age that shall lightly and joyfully meet its translation."

Cultured conventions, of which we make so much, distress him. They tend, he argues, to enervation, to a poor, imitative, self-conscious art, to an artificial, morbid life.

His curative methods were heroic; but who can say that they were not needed, or that they were mischievous?

Certainly, in aiming first of all at sincerity he has attained that noble beauty which is born of strength. Nature, as he saw, was full of vital loveliness by reason of her very power. The average literary artist is always seeking for the loveliness, aiming after beauty of form, without a care whether what he is saying has the ring of sincerity and truth, whether it is in touch with the realities of

Nature. And in his super-refinements he misses the beauty that flashes forth from the rough, savage songs of Whitman.

Whitman does not decry culture. But he places first the educative influence of Nature. "The best culture," he says, "will always be that of the manly and courageous instincts and loving perception, and of self-respect."

No advocate of lawlessness he; the influence of modern science informs every line that he has written.

To speak of him as did his biographer, Dr. Bucke, as "perhaps the most advanced nature the world has yet produced," to rank him, as some have done, with the world's greatest moral teachers, beside Jesus and Socrates, seems to me the language of hysterical extravagance. Nay, more, it misses surely the special significance of his genius. In his religious thought, his artistic feelings, his affections, there is breadth of sympathy, sanity of outlook, but an entire absence of intensity, of depth.

We shall scan his pages vainly for the profound aspiration, the subtle spiritual insight of our great religious teachers. In his indifference to form, his insensibility to the noblest music, we shall realise his artistic limitations.

Despite his genial comradeship, the more intimate, the more delicate experiences of friendship are not to be found in his company. Delicacy, light and shade, subtlety, intensity, for these qualities you must not seek Whitman. But that is no reason for neglecting him. The Modern and Ancient world are rich in these other qualities, and the special need of the present day is not intensity so much as sanity, not subtlety so much as breadth.

In one of his telling phrases, Mr. Havelock Ellis has described Whitman "as a kind of Titanic Undine."[1]

Perhaps it is a good thing for us that he never "found his soul." In an age of morbid self-introspection there is something refreshing in an utterance like this, where he praises the animals because:

> "They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
> They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,
> They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God."

The academic traditions of American Literature were rudely shaken by Whitman. If, with the majority, we suffer from a plethora of culture, Whitman certainly redresses the balance. Not that he was a Goth in this respect; he loved the great race-utterances of the world, the Bible, Homer, the *Nibelungenlied*, the elemental side of Shakespeare; and these sufficed him. The wisdom that we find in his pages is not the wisdom of a well-stored mind, not the wisdom of a profoundly reflective nature, not the wisdom of an Art-sensitive nature. It is the wisdom of a hearty and primal nature immensely receptive to the primal forces about him in Life, whether in Nature or in human society. All this, of course, he might have had and not been a force in letters save by some happy accident. Unresponsive as he was to the subtler beauties of life, he had an instinctive sense of beauty, which in a curious, unregulated and often coarse-grained way, vouchsafed to him from time to time the fine intuition of the great poet. To regard him as a mere egotistic poser, whose "barbaric yawp" has no place in literature, is as far from the truth as is the attitude of his fervent disciples, who claim him as one of the greatest poets, as well as one of the greatest moral teachers the world has seen. His work is far too unformed and chaotic, too full of absurd bathos and amazing doggerel, for us to acknowledge him as a great poet. But among the chaos are shooting stars; in the midst of the rank jungle of weeds are precious flowers—not garden blossoms, but beautiful wild ones. It is here that the supreme value of Whitman's work lies. He is a fresh and original first-hand power that has brought into English letters a healthy and reviving influence.

Standing on the verge of a new era of democratic ascendancy, we need a broader basis, a more intimate vitality for our Art. The Pre-Raphaelite movement in letters, memorable as it was for its passionate insistence on the ideal of beauty, exhibited in its methods one grave defect. In its endeavour to break away from the scientific and social tendencies of the day, that had invaded poetry and jeopardised its grace and charm, it had with its artistic exclusiveness lost in human significance. With all his faults as an artist, Browning worked on surer and saner lines, in keeping poetry in intimate touch with life. You do not strengthen any art by closing the gates on new forces, new influences; you *must* take them in with all their roughness and disturbing quality and try to transform them into beauty.

Browning, to a large extent, did this, though he retained many of the old poetic forms. Whitman, with greater daring but with less intellectual power, invented fresh forms to express the fresh forces. He was not great enough to do this with complete success; but to a large extent he triumphed. His failure lay less in his methods than in his personal shortcomings.

There had been many democratic poets in the nineteenth century, but he is the first real poet of democracy. Out of the throes of the Industrial Revolution had been born a lusty, clamorous infant that demanded recognition—the new Demos. And it claimed not only recognition in politics, but recognition in literature. Wordsworth and Shelley essayed to speak for it with varying success; but Wordsworth was too exclusive, and Shelley—the most sympathetic of all our poets till the coming of Browning—was too ethereal in his manner. Like his own skylark, he sang to us poised midway between earth and heaven; a more emphatically flesh and blood personage was wanted.

Here and there a writer of genuine democratic feeling, like Ebenezer Elliot, voiced the aspirations of the people, but only on one side. Thomas Hood and Mrs. Browning sounded a deeper note; but the huge clamorous populace needed a yet fuller note, a more penetrating insight, a more forceful utterance. And in America, with its seething

[1] *The New Spirit*, by Havelock Ellis.

democracy—a democracy more urgent, more insistent than our own—it found its spokesman. That it did not recognise him, and is only just beginning to do so, is not remarkable. It did not recognise him, for it had scarcely recognised itself. Only dimly did it realise its wants and aspirations. Whitman divined them; he is the Demos made articulate.

Perhaps the most inspiring thing about Whitman's attitude towards humanity is his thorough understanding of the working classes, and his quick discernment of the healthy naturalism that animates them. He neither patronises them nor idealises them. He sees their faults, which are obvious enough; but he also sees, what is not so obvious, their fine independence of spirit, their eager thirst for improvement, for ampler knowledge, for larger opportunities, and their latent idealism.

He was not a philosopher as Browning was; indeed, there is less of the philosopher about Whitman than about any poet of our age. His method is quite opposed to the philosophic. It is instinctive, suggestive, and as full of contradictions as Nature herself. You can no more extract a philosophy from his sweeping utterances than you can from a tramp over the hills.

But, like a tramp over the hills, Whitman lifts every reader who accompanies him for a stronger and more courageous outlook. It is not easy to say with Whitman as is the case with many writers: "This line quickened my imagination; that passage unravelled my perplexities." It is the general effect of his writings that exercises such a remarkable tonic influence. Perhaps he has never indicated this cumulative power more happily than in the lines that conclude his *Song of Myself*.

"You will hardly know who I am, or what I mean,
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,
And filter and fibre your blood.

Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
Missing me one place search another,
I stop somewhere waiting for you."

Yes; that is Whitman's secret—"Good health."

"Flow on, river! flow with the flood-tide, and ebb with the ebb-tide!
Frolic on, crested and scallop-edg'd waves!
Gorgeous clouds of the sunset! drench with your splendour me, or the men and women generations after me!
Cross from shore to shore, countless crowds of passengers!
Stand up, tall masts of Mannahatta! stand up, beautiful hills of Brooklyn!
Throb, baffled and curious brain! throw out questions and answers!
Suspend here and everywhere, eternal float of solution!
Gaze, loving and thirsting eyes, in the house or street or public assembly!
Sound out, voices of young men! loudly and musically call me by my nighest name!
Live, old life! play the part that looks back on the actor or actress!
Play the old rôle, the rôle that is great or small according as one makes it!
Consider, you who peruse me, whether I may not in unknown ways be looking upon you;
Be firm, rail over the river, to support those who lean idly, yet haste with the lightning current;
Fly on, sea-birds! fly sideways, or wheel in large circles high in the air;
Receive the summer sky, you water, and faithfully hold it till all the downcast eyes have time to take it from you!
Diverge, fine spokes of light, from the shape of my head, or any one's head, in the sunlit water!
Come on, ships from the lower bay! pass up or down, white-sail'd schooners, sloops, lighters!
Flaunt away, flags of all nations! be duly lowered at sunset!
Burn high your fires, foundry chimneys! cast black shadows at nightfall! cast red and yellow light over the tops of the houses!
Appearances, now or henceforth, indicate what you are;
You necessary film, continue to envelop the soul,
About my body for me, and your body for you, be hung our divinest aromas.
Thrive cities,—bring your freight, bring your shows, ample and sufficient rivers,
Expand, being than which none else is perhaps more spiritual,
Keep your places, objects than which none else is more lasting.
You have waited, you always wait, you dumb, beautiful ministers,
We receive you with free sense at last, and are insatiate hereafterward,
Not you any more shall be able to foil us, or withhold yourselves from us.
We use you and do not cast aside—we plant you permanently within us,
We fathom you not—we love you—there is perfection in you also,
You furnish your parts toward eternity,
Great or small you furnish your parts toward the soul."[1]

MISCELLANEOUS VERSE WRITERS: Nathaniel Parker Willis—Charles Fenno Hoffman—Thomas William Parsons—Bayard Taylor—Sidney Lanier—James Rider Randall—Thomas Bailey Aldrich—Richard Watson Gilder—William Bliss Carman.

MISCELLANEOUS VERSE WRITERS

MEANWHILE, during the time that Whitman was sounding a new note in literature, a number of lesser writers were continuing the older tradition of verse. Among these may be mentioned NATHANIEL PARKER WILLIS (1806–1867), a facile writer whose sentimental verse, now almost forgotten, was once as popular as the verse of Tom Moore; CHARLES FENNO HOFFMAN (1806–1884), less popular and singularly unequal, but a sweet singer at his best; and Dr. THOMAS WILLIAM PARSONS of Boston (1819–1892), who belongs to the considerable school of scholarly verse-writers; he was strongly affected by the Dante Revival, and no poem that he wrote is happier in its dignity and grace than the *Lines on a Bust of Dante*.

Two figures of greater literary importance are BAYARD TAYLOR (1825–1878), and SIDNEY LANIER (1842–1881). Taylor was an illustrious traveller.

[1] *Crossing Brooklyn Bridge*.

who lived abroad for two years, seeing a good deal of the democratic life both of Germany and Italy. His first success was made in travel-letters, and he always excelled in these, but he was an effective ballad-writer; his *Poem of the Orient* (1854) being among his best. His life was one of tragic and varied interest; he essayed much, but perhaps he will best be remembered for his fine translation of Goethe's *Faust* (unfinished), and his delightful *Travel Chat*.

Lanier—musician, soldier, poet, and critic—fought for the South in the American War, and emerged from his harrowing experiences broken in health. His skill as a musician is exhibited in his verse, notably *The Marshes of Glynn*, *Sunrise*, and *Corn*. He died of consumption in North Carolina, after a vain search for climes to restore his health. A less considerable figure in American letters than Taylor, he is, if not a more accomplished, a more original poet.

Among the ballads evoked by the Civil War, there is none better than the familiar *Maryland, My Maryland*, by JAMES RIDER RANDALL.

It is not practicable to discuss here the later developments of American verse. All that need be said is that democratic ideals have entered more and more intimately into the poetry of the age, and although no poets of commanding power have arisen, yet such names as THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH (1836–1896) and RICHARD WATSON GILDER (1844–1909) are sufficient indication of the sound technical accomplishment and imaginative fervour to be found among a large number of latter-day poets.

A Canadian verse-writer of originality and power appears in WILLIAM BLISS CARMAN (1861). His first work, *Low Tide on Grand Pré*, was published in 1893, and at once made its mark. He is especially happy as a song-writer, *e.g. Behind the Arras*, *Ballads of Lost Haven*.

II. PROSE: (a) FICTION AND THE ESSAY. Introduction: Roger Williams—John Cotton—Judge Sewall—Jonathan Edwards—Benjamin Franklin—John Woolman—J. H. St. J. de Crèvecœur—Charles Brockden Brown—Washington Irving—J. Fenimore Cooper—Herman Melville—John Pendleton Kennedy—William Gilmore Simms—Nathaniel Hawthorne—Edgar Allan Poe—Elizabeth Wetherell—Maria S. Cummins—Harriet Beecher Stowe—Theodore Winthrop—Fitzjames O'Brien—Henry James—Joel Chandler Harris—James Lane Allen—Francis Marion Crawford—Harold Frederic—Stephen Crane—John Oliver Hobbes—Winston Churchill—Sarah Orne Jewett—Kate Douglas Wiggin—Mary Eleanor Wilkins—Gertrude Atherton—Mary Johnston—Grant Allen—Gilbert Parker.

PROSE

AMERICAN Poetry has, as its modest pioneer, the pious ineptitudes of the *Bay Psalm Book*; and American prose was launched in the stormy waters of Puritan theology. Among the earlier New England divines, the most agreeable figure is that of ROGER WILLIAMS (c. 1607–1683), the apostle of toleration, a philologist of some merit, and a vigorous controversialist, whose most famous polemic was his reply to that intolerant and arid divine, JOHN COTTON—*The Bloody Tenent* (*i.e.* of persecution) *made yet more Bloody by Mr. Cotton's endeavours to wash it White*.

During the seventeenth century the theocratic ascendancy of the Puritan weakened, and the religious enthusiasm, the ecclesiastic fervour of that era gave place to the political aspiration and democratic spirit of the eighteenth century. Literature then became gradually secularised. In place of *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution*, we have *The Selling of Joseph*—one of the earliest Anti-Slavery documents, by JUDGE SEWALL: instead of *Orphans well provided for in the Divine Providence*, we find a *History and Present State of Virginia*.

Yet it may be said that Puritanism, just when its theological vitality seemed flickering out, sent out a dying flame more fiery and consuming than ever before. In short, it gave us the Calvinist preacher, JONATHAN EDWARDS (c. 1703–1758). Lacking the culture that has given literary distinction to the writings of continental thinkers like Pascal and Fénelon, he exhibited rare power of dialectic; indeed, his metaphysical skill and imaginative fervour place him among the great theologians of the world. He is best known, perhaps, as the preacher of Hell fire; but this minatory type of sermon was by no means uncommon among the Puritan preachers; and Edwards' more solid claim to remembrance lies in his powerful treatise on the *Will*, where he refutes the Arminian doctrine of "freedom of choice" and to some extent anticipates Hume's theory of Causation. Edwards' philosophical position, therefore, is quite as compatible with a purely sceptical outlook, though he chose to make it the handmaid of his Calvinistic theology. He was a man of intense sincerity and warm piety, and by no means the harsh, unfeeling dogmatist he is sometimes pictured. Like many another theologian, the man was better than his creed.

Edwards was born at Connecticut; his great contemporary, the utilitarian and scientist, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, was born three years later, at Boston, Massachusetts. His father was a tallow-chandler with a large family, and Benjamin was apprenticed at an early age to his brother, a printer of the *New England Courant*. He was a keen devourer of books, and well read in contemporary letters. Addison proved an important literary influence, and his earliest publications, anonymously published, were in the style of the *Spectator*. Literary, scientific, and political interests absorbed Franklin for the greater part of his life, and whether as a shrewd and homely moralist, as a shining

pamphleteer, as a masterly letter-writer, or a distinguished scientist, he is equally remarkable. But above all, he was a great citizen. In everything that pertains to public life, and the advancement of the best interests of his country, there is no name more dear to America than is that of Benjamin Franklin.

He has given us a vital picture of himself in his famous *Autobiography*; and no writer is more completely self-revealing in his writings than he. His books and letters give us Franklin's personality in solution. His sense and wit shine in *Poor Richard's Almanac*; his integrity and robust hopefulness are revealed in the *Autobiography*; whilst in his dialogues and pamphlets, the level-headedness, the sober dignity, the moral earnestness of the man are richly exhibited. Truly, his was a versatile and many-sided career, such as is seldom vouchsafed to a single personality. He is at once a typical product of the finest elements of American life, and a cosmopolitan force in letters. There have been many greater literary artists; but no one writer who combined in himself so many diverse qualities of sagacious thought, scientific brilliance, shrewd worldliness, and humanitarian zeal.

JOHN WOOLMAN (1720–1772) stands on a lower plane, yet he has many of the qualities that endeared Franklin to us. His *Journal* reflects a noble and kindly nature, a simple homeliness of disposition, that justify Whittier's assertion that they exhale "a sweetness as of violets." Born at New Jersey, he worked on a farm for some years, and became in turn a bookkeeper's clerk, a tailor, and a home missionary. Philanthropy and spiritual preoccupations possessed him more and more as he grew older, and he was strenuously opposed to the institution of Slavery, as witness his tract, *Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes*. He died of small-pox in 1772, while on a journey to England.

A gentle and benignant soul, whose one passion was for plain living and high thinking.

Another agreeable personality, with less of the Puritan in his nature, and a more plastic culture, is J. HECTOR ST. JOHN DE CRÈVECŒUR (1731–1813), whose *Letters of an American Farmer*—more idyllic than realistic—are only second in literary charm and human appeal to the *Autobiography* of Franklin. The idyllic note, if somewhat over-sentimental, has proved peculiarly attractive on that very account, for as Professor Trent has said:

> "Crèvecœur's imagination, fired by the vastness and the still virgin beauty of the country, and by the unshackled life of its inhabitants, bodied forth an ideal American which the real American has ever since taken more or less to heart."

We now come to the advent of the first professional man of letters in American history. CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN (1772–1810), came of Quaker parentage, and devoted his earlier years to legal studies. A period of verse-writing of little importance followed; then Brown turned to fiction, where he achieved considerable success. His best novels were *Wieland; or, The Transformation* (1798), dealing with the hardships of the marriage tie; *Ormond; or, The Secret Witness* (1799), influenced by Godwin's *Caleb Williams*; and *Arthur Mervyn* (1800–1801), remarkable for its haunting picture of a plague-stricken city.

Brown's strength lay in his sensitive and vivid imagination, and although his work owed something to the English Gothic School of Romancers, especially to Walpole and Mrs. Radcliffe, there is abundant originality in the treatment of his themes; and if he has some natural affinity for the wild and mysterious, such as *The Mysteries of Udolpho* show, he had a greater sense of reality than we find in Mrs. Radcliffe. He is the precursor of Fenimore Cooper, Hawthorne, and Poe.

Before dealing with these great American writers, mention must be made of a man of quite another temperament and order of ability—WASHINGTON IRVING (1783–1859). He came of British stock, his father being Scotch, his mother English, and as a delicate lad he went to Europe in 1804, in quest of health. The change not only restored him physically, but stirred his imaginative power, and as a writer of travel-letters he first attracted attention. On his return in 1806, he undertook the editing of a literary miscellany, *Salmagundi*, where he tried his hand blithely at every kind of literary experiment—essay, satire, verse, fiction. The death of a girl to whom he was deeply attached, brought out the sentimental and romantic side of his nature; it mellowed also his somewhat over-exuberant humour, and in the comic *History of New York*, his gifts as a discursive humourist are first clearly seen. But the *Sketch Book* proved his most emphatic success, for here both his genial fun and romantic imagination find admirable expression. In such tales as *Rip Van Winkle*, *The Spectre Bridegroom*, and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, he invented a fantastic type of romance, less crude and more delicately whimsical than Brown's, while in *Christmas Eve* and *Bracebridge Hall* he gave us a charming picture of English country life, second only in merit to those of Goldsmith. His later interest in Spanish history bore fruit in his *Life of Columbus* (1828), *The Conquest of Granada* (1829), and *The Alhambra* (1832). The first is only moderately good, the others gave the author ample scope for his gift of happy description, and contain some of his best writing.

Later in life, after his return to America, he was attracted by the life out West; but though something of this found its way into a *Tour on the Prairies*, and *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville*, the romance of the West was to find its most satisfying exponents later in Cooper and Parkman. Biographical work occupied the last few years of his life, but he is not at his best in the *Life of Goldsmith* or the unfortunate *Life of Washington*, for he had not the gifts of the true biographer.

Reviewing his work as a whole, we are struck by its freshness, geniality, and picturesque breadth. In many ways Irving is to American prose what Longfellow is to its poetry: he is a varied, wholesome, and attractive writer, somewhat voluminous in his sentiment, and graceful and charming rather than strong and profound. If not a great man of letters, he is a genuine and delightful one

A Rainy Day at the Inn

The day continued lowering and gloomy; the slovenly, ragged, spongy clouds drifted heavily along; there was no variety even in the rain; it was one dull, continued, monotonous patter, patter, patter, excepting that now and then I was enlivened by the idea of a brisk shower, from the rattling of the drops upon a passing umbrella. It was quite refreshing—if I may be allowed a hackneyed phrase of the day—when in the course of the morning a horn blew, and a stage-coach whirled through the street with outside passengers stuck all over it, cowering under cotton umbrellas, and seethed together, and reeking with the steams of wet box-coats and upper benjamins. The sound brought out from their lurking-place a crew of vagabond boys and vagabond dogs, and the carroty-headed hostler and that nondescript animal yclept Boots, and all the other vagabond race that infest the purlieus of an inn: but the bustle was transient; the coach whirled on its way; and boy and dog, and hostler and Boots, all slunk back again to their holes; the street became silent, and the rain continued to rain on.

The evening gradually wore away. The travellers read the papers two or three times over. Some drew round the fire, and told long stories about their horses, about their adventures, their overturns, and breaking-downs. They discussed the credits of different merchants and different inns, and the two wags told several choice anecdotes of pretty chamber-maids and kind landladies. All this passed as they were quietly taking what they called their nightcaps—that is to say, strong glasses of brandy and water and sugar, or some other mixture of the kind; after which they one after another rang for Boots and the chamber-maid, and walked off to bed in old shoes cut down into marvellously uncomfortable slippers. There was only one man left—a short-legged, long-bodied, plethoric fellow, with a very large, sandy head. He sat by himself with a glass of port-wine negus and a spoon, sipping and stirring, and meditating and sipping, until nothing was left but the spoon. He gradually fell asleep bolt upright in his chair, with the empty glass standing before him; and the candle seemed to fall asleep too, for the wick grew long and black, and cabbaged at the end, and dimmed the little light that remained in the chamber. The gloom that now prevailed was contagious. Around hung the shapeless and almost spectral box-coats of departed travellers, long since buried in deep sleep. I only heard the ticking of the clock, with the deep-drawn breathings of the sleeping toper, and the drippings of the rain—drop, drop, drop—from the eaves of the house.[1]

James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851), was born in New Jersey in September 1789, of mixed English and Swedish stock, and his earliest years were spent amid the wilds still tenanted by the Indians. His scholastic training was brief owing to differences between his father and the authorities at Yale College. Before entering the Navy as a midshipman in 1809, he served two years before the mast in a merchant vessel.

After some years' wandering, he married in 1811, and settled down to a country gentleman's life, but chance leading him into experimenting in fiction, he stumbled upon a line of work in which he was to achieve fame. This he did not win until after some apprenticeship; but very soon, and despite irritating faults as a writer, he clearly proved himself a story-teller who excelled in action, and none have transcended him as a romancer of the forest, prairie, and the sea. He is uncertain in characterisation—Natty Bumpo notwithstanding—especially with his women, but he has an epic gift for adventure and a strong and robust imagination. Given primal types, such as the Indians, he is admirable; Leather Stocking is a masterpiece; given elemental background such as the sea or the prairie, he is impressive. His effects are highly coloured, and his religious prejudices are frankly insistent. But, like our own Charles Reade, whom he resembles largely in temper and in method, there is a sinewy strength and spacious greatness about his best work. Such stories as *The Pilot*, *The Deerslayer*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Pathfinder*, *The Pioneers*, and *The Prairie*, dealing as they do for the most part with the clash of the new civilisation with the primitive life of Young America, have no peers in romantic fiction. In their own way they are unique.

Among a crowd of lesser romancers who followed Cooper, may be mentioned Herman Melville (1819–1891) who spent many years as a sea-rover, and achieved success with his novel *Typee*, a peep at Polynesian life (1846); *Omoo: a Narrative of Adventures in the South Sea* (1847); and *Moby Dick, or the White Whale* (1851). As a painter of life at sea he is fully equal to Cooper, but his powers of story-telling are less varied and sustained.

John Pendleton Kennedy (1795–1870) wrote one notable romance dealing with the Revolution in the South, *Horse-Shoe Robinson*, a tale of the Tory ascendancy; and William Gilmore Simms (1806–1870), a Southerner, was a more prolific writer with greater staging power, who in *The Yemassee*, a story of South Carolina, exhibited a rough but genuine power of exciting narrative, not unworthy of Cooper.

We now come to the two greatest forces in American fiction: Hawthorne and Poe.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE (1804–1864)

His Life

The descendant of a long line of sea-worthies, Nathaniel Hawthorne was born at Salem, Mass., on July 4, 1804, and when his father died four years later, his mother, who was but twenty-seven, became depressed and melancholy, living the life of a recluse until her death in 1849. Had it not been for his Uncle Robert, the boy's welfare and education might have fared badly.

Young Hawthorne's first schoolmaster was the eminent Dr. Worcester, then a young graduate fresh from Yale, who had set up a school at Salem. By an accident that prevented him for some years from taking any part in school sports, the lad not unnaturally became a voracious reader—a mixed diet of Shakespeare, Milton, Smollett, and Mrs. Radcliffe (on week days) gave place on Sundays to Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

A shy, sensitive, dreamy boy, he lived a singularly lonely life with his mother and sisters, and seems to have had no companions of his own age. When he was fourteen the family left Salem for Raymond, where his grandfather possessed some landed property. Wild and solitary as the country was, and devoid of all society but that of his own family, Hawthorne always looked back upon his two years there as the happiest of his boyhood: "I lived in Maine like a bird of the air," he wrote fifty years

[1] *Bracebridge Hall.*

later, "so perfect was the freedom I enjoyed. But it was there I first got my cursed habits of solitude."

Leaving Raymond in 1819, two years were spent with the Rev. Caleb Bradley in preparation for college. At the same time, his literary sense began to stir. In 1820 he made his first experiment in journalism: a paper for boys, entitled *The Spectator*—written with a pen on small notepaper, containing two characteristic essays on *Solitude* and *Industry*—four numbers of which were issued from August 21st to September 18th.

But the time had arrived for him to choose a profession, and a letter to his mother revealed his opinions on the subject. The Church was regarded as "so dull a way of life"; the Law was put aside, as the multitude of lawyers revealed the fact that "one half of them (upon a moderate calculation) are in a state of actual starvation"; and as a doctor, the idea of living on the diseases of his fellow-creatures did not appeal to him. "What do you think of my becoming an author?" he wrote. "Indeed, I think the illegibility of my handwriting is very author-like."

In the summer of 1821, with no very definite calling in view, Hawthorne left Bowdoin, a small college presided over by a cultured and kindly staff, where Franklin Pierce and Longfellow were his companions. Notwithstanding his retiring disposition, he seems to have taken his share in the rough-and-tumble life of his college. On one occasion he was fined fifty cents for card-playing, but as Hawthorne had a hatred of debt and managed to live on three hundred dollars a year, we may presume that his convivialities were not on a very extensive scale. In 1825 he graduated, and having distinguished himself in Latin and English, returned to Salem, where for twelve years in "the monastery of Home" he lived the somewhat hermit life characteristic of the whole family. His days were spent in reading and study, he received no visitors and made no friendships, and his meals were left outside his locked door until it pleased him to take them in. An early sea bath in the summer, and long walks after dark, appear to have been his sole recreations.

Hawthorne had definitely decided to earn his living by his pen if possible, but his early ventures were doomed to disappointment. *Fanshawe* in 1826, published anonymously and at his own expense, was a failure; he then wrote a number of short stories, but unable to find a publisher he burned them in disgust. Nothing daunted, however, he proceeded to write another collection which appeared in *The Token*, edited by S. C. Goodrich ("Peter Parley"), and with some measure of success these made their appearance in 1837 as *Twice Told Tales*. He also did much editorial work, but the remuneration was so poor that he was glad to accept a post in the Customs at Boston, which he occupied from 1839 to 1841. A year later, he married Miss Sophia Peabody, and in the old dwelling at Concord to which he brought his bride was written the famous *Mosses from an Old Manse*.

It was at this period that Hawthorne became connected with the Utopian scheme known as the Brook Farm Community, and he does not seem to have been so impressed with the experiment as he anticipated: "I went to live in Arcady," he said, "and found myself up to the chin in a barnyard." However, but for this experience we might never have had *The Blithedale Romance* (1852).

While acting as Surveyor of the port of Salem, Hawthorne was hard at work on *The Scarlet Letter*, published in 1850, followed by *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), *Grandfather's Chair*, and *The Wonder Book*.

On the election of Franklin Pierce to the Presidency, he at once sought out his old friend and schoolfellow. The consulship at Liverpool was offered and accepted by Hawthorne, and in *Our Old Home* (1863) he gives us a vivid description of the four years spent in England. For the next three years he roamed through France and Italy; a series of *Note Books* and *The Marble Faun* being the result of his European wanderings.

On Hawthorne's return to America in 1860, the country was in the throes of an impending civil war, and he found it difficult to settle down, or to give his attention to any serious literary work. His health failed gradually until 1864, when it rapidly gave way, and while on a visit to his friend, ex-President Pierce, the great novelist was taken seriously ill; he died on May 19th, at Plymouth, New Hampshire, and is buried at Concord.

His Work

In Hawthorne's writings there are three characteristics that impress themselves upon the reader—his sense of mystery, his gift of fantasy, his intellectual detachment.

His Sense of Mystery.—When Hawthorne declared that he was "a lover of the brown twilight," he gave us, in that admirable, self-revealing phrase, a clue to his outlook as a literary artist. Twilight was his art medium. Some flowers are the sweetest after sunset, and keep their fragrance for the coming of night. So did Hawthorne's genius. But the twilight in which it throve was a homely one; a warm twilight with gold and sepia in it. Poe also was a lover of the twilight; but it was a grey, brooding one, full of strange unrest. Hawthorne's twilight is a restful atmosphere. Thus his sense of mystery has an individual note about it. It has not the uncanny magic of Poe; it eschews the merely grotesque and horrible. It seeks only to reveal the unfamiliar side of familiar things; to put ordinary life in an unusual setting. That this is so is perfectly clear from the exquisite preface to *The Scarlet Letter*:

"Moonlight in a familiar room," he says, "falling as white upon the carpet, and showing all its figures so distinctly, making every object so minutely visible, yet so unlike a morning or noontide visibility,—is a medium the most suitable for a romance writer to get acquainted with his illusive guests. There is the little domestic scenery of the well-known apartment; the chairs, with each its separate individuality; the centre table, sustaining a work-basket, a volume or two, and an extinguished lamp; the sofa, the bookcase, the picture on the wall;—all these details, so completely seen, are so spiritualised by the unusual light, that they seem to lose their actual substance and become things of intellect. Nothing is too small or too trifling to undergo this

change and acquire dignity thereby. A child's shoe, the doll seated in her little wicker carriage, the hobby-horse,—whatever, in a word, has been used or played with during the day, is now invested with a quality of strangeness and remoteness, though still almost as vividly present as by daylight. Thus, therefore, the floor of our familiar room has become a neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and fairyland, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other."

Hawthorne's world is a real enough world; for a thing seen in the twilight or the moonlight is no more unreal than that seen in the sunlight. But it is different. It gives us a fresh point of view, with a subdued and delicate charm of its own. Poe sought to heighten the *excitement* of everyday life; Hawthorne merely to heighten the *beauty*. "Some things we miss," he said, "not because our eyes are not clear enough . . . but because the daylight is too blinding."

His Puritan strain is shown unmistakably in his choice of subjects. Whether we look at his longer romances or his short stories, one thing is clear: Sin in one form or another is the constant preoccupation. Sinful passion in *The Scarlet Letter*; hereditary evil in *The House of the Seven Gables*; the unconscious cruelty of the philanthropist in *The Blithedale Romance*; sin and human progress in *The Marble Faun*. Yet no Puritan was ever less didactic than he; and it is in his treatment of the familiar Puritan formulas that the originality of the literary artist emerges. For it is the psychological, not the ethical implications, as we might expect, that immediately concern him. He is fascinated by the mystery of the problem; the obvious moral he passes by.

The Scarlet Letter, for instance, is only superficially a tale of sinful passion; fundamentally it is a study in the pathology of remorse. We are not called upon to assess the responsibility of the vindictive husband, the erring clergyman, or the wife false to her vows. Hawthorne asks us rather to watch the effect of remorse upon the character of the two chief actors; we find ourselves scrutinising with meticulous care the evil arising from the necessarily furtive up-bringing of the child; the corroding effects of the enforced insincerity of the man's daily life; the spiritual degradation caused by the fateful letter woven on the woman's breast. So in *The House of the Seven Gables*, the author is not concerned with the character of the original wrong-doing; but with the growing blight spread by this wrong-doing on future generations. It is not with the sour grapes eaten by the father that we are concerned but with the "children's teeth set on edge."

We may apply the same test to all the other stories, where Hawthorne states an ethical problem, and in each case shall we find that it is the mysterious alchemy of sin that attracts him. He treats his subject in fact as an artist, not as a moralist.

A sense of mystery leads its possessor often into vague visions. It is not so with Hawthorne. His best work is clear, definite, and simple. Take as an illustration that beautiful little interlude, *The Story of David Swan*. It deals with a young man, who while waiting for the coach to take him to the town where he may essay his fortune, falls asleep in a copse near the highway. While he is sleeping, a man and his wife pass by, and attracted by his youth, wish he was their son. They are wealthy. Why should they not adopt him? Had he awakened just then the half-formed resolution might have been confirmed; but he does not wake, and they pass on. Then comes a maiden tripping along; she is fair and sweet and made for love, and she looks with favour on the sleeping youth. Again, if he had awakened just then—what might not the future have held for both of them. She looks wistfully at his upturned face, and in her turn passes on. Then come men with murder in their hearts. They see the sleeping youth and covet his knapsack. But before they can actualise their ugly designs the rattle of the coach is heard on the road, and the sound of the horn.

The youth leaps up from sleep, and jumps on the coach, unconscious of the fact that in this brief space of time while he had been resting, wealth, love, and death had each appeared in turn, and in turn passed him by.

A simple little episode, told with rare delicacy and restraint—an eloquent little fancy on the possibilities of life . . . of the things that nearly happen; an idea that could so easily have been spoiled by a too ponderous purpose, or an over-anxious art. There is no more perfect piece in all Hawthorne's writings than this.

His Gift of Fantasy.—Fantasy is common to two classes of writers—those who see more dimly than ordinary people, who see "men as trees walking," and who resort therefore to fantastic images and embellishments to conceal their poverty of sight, and those who see more clearly than the majority, and who use fantasy as a pictorial appeal to impress folk with dimmer power of vision than themselves.

Hawthorne belongs to the latter. There is no greater mistake than to think of him as some readers do, as a vagrant dreamer who saw the world with half-closed eyes. He was a remarkably clear-sighted man, and a proof of this may be seen in the clarity and vividness with which he could, when he chose, draw everyday characters. Take as an illustration his picture of the old apple dealer—it is an amazing little vignette of delicate, detailed observation. Defoe himself could not have bettered its realism, for Hawthorne not only sees, but sees *into*. And it is because he saw behind the externals of his characters, that we are often disinclined to credit him with the power of seeing externals at all.

If we examine a few of his fantasies we shall realise the fundamental reality that underlies them, and not regard them merely as the iridescent spray of an excitable imagination.

In *Rappacini's Daughter* we have what is, on the surface, a little fairy tale of love and poison, charmingly told, yet apparently remote enough from ordinary life. Beatrice has been brought up by her father in a garden of beautiful flowers, which derive their fragrance and loveliness from poison. And living and breathing as she does an atmosphere of poison, she is like one of the flowers, lovely as they and as poisonous. Then she falls in love, and her lover finds out, to his horror, the tainted

source of her life and beauty. The father is persuaded to destroy this poison in her nature, and administers a powerful antidote. The poison is annihilated, and with it her life also; for poison has become to her a second nature, a law of life, although the law of death to others. The psychological truth underlying this ingenious little romance is incontestable, and Hawthorne, in place of leading us away from reality, as some weavers of fantasy do, brings us through fantasy to the very heart of reality.

Take another fictional extravagance, *The Snow Image*, a delicate and exquisite little fantasy, told with the simplicity of Hans Andersen. No more charming commentary on the mischief wrought by kind, well-meaning, but unimaginative people could be desired.

Hawthorne's fantasies are never meaningless: they are symbolic. Symbolism is a perilous weapon save in the hands of the true artist. In Hawthorne's hands, it is nearly always attractive; for it is never too obtrusive, never overcrowded.

Donatello's pointed ears (in *The Marble Faun*) are delicately suggestive of his animal nature; the red stigma over Dimmesdale's heart suggests the corroding remorse within; the likeness of *The Great Stone Face* to that of the eager seeker who is expecting to see it externalised as some other, never dreaming of himself, is a beautiful reminder of a familiar text.

Sometimes the play of fantasy runs thin, as in *The Birth Mark*, and the symbolism asserts itself over-insistently; but given the mood (and Hawthorne is essentially a writer for certain moods), the fantasies touch the imagination delicately and pleasantly, like flowers that brush the face in the gloom, dimly seen, and faintly fragrant.

What a grateful contrast from the romantic upholstering of the Gothic school. Here are no stage directions for "screams without"; "lights down" and "lights up"; no manipulation of the weather for the sheer purpose of thrill-making. Hawthorne's romantic sympathies surround the simplest things; enveloping their familiar, everyday appearance in his brown twilight atmosphere, until they lose their sharp outline and assume strange and alien shapes. "Among ourselves," he sighed, "there is no fairy land for the romancer." He need not have lamented; his very strength lay in the barrenness of the environment in which he lived; its hard, unblinking actuality. Give him a heap of stones and he sees a ladder at once from earth to heaven. Throw him a handful of nettles and he will, like Elisa, weave out of them mantles of magic. He could strike the hard rock of New England life, and the waters of romance gushed forth at once.

If this be so, says the reader, what miracles will be wrought when he can pass to a land rich in romantic associations? Hawthorne in Italy! does not the combination rouse the highest expectations? What did happen we can see for ourselves in *The Marble Faun*, and the result is on the whole disappointing. It is a long and ambitious romance, with a fine, promising motif—that of the faunlike being who is suddenly stricken into manhood through an overwhelming passion. But the very richness of the romantic material among the streets of Rome seems to have stunned rather than stimulated his imagination. The book has many beauties: beauties of description, beauties of suggestive fancy; but there is a curious immaturity about it. And as a result of this there is an unreality at times about the fantastic development that we never feel in some of the *Twice Told Tales*, or *Mosses from an Old Manse*. He is sensitive enough to the romantic association of his surroundings; but they distract rather than inspire him as a literary artist.

Hawthorne's finest efforts are not the result of external stimulus at all. His gossamer fancies are spun like the spider's web out of his own self. Shorn of romantic surroundings, he achieves his highest triumphs. He was always sighing for richer mental diet, but the sparse, ascetic living suited his temperament and genius best.

"No author," he says, "can conceive of the difficulty of writing a romance about a country where there is no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but a commonplace prosperity, as is happily the case with my dear native land. It will be very long, I trust, before romance-writers may find congenial and easily-handled themes either in the annals of our stalwart republic, or in any characteristic and probable events of our individual lives. Romance and poetry, ivy, lichens, and wall-flowers need ruins to make them grow."

We think of his *New England Stories*, and smile at the perversity of the man unable to realise not only where his own strength lay, but wherein lies the real spirit of romance. "Romance and poetry, ivy, lichens, and wallflowers need ruins to make them grow." Fie! Nathaniel Hawthorne, there is no worse pathetic fallacy than this; and your own fantasies give the lie to it. You yourself have shown us that Romance is the poetry of reality; that below every commonplace lurks a mystery; and that the fantasies you love are merely imaginative attitudes without any reference to the thing looked at. Nor can anyone doubt that in his heart he loved what a critic has called the "bleak granite rocks and half-baked civilisation" of his own country; it is this zealous love for them that gives the note of petulance and childishness to his comments on English life. With his sensitive artistic eye he drank in our richer store of romantic material; revelled in the old hospital at Leicester; the historical memories of the countryside; yet smarting all the while, loyal American as he was, that these things were not in his own land. Then in his jealousy he girds at our John Bullism. For his diatribes on Englishmen he has been severely taken to task by English critics. But really it is not for us to cast stones at him. Our own insularity is often far more offensive, when we enter countries other than our own, lacking the excuse that Hawthorne had at his uncongenial post at the Liverpool Customs Office, where he first took stock of our countrymen. Yet he is exquisitely alive to the romantic aspects of English life, though firmly convinced that we have too much beer and roast beef in us to appreciate

them. That he under-estimated our imaginative powers, need not prevent us from appreciating his.

His Intellectual Detachment.—Behind the romantic idealism of Hawthorne, behind that acute sense of spiritual perspective that we call mystery, there is a cool, inquisitive intellect. There is no passion in his writing, often as he deals with passion. His imagination is fertile and exquisite, but the flowers it gives birth to are no rich, vital blooms, but delicate, faintly-tinted, faintly-scented blossoms, with a palpable yet chill beauty of their own—for the cool, bracing air of New England has helped to nurture them. He has the hand of the artist, but the soul of the scientist. He probes, analyses, weighs dispassionately (when his prejudices are not engaged), keeping himself in detachment from his subject so as to more thoroughly rate its value. Take as an illustration of this, the powerful passage where he addresses the dead body of Squire Pyncheon, running steadily and relentlessly through the dead Judge's appointments and idiosyncrasies so as to make us realise the littleness of the man and the irony presented by his mute, lifeless figure. It is a fine passage, and the mystery and pitifulness of death are admirably suggested; yet the cold, relentless analysis of the man's short-comings (just as it is), reveals a fresh side of Hawthorne's nature.

"Half an hour Why, Judge, it is already two hours by your own undeviatingly accurate chronometer. Glance your eye down on it and see. Ah! he will not give himself the trouble either to bend his head or elevate his hand, so as to bring the faithful time-keeper within his range of vision. Time all at once appears to have become a matter of no moment with the Judge!"

Yet Hawthorne's emotions never radiate heat as do the emotions of some novelists. His characters pass through awful spiritual experiences; but he intellectualises the tragedy, and though we are interested, even fascinated, we are rarely *moved*. Think what Charlotte Brontë would have made of the young girl Hilda, burdened by her dread secret, or Mr. Hardy of Zenobia with her tragic affection. Hawthorne's cool, prying intellect moves across his subject; and the emotional problem is scarcely felt. We are looking at a scientific "case," not at a human problem. *The Scarlet Letter* is a wonderful book, delicate and subtle in its art, noble in its austere beauty; but surely never was a poignant passion so frigidly treated. We are in the spirit of the dissecting-room. Hawthorne will pursue some nice point in psychology or moral pathology with a kind of intellectual fury. This intellectualism comes as a surprise to many readers who imagine that the choice of emotional subject-matter necessitates an emotional treatment. But the imagination has its intellectual side as well as its sentimental side, and the tendency to fantastic treatment is in itself an intellectual bent. Indeed fantasy is the intellect in holiday mood.

Nowhere, however, do we better realise this detachment than in *The Blithedale Romance*. Ostensibly the record of a communistic experiment, based on the experience of the little colony at Brook Farm, it exhibits in a most striking way the keen analytic power of Hawthorne; and we shall not err greatly if we associate the personality of Miles Coverdale with that of his creator. Coverdale is a sympathetic and kindly man, imaginative enough to sympathise with and understand the aspiration of the little colony, cool and observant enough to note their foibles and weaknesses.

Admirably does he depict in Hollingsworth, the thoroughgoing Reformer and Social Idealist. Read the scene where he and Coverdale are working together, piling stones in a dyke, and the narrow, uncompromising, though desperately nervous character of the man is shown with that dry, astringent humour in which Hawthorne excelled.

"He" (Hollingsworth) "would glare upon us from the thick shrubbery of his meditations, like a tiger out of a jungle, make the briefest reply possible, and betake himself back into the solitude of his heart and mind. . . . He was for ever busy with his strange, and as most people thought, impracticable plan for the reformation of criminals through an appeal to their higher instincts. Much as I liked Hollingsworth, it cost me many a groan to tolerate him on this point. He ought to have commenced his investigation of the subject by committing some huge sin in his proper person, and examining the condition of his higher instincts afterwards."

Yet there is nothing hard in Hawthorne's nature; indeed the intellectual detachment serves as a protection for his fine and delicate sensibilities. There are many fine, tender touches in the characterisation of the girl Priscilla; while the splendid figure of Zenobia is portrayed with a true sense of tragedy.

Mention has been made of Hawthorne's humour, which is too often under-estimated. It is a quiet, insidious humour, the natural product of a brooding, meditative temperament, with no touch in it of animal spirits, but with a whimsical charm that lightens up many a passage in his writings, and flashes agreeably from his letters.

Thus he writes to a friend about his house at Concord:

"I know nothing of the house except Thoreau's telling me that it was inhabited a generation or two ago by a man who believed he should never die. I believe, however, he is dead; at least I hope so; else he may probably reappear and dispute my title to his residence."

Here is a fine touch of self-criticism dealing with his early Custom House experience:

"It was a folly, with the materiality of this daily life pressing so intrusively upon me, to attempt to fling myself back into another age; or to insist on creating a semblance of a world out of airy matter. . . . The wiser effort would have been, to diffuse thought and imagination through the opaque substance of to-day, and thus make it a bright transparency . . . to seek resolutely the true and indestructible value that lay hidden in the petty and wearisome incidents and ordinary characters with which I was now conversant. The fault was mine. The page of life that was spread out before me was dull and commonplace, only because I had not fathomed its deeper import. A better book than I shall ever write was there. . . . These perceptions came too late. . . . I had ceased to be a writer of tolerably poor tales and essays, and had become a tolerably good Surveyor of the Customs. That was all. But, nevertheless, it is anything but agreeable to be haunted by a suspicion that one's intellect is dwindling away, or exhaling, without your consciousness, like ether out of a phial; so that at every glance you find a smaller and less volatile residuum."

He comments thus on a child's drawing:

"One of the children drawing a cow on the blackboard says, 'I'll kick this leg out a little more,' a very happy energy of expression, completely identifying herself with the cow; or perhaps as the cow's creator, conscious of full power over its movements."

Thus, on a domestic duty performed during his wife's absence:

"The washing of dishes does seem to me the most absurd and unsatisfactory business that I ever undertook. If, when once washed, they would remain clean for ever and ever (which they ought in all reason to do, considering how much trouble it is) there would be less occasion to grumble; but no sooner is it done than it requires to be done again."

Again:

"I am at this moment superintending the corned beef, which has been on the fire, as it seems to me, ever since the beginning of time, and shows no symptoms of being done before the crack of doom. . . . To say the truth, I look upon it as such a masterpiece in its way that it seems irreverential to eat it. Things on which so much thought and labour are bestowed should surely be immortal."

Again:

"I went to George Hillard's office, and he spoke with immitigable resolution of the necessity of my going to dine with Longfellow before returning to Concord; but I have an almost miraculous power of escaping from necessities of this kind. Destiny itself has often been worsted in the attempt to get me out to dinner."

His literary style is no less the result of his intellectual subtlety, than of his sympathetic imagination. It gives form and precision to his fancies:

"The wine demanded so deliberate a pause in order to detect the hidden peculiarities and subtle exquisiteness of its flavour, that to drink it was really more a moral than a physical enjoyment."

"His feeling for flowers was very exquisite, and seemed not so much a taste as an emotion."

"She was plucked out of a mystery and had its roots still clinging to her."

Hawthorne is referred to frequently as a mystic. Now a mystic is, above all things, a man who is in intimate touch with spiritual realities. If Vaughan, Blake, and Francis Thompson are mystics (and no one would deny this), then assuredly Hawthorne is not. He loved mystery; it touched his imagination and excited his curiosity; but he loved it as a literary artist, just as did Rossetti, and to have a subtle sense of the mystery of life is not necessary to be a mystic. His inheritance of Puritan instincts, again, is used as a pigment to paint his pictures, not as a creed to regulate his outlook on life. Ethical preoccupations drift through his pages, yet he is not really a moralist; he is not concrete, practical, direct enough; he never became more than a psychological dreamer, fascinated by the complexities of the human conscience and allowing his delicate fancies to play over them. He holds, indeed, a unique place in English letters, by virtue of a subtle, elusive genius that concerns itself neither primarily with the world of everyday life, nor with the world of the spirit; but is poised midway—in a shadowy borderland—a visionary with his head amid the star-dust of romance, his feet set firm on the concrete actualities of life.

"A large number of passengers were already at the station-house awaiting the departure of the cars. By the aspect and demeanour of these persons it was easy to judge that the feelings of the community had undergone a very favourable change in reference to the celestial pilgrimage. It would have done Bunyan's heart good to see it. Instead of a lonely and ragged man, with a huge burden on his back, plodding along sorrowfully on foot while the whole city hooted after him, here were parties of the first gentry and most respectable people in the neighbourhood setting forth towards the Celestial City as cheerfully as if the pilgrimage were merely a summer tour. Among the gentlemen were characters of deserved eminence—magistrates, politicians, and men of wealth, by whose example religion could not but be greatly recommended to their meaner brethren. In the ladies' apartment, too, I rejoiced to distinguish some of those flowers of fashionable society who are so well fitted to adorn the most elevated circles of the Celestial City. There was much pleasant conversation about the news of the day, topics of business, and politics, or the lighter matters of amusement; while religion, though indubitably the main thing at heart, was thrown tastefully into the background. Even an infidel would have heard little or nothing to shock his sensibility.

"One great convenience of the new method of going on pilgrimage I must not forego to mention. Our enormous burdens, instead of being carried on our shoulders as had been the custom of old, were all snugly deposited in the baggage car, and, as I was assured, would be delivered to their respective owners at the journey's end. Another thing, likewise, the benevolent reader will be delighted to understand. It may be remembered that there was an ancient feud between Prince Beelzebub and the keeper of the wicket gate, and that the adherents of the former distinguished personage were accustomed to shoot deadly arrows at honest pilgrims while knocking at the door. This dispute, much to the credit as well of the illustrious potentate above mentioned as of the worthy and enlightened directors of the railroad, has been pacifically arranged on the principle of mutual compromise. The prince's subjects are now pretty numerously employed about the station-house, some in taking care of the baggage, others in collecting fuel, feeding the engines, and such congenial occupations; and I can conscientiously affirm that persons more attentive to their business, more willing to accommodate, or more generally agreeable to the passengers, are not to be found on any railroad. Every good heart must surely exult at so satisfactory an arrangement of an immemorial difficulty.

"'Where is Mr. Greatheart?' inquired I. 'Beyond a doubt the directors have engaged that famous old champion to be chief conductor on the railroad?'

"'Why, no,' said Mr. Smooth-it-away, with a dry cough. 'He was offered the situation of breaksman; but, to tell you the truth, our friend Greatheart has grown preposterously stiff and narrow in his old age. He has so often guided pilgrims over the road on foot that he considers it a sin to travel in any other fashion. Besides, the old fellow had entered so heartily into the ancient feud with Prince Beelzebub that he would have been perpetually at blows or ill language with some of the prince's subjects, and thus have embroiled us anew. So, on the whole, we were not sorry when honest Greatheart went off to the Celestial City in a huff, and left us at liberty to choose a more suitable and accommodating man. Yonder comes the engineer of the train. You will probably recognise him at once.'

"The engine at this moment took its station in advance of the cars, looking, I must confess, much more

like a sort of mechanical demon that would hurry us to the infernal regions than a laudable contrivance for smoothing our way to the Celestial City. On its top sat a personage almost enveloped in smoke and flame, which, not to startle the reader, appeared to gush from his own mouth and stomach as well as from the engine's brazen abdomen.

"'Do my eyes deceive me?' cried I. 'What on earth is this? A living creature? If so, he is own brother to the engine he rides upon!'

"'Poh, poh, you are obtuse!' said Mr. Smooth-it-away, with a hearty laugh. 'Don't you know Apollyon, Christian's old enemy, with whom he fought so fierce a battle in the Valley of Humiliation? He is the very fellow to manage the engine; and so we have reconciled him to the custom of going on pilgrimage, and engaged him as chief engineer.'

"'Bravo, bravo!' exclaimed I, with irrepressible enthusiasm; 'this shows the liberality of the age; this proves, if anything can, that all musty prejudices are in a fair way to be obliterated. And how will Christian rejoice to hear of this happy transformation of his old antagonist! I promise myself great pleasure in informing him of it when we reach the Celestial City.'

'The passengers being all comfortably seated, we now rattled away merrily, accomplishing a greater distance in ten minutes than Christian probably trudged over in a day. It was laughable, while we glanced along, as it were, at the tail of a thunderbolt, to observe two dusty foot travellers in the old pilgrim guise, with cockle-shell and staff, their mystic rolls of parchment in their hands, and their intolerable burdens on their backs. The preposterous obstinacy of these honest people in persisting to groan and stumble along the difficult pathway rather than take advantage of modern improvements, excited great mirth among our wiser brotherhood. We greeted the two pilgrims with many pleasant gibes and a roar of laughter; whereupon they gazed at us with such woeful and absurdly compassionate visages that our merriment grew tenfold more obstreperous. Apollyon also entered heartily into the fun, and contrived to flirt the smoke and flame of the engine, or of his own breath, into their faces, and envelop them in an atmosphere of scalding steam. These little practical jokes amused us mightily, and doubtless afforded the pilgrims the gratification of considering themselves martyrs.

"At some distance from the railroad Mr. Smooth-it-away pointed to a large, antique edifice, which, he observed, was a tavern of long standing and had formerly been a noted stopping place for pilgrims. In Bunyan's road book it is mentioned as the Interpreter's House.

"'I have long had a curiosity to visit that old mansion,' remarked I.

"'It is not one of our stations, as you perceive,' said my companion. 'The keeper was violently opposed to the railroad; and well he might be, as the track left his house of entertainment on one side, and thus was pretty certain to deprive him of all his reputable customers. But the footpath still passes his door; and the old gentleman now and then receives a call from some simple traveller, and entertains him with fare as old-fashioned as himself.'

"Before our talk on this object came to a conclusion we were rushing by the place where Christian's burden fell from his shoulders at the side of the Cross. This served as a theme for Mr. Smooth-it-away, Mr. Live-for-the-world, Mr. Hide-sin-in-the-heart, Mr. Scaly-conscience, and a knot of gentlemen from the town of Shun-repentance, to descant upon the inestimable advantages resulting from the safety of our baggage. Myself, and all the passengers indeed, joined with unanimity in this view of the matter; for our burdens were rich in many things esteemed precious throughout the world; and, especially, we each of us possessed a great variety of favourite habits, which we trusted would not be out of fashion even in the polite circles of the Celestial City. It would have been a sad spectacle to see such an assortment of valuable articles tumbling into the sepulchre. Thus pleasantly conversing on the favourable circumstances of our position as compared with those of past pilgrims and of narrow-minded ones at the present day, we soon found ourselves at the foot of the Hill Difficulty. Through the very heart of this rocky mountain a tunnel has been constructed of most admirable architecture, with a fly arch and a spacious double track; so that, unless the earth and rocks should chance to crumble down, it will remain an eternal monument of the builder's skill and enterprise. It is a great though incidental advantage that the materials from the heart of the Hill Difficulty have been employed in filling up the Valley of Humiliation, thus obviating the necessity of descending into that disagreeable and unwholesome hollow."[1]

EDGAR ALLAN POE (1809–1849)

His Life

On January 19, 1809, the self-willed, reckless, brilliantly-gifted Edgar Allan Poe was born at Boston. His father, of good Irish stock, was destined for the Bar, but preferred the calling of an actor. For this, and for his marriage when nineteen, to a young widow, also an actress, his parents cast him off, and a grim struggle with poverty ensued. Five years later the young couple died of consumption in the same year, leaving three young children.

Edgar, the second child, was adopted by the Allans. Mr. Allan was his godfather and a wealthy tobacco merchant. This good fortune was more apparent than real, and the picture we have of a pretty, precocious child, indulged and petted, standing on a dinner table glass in hand, proposing toasts, can scarcely be considered the best method of youthful training.

When Poe was six years old the Allans crossed to England and the boy was put to school at Stoke Newington; here he remained till 1821, when he returned to the States. After a year's idleness he was sent to a day school at Richmond, Virginia, where the Allans resided. On leaving in 1825 he was a good linguist, and a fair Latin scholar, a voluminous writer of verse, and an excellent swimmer. In January of the following year he was entered at the University of Virginia.

His choice of companions at college was unfortunate. He fell into intemperate habits, and at the end of his first year was heavily in debt through gambling. Mr. Allan was a generous and good-natured man while he had everything his own way, but he was also capricious and exacting, and failed to see that by his own injudicious training of the child he was mainly responsible for the lad's want of moral stamina. He, however, refused to pay Poe's "debts of honour," so his career at the university came to an end. A place was then found for him in Mr. Allan's office, but from this uncongenial occupation he shortly ran away and enlisted. On the death of Mrs. Allan in 1829, the youth returned home, a reconciliation took place, and a substitute was found to return to the regiment of his stead. He was then sent to the Sandhurst in America—West Point.

Poe must have had his industrious moments for

[1] *The Celestial Railroad.*

in 1827 he had published *Tamerlane and Other Poems*, with the following quotation from Cowper on the title-page:

"Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,
And make mistakes for manhood to reform;"

but we cannot trace in his later career that Poe lived up to the latter half of his motto. In March 1831 he was dismissed from West Point and once more thrown penniless upon the world, and at the end of two years he was in the direst poverty. But the tide was turning.

In 1833 he sent his story, *A Manuscript Found in a Bottle*, to *The Saturday Visitor*. With this he gained the prize offered of 100 dollars, and from this period Poe had no difficulty in procuring work. His worth was quickly recognised, and for two years he contributed largely to the magazines.

In 1836 he married his young cousin, Virginia Clemm, and it was hoped that his love for his child-wife would have a restraining influence upon his vicious habits, but it was not to be. He successively filled the editorial chairs of *The Southern Literary Messenger*, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, and *Graham's*, in which appeared *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, and *The Descent into the Maelstrom*, and from each of these posts his dissolute ways procured his dismissal.

In 1844 Poe settled in New York with his invalid wife and her mother, whose devotion to her unstable son-in-law was remarkable. On January 29, 1845, *The Raven* appeared in *The Evening Mirror*, and shortly afterwards Poe went on the staff of *The Broadway Journal*; within the same year he was joint-editor, sub-editor, and proprietor, and on January 3, 1846, the paper was issued with the following note:

"Unexpected engagements demanding my whole attention, and the objects being fulfilled, so far as regards myself personally, for which *The Broadway Journal* was established, I now, as its editor, bid farewell—as cordially to foes as to friends.

"Mr. Thomas H. Lowe is authorized to collect all money due the *Journal*. EDGAR A. POE."

The little household was then removed from New York to Fordham, Westchester County. Mrs. Poe's health was rapidly failing, and she died on January 30, 1847.

It is but fair to Poe's memory to record that after his wife's death he endeavoured to throw off his bad habits, but they had gained too firm a hold upon him. He then had recourse to opium, and the last two years of his life are too sad to recall.

"I have absolutely *no* pleasure in the stimulants in which I sometimes so madly indulge," he wrote a year before his death. "It has not been in the pursuit of pleasure that I have perilled life and reputation and reason. It has been in the desperate attempt to escape from torturing memories—memories of wrong and injustice and imputed dishonour—from a sense of insupportable loneliness and a dread of some strange impending doom."

After a drunken bout Poe was found insensible in Baltimore and taken to the Washington University Hospital, where he died on October 7, 1849.

His Work

A brilliant though erratic critic, with a naturally fine literary palate, and a bundle of prejudices; an ingenious versifier with flashes of greatness, and a master craftsman in the romance of horror. Thus briefly may we sum up the work of this unhappy man of genius. As a writer of fiction he belongs to the Gothic school; only he achieves with remarkable skill what Mrs. Radcliffe, Horace Walpole, Maturin, and Monk Lewis did in cruder and more stumbling fashion; revels as they did in the eerie side of things; but he is a professional artist in horrors, while they were well-meaning amateurs succeeding only by fits and starts and more or less accidentally, in the art of blood-curdling. Maturin, in his Eastern Romances, approaches the closest to Poe in grim power; but a wide gulf divides *Vathek* from masterly studies like *The Pit and the Pendulum*, and the *Fall of the House of Usher*.

In certain respects Poe resembles his greater contemporary, Hawthorne. He brings to bear upon his work an analytical intellect, a prying imagination. Like Hawthorne he is attracted towards the night side of things, and is fascinated by pathological problems. But here the likeness ends. Poe externalised his horrors; Hawthorne spiritualised them. Hawthorne stimulates our imagination; Poe sears it. In constructive power, Poe is superior; he has a more meticulous mind, a more masculine genius. But the beauty, the delicacy, the essential sanity of Hawthorne is without his range. Even while he grips he disgusts you. There is the reek of the charnel-house in the majority of his tales, and his intensely morbid preoccupation with pain and death oppress one like a miasma. His most agreeable work lies in the direction of the puzzle story. Here his ingenuity and power of ratiocination mark him out as the pioneer of the modern detective story. He is the protagonist of Gaboriau and Du Boisgobey, Anna K. Green, and Conan Doyle. Of their kind, nothing could well be better done than his *Murder in the Rue Morgue*, his *Mystery of Marie Roget*, or *The Gold Bug*. On a somewhat lower plane come his pseudo-scientific tales such as *The Descent into the Maelstrom*; but even here he opens a new field in fiction which has since his time been more fully exploited by Jules Verne and Mr. H. G. Wells.

His studies in morbid psychology exhibit yet a third side of his genius; and if he is excelled here in range and delicacy by his successor, Hawthorne, yet he certainly prepared the way; and putting aside the "spiritual clamminess" which R. H. Hutton found in his tales, the haunting intensity with which he can depict a guilty conscience, or trace the growth of some terrible obsession, as in *The Tell-Tale Heart*, is horribly effective and arresting.

Poe's work, therefore, when viewed in relation to certain developments in the later fiction of the age, is of undeniable interest, even apart from its intrinsic merit. It is a pity that he wasted his genius so much in the merely gruesome; for his imagination was strong enough to dispense with those adventitious horrors. I do not find fault

with him, as some do, because he elected to deal with problems of mental pathology; I blame him because he treats them too little as an artist, too much as a scientist.

As a poet, there is no American man of letters who is his peer in sheer artistry. There is greater artistry in his verse than in his prose, and if the imagination shown is less flexible, less adventurous, it is also less rank, less variable. Its range is narrow; but in that range its effectiveness is remarkable.

In *Israfel* and *To Helen*, he has achieved a fantastic beauty and melodic cadence, that of its kind has never been equalled in American Literature. Elsewhere in his tenuous body of verse he has shown himself a cunning master of verbal harmonics, and three at least of his poems—*The Raven*, *The Bells*, and *Annabel Lee*—have taken captive the popular imagination to an extraordinary extent. Nevertheless, we cannot but feel the presence, more or less, of a certain strain of affectation and pretentiousness in his verse, which, although not impairing the universal sweetness of his music, debar one from classing it with the romantic lyrics of poets like Shelley, Keats, and Tennyson. The debatable border line between Art and Artifice finds Poe nearly always on the wrong side. Sometimes, as in *Annabel Lee* and *The Bells*, faintly so; at others, as in *The Haunted Palace* and the over-praised *Raven*, markedly so. Of course many readers do not feel this. To them there is something peculiarly haunting and compelling in Poe's imaginative power; nor do they feel any jarring note. But excepting *Israfel*, which seems to me quite the most magically perfect thing that Poe ever wrote, there is no poem that is not spoiled, however slightly, by some touch of tinsel.

There is the touch of tinsel even in *Helen*, with its elusive charm and fine phrasing. It occurs in the third line (the italics are mine):

> "Helen, thy beauty is to me
> Like those Nicean barks of yore
> That gently, o'er a *perfumed* sea,
> The weary, way-worn wanderer bore
> To his own native shore."

Why "perfumed"? This boudoir word strikes an artificial note and will not compensate even for such felicities as:

> "The glory that was Greece
> And the grandeur that was Rome."

Sometimes the touch of tinsel shows itself, not in a word or a phrase, but in the palpable effort on the part of the writer to intensify his effects. This is the weakness of *The Raven*: the effects are not subtle enough; the shadows are accentuated with too obvious a care to achieve the impressive. To a less extent *The City in the Sea*, with its admirable opening, suffers from over-elaboration. To compare with a fantasy that is perfect in its romantic art, let the reader turn to Tennyson's *Lady of Shalott* after reading Poe's verse, and he will realise the difference.

Apart from its fitful, though genuine romantic beauty, and admirable though not perfect artistic cunning, Poe's verse is singularly limited in its scope. He never touches the broad, general interests of life and thought, and has nothing of the benign sanity of Longfellow, the tender humanity of Whittier, or the naked force of Whitman. Yet he is an attractive and influential poet in his own way, and as a proseman one of the few original forces in American letters. Had his breadth and sanity of outlook been at all commensurate with his shaping and imaginative faculty, he would have had no peer in the literature of his country.

The Haunted Palace

In the greenest of our valleys
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace—
Radiant palace—reared its head.
In the monarch Thought's dominion—
It stood there!
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair!

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow
(This—all this—was in the olden
Time long ago),
And every gentle air that dallied,
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
A winged odour went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley,
Through two luminous windows, saw
Spirits moving musically,
To a lute's well-tuned law,
Round about a throne where, sitting
(Porphyrogene!)
In state his glory well befitting,
The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,
And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate.
(Ah, let us mourn!—for never morrow
Shall dawn upon him desolate!)
And round about his home, the glory
That blushed and bloomed
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old time entombed.

And travellers now, within that valley,
Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms, that move fantastically
To a discordant melody,
While, like a ghastly rapid river,
Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out for ever
And laugh—but smile no more.

The City in the Sea

Lo! Death hath reared himself a throne
In a strange city lying alone
Far down within the dim west
Where the good and the bad and the worst and the best
Have gone to their eternal rest.
There shrines and palaces and towers
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not!

Resemble nothing that is ours.
Around, by lifting winds forgot,
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy heaven come down
On the long night-time of that town;
But light from out the lurid sea
Streams up the turrets silently—
Gleams up the pinnacles far and free—
Up domes—up spires—up kingly halls—
Up fanes—up Babylon-like walls—
Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers—
Up many and many a marvellous shrine
Whose wreathed friezes interwine
The viol, the violet, and the vine.
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.
So blend the turrets and shadows there
That all seem pendulous in air.
While from a proud tower in the town
Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves
Yawn level with the luminous waves
But not the riches there that lie
In each idol's diamond eye—
Not the gaily-jewelled dead
Tempt the waters from their bed.
For no ripples curl, alas!
Along that wilderness of glass—
No swellings tell that winds may be
Upon some far-off happier sea—
No heavings hint that winds have been
On seas less hideously serene.

But lo, a stir is in the air!
The wave—there is a movement there
As if the towers had thrust aside,
In slightly sinking, the dull tide—
As if their tops had feebly given
A void within the filmy heaven.
The waves have now a redder glow—
The hours are breathing faint and low—
And when, amid no earthly moans,
Down, down that town shall settle hence,
Hell rising from a thousand thrones,
Shall do it reverence.

ISRAFEL

In Heaven a spirit doth dwell
"Whose heart-strings are a lute";
None sing so wildly well
As the angel Israfel,
And the giddy stars (so legends tell),
Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell
Of his voice all mute.

Tottering above
In her highest noon,
The enamoured moon
Blushes with love,
While, to listen, the red levin
(With the rapid Pleiades, even
Which were seven),
Pauses in Heaven.

And they say (the starry choir
And the other listening things)
That Israfel's fire
Is owing to that lyre
By which he sits and sings—
The trembling living wire
Of those unusual strings.

But the skies that angel trod,
Where deep thoughts are a duty—
Where Love's a grown-up God—
Where the Houri glances are
Imbued with all the beauty
Which we worship in a star.

Therefore thou art not wrong,
Israfel, who despisest
An unimpassioned song;
To thee the laurels belong,
Best bard, because the wisest!
Merrily live, and long.

The ecstasies above
With thy burning measures suit—
Thy grief, thy joy, thy hate, thy love,
With the fervour of thy lute—
Well may the stars be mute!

Yes, Heaven is thine; but this
Is a world of sweets and sours;
Our flowers are merely—flowers,
And the shadow of thy perfect bliss
Is the sunshine of ours.

If I could dwell
Where Israfel
Hath dwelt, and he where I,
He might not sing so wildly well
A mortal melody,
While a bolder note than this might swell
From my lyre within the sky.

The Note of Realism in American Fiction.—The later years of the nineteenth century witness a change in the character of American fiction. Hitherto the romantic note had predominated; but just as in England realistic stories of town and country life gradually grew more and more numerous, and relegated romantic adventure to the background, so in America the note of realism becomes gradually insistent. The change was ushered in by no great names as in England, and few would prefer the milk-and-water sentimentalities of *The Wide, Wide World* of ELIZABETH WETHERELL and *The Lamplighter* of MARIA S. CUMMINS to the flamboyant excitement of Cooper and Melville.

Far more interesting is the work of such American humorists as Bret Harte and Mark Twain, with its blend of romantic realism and humorous extravagances; yet the growing interest in humanitarian subjects was to produce one memorable writer —HARRIET BEECHER STOWE, who is responsible for several interesting pictures of the quieter aspects of New England life in the *Hyperion* of Longfellow and the *Elsie Venner* of Oliver Wendell Holmes.

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE (1811–1896), was born in Connecticut, being the sixth child of the noted Congregational preacher, Lyman Beecher. Her brother, Henry Ward, inherited his father's powers of oratory, and for a while was a figure of almost sensational celebrity in our country. Harriet was a thoughtful, imaginative girl, whose worship of Byron was met by doses of Butler's *Analogy*—just as a child is given rhubarb for a plethora of sweets. After passing through a religious crisis, she became what we should call pronouncedly "Evangelical" in her views. In 1836 she married the Rev. Calvin E. Stowe, an able scholar, by no means of the dry-as-dust type. He encouraged his wife's literary ambitions and proved a pleasant companion. Meanwhile she was studying the problems of Slavery, and in 1851 *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was begun for the Anti-Slavery journal *Era*. As a serial it did not attract much attention. But on its publication in

book form it leapt at once into popularity—a popularity that soon became cosmopolitan.

This book was followed by another far less effective slavery story, *Dred: a Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp* (1856). She made two visits to England, meeting on the first occasion Lady Byron.

After *Dred* came *The Minister's Wooing*, an excellent story of colonial life. Among her later writings, *Oldtown Folks* (1869) is the best, and exhibits clearly the more sober realistic tendencies of the time.

Although she was a voluminous writer in verse, travel-talk, children's stories, novels, her reputation will rest upon *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which, with all its crudities, has extraordinary power and grip. Her unfortunate incursion into the Byron controversy, *Lady Byron Vindicated*, was a sad error of judgment that is best forgotten.

Two novelists of the older romantic type merit brief notice: these are THEODORE WINTHROP (1828–1861), and FITZJAMES O'BRIEN (*c.* 1828–1862). Winthrop was a man of some culture, with an ebullient literary style, and a tendency to idealise his characters in a slap-dash way, that found many admirers. O'Brien was an attractive Irish-American journalist, with a gift for clever (but only clever) verse, and an ingenious writer of short stories reminiscent of Poe and Hawthorne, yet by no means quite imitative. One of his best tales is *The Diamond Lens*, really a striking little fantasy.

HENRY JAMES (1843–1916) enjoyed a cosmopolitan education at New York, Geneva, Paris, and Boulogne. Like so many literary men he was destined for the Bar, though he had his sympathies elsewhere. After a brief career in literary journalism, he published his first novel in 1875; this was succeeded by *The American*, *The European*, and *Daisy Miller, A Bundle of Letters*, and *Washington Square* (1880). These novels dealt for the most part with American life. In the years following, his *locale* is more varied, and in several books, *The Princess of Cassamassima* (1886), and *A London Life* (1889), for example, he presented studies of English society. From the outset he showed a special aptitude for analysis of character; and as the years passed by, his analytical faculty—influenced by the French Realistic school—became more and more subtle. This, combined with an elliptical and somewhat precious style, has stood in the way of his popularity. The subtlety and delicacy of his method are at their best in *The Two Magics* (1898), where he takes as his *motif* supernaturalism; and while avoiding all those melodramatic tricks which writers so often resort to, in dealing with this subject, achieves a grim and poignant intensity which he had never hitherto attained. Much of his work, brilliant as it is, is marred by intellectual gymnastics. In this he resembles Meredith. But Meredith's work has a less astringent and, on the whole, more poetical quality about it. Yet at his best, James is a superb literary craftsman, who would be loved better were we less conscious of the craftsmanship.

As a critic, Henry James is always interesting, though somewhat circumscribed in his sympathies. He is seen to best advantage when dealing with modern French literature. His monograph on Hawthorne abounds in just criticism and admirable touches; but in broad comprehensiveness is inferior both to Leslie Stephen's critical essay and to Hutton's masterly little study. His recent autobiographic volumes show him both at his best and at his worst—at his worst in constructive arrangement of his material and in lucidity; at his best in the delicacy and insight of their characterisation.

Of late years American fiction has been particularly rich in writers of distinction, many of whom have proved as popular in England as across the water.

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS (1848–1908) is affectionately remembered for his inimitable *Uncle Remus* (1880), and some of our political cartoonists, particularly Mr. F. Carruthers Gould, have good reason to be grateful for the creation of "Brer Rabbit" and the "Tar Baby"—that "kep' on sayin' nothin'."

JAMES LANE ALLEN (1849) of Kentucky has published many tales and sketches, dealing with those regions of America he knows so well, and his delicacy of treatment, his poetic insight into life, give special charm to such stories as *A Kentucky Cardinal*, *A Summer in Arcady*, *The Choir Invisible*.

Less fastidious as a literary artist, but more versatile and spacious as a story-teller, is FRANCIS MARION CRAWFORD (1854–1909), whose novels of Italian life won the hearty admiration of Swinburne. He has written both of American and Italian life, but is at his happiest in the Italian novels. His earlier work—like *Mr. Isaacs* (1882), his first novel, a story of Indian life; *Dr. Claudius*, and *The Witch of Prague*—depends rather upon the suggestion of mystery and adventure for its interest. But even here, as in *A Cigarette Maker's Romance* (1890), he showed a real sense of character; and the characterisation of his later novels, *e.g.* *Via Crucis* and *The Heart of Rome*, is excellent.

Two writers of brilliant promise were cut off in the height of their power: HAROLD FREDERIC (1856–1898), born in Utica, New York, exhibited in *Illumination* (*The Damnation of Theron Ware*) especially, unusual power of subtle insight and trenchant portraiture; and STEPHEN CRANE (1870–1900), who won fame first of all as a war correspondent (Turkey and Greece), showed later, in his *Red Badge of Courage* (1895), an extraordinary insight into the psychology of the soldier.

JOHN OLIVER HOBBES (Pearl Mary Teresa Richards), although she lived for most of her life in England, was born in Boston (1867) and comes of American stock. Her early work, *Some Emotions and a Moral*, *The Sinner's Comedy*, &c., though lacking the breadth and imaginative power of her later novels, is in many respects more original and attractive, by virtue of its sprightly wit and deft psychology. After her reception into the Roman Catholic Church, her fiction grew more serious and weighty; but, despite its careful craftsmanship and cultured writing, it may be questioned whether it possesses the vitality that marked her first adventures into fiction. She wrote also for the stage;

her best play being *The Ambassadors*—a clever comedy not uninfluenced by Oscar Wilde. Her comparatively early death in 1906 makes it impossible to say whether she would have regained that touch of vitality that was lacking in her later books. Certainly, she never did full justice to her very considerable intellectual powers and artistic capacity.

At the present day one of the ablest novelists is WINSTON CHURCHILL, born at St. Louis in 1871; and his historical romance, *Richard Carvel* (1899), *The Crisis* (1901), and *The Crossing* (1904), a sequel dealing with the time of the Civil War, show both incisive vigour and breadth of imaginative sympathy.

Among the women writers may be mentioned SARAH ORNE JEWETT (1849), whose *Tales of New England Life* show subtle power of portraiture; FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT (1849), perhaps best known for her *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, but seen to greater artistic advantage in a novel called *Through One Administration*.

The sentimental humorist, KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN (1857), whose *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* was recently produced in dramatic form, but proved too saccharine for English tastes.

MARY ELEANOR WILKINS (1862), a perfect artist in miniature of New England life, with an exquisite delicacy of touch, unrivalled by any of her contemporaries. GERTRUDE FRANKLIN HORN (Mrs. Atherton), who has never perhaps quite fulfilled the splendid promise of such earlier work as *Patience Sparhawk, American Wives and English Husbands*, but who, at her best, shows a breadth of treatment and a primal emotional quality unusual among women writers.

Finally, there are MARY JOHNSTON (1870), a striking historical novelist, whose stories, *The Old Dominion* (1898), *By Order of the Company* (1900), and *Audrey* (1901), have won high praise; and EDITH WHARTON, whose keen insight into modern conditions of life, and whose fine craftsmanship, place her among the best novelists of the day.

Among Canadian writers of fiction, two men have made a mark upon the fiction of the age: one, GRANT ALLEN (1848–1899), an extremely versatile writer, who for bread-and-cheese reasons was never able to do full justice to his remarkable intellectual gifts. Much of his fiction is frankly of the pot-boiler kind, though of its kind it is clever enough; but in some of the short stories originally published in the *Cornhill Magazine*, he showed a power of imagination not unworthy of Poe; and in one story, *The Rev. John Creedy*—a study in racial reversion—he touched upon a theme which has always fascinated Mr. Kipling. The best tribute one can pay Allen is to say, Kipling himself has never bettered the dramatic irony and intensity of this powerful little tale.

The other story-teller is Sir GILBERT PARKER (1862), who first attracted attention with those fresh and arresting studies of Canadian character, *Pierre and his People* (1892). He has written also a number of historical novels of good quality; though his gifts are most happily shown when dealing with Canadian life—whether past or present.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803–1882)

His Life

RALPH WALDO EMERSON was born on May 25, 1803, at Boston, Massachusetts, to which State his progenitor, Thomas Emerson, had migrated from the Old Country in the middle of the seventeenth century. For generations the Emersons had ministered to the spiritual needs of the people of Concord, Harvard, and Boston, and Emerson's father was pastor of Boston Unitarian Church at the time of his death in 1811. This calamity plunged the family into straitened circumstances. A small pension was paid by the church to Mrs. Emerson for seven years, but, despite the strictest economy and her untiring industry, it was a hard struggle to provide even the bare necessaries of life for her young family. An aunt, Miss Mary Moody Emerson, placed her scanty means, as well as her gospel of stoicism, at the disposal of her sister-in-law and nephews, and did her best to secure for them a good education. Whether the little lads took as keen an interest in her stories of heroic endurance as they would have done had she been able to set before them a hearty meal, we can but conjecture: but many years later, Emerson paid his tribute to this Spartan training when he wrote:

> "It is the iron band of poverty, of necessity, of austerity, which, excluding them from the sensual enjoyments which make other boys too early old, has directed their activity into safe and right channels, and make them, despite themselves, reverers of the grand, the beautiful and the good."

Lessons began at a very early age in the Emerson household, for his father deplored the fact that at three years old, "Ralph does not read very well yet." When nine he was sent to Boston Latin School, where, in part payment for his board and lodging, he rendered many small services.

For mathematics Emerson had no bent, and was continually in conflict with the school authorities for this weakness. He had, however, an enthusiasm for Greek, and a profound love for Shakespeare and the early English dramatists, but gave no sign of the future poet and mystic.

In 1817 Emerson entered Harvard, the expense of which was partly defrayed by an elder brother, who had set up a young ladies' school at Boston. On leaving the university he took charge of this school, in order to set his brother free for the study of theology, but Emerson's natural reserve precluded success in a girls' school, and it was given up in 1825, when Ralph also began to study for the ministry. Ill-health interfered with this for a time, but eventually he was "approbated to preach," and in March 1828, ordained associate pastor of the Old North Church in Boston, Dr. Ware's resignation shortly afterwards placing him in sole charge. In the same year he married Miss Ellen Louise Tucker. This marriage was one of sincere attachment, and her death in 1831 was a great blow to her husband.

Doubts as to certain religious observances began

to assail the mind of Emerson, and, unable to satisfy these, he resigned his pastorate in 1832. This set him free for a trip to Europe.

In these days of rapid transit between America and England, it is interesting to know that Emerson's journey took him one month and five days to accomplish. A short visit to the Continent was followed by a trip to England, where he met Wordsworth, "who was so benevolently anxious to impress upon me my social duties as an American citizen, that he accompanied me near a mile from his house, talking vehemently, and ever and anon stopping short to imprint his words."

After an interview with Coleridge, he went to Craigenputtock to visit Carlyle. "*That* is the man, my man," he said to his wife,—pointing to a picture of Carlyle shortly before his death.

In 1833 he returned to America, and, making his home with his mother at Newton near Boston, was in great request as a lecturer and preacher. In the midst of his popularity and success, in 1835, he again married; this time to Miss Lydia Jackson, the daughter of Dr. Charles Jackson, who claimed to be the first to use ether as an anæsthetic. Emerson then bought a house at Concord, where he lived for the remainder of his life.

Nature, Emerson's first book, was published in 1836, and in 1837 he gave his famous "Phi Beta Kappa" address at Harvard on *The American Scholar*. *Lectures on Representative Men*, that he had delivered in England and Scotland (1847), were published in 1850, and *English Traits* in 1856.

In July 1840, *The Dial*—a quarterly organ of the Transcendentalists—was started. Emerson's duties as editor—shared by Margaret Fuller and Thoreau—brought him into conflict with certain of his contributors which brought about the downfall of the magazine four years later.

The famous community at Brook Farm was another venture of the Transcendental Club. This co-operative scheme had Emerson's sympathy, in a measure; but he preferred life in his own little farm at Concord. Unfortunately, in 1873, his house was burnt down, and although most of his belongings were rescued from the fire, the loss of the house itself was a serious one. For all his success as a lecturer, his remuneration seldom reached ten pounds for a single lecture, and he was never in affluent circumstances; friends and sympathisers therefore took the opportunity of a third trip across the Atlantic, to club together for the rebuilding of his house, and great was Emerson's surprise to find his home ready for occupation on his return.

Another recognition, this time from the Old Country, was his nomination for the Lord Rectorship of Glasgow University in 1874. Emerson was very proud of this honour, although he was defeated—Disraeli being elected.

A regular contributor to *The Atlantic Monthly* from its commencement, in 1860 he published *Conduct of Life*, followed by *Society and Solitude*, *Letters and Social Aims*, and his poem *May Day*. His last book, *Parnassus*, a collection of poems, was published in 1874.

For some years before his death Emerson's health was gradually giving way, and at Longfellow's funeral, in March 1882, it was evident that his powers were fast failing, for he was unable to recall his friend's name. "When one's wits begin to fail," he once remarked, "it is time for the heavens to open and take him away"—Emerson's time had thus come. After a few days' illness from pneumonia, he passed away on April 27, 1882.

His Work

Emerson is the articulate conscience of New England. There is something curiously impersonal about his writings. Despite the gracious, subtly distinctive personality that emerges from his chit-chat in letters and from the reports of friends, we, who have never known him in the flesh, think of him as a Voice rather than as a Man. We can picture the shy, critical, brooding Hawthorne from his tales and essays; can actualise sharply and distinctly the genial philosopher of the *Breakfast Table*, the placidly observant Thoreau. But Emerson? We gather from the table talk of friends that he was gentle, benignant, humorous, and we may reasonably infer that there was a forcefulness about his presence, or Carlyle would not have so warmly welcomed him.

But as we turn over the pages of his lectures and essays, we find ourselves merely listening to an oracular voice uttering words of gnomic wisdom, in clear but almost expressionless tones.

In his basic attitude towards life he is certainly a mystic: that is obvious to the most superficial reader. But the mysticism has no warmth or ecstasy about it. It has a cold, astringent quality, very agreeable to some temperaments, but disconcerting to the fervent enthusiast. When Lowell said he had a "Greek head on right Yankee shoulders," he gave us the clue to his character. For Emerson is only half a mystic; his intellect approved this relation with the unseen world, the world of spirit; having approved it, the practical, critical American side of him came uppermost. When he bade us "hitch" our "wagon to a star," many of us saw in this adjuration merely the mystical moralist; nor realised that the monition showed quite as fully the practical moralist. He is quite as emphatic about the wagon as about the star. The Idealist who is always looking at the star moved Emerson to mild reproach; though he was tolerant enough with his reforming friends. "We are a little wild here . . . numberless projects of reform," he wrote, adding characteristically, "I am gently mad myself."

So gentle, so calm, so temperate is his method that we do not realise at once the extent of his spiritual radicalism.

The Mystic.—Unless we grasp the mystical side of Emerson's nature, we shall be apt to lose ourselves in the steady hailstorm of pithy sayings, apparently unrelated with one another. His central doctrine may be found in his Essay on the *Over-Soul*. This world of ours is permeated with a spiritual being—Soul. What, then, is Soul? It is a universal spiritual tidal life that overflows into

individual lives, working independently of our own efforts, when once we have allowed it ingress. It is a life that makes for righteousness. We are possessed of it. Our individualities, indeed, are like islands lapped round by an infinite sea. Those who admit its influence are linked to one another by a social solidarity of spirit; and everyone may admit the influences, and should do so, for our own individual strength depends on it. Every man may be his own philosopher. So let us unbar our private door, and let in God.

In a fine saying he tells us, "I conceive of a man as always spoken to from behind, and unable to turn his head and see the speaker. In all the millions who have heard the voice, none ever saw the face."

The purpose of life, then, in Emerson's view is to acquaint man with the character of his own powers. And he must be always open to fresh impressions, and beware of the stereotyped mind. "I want to say what I feel and think with the proviso that to-morrow, perhaps, I shall contradict it all."

And this mystical attitude towards life in general, he carries into its various departments. He is a mystic in his critical valuations. No one would have more thoroughly endorsed Milton's saying that "a good book is the precious life blood of a master spirit." He valued writers for their vitalising powers. He loved those who, to use his own quaint phrase, could make his "top spin." The great man is a forceful hero to Carlyle; he is an illuminating seer to Emerson. Yet each acclaimed him for his dynamic influence. "The unstable estimate of men," said Emerson, "crowd to him whose mind is filled with truth as the heaped waves of the Atlantic follow the moon."

In temperament Emerson is akin to the Quakers. Anger and violence he passes on one side. As a thinker, he has no wish to storm the reader with philosophic artillery; merely to surround him, and permeate him like an atmosphere.

His thought is not original, his texts are familiar enough, but he gives them freshness by his handling.

The Moralist.—Yet the practicality of the man is quite as insistent as his mysticism. He believes absolutely in the paramount importance of conduct. His mysticism is concerned not in making for spiritual exaltation, but for moral stability. With Emerson, as with Matthew Arnold, "Conduct is three-fourths of life."

"Every man takes care," says he, "that his neighbour shall not cheat him, but a time comes when he begins to care that he shall not cheat his neighbour. Then all goes well. He has changed his market cart into a chariot of the sun.'

Right thinking and clean living, according to Emerson, go together. The average moralist says, "Live straight and don't waste time in searching for intellectual truth." Emerson says, "Live straight and you'll think straight." Morality to him implies health—health of mind and body; "Character is the habit of action from the permanent vision of truth." Here we see the link that binds the moralist to the mystic. The obedience to the universal spirit is no blind fatalism with Emerson, it is conscious effort on man's part; let him identify himself with the sublime order of things, and he will do "with knowledge what the stars do by structure," fulfil the law of their being. Thus, by understanding ourselves and identifying ourselves with the great forces of the universe, we become rulers of others. Emerson takes pains to show that the moral law of the universe is as clear as the physical law; and will affect the soul of man just as gravitation and chemical forces affect his body.

Yet Emerson had little sympathy with dogmatic religion:

"We are all very sensible," he says, "it is forced on us every day, that churches are outgrown; that the creeds are outgrown. . . . The Church is not large enough for the man; it cannot inspire the enthusiasm which is the parent of everything good in history. . . . For that enthusiasm you must have something greater than yourselves, and not less. But in churches every healthful and thoughtful mind finds itself in something less; it is checked, cribbed, confined.

"The Jewish *cultus* is declining: the Divine, or, as some will say, the truly Human, hovers, now seen, now unseen, before us.

"Swedenborg and Behmen both failed by attaching themselves to the Christian symbol instead of to the moral sentiment, which carries innumerable Christianities, humanities, divinities, in its bosom. What have I to do with arks and passovers, ephahs and ephods? . . . Good for Orientals, these are nothing to me. The more learning you bring to explain them, the more glaring the impertinence. Of all absurdities, this of some foreigner proposing to take away my rhetoric and substitute his own, and amuse me with peliean and stork instead of thrush and robin, palm-trees and shittim-wood instead of sassafras and hickory, seems the most useless.

"If a man claims to know and speak of God, and carries you backward to the phraseology of some old mouldered nation in another country, in another world, believe him not."

Again:

"I object, of course, to the claim of miraculous dispensation—certainly not to the *doctrine* of Christianity. This claim impairs, to my mind, the soundness of him who makes it, and indisposes us to his communion. . . . It is contrary to that law of Nature which all wise men recognise; namely, never to require a larger cause than is necessary to the effect.

"The word miracle, as it is used, only indicates the ignorance of the devotee, staring with wonder to see water turned into wine, and heedless of the stupendous fact of his own personality. Here he stands, a lonely thought, harmoniously organised into correspondence with the universe of mind and matter. What narrative of wonders coming down from the thousand years ought to charm his attention like this? . . . It seems as if, when the Spirit of God speaks so plainly to each soul, it were an impiety to be listening to one or another saint. Jesus was better than others, because he refused to listen to others and listened at home.

"It is so wonderful to our neurologists that a man can see without his eyes, that it does not occur to them that it is just as wonderful that he should see with them; and that is ever the difference between the wise and the unwise: the latter wonders at what is unusual, the wise man wonders at the usual.

"Far be from me the impatience which cannot brook the supernatural, the vast; far be from me the lust of explaining away all which appeals to the imagination, and the great presentiments which haunt us. Willingly I too say, Hail! to the unknown awful powers which transcend the ken of the understanding.

"It is not the incredibility of the fact, but a certain want of harmony between the action and the agent. We

are used to vaster wonders. One moment of a man's life is a fact so stupendous as to take the lustre out of all fiction. But Nature never works like a conjuror. . . . The soul penetrated with the beatitude which pours into it on all sides, asks no interposition, no new laws,—the old are good enough for it,—finds in every cart-path of labour ways to heaven, and the humblest lot exalted.

"We want all the aids to our moral training. We cannot spare the vision nor the virtue of the saints; but let it be by pure sympathy, not with any personal or official claim. If you are childish, and exhibit your saint as a worker of wonders, a thaumaturgist, I am repelled. That claim takes his teachings out of logic and out of Nature, and permits official and arbitrary senses to be grafted on the teachings. It is the praise of our New Testament that its teachings go to the honour and benefit of humanity,—that no better lesson has been taught or incarnated. Let it stand, beautiful and wholesome, with whatever is most like it in the teaching and practice of men; but do not attempt to elevate it out of humanity by saying, 'This was not a man,' for then you confound it with the fables of every popular religion, and my distrust of the story makes me distrust the doctrine as soon as it differs from my own belief."

The essence of religion to Emerson, as to Carlyle, was the moral life. Theology he looked upon as "the rhetoric of morals." "Men talk," he complained, "of 'mere morality,' which is much as if we should say: Poor God, with nobody to help him!"

Emerson will have little to do with the Utilitarian conception of morality as the promoter of happiness. He believes that the State should try to secure the greatest good of the greatest number; but "good" to him meant spiritual good; and might even involve some measure of material unhappiness:

> "He that feeds men serveth few;
> He serves all who dares be true."

The Optimist.—Emerson was not blind to the evolutionary doctrine, as some imagine; in fact it is his outlook on evolution that made him so optimistic. Note this vigorous and eloquent passage:

"Very few of our race can be said to be yet finished men. We still carry sticking to us some remains of the preceding inferior quadruped organisation. We call these millions men; but they are not yet men. Half engaged in the soil, pawing to get free, man needs all the music that can be brought to disengage him. If Love, red Love, with tears and joy, if Want with his scourge, if War with his cannonade, if Christianity with its charity, if Trade with its money, if Art with its portfolios, if Science with her telegraphs through the deeps of space and time, can set his dull nerves throbbing, and by loud taps on his rough chrysalis can break its walls and let the new creature emerge erect and free,—make way and sing paean! The age of the quadruped is to go out, the age of the brain and of the heart is to come in. The time will come when the evil forms we have known can no more be organised. Man's culture can spare nothing, wants all the material. He is to convert all impediments into instruments, all enemies into power. The formidable mischief will only make the more useful slave. And if one shall read the future of the race hinted in the organic effort of Nature to mount and meliorate, and the corresponding impulse be the better in the human being, we shall dare affirm that there is nothing he will not overcome and convert, until at last culture shall absorb the chaos and gehenna. He will convert the Furies into Muses, and the hells into benefits."

Emerson has often emphasized the enormous influence of heredity and environment. Not unnaturally we may inquire how far his own optimism is the result of a happily balanced disposition:

"Men are," he said frankly, "what their mother made them. You may as well ask a loom which weaves huckaback why it does not make cashmere, as expect poetry from this engineer, or a chemical discovery from that jobber."

Now Emerson's whole life shows him to have been a man of a naturally sanguine and bright disposition. The sights which so distressed Carlyle, the tragic spectacle of misery and degradation in the streets of London, shocked him, but left no strong impression. Evil, he declares, has no real existence, and vanishes when we come to see the whole, instead of dwelling on isolated facts. His life had its sorrows, but for the most part it was free of those things that chafe and worry. He never experienced the oppressive problem of industrial warfare; had no sense in his own life of wasted effort; nor knew of the heartrending fight with debilitating disease. No deep tidal passion swept over his soul; there were neither ecstasies nor horrors in his nature; but temperate equability. Circumstances did something, temperament (as is always the case) a great deal in determining the tone of his philosophy and its note of tranquil and cheerful assurance. Being born on the heights he could ill realise the hardships of those less fortunate ones who stumble along in the valley below, baffled by ground mists.

The most satisfying point about Emerson's thought is not its optimism but its crisp practicality. What is the good of telling a man or woman whose life has been blighted by another's baseness that evil has no real existence? What consolation is afforded by telling the victim to cancer that "all's right with the world"? It is not Browning's optimism, but his courage and grit that inspire his readers: it is not Emerson's optimism, but his cool common-sense and sensitiveness to spiritual values, that count for those who construe his pages. His views on the problem of Evil will appeal to those in basic affinity with him. They cannot touch others. At the best his generalisation is but a cheery guess, for which he gives no intellectual justification. But the common-sense helpfulness of such lines as these is quite obvious:

> "Some of the ills you have cured,
> And the sharpest you still have survived,
> But what torments of pain you endured
> From the Evil that never arrived."

To do him justice, it should be said that Emerson, despite the tenacity of his own convictions, never attempted propagandist work. Like Newman, he disliked controversies, and held that they were for the most part futile. As early as 1838 he had written:

"I do not gladly utter any deep convictions on the soul in a company where I think it will be contested. No, nor unless I think it will be welcomed. Truth has already ceased to be itself if polemically said."

"Unless I think it will be welcomed." The

words are significant and illustrate the man's whole attitude; its strength as well as its limitations.

Emerson's was a high-minded and finely moulded nature. Among the moral counsellors of the age he will always hold a distinguished place, for the spiritual delicacy of his monitions and the practical wisdom of his ethics.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU (1817–1862)

His Life

Henry David Thoreau, who has described himself as "a mystic, a transcendentalist, and a natural philosopher," was born at Concord on July 12, 1817. His father, a quiet, unambitious business man, who took no part in the politics or social problems of the day, was of French birth; his mother, a shrewd, kindly, hospitable Scotchwoman, a striking contrast to her husband, was an inveterate talker—in fact, wherever Mrs. Thoreau appeared all work had to be put aside. Their four children, of whom Henry was the third, were one in high ideals, and without wealth or social influence imparted an air of individuality and dignity to the common round of their daily lives.

Thoreau's early education, received at private schools, was a good one, with special attention to the classics; and, on going to Harvard at the age of sixteen, he was a good Greek scholar. He was a sturdy, manly youth of stoical fortitude and affectionate disposition, with simple, unaffected tastes, an innate love of nature and books, and found a wonderful fascination in everything pertaining to the North American Indians.

Having graduated in 1837, he left Harvard with Josiah Quincy's testimony to his moral and intellectual qualifications as a teacher, and found employment for a short time at the Grammar School at Concord. On April 11, 1838, he delivered his first lecture at the Freemasons' Hall, on the subject of *Society*, before the Concord Lyceum.

Unable to settle down to regular teaching work, he turned to his father's trade of pencil making, and during the next few years followed a variety of occupations.

The acquaintance with Emerson had begun in 1837 and ripened into the closest intimacy; in 1841 Thoreau became a member of Emerson's household for two years, and assisted in editing *The Dial*, to which he also contributed until its extinction in 1844.

In 1845 the much-talked-of Walden episode began to take shape. Thoreau had for years meditated a life of retirement, and his friend Ellery Channing wrote:

> "I see nothing for you in this earth but that field which I once christened 'Brister'; go out upon that, build yourself a hut, and there begin the grand process of devouring yourself alive."

Thoreau took his advice, borrowed an axe, and began to cut the timbers for the famous hut built on the edge of Walden Pond, where for over two years he laboured and studied in seclusion. Yet he was no misanthropic individual. He still held social intercourse with his friends, but "The man I meet," he said, "is seldom so instructive as the silence which he breaks." He had few wants, and these he satisfied by some small piece of work of any nature that would bring a quick remuneration, the greater portion of his time being utilised in writing his delightful experiences of *A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers*, published in 1849, and an *Essay on Carlyle* that first appeared in *Graham's Magazine* in 1847.

From a lad he had kept a journal in which he recorded his thoughts as well as the minutest observation of his walks and excursions. In 1860 the volumes numbered thirty, and form the groundwork of his essays and lectures.

Horace Greeley, editor of the *Tribune*, gave Thoreau much friendly advice and assistance in placing his literary work, and after *Walden* (1854) was published, it was Greeley who wrote: "There is a small class in England who ought to know what you have written," and suggested that copies of *Walden* and the *Week* be sent to the *Westminster Review*, whose editor has "expressed surprise that your book has not been sent him, and I could find very few who had read or seen it." The *Week* had a poor sale of three hundred copies in eight years; but a small edition of *Walden* was exhausted before the author's death.

A vigorous supporter of the Anti-Slavery movement, Thoreau lectured in 1854 on behalf of the Abolitionists and in defence of John Brown, and the Walden hut was regarded as a "station on the underground railroad," where slaves could receive hospitality and refuge when required. Neither had Thoreau any sympathy with the Mexican War, and suffered imprisonment in default of paying the church tax. His indignation at his friends paying the tax and procuring his release is well known.

Thoreau was not a physically strong man. In 1859 he wrote to a friend:

> "The doctors are all afraid that I am suffering for want of society. Was never a case like it! First, I did not know I was suffering at all; secondly, as an Irishman might say, I had thought it was indigestion of the society I got."

The following year pulmonary consumption became evident, and for two years he lived on, working industriously so long as he could hold his pencil. Patient, cheerful, and consoling to those around him, he preferred to endure the greatest suffering rather than have his mind dulled by narcotics. On May 6, 1862, he was granted a "gentle, easy exit," and after a public funeral was buried in "Sleepy Hollow"—the village cemetery.

His Work

Among American men of letters there are more winning personalities than that of Thoreau, more versatile literary artists, but none—not even Whitman himself—more interesting. One proof of this lies in the widely varying estimate of Thoreau's character and genius to be found in contemporary criticism. By some he is regarded as a poor imitation of Emerson, given to posing, and the Walden episode has been referred to as a theatrical flourish. Lowell and Robert Louis Stevenson, to mention

two of his most formidable critics, have covered him with sarcastic ridicule, and even Mr. Watts-Dunton, the avowed friend of the "Children of the Open Air," in his introduction to an edition of *Walden*, impugned his sincerity, leaving us with the impression that Thoreau was an uncomfortable kind of egotist. As it is the Walden episode which has been chiefly responsible for the critical diatribes, it may be well to examine this two years' sojourn in the woods near Concord, and see how far it deserves the ire that has been called down upon it.

From his earliest years, Thoreau showed a passion for the open—unmistakably sincere and whole-hearted. In 1839, soon after leaving college, he made his first long jaunt in company with his brother John. This was a voyage on the Concord and Merrimac rivers.

The keen enjoyment afforded to mind and body by this and subsequent outings suggested to Thoreau the desirability of a longer and more intimate association with Nature. Walden Wood had been a familiar and favoured spot for many years, and so he began the building of his tabernacle there. So far from being a sudden, sensational resolve with an eye to effect, it was the natural outcome of his passion for the open.

He had his living to earn, and would go down into Concord from time to time to sell the results of his handiwork. He was quite willing to see friends and any chance travellers who visited from other motives than mere inquisitiveness. On the other hand, the life he proposed for himself as a temporary experiment would afford many hours of congenial solitude, when he could study the ways of the animals that he loved, and give free expression to his naturalistic enthusiasms.

Far too much has been made of the Walden episode. It has been written upon as if it had represented the totality of Thoreau's life, instead of being merely an interesting episode. Critics have animadverted upon it, as if the time had been spent in brooding, self-pity, and sentimental affectations, as if Thoreau had gone there to escape from his fellow-men. All this seems to me wide of the mark. He went to Walden not to escape from ordinary life, but to fit himself for ordinary life. The sylvan solitudes, as he knew, had their lessons for him no less than the busy haunts of men.

Yet it is a mistake to think, as some do, that he favoured a kind of Rousseau-like "return to Nature," without any regard to the conventions of civilisation.

> "It is not," he states emphatically, "for a man to put himself in opposition to society, but to maintain himself in whatever attitude he finds himself through obedience to the laws of his own being, which will never be one of opposition to a just government. I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one."

This is not the language of a crank, or the words of a man who, as Lowell unfairly said, seemed "to insist in public in going back to flint and steel when there is a match-box in his pocket."

Lowell's criticism of Thoreau, indeed, is quite wide of the mark. It assumes throughout that Thoreau aimed at "an entire independence of mankind," when Thoreau himself repeatedly says that he aimed at nothing of the sort. He made an experiment for the purpose of seeing what a simple, frugal, open-air life would do for him. The experiment being made, he returned quietly to the conditions of ordinary life. But he did not lack self-assurance, and his frank satisfaction with the results of his experiment was not altogether pleasing to those who had scant sympathy with his passion for the earth.

To be quite fair to Lowell and other hostile critics, one must admit that, genuine as Thoreau was, he had the habit, common to self-contained and self-opinionated men, of talking at times as though his very idiosyncrasies were rules of conduct imperative upon others. His theory of life was sound enough, his demand for simple modes of living, for a closer communion with Nature, for a more sympathetic understanding of the "brute creation," were reasonable beyond question. But the Emersonian mannerism (which gives an appearance of dogmatism, when no dogmatism is intended) starts up from time to time and gives the reader the impression that the path to salvation traverses Walden, all other paths being negligible, and that you cannot attain perfection unless you keep a pet squirrel.

Yet, if a sentence here and there has an annoying flavour of complacent dogmatism, and if the note of self-assertion grows too loud on occasion for our sensitive ears, yet his life and writings, considered as a whole, do not assuredly favour verdicts so unfavourable as those of Lowell and Stevenson.

There are certain aspects of Thoreau's nature that help us to understand more fully the significance of the Walden episode, and the special value of his writings.

In the first place there was that touch of wildness in his nature that made a simple, austere life especially attractive to him, and made him peculiarly critical of modern civilisation.

It was in no quixotic spirit, in no burst of moral crusading zeal, that he undertook the experiment. It was a natural expression of his temperament, and he felt, quite rightly, that along these lines he was likely to accomplish the most efficient work.

Thoreau's sympathy with and insight into the Indian character is on a par with Borrow's affinity with the Gypsies. If he could not give to his intimate knowledge such happy literal expression as Borrow could, it has at any rate inspired some of his best passages. A lover of Indian relics from his childhood, he followed the Indians into their haunts and conversed with them frequently; he understood the apparent coldness and reserve which debarred the ordinary man from intercourse, for he had no little of this reserve and impenetrability himself, and saw the fine points of their character. Take, for instance, this illuminating passage from *A Week on the Concord*:

> "We talk of civilising the Indian, but that is not the name for his improvement. By the wary independence and aloofness of his dim forest-life he preserves his intercourse with his native gods, and is admitted from time to time to a rare and peculiar society with Nature,

He has glances of starry recognition to which our salons are strangers. The steady illumination of his genius, dim only because distant, is like the faint but satisfying light of the stars compared with the dazzling but ineffectual and short-lived blaze of candles. . . . We would not always be soothing and taming Nature, breaking the horse and the ox, but sometimes ride the horse wild and chase the buffalo. The Indian's intercourse with Nature is at least such as admits of the greatest independence of each. If he is somewhat of a stranger in her midst, the gardener is too much of a familiar. There is something vulgar and foul in the latter's closeness to his mistress, something noble and cleanly in the former's distance. In civilisation, as in a southern latitude, man degenerates at length and yields to the incursion of more northern tribes—

> 'Some nations yet shut in
> With hills of ice.'

"There are other savager and more primeval aspects of Nature than our poets have sung. It is only white man's poetry—Homer and Ossian even can never revive in London or Boston. And yet behold how these cities are refreshed by the mere tradition or the imperfectly transmitted fragrance and flavour of these wild fruits. If one could listen but for an instant to the chant of the Indian muse, we should understand why we will not exchange his savageness for civilisation. Nations are not whimsical. Steel and blankets are strong temptations, but the Indian does well to continue Indian."

These are no empty generalisations, but the comments of a man who has observed closely and sympathetically. All of Thoreau's references to Indian life merit the closest attention. For, as I have said, they help to explain the man himself. He had a sufficient touch of wildness to be able to detach himself from the civilised man's point of view. Hence the life of the woods came so naturally to him. The luxuries, the excitements, that mean so much to some, Thoreau passed by indifferently. There is much talk to-day of "the simple life," and the phrase has become tainted with affectation. Often it means nothing more than a passing fad on the part of overfed society people, who are anxious for a new sensation. A fad with a moral flavour about it will always commend itself to a certain section. There is no real intention of living a simple life any more than there is any deep resolve on the part of the man who takes the waters annually to abstain in the future from over-eating. But with Thoreau the simple life was a vital reality. He was not devoid of American self-consciousness, and perhaps he pats himself on the back for his healthy tastes more often than we should like. But of his fundamental sincerity there can be no question.

He saw even more clearly than Emerson the futility and debilitating effect of extravagance and luxury—especially American luxury. And his whole life was an indignant protest.

And if the touch of wildness in Thoreau helps us to understand the man and his writings, his Oriental sympathies help still further in this direction. He was fundamentally at one with Eastern modes of regarding life; and the pantheistic tendency of his religious thought, especially his care and reverence for all forms of life, suggest the devout Buddhist. The varied references scattered throughout his writings to the Sacred Books of the East, show how Orientalism affected him.

Herein we touch upon the most attractive side of the man; for it is this Orientalism, I think, in his nature that explains his regard for, and his sympathy with, the birds and animals.

The tenderness of the Buddhist towards the lower creation is not due to sentimentalism, nor is it necessarily a sign of sensitiveness of feeling. In his profoundly interesting study of the Burmese people Mr. Fielding Hall thus sums up the teaching of Buddha: "Be in love with all things, not only with your fellows, but with the whole world, with every creature that walks the earth, with the birds in the air, with the insects in the grass. All life is akin to man." The oneness of life is realised by the Eastern as it seldom is by the Western. The love that stirs in your heart kindled the flower into beauty, and broods in the great silent pools of the forest.

But Nature is not always kind. That he cannot help feeling. She inspires fear as well as love. She scatters peace and consolation, but can scatter also pain and death. All forms of life are more or less sacred. The creatures of the forest whose ferocity and cunning are manifest, may they not be inhabited by some human spirit that has misused his opportunities in life? Thus they have an affinity with us, and are signs of what we may become.

So if a measure of sacredness attaches to all life, however unfriendly and harmful it may seem, the gentler forms of life are especially to be objects of reverence and affection.

In one particular, however, Thoreau's attitude towards the earth and all that therein is differed from the Buddhist, inasmuch as the fear that enters into the Eastern's earth-worship was entirely purged from his mind. Mr. Page has instituted a suggestive comparison between Thoreau and St. Francis d'Assisi. Certainly the rare magnetic attraction which Thoreau seemed to have exercised over his "brute friends" was quite as remarkable as the power attributed to St. Francis, and it is true to say that in both cases the sympathy for animals is constantly justified by a reference to a dim but real brotherhood. The brutes are "undeveloped men"; they await their transformation and stand on their defence; and it is very easy to see that inseparably bound up with this view there are certain elements of mysticism common to the early saint and the American "hut builder."

And yet, perhaps, Mr. Page presses the analogy between the mediæval saint and the American "poet-naturalist" too far. St. Francis had an ardent, passionate nature, and whether leading a life of dissipation or tending to the poor, there is about him a royal impulsiveness, a passionate abandonment, pointing to a temperament far removed from Thoreau's.

Prodigal in his charities, riotous in his very austerities, his tenderness towards the animals seems like the overflowing of a finely sensitive and artistic nature. With Thoreau one feels in the presence of a more tranquil, more self-contained spirit; his affection is the affection of a kindly scientist who is intensely interested in the ways and habits of birds, beasts, and fishes; one who

does not give them the surplus of the love he bears towards his fellow-men so much as a care and love which he does not extend so freely towards his fellows. I do not mean that he was apathetic, especially when his fellow-creatures were in trouble; his eloquent defence of John Brown, his kindness towards simple folk, are sufficient testimony on this score. But on the whole his interest in men and women, genuine as it was, lacked the personal warmth and eager inquisitiveness that he showed towards the denizens of the woods and streams—his suggestive, yet somewhat anæmic essay on *Friendship* bears out this criticism. I am not sure that Hawthorne was so far out in his characterisation of Donatello, the creature half animal, half man, which he says was suggested by Thoreau. It does not pretend to realise all his characteristics, nor do justice to his fine qualities. None the less in its picture of a man with a flavour of the wild and untamable about him, whose uncivilised nature brings him into close and vital intimacy with the animal world, we detect a real psychological affinity with Thoreau. May not Thoreau's energetic rebukes of the evils of civilisation have received an added zest from his instinctive repugnance to many of the civilised amenities valued by the majority?

Thoreau's love of children, moreover, is a fresh instance of his attraction towards simpler, more elemental forms of life. Men and women not ringed round by civilised conventions, children who have the freshness and wildness of the woods about them; such were the human beings that interested him.

Pleasant stories are told of his children's parties.

"His resources for entertainment," says Mr. Moncure Conway, "were inexhaustible. He would tell stories of the Indians who once dwelt thereabouts till the children almost looked to see a red man skulking with his arrow and stone, and every plant or flower on the bank or in the water, and every fish, turtle, frog, lizard about was transformed by the wand of his knowledge from the low form into which the spell of our ignorance had reduced it, into a mystic beauty.

"Little Edward Emerson, on one occasion, carrying a basket of fine huckleberries, had a fall and spilt them all. Great was his distress, and offers of berries could not console him for the loss of those gathered by himself. But Thoreau came, put his arm round the troubled child, and explained to him that if the crop of huckleberries was to continue it was necessary that some should be scattered. Nature had provided that little boys and girls should now and then stumble and sow the berries. 'We shall,' he said, 'have a grand lot of bushes and berries on this spot, and we shall owe them to you.' Edward began to smile."

Thoreau evidently knew how to console a child, no less than how to make friends with a squirrel.

"Sometimes he would play juggler tricks for us," records a lady who knew him when she was a child, "and swallow his knife and produce it again from our ears or noses. We usually ran to bring some apples for him as soon as he came in, and often he would cut one in halves in fine points that scarcely showed on close examination, and then the joke was to ask Father to break it for us and see it fall to pieces in his hands. But perhaps the evenings most charming were those when he brought some ears of pop-corn in his pocket and headed an expedition to the garret to hunt out the old brass warming-pan; in which he would put the corn, and hold it out and shake it over the fire till it was heated through, and at last, as we listened, the rattling changed to popping. When this became very brisk, he would hold the pan over the rug and lift the lid, and a beautiful fountain of the white corn flew all over us. It required both strength and patience to hold out the heavy warming-pan at arm's length so long, and no one else ever gave us that pleasure."

Thoreau's intellectual indebtedness to Emerson must not be overlooked; and some of his earlier work suffers somewhat from a too faithful discipleship, in the vocal imitation of the "voice oracular." Occasionally, indeed, it is hard to distinguish the disciple from his master, as when he writes:

"How can we expect a harvest of thought who have not a seedtime of character?"

"Only he can be trusted with goods who can present a face of bronze to expectations."

But this is only a passing phase. Thoreau is no weak replica of Emerson; and the bond between them is at bottom a real spiritual bond; a common outlook on life; the imitativeness is a pure literary trick that young inexperienced writers frequently fall into before they have found their own individual style.

This Thoreau did in his *Walden*. Beyond an imaginative affinity with the author of *Nature*, there is nothing Emersonian in the following individual and characteristic passage:

"The stillness was intense and almost conscious, as if it were a natural sabbath. The air was so elastic and crystalline that it had the same effect on the landscape that a glass has on a picture—to give it an ideal remoteness and perfection. The land ape was bathed in a mild and quiet light, while the woods and fences chequered and partitioned it with new regularity, and rough and uneven fields stretched far away with lawn-like smoothness to the horizon, and the clouds, finely distinct and picturesque, seemed a fit drapery to hang over fairyland."

The ascetic hardiness of Thoreau is well illustrated in this "Naturalistic" sketch:

"The wonderful purity of Nature at this season is a most pleasing fact. Every decayed stump and moss-grown stone and rush of the dead leaves of autumn are concealed by a clean napkin of snow. In the bare fields and trickling woods see what virtue survives. In the coldest and bleakest places the warmest charities still maintain a foothold. A cold and searching wind drives away all contagion, and nothing can withstand it, but what has a virtue in it; and accordingly whatever we meet with in cold and bleak places as the tops of mountains, we respect for a sort of sturdy innocence, a Puritan toughness."

Thoreau, indeed, is at his best as a poetic observer of Nature. His style lacks the rich opulence of Jefferies, but it has a cool clarity and austere beauty of its own. He has been called "the Post-Naturalist," by many; and by a few acclaimed as a Philosopher. But he is really neither the one nor the other. He had neither the intellectual equipment of the naturalist, nor the ratiocinative power of the philosopher. He had neither the scientist's faculty of correlating facts, nor the philosopher's faculty of generalising from them. He is a literary Vagabond.

Mr. Sanborn when first he met him described him as looking like "a sort of wise, wild beast." This vivid little touch is more illuminating than the elaborate picture he makes of Thoreau ultimately, as poet and philosopher.

The literary vagabond is at bottom a wise, wild beast; and no bad blend either. Emerson's admirable little sketch bears out this aspect of the man:

"It was a pleasure and a privilege to walk with him. He knew the country like a fox or bird, and passed through it as freely by paths of his own. Under his arm he carried an old music-book to press plants; in his pocket his diary and pencil, a spy-glass for birds, microscope, jack-knife, and twine. He wore straw hat, stout shoes, strong gray trousers to brave shrub-oaks and smilax, and to climb a tree for a hawk's or squirrel's nest. He waded into the pool for the water-plants, and his strong legs were no insignificant part of his armour. His intimacy with animals suggested what Thomas Fuller records of Butler the apologist, 'that either he had told the bees things, or the bees had told him.' Snakes coiled round his leg, the fishes swam into his hand, and he took them out of the water; he pulled the woodchuck out of its hole by the tail, and took the foxes under his protection from the hunters. He confessed that he sometimes felt like a hound or a panther, and, if born among Indians, would have been a fell hunter. But, restrained by his Massachusetts culture, he played out the game in the mild form of botany and ichthyology. His power of observation seemed to indicate additional senses; he saw as with microscope, heard as with ear-trumpet, and his memory was a photographic register of all he saw and heard. Every fact lay in order and glory in his mind, a type of the order and beauty of the whole."

At the same time I do not wish to underrate Thoreau's work as a thinker or as an observer of Nature. He was a fresh-minded and keen observer of natural phenomena, but his observations are far less valuable for scientific data (as are the naturalists) than as supplying him with agreeable material for humorous fancy, for ethical reflection, or for graceful and delicate description. In like manner, while as a thinker he is vigorous and effective in his own discursive and fragmentary way, with flashes of gnomic wisdom that, if less impressive than Emerson at his best, are more relishable; yet it is ultimately his manner of speech rather than his matter of thought that arrests us the most. For his thought after all is a piquant blend of pantheism, orientalism, puritanism, paganism: an attractive enough patchwork to deck a literary vagabond, but a shade distracting in a philosopher.

Why not leave him then as the "wise, wild beast"; a curious and arresting personality, half scholar, half faun; a mystic and a realist, sarcastic moralist and idyllic naturalist. In this way we can enjoy best his vagrant moods, according to our own inclination and the mood of the moment; acclaiming him when, as the fervent moralist, he writes in lofty vein of "Life without Principle underlying it"; or delighting in his pagan humour, as when, while dying, an earnest young friend asked him whether he had made his peace with the next world, and Thoreau replied: "One world at a time"; or lingering with the poetic observer of Nature, with his cold, bracing imagination and love of elemental things; or finally, responding to the fierce enthusiasm of the hero-worshipper, when he writes on John Brown or Thomas Carlyle.

Thus there is abundant diversity in Thoreau. Herein lies his charm as a man of letters. Of his verse I have said little, for though, like all he wrote, it is striking and individual, he was a poetic thinker rather than a poetic artist. Yet he wrote one set of verses, which may not unfittingly serve to round off this review of the man and his work; for they abound in self-revealing touches and are among the happiest that he wrote:

"I am a parcel of vain strivings tied
By a chance bond together,
Dangling this way and that, their links
Were made so loose and wide
Methinks
For milder weather.

A bunch of violets without their roots
And sorrel intermixed,
Encircled by a wisp of straw
Once coiled about their shoots,
The law
By which I'm fixed.

Some tender buds were left upon my stem
In mimicry of life,
But ah, the children will not know
Till Time has withered them,
The woo
With which they're rife."

"We should treat our minds—that is, ourselves—as innocent and ingenuous children, whose guardians we are, and be careful what objects and what subjects we thrust on their attention. Read not the Times. Read the Eternities. Conventionalities are at length as bad as impurities. Even the facts of science may dust the mind by their dryness, unless they are in a sense effaced each morning, or rather rendered fertile by the dews of fresh and living truth. Knowledge does not come to us by details, but in flashes of light from heaven. Yes, every thought that passes through the mind helps to wear and tear it, and to deepen the ruts, which, as in the streets of Pompeii, evince how much it has been used. How many things there are concerning which we might well deliberate whether we had better know them,—had better let their peddling-carts be driven, even at the slowest trot or walk, over that bridge of glorious span by which we trust to pass at last from the farthest brink of time to the nearest shore of eternity! Have we no culture, no refinement,—but skill only to live coarsely and serve the devil?—to acquire a little worldly wealth, or fame, or liberty, and make a false show with it, as if we were all husk and shell, with no tender and living kernel to us? Shall our institutions be like those chestnut-burrs which contain abortive nuts, perfect only to prick the fingers?"[1]

"When I think of Brown and his six sons, and his son-in-law, not to enumerate the others, enlisted for this fight, proceeding coolly, reverently, humanely to work, for months if not years, sleeping and waking upon it, summering and wintering the thought, without expecting any reward but a good conscience, while almost all America stood ranked on the other side,—I say again that it affects me as a sublime spectacle. If he had had any journal advocating 'his cause,' any organ, as the phrase is, monotonously and wearisomely playing the same old tune, and then passing round the hat, it would have been fatal to his efficiency. If he had acted in any way so as to be left alone by the Government, he might have been suspected. It was the fact that the tyrant must give place to him, or he to the tyrant, that distinguished him from all the reformers of the day that I know.

[1] *Life without Principle.*

"It was his peculiar doctrine that a man has a perfect right to interfere by force with the slaveholder, in order to rescue the slave. I agree with him. They who are continually shocked by slavery have some right to be shocked by the violent death of the slaveholder, but no others. Such will be more shocked by his life than by his death. I shall not be forward to think him mistaken in his method who quickest succeeds to liberate the slave. I speak for the slave when I say that I prefer the philanthropy of Captain Brown to that philanthropy which neither shoots me nor liberates me. At any rate, I do not think it is quite sane for one to spend his whole life in talking or writing about this matter, unless he is continuously inspired, and I have not done so. A man may have other affairs to attend to. I do not wish to kill nor to be killed, but I can foresee circumstances in which both these things would be by me unavoidable. We preserve the so-called peace of our community by deeds of petty violence every day. Look at the policeman's billy and handcuffs! Look at the gaol! Look at the gallows! Look at the chaplain of the regiment! We are hoping only to live safely on the outskirts of *this* provisional army. So we defend ourselves and our hen-roosts, and maintain slavery. I know that the mass of my countrymen think that the only righteous use that can be made of Sharpe's rifles and revolvers is to fight duels with them when we are insulted by other nations, or to hunt Indians, or to shoot fugitive slaves with them, or the like. I think that for once the Sharpe's rifles and the revolvers were employed in a righteous cause. The tools were in the hands of one who could use them."[1]

"Carlyle is no mystic, either, more than Newton or Arkwright or Davy, and tolerates none. Not one obscure line, or half line, did he ever write. His meaning lies plain as the daylight, and he who runs may read; indeed, only he who runs can read, and keep up with the meaning. It has the distinctness of a picture to the mind, and he tells us only what he sees printed in largest English type upon the face of things. He utters substantial English thoughts in plainest English dialects; for, it must be confessed, he speaks more than one of these. All the shires of England, and all the shires of Europe, are laid under contribution to his genius; for to be English does not mean to be exclusive and narrow, and adapt one's self to the apprehension of his nearest neighbour only. And yet no writer is more thoroughly Saxon. In the translation of those fragments of Saxon poetry, we have met with the same rhythm that occurs so often in his poem on the French Revolution. And if you would know where many of those obnoxious Carlyleisms and Germanisms came from, read the best of Milton's prose, read those speeches of Cromwell which he has brought to light, or go and listen once more to your mother's tongue. So much for his German extraction.

"Indeed, for fluency and skill in the use of the English tongue, he a master unrivalled. His felicity and power of expression surpass even his special merits as historian and critic. Therein his experience has not failed him, but furnished him with such a store of winged, ay and legged words, as only a London life, perchance, could give account of. We had not understood the wealth of the language before. Nature is ransacked, and all the resorts and purlieus of humanity are taxed, to furnish the fittest symbol for his thought. He does not go to the dictionary, the word-book, but to the word-manufactory itself, and has made endless work for the lexicographers. Yes, he has that same English for his mother-tongue that you have, but with him it is no dumb, muttering, mumbling faculty, concealing the thoughts, but a keen, unwearied, resistless weapon. He has such command of it as neither you nor I have; and it would be well for any who have a lost horse to advertise, or a town-meeting warrant, or a sermon, or a letter to write, to study this universal letter-writer, for he knows more than the grammar or the dictionary.

"The style is worth attending to, as one of the most important features of the man which we at this distance can discern. It is for once quite equal to the matter. It can carry all its load, and never breaks down nor staggers. His books are solid and workmanlike, as all that England does; and they are graceful and readable also. They tell of huge labour done, well done, and all the rubbish swept away, like the bright cutlery which glitters in shop windows, while the coke and ashes, the turnings, filings, dust, and borings lie far away at Birmingham, unheard of. He is a masterly clerk, scribe, reporter, writer. He can reduce to writing most things,—gestures, winks, nods, significant looks, patois, brogue, accent, pantomime, and how much that had passed for silence before, does he represent by written words. The countryman who puzzled the city lawyer, requiring him to write, among other things, his call to his horses, would hardly have puzzled him; he would have found a word for it, all right and classical, that would have started his team for him. Consider the ceaseless tide of speech for ever flowing in countless cellars, garrets, *parlours*; that of the French, says Carlyle, 'only ebbs towards the short hours of night,' and what a drop in the bucket is the printed word. Feeling, thought, speech, writing, and, we might add, poetry, inspiration,—for so the circle is completed; how they gradually dwindle at length, passing through successive colanders into your history and classics, from the roar of the ocean, the murmur of the forest, to the squeak of a mouse; so much only parsed and spelt out, and punctuated, at last. The few who can talk like a book, they only get reported commonly. But this writer reports a new 'Lieferung.'

"One wonders how so much, after all, was expressed in the old way, so much here depends upon the emphasis, tone, pronunciation, style, and spirit of the reading. No writer uses so profusely all the aids to intelligibility which the printer's art affords. You wonder how others had contrived to write so many pages without emphatic or italicised words, they are so expressive, so natural, so indispensable here, as if none had ever used the demonstrative pronouns demonstratively before. In another's sentences the thought, though it may be immortal, is as it were embalmed, and does not *strike* you, but here it is so freshly living, even the body of it not having passed through the ordeal of death, that it stirs in the very extremities, and the smallest particles and pronouns are all alive with it. It is not simple dictionary *it*, yours or mine, but IT. The words did not come at the command of grammar, but of a tyrannous, inexorable meaning; not like standing soldiers, by vote of Parliament, but any able-bodied countryman pressed into the service, for 'Sire, it is not a revolt, it is a revolution.'"[1]

[1] *A Plea for Captain John Brown.*

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES (1809–1894)

His Life

Oliver Wendell Holmes was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on August 29, 1809, and was the son of the staunch old Calvinist who had ministered to the First Church of Boston for forty years.

From a dame's school, where the pupils were "reminded rather than chastened" by a long willow rod, he passed to Cambridgeport Academy, where for five years he shared its teaching with Margaret Fuller and Richard Henry Dana; one year was then spent at Phillips' Academy, Andover, where at the early age of fifteen he translated the first book of the *Æneid* into heroic couplets.

Speaking of his boyhood's days he once remarked that "exceptional boys of fourteen and fifteen make home a heaven it is true, but I have suspected late in life that I was not of the exceptional

[1] *Thomas Carlyle and his Works.*

kind." He was certainly versatile; he played the flageolet and flute, and with a pistol fired at everything but the house cat; he would smoke a cigar by instalments, and during the intervals hide it from the eyes of suspicious relatives in the barrel of his pistol.

In 1825 he went to Harvard. Here he was a universal favourite, elected class poet and a member of the select Phi Beta Kappa Society, and for over forty years after his graduation in 1829, he was a welcome figure at the College reunions.

On leaving Harvard he made a twelve months' acquaintance with the "lawless science of the law," but finding medicine a more congenial study, he crossed to Europe, first made the "grand tour," and then studied in Paris and Edinburgh. On his return he took his degree of Doctor of Medicine at Harvard in 1836. For a year he held the Chair of Anatomy at Dartmouth College, then returned to Boston, where he finally settled. Henceforth medicine and literature were to be driven in double harness.

In patriotic disgust at the proposed demolition of the old frigate *Constitution* he wrote *Old Ironsides*, as a protest. The poem was sold in the streets, and printed in nearly every newspaper throughout the country; the *Constitution* was saved, and the poet became famous.

Holmes published a first collection of his verse in 1837; this included a versified *Essay on Poetry*, *The Last Leaf*, and a boyish quip typical of the poet—*My Aunt*. Here is a stanza:

> "My aunt! my dear unmarried aunt!
> Long years have o'er her flown:
> Yet still she strains the aching clasp
> That binds her virgin zone;
> I know it hurts her—though she looks
> As cheerful as she can;
> Her waist is smaller than her life,
> For life is but a span."

But there is also the serious side to be acknowledged, for Holmes also distinguished himself in 1836–1837, by gaining three medals for medical themes.

In 1840 he married Miss Amelia Lee Jackson, daughter of a Judge of the Supreme Court, and it was about this time that for the dinner given to Charles Dickens, Holmes was asked to write the song of welcome.

As Parkman Professor of Anatomy, at Harvard, from 1847 to 1882, Holmes was delivering four lectures a week. He does not appear to have been a successful practitioner, but had a wonderful power as a lecturer.

> "We always welcomed Professor Holmes," wrote one of his students; "his lectures were so brimful of anecdote that we sometimes forgot it was a lesson in anatomy we had come to learn. But the instruction—deep, sound, and thorough—was there all the same, and we never left the room without feeling what a fund of knowledge and what a clear insight upon difficult points in medical science had been imparted to us through the sparkling medium."

In 1852 he also gave a course of lectures on *English Poets of the Nineteenth Century*, at the Lyceum.

When the *Atlantic Monthly* was started in 1857, Lowell accepted the editorship only on the understanding that Holmes would become a regular contributor. This he agreed to do, and with *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, he continued an old series that had previously appeared under the same title in *The New Englander* in 1831. With *The Autocrat* he made his own literary reputation as well as the financial and literary position of the magazine. *The Professor* and *The Poet* followed, but not with quite the same measure of success.

Elsie Venner first appeared as a serial in 1858, and in book form two years later; *The Guardian Angel* (1867) and *A Mortal Antipathy* (1885) are his only three novels. A biography of his friend Emerson was published in 1885, and of his friend Motley in 1878 (one of his least satisfactory works).

To celebrate his seventieth birthday, the *Monthly* gave a breakfast, at which Emerson, Whittier, and Harriet Beecher Stowe were present: for this occasion he composed his poem, *The Iron Gate*.

Many were the letters received by Holmes from budding aspirants to literary fame, asking his advice. One who had done so and was encouraged to go forward called upon Holmes some years later—it was Bret Harte.

Holmes' last volume of table talk, *Over the Tea Cups*, published in 1880, lacked the freshness and sprightliness of his earlier volumes. Tea-time proved a less suitable milieu for his chit-chat than breakfast time; and his last publication, *Our Hundred Days in Europe* (1889), is merely a pleasant record of a trip abroad among friends and admirers, and has no literary pretensions.

It was fitting that one who expressed so fully the best Bostonian traditions should die in Boston on October 7, 1894.

A man of strong personal charm, of keen sympathy and kindly thought of everyone, he was, said one who knew him well, "the perfect essence of wit and hospitality, courteous, amiable and entertaining to a degree, which is more easily remembered than imparted or described."

His Work

There is no more genial, more agreeable personality in American letters than Oliver Wendell Holmes; and the versatile ease with which he could turn from verse to table-talk, and from table-talk to fiction, are not the least of his attractions. As essayist he has neither the distinction of Emerson, the freshness of Thoreau, nor the vigorous staying power of Lowell. Yet, at his best, as in *The Breakfast Table Series* and *Elsie Venner*, there is an ease and a play of charming fancy about his work, that gives him quite a distinctive place among American prosemen. He is an adept in the art of allusive chit-chat. No American writer can talk in print so intimately, or with such discursive wisdom as he. He has mastered the art of button-holing; and his easy-jacket, carpet-slipper style admirably suits the play of humour and fancy which he brings to bear upon all manner of subjects. The very title of his famous series of chatters is significant of the man: *The Breakfast Table Series*.

He is the Autocrat, Poet, and Professor of the

Breakfast Table. Not a time many of us would select for philosophy and dialectics, however airily and playfully conducted. We recall sympathetically "Elia's" eloquent plea for lying a-bed on mornings and digesting our dreams, and say "Amen" to his comment that "Jokes come in with candlelight." His strenuous, healthy, and sanguine temperament bids us start the day well, with a clear head and a bright heart. And that is why, despite superficial resemblances between his chit-chat and that of Lamb, there is a basic difference of temperament between them.

Lamb is the prince of poltroons in the realms of the imagination. At heart he is as sane and clear-visioned as Holmes himself; but he is not a moralist by persuasion like Holmes. Holmes, that voluble and cheerful policeman of letters, is concerned to continually moving us on. He has all the alert practicality of the Yankee. He is for clearing up matters, for solving problems psychological and ethical, though his broad sympathies and kindly confidences make us forget at times that the arm which is linked in ours is concerned in increasing our pace, and keeping us along the high road.

The chatter of "Elia" is the chatter of the artistic temperament; the chatter of our Breakfast Table philosopher that of the scientific temperament. Yet, for all his fun and fancy and literary sense, Holmes' outlook is the outlook of the scientist. He sees life through the surgery window. We never forget for long that he is *Doctor* Oliver Wendell Holmes; for very soon he has his hand on the reader's pulse and is ready with some prescription for his moral health. But it is done all so agreeably and amiably that we are never bored.

In his three novels, *Elsie Venner*, *The Guardian Angel*, and *A Mortal Antipathy*, he is primarily concerned with some nice point in mental psychology; with pre-natal influences, with the legacies of heredity, with the psychology of likes and dislikes. Indeed, the charm of Holmes lies in the fact that he is an imaginative medical man, who can blend fact and fancy with an agreeable skill for the least instructed layman.

Less a man of the world than Lowell, less a man of the study than Emerson, he presents us a humorist a happy blend of these two sides. Let these quotations serve by way of illustration:

"You don't suppose that my remarks made at this table are like so many postage-stamps, do you—each to be only once uttered? If you do, you are mistaken. He must be a poor creature that does not often repeat himself. Imagine the author of the excellent piece of advice, 'Know thyself,' never alluding to that sentiment again during the course of a protracted existence? Why, the truths a man carries about with him are his tools; and do you think a carpenter is bound to use the same plane but once to smooth a knotty board with, or to hang up his hammer after it has driven his first nail? I shall never repeat a conversation, but an idea often; I shall use the same types when I like, but not commonly the same sterentypes. A thought is often original, though you have uttered it a hundred times. It has come to you over a new route, by a new and express train of association."

. . . . . .

"You never need think you can turn over any old falsehood without a terrible squirming and scattering of the horrid little population that dwells under it."

"Every real thought on every real subject knocks the wind out of somebody or other. As soon as his breath comes back, he very probably begins to expound it in hard words. These are the best evidence a man can have that he has said something it was time to say. Dr. Johnson was disappointed in the effect of one of his pamphlets, 'I think I have not been attacked enough for it,' he said;—'attack is the reaction; I never think I have hit hard unless it rebounds.'

"If a fellow attacked my opinions in print would I reply? Not I. Do you think I don't understand what my friend, the Professor, long ago called *the hydrostatic paradox of controversy*?

"Don't know what that means?—Well, I will tell you. You know, that if you had a bent tube, one arm of which was of the size of a pipe-stem, and the other big enough to hold the ocean, water would stand at the same height in one as in the other. Controversy equalizes fools and wise men in the same way,—*and the fools know it.*"

There is no special profundity in either of these passages, but the alert common-sense of a shrewd observer of men and things sparkles in every sentence.

If not a deep thinker, he is invariably a clear and vigorous one, and carries the epigrammatic power of Emerson and Thoreau with a more light hearted air. Occasionally he can be as serious and as suggestive as the Concord Oracle himself, for instance when he observes:

"Sin has many tools, but a lie is the handle which fits them all."

Or:

"Faith always implies the disbelief of a lesser fact in favour of a greater."

But more often he is content to be blithe and flippant, as in

"We never tell our secrets to people who jump for them."

"Memory is a net, one finds it full of fish when he takes it from the brook, but a dozen miles of water have run through it without sticking."

(Of the Red Indian)

"A few instincts on legs flourishing a tomahawk."

But the graceful flippancies of Holmes are the most palatable when turned into verse. There his literary deftness, his underlying tenderness, his worldly sagacity, blend with the happiest results.

THE OLD MAN DREAMS

O for one hour of youthful joy!
Give back my twentieth spring!
I'd rather laugh a bright-haired boy
Than reign a grey-beard king!

Off with the wrinkled spoils of age!
Away with learning's crown!
Tear out life's wisdom-written page,
And dash its trophies down!

One moment let my life-blood stream
From boyhood's fount of flame!
Give me one giddy, reeling dream
Of life all love and fame!

—My listening angel heard the prayer,
And calmly smiling, said,
"If I but touch thy silvered hair,
Thy hasty wish hath sped.

"But is there nothing in thy track
To bid thee fondly stay,
While the swift seasons hurry back
To find the wished-for day?"

—Ah, truest soul of womankind!
Without thee, what were life!
One bliss I cannot leave behind:
I'll take—my—precious—wife!

—The angel took a sapphire pen
And wrote in rainbow dew,
"The man would be a boy again,
And be a husband too!"

—"And is there nothing yet unsaid
Before the change appears?
Remember, all their gifts have fled
With those dissolving years."

Why, yes; for memory would recall
My fond paternal joys;
I could not bear to leave them all:
I'll take—my—girl—and—boys!

The smiling angel dropped his pen,—
"Why, this will never do;
The man would be a boy again,
And be a father too!"

And so I laughed,—my laughter woke
The household with its noise,—
And wrote my dream, when morning broke,
To please the gray-haired boys.

THE LAST BLOSSOM

Though young no more, we still would dream
Of beauty's dear deluding wiles;
The leagues of life to greybeards seem
Shorter than boyhood's lingering miles.

Who knows a woman's wild caprice?
It played with Goethe's silvered hair,
And many a Holy Father's "niece"
Has softly smoothed the papal chair.

When sixty bids us sigh in vain
To melt the heart of sweet sixteen,
We think upon those ladies twain
Who loved so well the tough old Dean.

We see the Patriarch's wintry face,
The maid of Egypt's dusky glow,
And dream that Youth and Age embrace,
As April violets fill with snow.

Tranced in her lord's Olympian smile
His lotos-loving Memphian lies,—
The musky daughter of the Nile
With plaited hair and almond eyes.

Might we but share one wild caress
Ere life's autumnal blossoms fall,
And Earth's brown, clinging lips impress
The long cold kiss that waits us all!

My bosom heaves, remembering yet
The morning of that blissful day
When Rose, the flower of spring, I met,
And gave my raptured soul away.

Flung from her eyes of purest blue,
A lasso, with its leaping chain
Light as a hop of larkspurs, flew
O'er sense and spirit, heart and brain.

Then com'st to cheer my waning age,
Sweet vision, waited for so long!
Dove that would seek the poet's cage
Lured by the magic breath of song!

She blushes! Ah, reluctant maid,
Love's *draperie rouge* the truth has told;
O'er girlhood's yielding barricade
Floats the great Leveller's crimson fold!

Come to my arms!—love heeds not years,
No frost the bud of passion knows—
Ha! what is this my frenzy hears?
A voice behind me uttered,—Rose!

Sweet was her smile,—but not for me;
Alas, when woman looks too kind,
Just turn your foolish head and see,—
Some youth is walking close behind!

In his higher flights Holmes is less satisfactory; that ingenuity of his, so telling in the lighter verse—such pieces as *The Deacon's Masterpiece, or The One-Hoss Shay*—gives a touch of artificiality to poems like *The Chambered Nautilus*; the graceful sentiment which touches with sufficient tenderness *The Last Leaf*, grows too riotous in a lyric like *Under the Violets*. These things are assuredly not without charm, but they are insufficiently strong and simple for great poetry. One has only to compare Hood's treatment of a young girl's death with Holmes to appreciate the difference.

Holmes never mastered the art that conceals art: and thus he is at his best when he reminds us of our own Praed, where a delicate artificiality is a charm, and not a blemish.

The most poetic thing Holmes ever wrote is his novel, *Elsie Venner:* the scientific problems raised in that remarkable book have a stimulating effect on the writer's imagination, that is nowhere else manifest. More of the twilight atmosphere of Hawthorne would no doubt have heightened the tragic romance of the *Snake Woman*—it is a little too clear-cut and definite; but there are passages in the book that reach a very high level of imaginative beauty.

On the whole, Holmes is at his best when he appears before us—to use a phrase Thackeray applied to himself—as the "week-day preacher." Bred in an intellectual atmosphere, there is nothing academic about his thought. His fresh adventurous mind scorns the narrow groove. He might have demurred to Bernard Shaw's contention that the medical profession is an organised conspiracy to defraud the laity (though we can imagine him chuckling at its daring impudence), but he was strongly in favour of the idea underlying Shaw's sally—

"You can't keep gas in a bladder, and you can't keep knowledge light in a profession—special knowledge will leak out and general knowledge leak in."

His general outlook may be gauged by his statement, that

"The great thing is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving."—"To reach the port of heaven we must sail sometimes with the wind; sometimes against it."

We may regard Holmes in literature as we regard the shrewd family physician in daily life. For serious crises we call in the expert, as at such times the family physician may prove unequal to the emergency. But in the ordinary run of life, all we need is sound counsel on hygienics and, perhaps, an occasional alterative mixture to keep us fit. There we find the value of Holmes. He knows our little infirmities well, and can adapt himself

to our moods and fancies. He knows that what does all of us good at times, is a picnic of ideas, and none can prepare that meal more adroitly and more palatably than the "Autocrat."

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL (1819–1891)

His Life

James Russell Lowell, in whom we see the somewhat rare combination of the wise and thoughtful man of affairs and the successful literary artist, was born at Cambridge, New England, on February 22, 1819. He was the fourth son of the Rev. Charles Lowell, who had ministered for fifty years at a Boston church; his mother—of remarkable personality and high accomplishments—was the grand-daughter of Robert Traill of Orkney.

Delicate as a child, James' early years were carefully tended by an elder sister, whose duty it was to see that he had an afternoon nap; as a soporific she would read extracts from the poetry of Shakespeare and Spenser; but so interested did he become in the stories of Spenser that his frantic efforts to keep awake were often most amusing. From boyhood he had the most marked power of self-control; and with a keen sense of humour combined a characteristic—unfortunately, not common—of an exquisite regard for the feelings of others.

From William Wells' famous classical school at Boston, Lowell went to Harvard in 1834. At that time little or no attention was there paid to English literature, yet among the young Harvardians was the same enthusiasm for the poetry of Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats as was shown for Tennyson twenty years later at Oxford.

In 1837 he was acting as joint editor of the College magazine—*Harvardiana*; and a year later his power as a versifier resulted in his election as class poet. The composition of the class poem proved no little trouble:

> "Here I am, as it were, at the end of nothing," he wrote home, "and not a pillow of consolation wherein to lay the aching head of despair."

School and college days were uneventful, if we except his "rustication" for the repeated neglect of the hard and fast rule of attendance at morning chapel. Having graduated in 1838, he studied for the bar; poetry, however, proved to have a prior claim, and led to his friendship with Miss Maria White, a beautiful, delicate girl of simple and refined tastes. A four years' courtship ended in a happy union that was severed only by the death of Mrs. Lowell in 1853, leaving one little daughter.

An easy and fluent speaker, it was not long ere Lowell was in great request as a lecturer. His first public appearance, in 1842, was to an audience of three thousand members of the Women's Total Abstinence Society. His lectures on English poetry at Boston in 1855 were so overcrowded that he was forced to give them twice a day.

"The modulations of his voice," we are told, were "unstudied and agreeable," and it "was kept in its natural compass. . . . There were no oratorical climaxes, and no pitfalls set for applause."

The famous *Biglow Papers*, which first appeared in the *Boston Courier* in June 1846, were published in book form some two years later; *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, an Arthurian legend, written in two days, during which he scarcely ate or slept, and *A Fable for Critics*, belong also to this period.

In July 1851 the Lowells sailed for Italy in search of health for the delicate wife; after an absence of fifteen months, which proved ineffectual, they returned to America, where she died. A second marriage, in 1857, to Miss Frances Dunlop proved as happy and fortunately not so brief as the first.

From 1857–1861 Lowell was editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, for which he wrote one hundred and sixteen articles—prose and poetry—between the years 1857 and 1877. In 1863 he joined his friend, Professor Charles Norton, as joint editor of the *North American Review*; for this he also wrote thirty-four articles besides critical work. Many of these papers were collected in *Among My Books* (1870) and *My Study Windows* (1871).

For nearly thirty years Lowell was Smith Professor of Modern Languages at Harvard, having succeeded Longfellow in 1854. On resigning his Chair in 1872 he made another journey abroad, and on his return threw himself into the politics of the day. In his kind, tactful nature the President saw the successful diplomat, and in 1877 he was appointed official representative at the Court of Madrid. From 1880 to 1885 he honourably filled the same distinguished position in England. Just before his return to America the second Mrs. Lowell died.

On his arrival from England he settled down at his beautiful home, Elmwood. To one who congratulated him on his return, he said, "Yes, it is very nice to be here, but the old house is full of ghosts." It contained so many sad memories. His own health began to give cause for anxiety, but after a serious illness from hereditary gout, he rallied for a time, and began to collect his fugitive pieces for a new edition of his works. This was his last literary labour. He died in August 1891.

> "He never seemed more cheerful and companionable and cordial and wise," says his friend Mr. Edward Everett Hale, "than in his seventh decade."[1]

His Work

Lowell is essentially American as a poet, and cosmopolitan as a prose writer. For this reason his verse is less appreciated across the water than is his prose, and in popularity he is certainly less appealing than Longfellow, Poe, Whitman, or even Holmes. There is, of course, a respectable body of his verse not concerned with patriotic motives and local inspirations; but this, with one or two rare exceptions, is the least distinguished part about it, while as a poet his reputation rests chiefly on his inimitable *Biglow Papers*. For the rest, his most considerable productions in verse are, it will be seen, American in their inspiration—to wit, the wise and witty *Fable for Critics*—on American poets and poetry; the stirring *Commemoration*

[1] *James Russell Lowell and his Friends*, by E. E. Hale.

Ode, and other memorial poems, especially the ode *Under the Old Elm*—celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of Washington's command of the Revolutionary army. A passionate love of country animates Lowell's best verse. When the matters with which he deals are of more universal interest—the stock-pot of poetic art—he is less fresh, less original, but his poetry is always virile and intelligent, and his later work especially finished and impressive in its Art.

Turning from his verse to his prose, his criticism may first be noticed. As a versatile scholar with a gift of happy, lucid exposition, and a mingling of shrewd humour and artistic feeling, he has no peer in American letters. In his purely literary criticism he is more catholic, more sane, than Poe. It is when we place his critical work beside the great English critics that Lowell's shortcomings are most clearly seen. As pieces of writing, as expressions of the author's interesting personality, they rarely fail to give us pleasure; but there is a lack of perspective about some, as, for instance, the *Milton*, and critical irrelevancies about many, as, for instance, the *Wordsworth*, which detract from their value.

As an illustration of what I mean, take this passage from the *Essay on Wordsworth*, which contains so much good and admirable matter.

"The play" (e.g. *The Borderers*) "has fine passages, but is as unreal as *Jane Eyre*." What is *Jane Eyre* doing here? How is it possible to elucidate the qualities of *The Borderers* by a slighting reference to Charlotte Brontë's famous novel? *Jane Eyre* may be unreal in parts where the author strays out of her own experiences of life; but the unreality of those passages is quite different from the unreality of *The Borderers*. Charlotte Brontë's unreality has in it a fundamental ignorance of the particular phase of life she is describing with such eager earnestness. Wordsworth's unreality lies in his deliberate avoidance of concrete actuality of any kind. Further, to refer to *Jane Eyre* as unreal is bad criticism. Taken as a whole, the book is alive and memorable by virtue of this very quality. The touches of unreality are overwhelmed by the vital reality of the book as a whole. Lowell's dictum, then, is challengeable, first because its allusion to *Jane Eyre* is fundamentally wrong. In the second place, because, even had the passage been so framed as to apply in a limited way to *Jane Eyre*, the criticism is inapposite, for the unreality of the one is a different thing from the unreality of the other. So far as *Jane Eyre* is unreal, it is unreal because of its over-accentuation; *The Borderers* because of its under-accentuation.

Neither is Lowell quite a fair critic of the Transcendental movement; he sees clearly and well enough the weaknesses and absurdities of that movement, but he badly undervalues one of its most original spokesmen—Thoreau. Lowell is, on the whole, a good taster of books, with a nice appreciation of what is fine in literature, but he is neither profound, original, nor thorough in his critical treatment. Yet his critical essays are certainly interesting and suggestive; they exhibit a strong and agreeable personality, and display a versatile culture; structurally awkward and lop-sided, irritating in their hasty generalisations, they none the less stimulate because of the happy flashes of wisdom with which they abound. And he is really the most happy, the most delightful, when he is least literary, and is not concerned with critical literary problems.

Looking finally at his entire output, both in prose and verse, it seems to me that his powers are fairly evenly distributed. An admirable letter-writer, a fresh and vigorous publicist, a suggestive literary critic, a cultured and virile poet; in short, perhaps the best all-round man in American letters.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Nature, they say, doth dote
And cannot make a man
Save on some worn-out plan,
Repeating us by rote:
From him her Old World moulds aside she threw,
And choosing sweet clay from the breast
Of the unexhausted West,
With stuff untainted shaped a hero new,
Wise, steadfast in the strength of God, and true.
How beautiful to see
Once more a shepherd of mankind indeed,
Who loved his charge, but never loved to lead;
One whose meek flock the people joyed to be,
Not led by any chain of birth,
But by his clear-grained human worth,
And brave old wisdom of sincerity!
They knew that outward grace is dust;
They could not choose but trust
In that sure-footed mind's unfaltering skill,
And supple tempered will
That bent like perfect steel to spring again and thrust.
His was no lonely mountain-peak of mind,
Thrusting to thin air o'er our cloudy bars,
A sea-mark now, now lost in vapours blind,
Broad prairie rather, genial, level-lined,
Fruitful and friendly for all humankind,
Yet also nigh to heaven and loved of loftiest stars.
Nothing of Europe here,
Or, then, of Europe fronting morningward still,
Ere any names of Serf and Peer
Could Nature's equal scheme deface;
Here was a type of the true elder race,
And one of Plutarch's men talked with us face to face.
I praise him not; it were too late;
And some innative weakness there must be
In him who condescends to victory
Such as the Present gives, and cannot wait,
Safe in himself as in a fate.
So always firmly he:
He knew to bide his time,
And can his fame abide,
Still patient in his simple faith sublime,
Till the wise years decide.
Great captains, with their guns and drums,
Disturb our judgment for the hour,
But at last silence comes;
These all are gone, and standing like a tower,
Our children shall behold his fame,
The kindly-earnest, brave, foreseeing man,
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,
New birth of our new soil, the first American.

(From the *Commemoration Ode.*)

A GOOD WORD FOR WINTER

If one would know what snow is, I should advise him not to hunt up what the poets have said about it, but to look at the sweet miracle itself.

The preludings of Winter are as beautiful as those of Spring. In a grey December day, when, as the farmers say, it is too cold to snow, his numbed fingers

will let fall doubtfully a few star-shaped flakes, the snowdrops and anemones that harbinger his more assured reign. Now, and now only, may be seen, heaped on the horizon's eastern edge, those "blue clouds" from forth which Shakespeare says that Mars "doth pluck the masoned turret." Sometimes also, when the sun is low, you will see a single cloud trailing a flurry of snow along the southern hills in a wavering fringe of purple. And when at last the real snowstorm comes, it leaves the earth with a virginal look on it that no other of the seasons can rival, compared with which, indeed, they seem soiled and vulgar.

And what is there in nature so beautiful as the next morning after such confusion of the elements? Night has no silence like this of busy day. All the batteries of noise are spiked. We see the movement of life as a deaf man sees it, a mere wraith of the clamorous existence that inflicts on our ears when the ground is bare. The earth is clothed in innocence as a garment. Every wound of the landscape is healed; whatever was still has been sweetly rounded as the breasts of Aphrodite; what was unsightly has been covered gently with a soft splendour, as if, Cowley would have said, Nature had cleverly let fall her handkerchief to hide it. If the virgin (*Notre Dame de la Neige*) were to come back, here is an earth that would not bruise her foot nor stain it. It is

"The fanned snow
That's bolted by the northern blasts twice o'er,"—

"Soffiata e stretta dai venti Schiavi
(Winnowed and packed by the Sclavonian winds),"—

packed so hard sometimes on hill-slopes that it will bear your weight. What grace is in all the curves, as if every one of them had been swept by that inspired thumb of Phidias' journeyman. . . .

The snow that falls damp comes commonly in larger flakes from windless skies, and is the prettiest of all to watch from under cover. This is the kind Homer had in mind; and Dante, who had never read him, compares the *dilatate falde*, the flaring flakes, of his fiery rain, to those of snow among the mountains without wind. This sort of snowfall has no fight in it, and does not challenge you to a wrestle like that which drives well from the northward, with all moisture thoroughly winnowed out of it by the frosty wind. Burns, who was more out of doors than most poets, and whose bare-foot Muse got the colour in her cheeks by vigorous exercise in all weathers, was thinking of this drier deluge when he speaks of the "whirling drift," and tells how—

"Chanticleer
Shook off the pouthery snaw."

But the damper and more deliberate falls have a choice knack at draping the trees; and about eaves of stone walls—wherever, indeed, the evaporation is rapid, and it finds a chance to cling—it will build itself out in curves of wonderful beauty. I have seen one of these durab waves, thus caught in the act of breaking, curl four feet beyond the edge of my roof and hang there for days, as if Nature were too well pleased with her work to let it crumble from its exquisite pause. After such a storm, if you are lucky enough to have even a sluggish ditch for a neighbour, be sure to pay it a visit. You will find its banks corniced with what seems to be precipitated light, and the dark current down below gleams as if with an inward lustre. Dull of motion as it is, you never saw water that seemed alive before. It has a brightness like that of the eyes of some smaller animals, which gives assurance of life, but of a life foreign and unintelligible.

(From *My Study Window.*)

II. PROSE: (5) MODERN THEOLOGIANS AND CRITICS. William Ellery Channing—The Transcendental Movement—Amos Bronson Alcott—Margaret Fuller—George Ticknor—Henry James, Senior—William James—Charles Godfrey Leland—George William Curtis.

THEOLOGIANS AND CRITICS

ALTHOUGH American Literature was cradled in theology, and never quite shook off its baby vestments, yet New England has produced very few religious thinkers of the first order. The reason for this lies in the intense practicality of the Yankee. When theology was largely a matter, as in the old Puritan days, of positive morality, then theologians of a sort flourished—though Jonathan Edwards was probably the only one whose influence was other than parochial. With the growth of toleration, the encroachment of political interest, the practical energies of the New Englander flowed into other channels. And it is not until the nineteenth century that we find any speculative thinker that may lay claim to literary distinction.

Liberal religious thought, emphasized by a reaction from the shackles of Calvinism, took a Unitarian form, and among the earlier Unitarians, WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING (1780–1842), is the first name of any importance. A dominant characteristic of Channing and his successors is the liveliness of their social sympathies. They tried to do for Christianity in America what Kingsley and Maurice tried to do in England—make it a life rather than a creed.

Channing was a thoughtful, sympathetic, and occasionally eloquent writer, not profound nor soul-stirring, but a consistent upholder of liberty of speech and tolerance of outlook, and a cautious though genuine democrat. During his lifetime came that wave of romantic idealism which is usually called Transcendentalism.

THE TRANSCENDENTAL MOVEMENT

The Transcendental Movement in America is in reality a phase of that Romanticism which we have clearly seen permeating European thought and letters. The significance of Romanticism in prose-letters has been discussed in a previous chapter: its significance in thought may be gathered from a study of the romantic movement in Germany with its metaphysical and artistic implications. Kant himself is responsible for the word Transcendental.

It is the word of passport from a philosophy of sense-perception to a philosophy of primary intuition. A little band of writers and teachers arose during the forties in America, who seized upon this intuitional idea and developed it into a rule of life—a rule tending towards spiritual arrogance in some of its exponents, and expressing itself in many extravagant ways, yet at bottom indicating a sincere and high-minded endeavour to find a fresh faith and a new outlook.

It found its most sober expression in Emerson's teaching, notably the doctrine of the Over-Soul, and in the more Oriental pantheism of Thoreau; but around these men were a number of personalities who demand some attention.

In September 1836, the Rev. Frederick Henry Hedge, a student of Emerson's letters and philosophy, Amos Bronson Alcott, an ardent communist, James Freeman Clarke, the philanthropist, together with Emerson, met at the house of George Ripley, a keen social reformer. Thus the Transcendental Club came into being. To its circle were added shortly, the theologian and untiring social worker, Theodore Parker, and that somewhat flamboyant but striking personality, Margaret Fuller.

Emerson was to be the oracle of the Club; Alcott a kind of gnomic understudy; with others the work was to be more of a social character. The precise scope and propaganda of the club were left agreeably vague. They were generally agreed over plain living and high thinking; but the extent of the "plainness," and the character of the mental flights were left to individual tastes. If any motto could have been found for the Club on which these widely-differing temperaments could have agreed it would have been Emerson's adjuration—"Trust thyself, and, though thou shouldst walk the world over, thou shalt not be able to find a condition inopportune or ignoble." Beyond this it is hard to find many points in common.

The main things seemed to be, a hostility towards traditions and the processes of reasoning; intuition being the rule of life, a fervent belief in the social beneficence of culture, and a return to Nature, more or less as Rousseau desiderated. Wordsworth's poetic Pantheism and Goethe's Individualism proved perhaps the most potent literary influences upon this little group; while on the more definitely theological side, German philosophy *via* Coleridge, and German literature *via* Carlyle, were factors with which to reckon.

The most interesting and practical outcome of the Club was the "Brook Farm Association," made famous by Hawthorne's *Blithedale Romance*. George Ripley was the leading spirit here; and the project was undertaken and organised with more practical sagacity than many of its critics have thought fit to allow it. The failure of the communistic experiment lay not in any business mismanagement of details, but in the inherent weakness that affects all such schemes. Indeed, with simpler financial resources something might have been made of the various trade activities in which the members co-operated. Insufficient funds hastened to bring about the failure of an experiment doomed to disaster through the temperamental incompatibility of those taking part. If the whole thing was little better than a "transcendental picnic," it was an agreeable and interesting one in many ways. One cannot regret a scheme that served Hawthorne for one of his happiest literary inspirations.

Amos Bronson Alcott (1799–1888) was one of the leading spirits, who later on attempted to establish an even more ideal community, "Fruitlands," that read into "Transcendentalism" many more extravagances than Emerson and Thoreau would have countenanced. The son of a farmer in Connecticut, he was an amiable visionary, whose helplessness as a man of affairs, and whose steady capacity for getting into debt, reminds one of Goldsmith. Most of his life he spent as a school teacher, in various places, though he was continually obliged to move on, owing to the visionary schemes he was always trying to materialise. Nowadays there might be some opening (though not a commercial one) for a man who was a mystic after the Eastern pattern, a vegetarian, a non-resistant, an advocate of woman's rights; but in those days there was little consideration for the "crank," and poor Alcott proved very unpopular with his neighbours. It is a pity that he had not some of the delightful humour and common-sense that his gifted daughter, Louisa M. Alcott, showed in her stories of girl life. It might have preserved him from many eccentricities of conduct. What success could be hoped for a reformer who gravely forbade the planting of anything that grew downward rather than upward, deprecated the use of manure, and repelled the existence of canker-worm? His sweetness of disposition and his real nobility of aim attracted to him not a few powerful friends, and Emerson championed him so far as possible. There is much to be said for some of his educational ideals. He was certainly an attractive personality, though he must have proved a difficult man to live with. The best part of Alcott's teaching may be studied in the saner writings of the daughter who wrote *Little Women*, *Good Wives*, and *Jo's Boys*—stories rich in humanitarian feeling and tender charm.

A more forceful personality than Alcott was Sarah Margaret Fuller (1810–1850). After an unhappy childhood, she became a teacher, teaching for a while in Alcott's school at Boston. Unattractive in appearance, she fascinated many by her romantic enthusiasm and her extensive learning. She is reputed to have been a brilliant conversationalist, better in the spoken word than in writing. Yet she was a vital and interesting writer—somewhat spoiled by excessive self-consciousness—and much of her work appeared in the *Dial*. Later on she became literary editor of the *New York Tribune* under Horace Greeley. She was fond of travel, and loved Italy. It was on her return from Italy with her husband, Marquis Ossoli, and her child, that she perished in a shipwreck in May 1850.

She excelled in critical work of the psychological order, and one of her best portraits is that of her friend Mazzini. Lacking plasticity and breadth of sympathy, she is always worth reading when she deals with the spiritual elements in society.

A few words may be said, in concluding this brief sketch of American Literature, about some miscellaneous writers, who excelled in the work of literary and philosophic criticism.

George Ticknor (1791–1871) was born at Boston, and educated for the Bar. Literature, however, lured him as she has lured many a young barrister, and after travelling through the States, he visited Europe, where he made the acquaintance of many famous men, including Roscoe and Lord Byron. In 1819 he returned to America, and became Pro-

fessor of Modern Languages and Literature at Harvard. He was an erudite scholar and an enthusiast for Spanish literature; and his *History of Spanish Literature* (1849) did a good deal to stir that cosmopolitan spirit in letters which his successor in the Chair, Longfellow, achieved in fostering. He was a sound and immensely industrious writer; lacking as a critic in those charms and graces that make scholarship attractive to a wide circle of readers. Yet he had an attractive literary side which may be enjoyed in his own *Life, Letters, and Journals* (1876).

Henry James (1811–1882), the father of the novelist and of the late Professor William James, was a fresh and original philosophical thinker, whose personality has lately been limned anew for us by his son, Henry James, in *Notes of a Son and a Brother*. Henry James, the elder, proved a delightful personality, with an unconventional method that was inherited and developed by Professor William James in his stimulating philosophical studies. As the popular expositor of Pragmatism, William James has become a familiar name of late years to many readers who hitherto had given philosophy the cold shoulder. This is not the place to discuss views which have naturally given rise to much technical controversy: but even his most hostile critics cannot deny him the power of luminous expression and a power of stating the problems of the schools in a live and attractive manner. While his reputation as a scholar will rest largely upon his brilliantly suggestive *Principles of Psychology*, the general reader will be drawn more especially to *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, with its bold attempt to analyse and harmonise conflicting phases of the religious temperament. His influence has been greater as a psychological critic than as a metaphysician.

To descend from philosophic heights to the lowlands of discursive letters, we have in Charles Godfrey Leland (1824–1903), a versatile and accomplished writer, who is best known to the majority as "Hans Breitmann," after the famous medley-dialect ballads, published about 1870. He had a speculative and roving mind, delving in gypsy lore, the psychology of dreams, mental physiology, Italian folk-lore, birds, and art. He translated also Heine's verse and prose.

Leland was nearly always an interesting writer, with a great fund of miscellaneous knowledge, though over-ready to generalise on insufficient data. Probably his *Hans Breitmann's Ballads* will survive his other writings; indeed, not a few lines have passed into current speech and become the familiar tags of the journalist.

Another versatile writer was George William Curtis (1824–1892), who also became a journalist. He wrote a popular story of New York life, *Trumps* (1861), and among much miscellaneous work published some agreeable travel sketches and some lively satires on American life in *The Potiphar Papers* (1853). He was a vigorous and untiring social reformer and an able and finished orator.

As an essayist, Curtis is a graceful and cultured exponent of the "light brigade"; sounding no great depths, nor achieving much originality, but nearly always a pleasant and entertaining companion.

II. PROSE: (c) Historians. George Bancroft—William Hickling Prescott—John Lothrop Motley—Francis Parkman—Daniel Webster—Abraham Lincoln—Goldwin Smith.

THE HISTORIANS

Historical literature in America is especially connected with Massachusetts, and this fact has been explained by American writers as being due partly to the existence in Boston and Cambridge of fine libraries peculiarly adapted for historical research; partly due to the greater wealth and culture to be found in this State. Historical research obviously needs leisure for its adequate pursuit.

The first historian of considerable note is George Bancroft (1800–1889). His twelve volumes dealing with the *History of the United States*, carry the subject down to the formation of the Constitution. The work is a quarry of valuable information rather than a work of literary art. His discursive and crudely-rhetorical style, his laborious minuteness, do not make for agreeable reading. His work, indeed, is not really a history of the States, but a history of the beginnings of the States. Yet, as a pioneer of American history, painstaking and generous-minded, he occupies an honoured place.

On a much higher level stands William Hickling Prescott (1796–1859), whose *History of the Conquest of Mexico* (1843) and *History of the Conquest of Peru* (1847), have attained a European reputation. He was not a great scholar, and our historian is far less accurate than Bancroft; not through wilfulness or carelessness, but because of the poverty of reliable material at the time that he wrote upon the subjects that attracted him the most. Yet, making all allowance for the picturesque inexactitudes of his popular histories, there is much that is still valuable in his work. As literary historian with a power of actualising the past and arresting the imagination of the reader, he can hold his own with our own Macaulay; and, like Macaulay, he has probably infected the minds of thousands with a taste for history.

John Lothrop Motley (1814–1877) is more accurate and reliable than Prescott, and at the same time he has many of Prescott's literary powers as a picturesque writer; so that we may regard him as the best historical writer America has yet given birth to. He is expressly connected with Dutch history, and his *Rise of the Dutch Republic* (1856), and the *History of the United Netherlands* (1860–1868), are the works of a thorough scholar and a

dramatic writer. Like Froude, with whom Motley presents points of affinity, Motley has his prejudices, and his Spanish portraits are over-coloured; but that is only to say he has the defects of his good qualities. He was an ardent patriot and an intense lover of liberty, and if his style is less easy to read than Prescott's, and some of his pictures over-elaborated, he is, at his best, fully as graphic and arresting.

Francis Parkman (1823–1893), though younger than Motley, belongs to the more modern school of research. He devoted most of his energies to a lengthy and detailed history of America, up to the time of the Revolutionary War. He was a great traveller both in America and the Continent, and his personal observation proved of great value to him; fully as valuable in another way were his thorough and systematic explorations in European archives.

Already in *The Oregon Trail* (1847) he had shown himself a lover of nature, an observer of character, and the possessor of a vivid and plastic style. When to these accomplishments in literary craftsmanship were added the knowledge and scholarship of the expert investigator, Parkman took his place as one of the great historians in American letters. His work is less wide in its appeal than that of Motley and Prescott, and lacks both the style and dignity of Motley; but on the whole Parkman may take a place very little below that of these two brilliant writers; while *qua* scholar he is certainly superior to Prescott, and is more judicial than Motley.

Allied to the work of the historian is the work of such great publicists as Daniel Webster (1782–1852) and Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865).

As an orator, Webster is the greatest that America has given us. Born in 1782, in New Hampshire, he displayed at an early age his power of eloquent speech. Entering Congress in his thirty-first year, he soon made his mark, just as earlier he had made his mark as an able lawyer; being regarded as one of the greatest interpreters of the Constitution. In 1822 he defended the theory of an indissoluble union in an eloquent and memorable speech. His greatest orations were on the two-hundredth anniversary of the landing of the Puritans in 1820, and on the death of John Adams and Thomas Jefferies, and the Reply to Hayne (1830). In 1850 his support of the compromise, on the subject of Anti-Slavery, brought upon him the wrath of Whittier, but here he was more short-sighted than deliberately base, as Whittier's bitter portrait shows him. In his desperate attempts to save the Union, he conceded too much to the opponents of freedom. And, as we know now, his concessions were vain and fruitless. Yet he was a great and sincere, and a very upright man, somewhat spoiled by success and adulation, whose sincerity was more remarkable than his clear-sightedness.

Regarded from the literary point of view, Webster's orations are clear and apposite in exposition, dignified and stately in treatment. If not Burke's peer in imaginative power and in variety, he is an oratorical writer of a high order.

Abraham Lincoln is a finer figure than Webster. Indeed there is no finer figure in American history than he; less brilliant and diverse than Franklin, he is a more thorough representative of the best elements of American democracy. The importance of this homely, self-educated man as a factor in American life cannot easily be overestimated.

Nobility of character gave both Franklin and Lincoln their pre-eminence as men of affairs, but Lincoln more than Franklin made of letters an ethical rather than artistic matter. In political literature Lincoln did for the American people what Longfellow did in poetry—spoke from the heart to the heart; concerned primarily to elevate and purify the springs of national life. He is seen at his best in his oration at the Cooper Union in 1860, and in some of his State papers and letters. His knowledge of the Bible and theology gives a simple, direct eloquence to his language that reminds us of our own Bunyan. Though of the people and for the people, he is no mere prophesier of fair things. He is as much alive as Whitman was to their weaknesses and faults. A democrat of the rarest and most precious order.

Goldwin Smith (1823) was a Canadian by adoption. Born at Reading, he was educated at Eton and Oxford, and it was not till 1868 that he settled in Canada, becoming Professor of English and Constitutional History in Cornell University. An able Canadian publicist, he is also a forceful and suggestive historical critic, and has written a *Political History of the United Kingdom* (1899), as well as a number of monographs on *Cromwell*, &c., while later he has showed his versatility by publishing a volume of scholarly verse, *Bay Leaves: Specimens of Greek Tragedy* (1894). In outlook somewhat pessimistic, in his style trenchant and caustic, his critical work shows everywhere the working of a powerful mind. In politics he was an individualist Radical and an anti-Imperialist both in Britain and America.

HUMORISTS

INTRODUCTION: HUMOUR ANALYSED. "Artemus Ward"—Francis Bret Harte—"Mark Twain."

It will be obvious to all who have studied American Letters, how insistent the note of humour is both in prose and verse, from Washington Irving onwards. No less obvious is the lack of humour before that time. The few exceptions were, before the coming of Irving, modelled chiefly upon the satirists of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and fell considerably short of their models. But there is scarcely a writer of note in the nineteenth century (Margaret Fuller is, perhaps, the one exception) whose humour is not an integral part of his work. Humour plays an important part in the work of scholarly writers such as Lowell and Holmes, it gives a pleasant tang to Thoreau's discursive wisdom, and ripples delicately over the surface of Hawthorne's fantasies. It plays an even more important part in writers more essentially popular, like Bret Harte and Mark Twain. The question naturally arises: Are there any distinctive marks that differentiate American from English humour?

At bottom, of course, humour is an elemental fact, independent of nationality; it derives from a sense of incongruity; an instinctive realisation of the clash between the Ideal and the Real, of the poetry of life and the prose of life. The truth of this statement may be readily tested by applying it to the work of such great humorists as Chaucer, Shakespeare, Rabelais, Cervantes. Their humour is basically at one; in its manifestation it is necessarily coloured by racial characteristics.

One thing, however, should be made clear. Humour is, in its ultimate analysis, quite independent of culture. All that culture does is to determine its form; the humour of the cultured writer we may conveniently call "wit"; that of the less cultured, "fun." Both English and American can furnish good examples of each; there is more fun than wit in Mark Twain, for example; more wit than fun in Oliver Wendell Holmes.

In estimating American humour we must bear in mind that many of the writers were profoundly influenced by English models, and to that extent their humour is derivative rather than original. There is, for instance, not a little in Washington Irving that reminds us of Addison and Steele; in Holmes, that recalls Praed and Lamb. But after making ample allowance for what one might call the natural imitativeness of widely read and impressionable natures as opposed to the artificial imitativeness of the mere literary parasite, there is a good margin of humour in American letters that has a distinctive flavour of its own, affected as it is especially by the racial conditions and particular environment of New England.

Firstly, then—*What* is this? In the second place—*Why* this distinctive flavour?

American humour has a dry, astringent quality about it. French humour also is dry, but is far less astringent on the whole; and English humour is, for the most part, not dry at all, but fruity and full-bodied. American humour, then, makes rather for chuckling than for hearty laughter.

For instance, Thoreau's famous retort: "One world at a time." Holmes': "Put not your trust in money, but put your money in trust." Lowell's:

> "Ez to my principles, I glory
> In havin' nothin' o' the sort;
> I ain't a W'ig—I ain't a Tory—
> I'm jest a candidate, in short."

Mark Twain's: "I could not lie, so I told Harris to do it." Bret Harte's:

> "Then Abner Dean of Angel's raised a point of order—when
> A chunk of old red sandstone took him in the abdomen.
> And he smiled a kind of sickly smile, and curled up on the floor,
> And the subsequent proceedings interested him no more."

Artemus Ward's:

> "I used to drink once, but when I did I never allowed business to interfere with it."

Whence arises this dry brand of humour?

It arises from (1) the contrast between the vastness of America with its primal aboriginal society, and the concentrated civilised life of its cities; (2) the continual clash between the intense practicality of the Yankee, and his larger human sympathies.

Both these features will be better appreciated when we have considered with some detail the especially distinctive American humorists. Washington Irving, Thoreau, Holmes and Lowell, are notable humorists; but they are cosmopolitan in their sympathies; and if we want to analyse American humour, we must needs turn to really national humorists like Artemus Ward, Bret Harte, and Mark Twain. The others are national in parts, these are wholly national.

THE HUMORISTS

CHARLES FARRER BROWNE ("Artemus Ward"), (1834–1867), is better known as a popular humorous lecturer than as a humorous writer; but his writings, though quite unpretentious in their solemn

absurdities, have a quaint raciness and originality that make him a welcome addition to the body of acceptable fun-makers. He makes abundant comic capital from orthographical eccentricities (a line of humour worked often to death by many of his successors); thus, in the interview between some pretty young Shakeresses and the Showman:

"'My pretty dears, ear I go you have no objections, have you, to a innersent kiss at parting?'
"'Yay,' they sed, and I *yay'd*.'
. . . . . .
"'My pretty dears,' sez I, 'shall we *yay* agin?'
"'Nay,' they sed, and I nay'd.'"

Naturally, he pokes fun at the sentiment over the Red Indian (shades of Cooper!):

"I will remark here, while on the subject of Injuns, that they are in the main a very shaky set . . . and when I hear philanthropists bewailin' the fask that every year 'carries the noble red man nearer the settin' sun,' I simply have to say I'm glad of it, tho' it is rough on the settin'sun. They call you by the sweet name of brother one minit, and the next they scalp you with their Thomas-hawks. But I wander. Let us return to the Tower."

Once, when crossing the desert, he was surrounded by a band of Ute Indians. Their chief rejoiced in the name of Wocky-bocky.

"He said:
"'Torsha arrah darrah, mishky bookshean!'
"I told him he was right.
"Wocky-bocky again rubbed his tomahawk across my face, and said, 'Win-ho-loo-loo!'
"Says I—'Mr. Wocky-bocky,' says I—'Wocky—I have thought so for years—and so's all our family.'"

Bryant's tribute to Artemus is worth recording:

"Artemus has a style of his own, which no lecturer has yet discovered. He says so many funny things that the audience lets a 'goak' slip by unnoticed, and then Artemus will pause for a moment, with a downcast expression, till a sudden guffaw tells him that somebody has seen the point. His lecture, besides his rollicking humour, includes considerable information, which is relieved from the tedious elements usually existing in valuable information by the panoramic pictures with which it is illustrated. An excellent idea of social life in great Salt Lake City is obtained from a visit to 'yours trooly,' besides a good stock of jokes to pass off at the next dinner party as original."

In the absurd "Rules of the House" appended to his lecture papers, there are some deliciously ridiculous quips:

"Children in arms not admitted if the arms are loaded.
"Children under one year of age not admitted, unless accompanied by their parents or guardians.
"Artemus Ward will not be responsible for any money, jewellery, or other valuables left with him—to be returned in a week or so.
"If the audience do not leave the hall when this entertainment is over, they will be put out by the police.
"Soldiers on the battle-field will be admitted to this entertainment gratis.
"Artemus Ward delivered lectures before
ALL THE CROWNED HEADS OF EUROPE
ever thought of delivering lectures."

Here is an extract from the programme at the Egyptian Hall:

"Mr. Artemus Ward will call on the citizens of London at their residence, and explain any jokes in his narrative which they may not understand."

The following is taken from some (we need hardly say bogus) recommendations appended to the programme.

"It was a grand scene, Mr. Artemus Ward standing on the platform talking; many of the audience sleeping tranquilly in their seats; others leaving the room and not returning; others crying like a child at some of the jokes—all, all formed a most impressive scene and showed the powers of this remarkable orator. And when he announced that he should never lecture in that town again, the applause was absolutely deafening."

Poor Browne's early death from consumption was universally regretted. America lost their most original humorist; his friends a genial, tender-hearted comrade.

Francis Bret Harte (1839–1902) was something more than a mere fun-maker (though that limitation is by no means to be despised). He was born in New York, August 1839, with English, German, and Hebrew blood in his veins. He was a delicate lad, and in 1856 went to California with his mother, becoming in succession a messenger, a drug clerk, a printer, a school teacher, and an Indian fighter, and secretary to the Superintendent of the Mint in San Francisco. In the last capacity he found opportunity for writing, and achieved some of his earliest successes, as, for instance, those capital parodies *Condensed Novels*. He did well also in whimsical light verse. Later on he achieved greater fame with his *Luck of Roaring Camp* and other Californian studies, which delighted all but the Californians themselves. Throughout his life he was a wanderer, but he never did any work of value apart from the inspiration of Western America, and it had been better for his genius if the wander-lust had been less firmly rooted. He died in 1902, at Camberley, Surrey.

Bret Harte's humour found a natural outlet in the rough, elemental life of the mining camp, where extravagances of personality as well as of incident seem quite in harmony with the surroundings. With this eye for extravagances he combined a dry, restrained, staccato style, peculiarly effective as a vehicle alike for his melodramatics, sentimentalities, and mere comicalities. His best writings have something of that colloquial realism, and rough actuality, that attract us in Mr. Kipling's tales, and which was, in the days of Bret Harte's popularity, a new and alluring feature.

There is a certain spiritual kinship between Bret Harte and Charles Dickens, in so far as each man was drawn towards rough, uncultured folk, and sought to show beneath the roughness and uncouthness, some fine strain of character, and each man won his greatest artistic successes in this field. The analogy must not be pressed further; for putting aside the incomparably greater genius of Dickens, his literary method has little in common with that of Bret Harte. But as moralists in fiction their likeness is of interest to the student of letters.

Here is a picture from one of the Californian stories:

"The winter of 1851 will long be remembered in the foot-hills. The snow lay deep on the Sierras, and every mountain creek became a river, and every river a lake. Each gorge and gulch was transformed into a tumultuous water-course that descended the hill sides, tearing down giant trees and scattering its drift and débris along the plain. Red Dog had been twice under water, and Roaring Camp had been forewarned. 'Winter put the gold into them gulches,' said Stumpy. 'It's been here once, and will be here again!' And that night the North Fork suddenly leaped over its banks and swept up the triangular valley of Roaring Camp.

"In the confusion of rushing water, crashing trees, and crackling timber, and the darkness which seemed to flow with the water and blot out the fair valley, but little could be done to collect the scattered camp. When the morning broke, the cabin of Stumpy, nearest the river-bank, was gone. Higher up the gulch they found the body of its unlucky owner; but the pride, the hope, the joy, the Luck of Roaring Camp had disappeared. They were returning with sad hearts when a shout from the bank recalled them.

"It was a relief boat from down the river. They had picked up, they said, a man and an infant, nearly exhausted, about two miles below. Did anybody know them, and did they belong here?

"It needed but a glance to show them Kentuck lying there, cruelly crushed and bruised, but still holding the Luck of Roaring Camp in his arms. As they bent over the strangely assorted pair, they saw that the child was cold and pulseless. 'He is dead,' said one. Kentuck opened his eyes. 'Dead?' he repeated feebly. 'Yes, my man; and you are dying too.' A smile lit the eyes of the expiring Kentuck. 'Dying!' he repeated; 'he's a taking me with him. Tell the boys, I've got the Luck with me now;' and the strong man, clinging to the frail babe as a drowning man is said to cling to a straw, drifted away into the shadowy river that flows for ever to the unknown seas."

Apart from his power of visualising a side of life hitherto untouched in literature, and from his sense of local colour, Bret Harte lacks distinction as a writer. Away from his favourite locale he becomes more often than not wearisome; and though there is excellent fooling in his prose parodies, they are not parodies of the first order, as Mr. Max Beerbohm's are. The burlesque element is too strong, the sense of style too weak.

In his verse there is plenty of vigour and colour. If it lacks the polish of Holmes and the intellectual tang of Lowell, it has humour and observation—while once at least, in the oft-quoted *Heathen Chinee*, it reaches a high level of satiric ingenuity. But on the whole, it is inferior to his best prose, for it is too rough-hewn, too dependent on well-known models.

Bret Harte will be remembered by his *Luck of Roaring Camp*, his *Miggles*, and his *Outcasts of Poker's Flat*; for there his erratic genius finds its most satisfying expression.

JIM

Say, there! P'r'aps
Some on you chaps
Might know Jim Wild?
Well,—no offence:
Thar ain't no sense
In gettin' riled!

Jim was my chum
Up on the Bar;
That's why I come
Down from up yar,
Lookin' for Jim.
Thank ye, sir! You
Ain't one of that crew,
Blest if you are!

Money?—Not much.
That ain't my kind:
I ain't no such.
Rum?—I don't mind
Seein' it's you.

Well, this yer Jim;
Did you know him?—
Jess 'bout your size;
Same kind of eyes!

Well, that is strange,
Why, it's two year
Since he came here,
Sick, for a change.
Well, here's to us:
Eh?
The h—, you say!
Dead?
That little cuss?

What makes you star'—
You ever thar?
Can't a man drop
's glass 'n yer shop
But you must r'ar?
It wouldn't take
D— much to break
You and your bar.

Dead!
Poor—little—Jim!
—Why, thar was me,
Jones, and Bob Lee,
Harry and Ben,—
No account men:
Then to take *him!*

Well, thar—Good-bye—
No more, sir,—I—
Eh?
What's that you say?—
Why, dern it!—sho!—
No? Yes! By Jo!
Sold!
Sold! Why, you limb!
You orney,
Derned old
Long-legged Jim!

SAMUEL LANGHORNE CLEMENS, otherwise "Mark Twain," was born in Florida, Missouri, 1835. His early years, with their variety of employment, served him well as an apprentice to letters. As a printer, a journalist, a river pilot, a soldier (in the Confederate Army), he amassed experiences that soon found an outlet in letters. Bursting upon his countrymen with broad extravaganza like *The Jumping Frog* and *The Innocents Abroad*, he is regarded by many as merely a humorist of the old-fashioned two-penny coloured order—in other words, a jolly-hearted buffoon.

But he is very much more than that, and even in *The Innocents Abroad*, amid much cheap tomfoolery, there are touches of admirable observation, and a graphic power of description.

As a humorist, he is less whimsical, less subtle than Bret Harte, but superior to him in fertility of inspiration and fecundity of subject matter. As a story-teller he has greater variety, and a steadier outlook on life; with greater force and intensity at

his best if less poignancy. His *nom-de-plume* came to him while as a pilot he was working on the Mississippi, and he would often hear the cry of warning "Mark Twain" or "In Two Fathom." Thus he seized on the name and used it for his work.

Mark Twain's travel experiences are drawn freely upon in his earlier works: *The New Pilgrim's Progress*, and *The Innocents Abroad* (dealing with Palestine); *Roughing It* and *The Innocents at Home* (dealing with life in Western America); *A Tramp Abroad* (dealing with European places, especially Switzerland).

In his later works the humour is less extravagant, the tone less cheerfully irresponsible; the humorist reveals himself as not merely a brilliant descriptive writer, or an acute observer, but as a delicate and subtle observer, an admirable story-teller, with a fine sense of character. He never did anything better than *Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn*, and *Pudd'nhead Wilson*—unsurpassed in their own way as pictures of American life.

His later years were filled with sorrow, yet at no time did his personality seem more attractive, or his character more lovable. Grief embitters some natures; it mellowed Twain's and revealed what few had suspected, that not only was he very much more than a jester, but that he was better in his serious than in his jocose moods. As a humorist, Twain scarcely ranks higher than fun-makers such as Max Adeler. He is less original than Artemus Ward, less artistic than Bret Harte; for his taste is by no means impeccable, as those dismal books, *A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur*, and *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*, show.

Even in his *Travel Yarns*, his descriptions are better than his jokes—for all their jolly, good-natured exuberance.

Take, for instance, this admirable pen picture from *The Innocents Abroad*:

"We walked out into the grass-grown, fragment-strown court beyond the Parthenon. It startled us every now and then, to see a stony white face stare suddenly up at us out of the grass with its dead. The place seemed alive with ghosts. I half expected to see the Athenian heroes of twenty centuries ago glide out of the shadows, and steal into the old temple they knew so well and regarded with such boundless pride.

"The full moon was riding high in the heavens now. We sauntered carelessly and unthinkingly to the edge of the lofty battlements of the citadel, and looked down. A vision!—and such a vision! Athens by moonlight! It lay in the level plain right under our feet—all spread abroad like a picture, and we looked upon it as we might be looking at it from a balloon. We saw no semblance of a street, but every house, every window, every clinging vine, every projection were marked as clearly as if it were at noonday; and yet there was no glare, no glitter, nothing harsh or repulsive. The harshest city was flooded with the yellowest light that ever streamed from the moon, and seemed like some little temple, whose delicate pillars and ornate front glowed with a rich lustre that chained the eye like a spell; and nearer by, the palace of the king reared its creamy walls out of the mist of a great garden of shrubbery, that was flecked all over with a random shower of amber lights—a spray of golden sparks that lost their brightness in the glory of the moon, and glinted softly upon the sea of dark foliage like the pallid star of the milky way. Overhead the stately columns, majestic still in their ruin; underfoot, the dreaming city; in the distance, the silver sea. The picture needed nothing. It was perfect."

Indeed his fun is most acceptable when well diluted by other qualities; the "set scenes" seem too often mechanically comic. We would willingly surrender them for such occasional flashes as this, dealing with the terrors of tipping in a big hotel:

"If you have a man to sneeze for you, and another chooses to help him, you have got to pay both."

Yet, excellent as his travel books are in vivid snapshots of men and things, Twain is at his happiest as a national writer when dealing with American life. Elsewhere he is a fitful artist; there a great artist.

The Jumping Frog might have been written by Josh Billings or Max Adeler. *The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg* (1900) is worthy of Lowell at his best.

It may savour of paradox to give serious examples of the best work of the humorist. Yet herein lies the fount of their humorous inspiration—a poetic sensibility and power of observation. Without these qualities they might have been jesters of a kind—not great jesters.

PART VIII

PRESENT-DAY TENDENCIES IN ENGLISH LITERATURE (1890–1916)

Introduction. Three Characteristics: I. Its Reiteration of the old Revolutionary Formula. 2. Its Worship of Power rather than of Beauty. 3. The Note of Challenge. I. Poetry. II. Fiction. III. The Drama. IV. Criticism and the Essay. V. Art and Letters.

INTRODUCTION

NOMINALLY, the Victorian era closes in 1900; actually, it came to an end during the 'eighties. The last ten years of the century saw a ferment of new ideas, gave birth to a fresh set of forces in literary life, and witnessed a reaction against many of the old Victorian ideals.

The new movement bears some resemblance to the Romantic revival that quickened our sensibilities at the close of the eighteenth century. It also is affected by Revolutionary ideas; it also is Democratic in its implications; it also involves a closer correspondence of Art with Nature.

But if the general resemblance is considerable, there are particular differences that give it a distinctive character of its own. There is always a rhythmic ebb and flow in literary fashions and ideals, but history, despite the adage, never repeats itself, though historical conditions may. No two sunrises are ever the same.

What are the special characteristics of the present-day tendencies in life and letters?

(1) Its reiteration of the old Revolutionary formula of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, in a new setting. (2) Its worship of Power rather than of Beauty—here it parts company abruptly with the age of the Romantic revival and the Victorian age. (3) Its challenging attitude of the elder values in Art and Life—this to some extent is true also of the age preceding; but the challenging attitude is more persistent, more searching to-day.

1. *Its Reiteration of the old Revolutionary Formula*

The old formula emphasized the individual; it drew attention to the importance of man as man, irrespective of class distinctions; and its reading of "equality" and "fraternity" was a moral and sentimental one. To-day the formula is construed in a fresh light. It is collectivistic, not individualistic in its emphasis; it is economic rather than moral and sentimental; it does not express itself in a humanitarian appeal to the more influential classes to help their poorer brethren, it strikes a more radical note in aiming at the abolition of class distinction. We can see this clearly if we place the social idealism of Wordsworth and Coleridge beside that of William Watson and John Davidson; of Dickens and Reade beside that of Shaw and Wells.

The change, of course, is no violent transition; it began in the 'sixties. Mill in his later studies, Kingsley in his songs, Ruskin in his economic criticism, had paved the way.

But there were pioneers at every stage, and it is none the less certain that the social heresies of yesterday have become the orthodoxies of to-day. Ruskin, once regarded as a dangerous innovator, is now regarded as almost old-fashioned in some of his social theories.

Put briefly, the difference between the appeal of the old Revolutionary formula and the new, is, that the old was made to the community as a collection of individuals; the new to the state as an organic and collective whole. Nor has this revolutionary gospel been confined as before to a few isolated figures in poetry and prose; it is promulgated by a compact body of writers drawn from the middle classes, whose aim is more systematically and logically, less sentimentally and didactically, expressed than in the Victorian era. The failure of the Labour riots in the 'eighties had taught the reformers the need of an educational programme to arouse more effectually the apathetic majority and to give the poor man a better intellectual equipment for the fight against oppression.

It may be urged that the battle song of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity is as vital to-day among progressive thinkers as ever it was in the day of Byron and Shelley. That it yet carries with it a vital significance is of course true, but do we sufficiently realise how imperceptibly the values attached to these words have altered. Let us examine, soberly and fairly, those terms so abused by rhetoricians.

Liberty is, in plain English, merely the freedom to do as you like. Obviously such a freedom must in every civilised community be qualified, for you can only do as you like provided you do not interfere with the rights of other people. In Revolutionary France, it meant freedom from the interference of the ruling classes; and this is the sense in which Coleridge and Shelley used the word. In other words, the old ideal of liberty implied a minimum of government. Both Godwin and Shelley looked upon government as an evil. Spencer considered the evil to be necessary, though the less State interference we had the better. This is the prevalent attitude during the earlier years of the century; this ideal saturated the Benthamite radicalism and accounts for the (otherwise inex-

pliable) reluctance to accept factory legislation. It was held to be unconducive to liberty.

But as the years went by, this old ideal wavered; it was felt that excessive individualism retarded rather than helped forward liberty; and to-day the freedom of the community, so far from resting on a decrease of government, is made to depend on a steadily increasing quantity of government. The Socialist to-day who talks about liberty looks to government interference; he does not resent it. Collectivism, so far from connoting a minimum, connotes a maximum of government.

Sociological science, a thing of essentially modern growth, has given greater exactitude and a clearer significance to the term liberty than it possessed in the earlier years of the last century; it has also done a like service for the terms equality and fraternity. No longer are we content with the moral implication of the term as is suggested by Burns' familiar lines "The man's the gowd for a' that." We have attempted to particularise the sentiment, as may be seen in such phrases as "Equality of opportunity." Fraternity likewise, for many years respected more in the light of a pious aspiration and left in the hands of the theologian and the poet, has gradually become an important factor in social politics. Not even the ghastly carnage of a Europe red with blood, should blind us to the fact that fraternity is a more living reality to-day than it was at the time when Shelley pleaded for Love as the law of life, and Coleridge declared that "he prayeth best who loveth best."

At first sight this statement may seem grotesquely untrue in face of the unspeakable horrors with which we have been for the last few months familiarised. But just as one does not accept as normal the temperature of a man in a raging fever, so one does not assess the moral sentiments of a nation when it is drunk with militarism.

Few of us in England can have realised the disintegration of all the finer instincts that this militaristic poison is capable of accomplishing. The poison has been secretly at work for years past. Now it has spread from a section of the governing classes in Germany to the German people at large. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. On the few who have deliberately fostered the poison, a terrible responsibility exists. But the many who have been unwittingly poisoned, must not be judged in the same way. They are as much the victims of a pernicious theory as are the thousands of tortured and murdered men, women, and children who have suffered in Flanders and Northern France. When the hour of madness has passed, fraternity, paralysed but not killed, will emerge the stronger and the deeper for the momentary set back. And that the fraternal sentiment is not killed must be clear to all who recall the remarkable account of Christmas 1914 in the trenches, when for a brief space enmities were forgotten and friend and foe fraternised together.

That brutality should even thus far have inhibited the growth of humanitarian feeling that has undoubtedly spread during the last hundred years, is largely due to a second characteristic which has leapt into prominence during the last twenty years.

The *second characteristic* in modern life and letters is *the Worship of Power rather than of Beauty*. In its inception this characteristic is a wholesome reaction from the over narrow ideal of Beauty that marked Victorian ideals. Strictly speaking there should be no line of demarcation between Power and Beauty. The most vital beauty is dynamic; many of the Victorians imagined it was something merely static. Immediately it is thus restricted it tends to lose its freshness and primal inspiration: conventionality weakens its vital appeal: artificiality creeps in to make it a source of enervation rather than of stimulus.

And some of the greater Victorians were keen-sighted enough to realise this. Browning consistently strove for strength rather than for sweetness in literary expression, just as he valued vigorous individuality above meek acquiescence in law and order; and not the least of his gifts to English literature was his strenuous attack upon the pretty-pretty conventionality that was one of the weaknesses of Victorian letters. Meredith and Hardy, each in his own way, followed in Browning's lead, and achieved for fiction what he had done for poetry.

But the new generation was to go further still, and it found an effective method to hand in the movement that has been christened Realism.

Writers like George Moore, W. E. Henley, and Rudyard Kipling brought a rough outspokenness into our letters. More and more do we notice a relaxation on the part of literary craftsmen, of those general problems of life and conduct that hitherto had been the chief concern of letters, for the particular problems of the day. The Woman's Movement found expression in the "keynote" series of the early 'nineties; Socialism, no longer a communistic dream as in the pages of Morris, becomes in the hands of men like Shaw, Wells, Edward Carpenter, Robert Blatchford, a homily for the particular needs of the nation. Even Morris, with all his devotion to beauty, significantly postulated that it must subserve some social end; and if Morris, the lover of beauty, insisted on this, can we be surprised that many in whom the sense of beauty was more superficially awakened should sometimes pass it by altogether in their efforts to be faithful to the actuality of contemporary life? As a result of this the literature of the New Era, with all its freshness, its living interest, its power to grip, became less and less of an art, more and more a method of social propaganda.

No better illustration of this tendency can be found than in the extraordinary development of Journalism, and in the revival of the Drama. There are few better rostrums for preaching than the editorial table and the stage; yet without denying literary qualities to the drama and also the journalism of to-day, clearly the chief claim to attention lies in their vigorous preaching qualities. All the outstanding literary personages of to-day, first and foremost, are lay preachers—Shaw, Wells, Bennett, Galsworthy, Masefield, Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc.

It is clear, therefore, that this craving for more power, more freedom, greater unconventionality in Literature, had its beginnings in a perfectly wholesome mood of reaction. It is, moreover, clear that

it accomplished a good deal that was desirable in re-invigorating both Literature and Life. At the same time it carried with it dangers of its own, that were fully as mischievous in quite another way as the dangers inherent in the tendencies of the age preceding. What these dangers more precisely were will be better realised if we turn to the *third characteristic—The Note of Challenge.*

While the preachers are many, the gospel that they preach is a negative rather than a positive one. To say this implies no reproach. The age is a transitional one. Old landmarks are disappearing, new points have not yet been clearly marked out. Meanwhile the attitude of the new movement is one of challenge—challenge of the old moral and social values, challenge of elder literary forms; it is an age of experimentalising. In every pioneer movement a period of destruction must precede that of construction. It was so with the English Renascence, so with the Romantic revival. Old literary conventions, just like old social conventions, had to be broken up. Windows must be smashed when you want to let in fresh air; idols have to be overturned when you wish to revitalise reverence. An experimental age, that is quite clear as to the sources of dissatisfaction, but is by no means clear as to the means of remedying matters, necessarily finds expression in experimental forms of literature. Throughout English history we have found a close correspondence between the life and the literature of the day. This is equally true at the present time.

Not only is the intellectual restlessness of the time obvious enough in the content of present-day literature, but it has influenced its form as well. The novel of to-day, the drama of the hour, the verse of the moment, its signal merits notwithstanding, is in a curious state of unstable equilibrium.

In an older age we went for romanticism to a Scott, for realism to a Crabbe, to Byron for cynical wit, to Shelley for social idealism. Now we find wit and idealism inextricably mingled in the work of Shaw; romanticism and realism play at see-saw in Masefield. George Eliot was severely taken to task because in *Felix Holt* she observed to some extent the rules of the story of incident and did not confine herself to characterisation which she had made her special line.

What would the Victorian critics have thought of Mr. Arnold Bennett, who varies his punctiliously realistic studies of life with light-hearted jocularities like *The Card* and the *Grand Babylon Hotel*.

Even Mr. Kipling has proved both one of the most unconventional and most conventional of our verse-makers; while Mr. Wells has ranged through every door in the palace of fiction in turn, so that we are reminded in his writings of Jules Verne, Swift, Hawthorne, and Dickens.

One of the great features of life to-day is the curious shrinkage of the world. The invention of the motor car, the aeroplane, wireless telegraphy, have helped to annihilate space. Of their scientific importance and social value there is no need to speak here; but the cumulative effect of these things upon the *psychology* of the day is worth noting, inasmuch as it reacts upon our literature.

Is not our literature and journalism eloquent of an age of rapid transit? The old leisurely atmosphere has gone; gone also much of the old dignity, grace, sweetness. Even more regrettable is the lack of the old thoroughness. A breathless hurry informs the writing of to-day; a neglect of form; a contempt for beauty. There are compensations, positive gains, of which I am not unmindful and which will be noted by us later; he would be a foolish critic who could see nothing but retrograde elements in the literature of his generation, or who could fail to appreciate qualities of greatness in its best writers. In an age of flux and transition, when fresh tracts of experience are being annexed for literary treatment, when old modes of expression are being cast aside and new ones essayed, art of any kind must necessarily suffer violence and be temporarily at a disadvantage.

The excesses of the realistic school, the extravagances of certain artistic coteries, the scrappy sensationalism of modern journalistic developments, are part of the price we must pay in order to bring our life and letters into closer correspondence.

There is no need to reiterate here the qualities of greatness that characterise Victorian letters. These have been insisted upon at some length. But admiration and affection for it need not blind us to the fact that a literary age, like an individual, grows infirm in course of time. Literature, as we have seen throughout its history, needs from time to time to be reinforced with fresh vitality, with new vigour; otherwise it will languish and decay. To do this has been the work of the new generation since the closing years of the last century; and if there is more force and sincerity than beauty and sweetness in modern letters, it is because force and sincerity were the things needed. The new wine may at present be rather acrid and heady, but it has body, and time will remedy its defects. Meanwhile we must bear as tolerantly as possible with those who have drunk too deeply of this heady beverage, and mistake violence and license for strength and freedom.

I. Poetry

As regards the poetry of the period this may be said by way of preface. The splendid legacy of the past has enriched the imagination of all, its significance made the clearer and weightier by increased facilities in the book-selling world, and the greater attention given to critical and interpretative literature. The influence of Wordsworth and of Tennyson especially may be traced in much contemporary verse: Mr. William Watson carries on the Wordsworth tradition, while the lyrical sweetness and rhythmic charm of Tennyson have left their impress in different ways upon Mr. Stephen Phillips and Mr. Alfred Noyes.

It is not in these writers, however, that we shall find the new spirit in letters asserting itself. To find this we must turn to Kipling. Henley had introduced a more realistic note into poetry, especially in the emphasis he laid on Victorian life; but Rudyard Kipling is the first man who treated the raw material of modern existence in such a way

as to appeal to the man in the street. And in dealing with the crude actualities of "things as they are," neither Mr. Kipling nor his successor, Mr. John Masefield, have been at pains to eliminate the concomitant ugliness from their art. Masefield is the less sparing here, and it is curious to note that while his best work shows a finer and surer imaginative beauty than that of Kipling, he is less concerned than his contemporary to soften the brutal realities with which as a writer he is concerned.

I do not think this is due to the fact that he is more realistic in his method than the author of *Barrack Room Ballads*; for if you examine their work closely, Kipling's verse shows a more deliberately realistic manner. But Kipling is at heart more conventional than Masefield. Masefield's keener sensibilities drive him into a frenzy when he compares the idealities with the realities, and the coarse and nauseous violence of certain passages in his verse are the outcome of an exasperated romanticism, not the result of a deliberate realism. Less conventional than Kipling, he is at less pains to hide his feelings. That he has greater imagination I would not aver—recalling such things as *Mandalay*—but he has certainly a more sensitive one.

Another illustration of the new spirit in our poetry may be seen in the work of æsthetic writers like Arthur Symons and Ernest Dowson, and brilliant experimentalists such as John Davidson.

Symons grew lyrical over lip salve, rouge, and the thick atmosphere of the music hall. There are other things beside elemental realities that may claim to be treated of in Art, said Dowson and Symons in effect. The realities of life include very many phases of human experience—even exotic and morbid moods, and the dallying with artificialities. Artistic skill need not be denied the author of *London Volunteries* and *Amoris Victima*—though Dowson is the finer artist here in *morbidezza*—but the defect of Mr. Symons' metrical art lies in the absence of any true gaiety, abandon, *joie de vivre* in his erotic moods. His amatory verses repel, not because they are concerned with sensual sensations, but because it is a cold- not a hot-blooded sensuality—because there is too little of the genuine Bohemian, too much of the clever experimental journalist in his work. It is a pity, for Symons has a fine and fastidious literary palate, and a genuine love of letters, as his prose writings show.

The work of JOHN DAVIDSON deserves a more lengthy consideration.

JOHN DAVIDSON

John Davidson, born 1857, was the son of Scottish parents, and was educated at the Highlanders' Academy, Greenock, up to the age of thirteen; he then worked in a sugar manufactory for a brief while, but in 1873 returned to his old school as a pupil teacher. Other scholastic work followed during the next few years: then came a brief business interregnum again in a Glasgow thread firm; after which his career as a teacher was resumed. During this time he had given much thought to literature and published several plays. Finally he gave up his scholastic work, and coming to London threw all his energies into literature and journalism. He wrote for *The Speaker* and *The Yellow Book*, scored a fair measure of theatrical success with his translation of Coppée's *For the Crown* and Victor Hugo's *Ruy Blas*, but distinguished himself most as a fresh and vigorous verse writer. Such volumes as *Fleet Street Eclogues* and *Ballads and Songs*, published during the 'nineties, exhibit him at his best as a literary artist. During his later years he gave more attention to matter than to manner, and was mainly concerned with giving his philosophy of life to the world in a series of "testaments."

Circumstances were often adverse, yet he had a fair meed of success and a generous allowance of recognition compared with that which has fallen to some men of letters. But his proud nature and awkward temperament shaped him for tragedy. He was a born revolutionary an instinctive fighter; and stoical fortitude was not among his virtues, courageous as he was in many ways.

Depressed and discouraged by the necessity of doing so much pot-boiling work in order to earn a livelihood, Davidson, it is surmised, put an end to his life in 1909. His body was found by some fishermen in Mount's Bay, Cornwall, and he was buried at sea, in consonance with his own wishes.

His Work

Various as his work is, farce, satire, fantasy, romance, it is as a writer of ballads that he will probably be best remembered. There is an opulence, a passion about these that grip the imagination. Sometimes indeed he rises to a stuck splendour of phrasing worthy of the highest traditions of English poetry. For instance, in such stanzas as these from *A Ballad of Heaven*:

"He wrought at one great work for years;
The world passed by with lofty look;
Sometimes his eyes were dashed with tears;
Sometimes his lips with laughter shook.

His wife and child went clothed in rags,
And in a windy garret starved:
He trod his measures on the flags,
And high on heaven his music carved.

Wistful he grew but never feared;
For always on the midnight skies
His rich orchestral score appeared
In stars and zones and galaxies.

He thought to copy down his score;
The moonlight was his lamp; he said,
'Listen, my love,' but on the floor
His wife and child were lying dead."

Or these from *Romney Marsh*—

"Masts in the offing wagged their tops;
The swinging waves pealed on the shore
The saffron beach, all diamond drops
And beads of surge, prolonged the roar.

As I came up from Dymchurch Wall,
I saw above the Downs' low crest
The crimson bands of sunset fall,
Flicker and fade from out the west.

Night sank: like flakes of silver fire
The stars in one great shower came down,
Shrill blew the wind; and shrill the wire
Rang out from Hythe to Romney town.

The darkly shining salt sea drops
Steamed as the waves clashed on the shore;
The beach, with all its myriad steps
Pealing again, prolonged the roar."

There is a fine humour in Davidson's verse, that sparkles in *The Ballad of a Nun*, and flushes from his haunting lyric *The Runnable Stag*:

"Three hundred gentlemen able to ride
Three hundred horses, as gallant and free,
Behold him escape on the evening tide
Far out till he sank in the Severn sea,
Till he sank in the depths of the sea—
The stag, the buoyant stag, the stag
That slept at last in a jewelled bed
Under the sheltering ocean's spread,
The stag, the runnable stag."

Davidson is rough and uneven as a writer, by deliberate intent, not through lack of care, but he is never weak and negligible; there is power and passion in his earliest dramatic work, *e.g. Bruce*, and power and thought in the somewhat chaotic *Testaments* of his later period, when he had come to look on rhyme as a sign of decadence, and to insist upon his revolutionary creed as the one thing that mattered. His blank verse is remarkably forceful, and the influence of Milton and Shakespeare is considerable.

In his outlook on life, Davidson owed much to Nietzsche. Like Nietzsche he made it his business continually to question accepted ideas and to demand a revaluation. With Nietzsche he worshipped Power and Will, but he had no sympathy with the doctrine of the Super-man. He was impatient with the rationalistic spirit that the science of the mid century had helped to disseminate.

"Rationalism was only a stage in the process. For the old conception of a created Universe, with the fall of man, an atonement, and a heaven and a hell, the form and substance of the imagination of Christendom, Rationalism had no substitute. Science was not ready, but how can poetry wait? Science is synonymous with patience; Poetry is impatience incarnate. . . . Science is still a valley of dry bones till imagination breathes upon it."

But in striving to give expression to these ideas in artistic form, he lost grip as a writer. He surrendered his ancient heritage as a poet, and his links with the past, but was unable to find a medium through which to express his new ideas. We may admire the vigour and sincerity of his later utterances, but their form is displeasing and their utterance confused and vague. It is for his ballads especially, and after these his eclogues, that he will be esteemed by lovers of literature; the one for their beauty and passion, the other for their fantasy and whimsical grace.

The Celtic Note

What of the "Celtic School," it may be said, of which we have heard so much lately? How is this to be reconciled with the new spirit of which we have been speaking?

Frankly, I cannot admit the existence of any Celtic school such as may claim a distinctive place in modern verse. A Celtic note there is admittedly, but this is nothing new. Let us consider what the phrase connotes in the literature of to-day.

Broadly speaking, the Celtic note in English letters is as old as our literature, finding expression on one side in the Arthurian Romances, on the other in the Scots ballads; but when it comes to differentiating the Celtic from the Teutonic note we are faced by insuperable difficulties which are certainly not surmounted by labelling everything that survives of mysticism and idealism as Celtic. Neither Blake, Coleridge, nor Shelley were Celts, yet where in our poetry do you find these elements more rarely emphasized? In fact our greatest imaginative writers have been men of mixed blood, whereas the pure Celtic man of letters has nearly always been a writer of the second or third rank; Tom Moore, George Darley, Mangan, Ferguson. The touch of melancholy in British verse has been claimed on the Celt's behalf; but this vein runs throughout the work of men like Tennyson and Matthew Arnold, and Clough, and none of these were Celts.

Attention has been paid to a number of writers who strike the Celtic note, whether in Britain or Ireland; when, however, we pass out of Victorian times this Celtic note loses the vague indefinite quality that had for the most part characterised it before, and becoming more nationalistic, merges into what has been called the Celtic Revival. The phrase, however, must be regarded in a political and social sense rather than a literary; for the Celt has no more importance as a literary force to-day than at any time during the last hundred years. Distinctive nationalistic movements in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales have, however, given him a more definite position.

In Ireland, the literary movement is associated largely with the name of Mr. W. B. Yeats, who founded the Irish Literary Society in 1891, and was responsible some years later for the Irish Literary Theatre. With him may be mentioned Dr. Douglas Hyde, Lady Gregory, and Mr. Arthur Perceval Graves, who concentrated attention, as Scott had done in the case of his own country, upon the ancient songs and legends of Ireland.

In Scotland, the Celtic note has been popularised of late years by the work of "Fiona Macleod" (William Sharp); but in Wales the people have expressed themselves latterly more through political than literary channels. In Victorian times, Sir Lewis Morris is the only Cymric singer of importance, and popular as his writings were, they had no special artistic excellence. There are signs, however, of an attempt to emphasize the more literary aspects of Welsh life, and Mr. Ernest Rhys has done good work in this direction.

The Celtic note, therefore, in so far as it exists, is merely a continuation of a persistent element in British verse from earliest times. If it has gained more attention to-day than formerly, this is merely because it is sharply differentiated from the prevalent note of realism; it is a Romantic survival that has resisted the spirit of change, not a fresh manifestation in literary life.

II. Fiction

The novel provides such a facile and attractive means of popular appeal, and is so adaptable to

literary fashions, that its continued vitality will surprise no one. It enjoys, however, no longer the unchallenged supremacy that was its own in Victorian times, when many of the best minds of the age used it as a medium of expression.

If the literary student will follow the development of fiction from the nineties down to the present day, he will realise that while the quantity of output suffers slight diminution there is a marked decline in the quality; and that there is an increasing tendency on the part of our ablest men to choose other modes of expression. Journalism and the drama have proved serious rivals to the intellectual supremacy of the novelist. Indeed, some of the most remarkable men of the present time achieve their best work in terms of the newspaper office, or of the theatre—*e.g.* Bernard Shaw, G. K. Chesterton, John Galsworthy, J. M. Barrie, Granville Barker. Mr. G. K. Chesterton, with his acrobatic intellect, has essayed fiction in the same way as he has essayed most forms of literature, but he is, above everything, a brilliant journalist. Sir J. M. Barrie won a name in contemporary letters, truly, by his studies in Scottish life; but the kernel of Barrie's genius lies in his plays.

Yet in the first decade of the period at any rate, the novel was still a force of considerable magnitude in the life of the day.

The brilliant little band of writers who contributed to the *Yellow Book* and the *Savoy*, despite extravagances and affectations, did work that was worth the doing in tilting against the conventions that had hampered even some of the greatest Victorian novelists, to the depicting of certain phases of life. Mr. Morrison in particular proved a needful influence by opening up in his *Tales of Mean Streets* and *A Child of the Jago*, a frank and intimate study of the seamy side of city life—a phase of our life that had been over-sentimentalised and covered up. *Oliver Twist* was realistic beside *Jack Sheppard*, but Dickens was afraid to speak out as he would like to have done, and could have done, for fear of scandalising his readers. It was time that some one should speak out. So Mr. Morrison on one side, and Mr. George Moore and Mr. George Gissing on the other, gave us greyness to counterbalance the glut of rose-pink.

Another striking feature in the fiction of to-day, is the dominance of the woman novelist. Of the important part she played in Victorian fiction mention has been made; and here, as there, she is to be found in the forward movement. The note of revolt against the sex-limitations of modern life had been struck by that passionate little Puritan, Charlotte Brontë. The bugle had been blown, and now across the years its cry was taken up by a little band of clever women. There had been spasmodic outbursts before, as for instance, when Olive Schreiner published, in 1881, her *Story of an African Farm*; but it became a chorus of revolt through the mouths of "George Egerton" (Mrs. Golding Bright), Sarah Grand, "Iota" (Mrs. Mannington Caffyn), Beatrice Harraden, Elizabeth Robins, and Mrs. W. K. Clifford.

But not all of them were revolutionaries. Mrs. Humphry Ward, who started with the vote, was too critical, too judicial by temperament, to sympathise with her sister extremists; and to-day she would certainly be accounted among the literary conservatives.

There was more freshness and daring than art and staying power in many of these writers, but though the literary revolution of the woman's movement was a brief one, it left a permanent mark on the fiction that succeeded; and the experimentalists to-day, such as Mr. Compton Mackenzie and Mr. Gilbert Cannan, owe a considerable debt to the women pioneers who broke fresh ground, especially in the domain of sexual psychology, in the 'nineties of the last century.

The experimentalist, however, was by no means wholly concerned with realistic points of view; he is to be found also among the Romantics of the time. The dialect novel sprang into popularity in the late 'eighties with Barrie's *Auld Licht Idylls*, and along with Barrie in the 'nineties must be associated S. R. Crockett and Ian Maclaren, in their tales of Scottish life; Miss Jane Barlow in her Irish tales—*Bogland Studies* (1892); while the Realists, quickly appraising the value of local colouring did likewise with their enchantments; and the Cockney school in the hands of men like Arthur Morrison, Israel Zangwill, W. Pett Ridge, Edwin Pugh, and Barry Pain, surpassed in staying power the popular "Rail Yard" school.

The influence of science upon Victorian fiction has already been noted. It is more dominant to-day; indeed, it is to science that fiction finds its richest inspiration.

To illustrate from three different types:

In purely sensational fiction it permeates the methods of detective stories like *Sherlock Holmes*; in the novel of character it lies at the root of Mr. Arnold Bennett's cool self-detachment; in the novel of adventure it inspires the restless fantasies of Mr. H. G. Wells.

Every experimental period is necessarily self-conscious in its art, and save in the hands of a few masters, intense self-consciousness meets us in the fictions of the last decade or so. This is by no means such an embarrassment to enjoyment as it may seem; but since it throws the onus of pleasing entirely on the personal equation, its limitations will be obvious. It is most agreeably illustrated in the humorous work of the time, so severely criticised by that fine man of letters, H. D. Traill.

The "New Humour," as it was called, lacked the body, the sanity, the broad humanity of the great Victorians, and the virility of the eighteenth-century humorists, so Mr. Traill's animadversions were to some extent justified. None the less there is a distinctive quality about latter-day humour that gives it both a literary and human significance.

The paradoxical art of Wilde's *Dorian Grey*, the fantastic fun of J. M. Barrie, each in its own way contributes a distinct and original contribution to humorous literature; while its special characteristic lies in the self-consciousness of the jester and the capricious blend of romance and reality in his method. The spirit of mockery is more in evidence than in the older humour; there is an absence of that immense flow of animal spirits

that meets us in Dickens, or the tender, spontaneous whimsicality of Lamb. The humour is thinner, drier, less universal in its appeal. It belongs far more to a time and to a fashion than does the humour of the elder humorists. None the less it is excellent in its more limited way, and there is an intellectual flavour about Wilde's wit, and a poetic flavour in Barrie's, that may always be sure of an audience.

Mr. W. W. Jacobs can scarcely be classed with the "New Humorists," for he derives so unmistakably from Dickens and Smollett, and carries on worthily—in miniature—the elder traditions.

III. The Drama

The weaknesses of the Victorians are more conspicuous in the drama of the period than in other forms of literature; while those qualities that made the Victorian novel and Victorian verse so remarkable, are precisely those that admit least of being expressed in terms of the theatre. It is clear, therefore, that the new note of realism that was becoming more and more insistent would find a better welcome on the stage than elsewhere; for there it was needed most of all. Two men who prepared the way for the striking change that took place in the 'nineties—a change that has not yet reached its fullness of development—are Henry Arthur Jones and Arthur Wing Pinero. Mr. H. A. Jones showed a lively sense of characterisation that helped materially to vitalise the stereotyped figures of the elder Victorian play; Sir. A. W. Pinero by his deft craftsmanship and keen appreciation of stage effects did good work in creating a livelier illusion of reality. Neither the one nor the other were Realists in the accepted sense of the term; Mr. Jones' rhetorical methods detracted often from his shrewd observation; and Sir A. W. Pinero showed more ingenuity in his situations than in his ideas.

But they prepared the way none the less for an appreciation of Ibsen's genius, and accustomed the playgoer to a more faithful and intimate picture of contemporary life than that to which he had been accustomed.

In some quarters the change that came over the English drama is attributed almost entirely to Ibsen, with William Archer as his high priest and Bernard Shaw as his prophet. But the change cannot be expressed so simply as that; it was a change in the psychological climate of Europe that affected some countries more quickly than others; and it was in the natural order of things that our insular conservatism should hold out against it, whilst Scandinavia and Germany should give us the lead. Ever since the earlier years of the century, the poverty of the English drama had impressed the thoughtful men of the time. William Gifford, of the *Quarterly Review*, had said in 1810, "It seems as if all the idiots of the United Kingdom had combined together to write for the stage." Certainly while, in every other domain of art, beauty and fundamental brain work was not far to seek, in the theatre alone, at any rate for the first two-thirds of the era, poverty of idea and artificiality of treatment triumphed. The play-going public as a whole accepted cheerfully the mechanical plays of Scribe and his school; indeed, so fetter-bound were we by the machine-made play that the "tea-cup and saucer" school of T. W. Robertson in the 'sixties, with its simpler, less sophisticated methods, came as a breath of fresh air. A determined attempt was made by some of the great Victorians to restore the prestige of the romantic drama, about the same time as Robertson was effecting a mild revolution in the drama of ordinary life. Tennyson, Browning, and Swinburne worked hard to vitalise old poetic forms; but interesting as much of their work is, it is nothing more than interesting. Tennyson's gifts were panoramic, Browning's psychological, Swinburne's lyrical; valuable enough qualities certainly in poetic drama, yet of little use without the power of expressing action.

Meanwhile, among the dramatic critics of the day there was Mr. William Archer, who saw clearly into the human significance of Ibsen's work, and worked hard to introduce the Ibsen "yeast" into English theatrical bread. What Ibsen purposed to effect has been thus expressed in Mr. Shaw's exuberant style:

> "What we might have learned from Ibsen was that our fashionable dramatic material was worn out as far as cultivated modern people are concerned; that what really interests such people on the stage is not what we call action—meaning two well-known and rather short-sighted actors pretending to fight a duel without their glasses, or a handsome leading man chasing a beauteous leading lady round the stage with threats, obviously not feasible, of immediate rapine—but stories of lives, discussion of conduct, unveiling of motives, conflict of characters in talk, laying bare of souls, discovery of pitfalls—in short, *illumination* of life."

In 1889 *A Doll's House* was produced in England by Charles Charrington, and this was followed a few years later by *Hedda Gabler* and *Ghosts*. Naturally there was an uproar amongst the conservative school of critics; but the effect of Ibsen's methods, and Ibsen's attitude towards life, was undistinguishable. He did not take us by storm, but he shook our self-complacency; the yeast was introduced: it has been working in our drama ever since. The later plays of H. A. Jones and Pinero testify to this leaven, as we may readily see if we compare *The Liars* and *Michael and his Lost Angel* of Jones, *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* and *Iris* of Pinero, with their earlier work. An enthusiastic little band of radicals kept the revolutionary note sounding, through the medium of the Independent Theatre and the Stage Society, and more latterly the Barker-Vedrenne management at the Court Theatre. For the rest, Mr. Stephen Phillips accomplished what his greater predecessors were unable to do—he made the poetic drama, to an appreciable extent, a vital reality, in *Paolo and Francesca* and in *Herod*; for he had what men like Tennyson and Browning lacked, a natural instinct for the stage. Then the concentration on the poetic drama had stimulated a fresh interest in Shakespeare, and both Sir Henry Irving and after him Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree did real service to the stage in their scholarly and poetic productions. Nor must we over-

look the splendid work done by that Shakespearean enthusiast Sir F. R. Benson in the provinces.

Of Wilde's work mention is made elsewhere. Here it is sufficient to say that his influence upon the stage was that of a wit, not of a craftsman.

The most important work achieved by the radical wing of playwrights was effected at the Court Theatre early in the new century, and introduced a number of writers, several of whom are still doing notable work for the stage. Granville Barker scored his first unequivocal success in *The Voysey Inheritance*; while John Galsworthy, John Masefield, and St. John Hankin were responsible for live and fresh contributions to the realistic drama.

The playgoing public, however, as a body is sentimental at heart; and though Shaw and a few others took its fancy by their wit, cleverness, and daring, Sir J. M. Barrie has proved the most popular dramatist of modern times. His vogue is as great as that of Robertson's; and he has what Robertson had not, a tender and whimsical humour, and a touch of high poetry in his nature. His keen, alert humour has disarmed all but the most encouraging sympathisers with realism; his sentimental appeal has appealed to the average man and woman; his theatrical resourcefulness and inventive imagination has interested the critic.

IV. Criticism and the Essay

The influence of modern journalism upon the various forms of literary expression is too big a subject to be discussed adequately in these pages. Some rough idea of its sphere of influence may, however, be indicated.

Mr. Bernard Shaw has expressed the view that good journalism is much rarer and more important than good literature. This is probably only his extravagant and provocative way of drawing attention to the importance of dealing with the concrete actualities of one's own age; examining its particular problems; of being vital and, in the best sense of the word, topical. And, in so far as Mr. Shaw seeks to discourage the purely academic view of literature as a by-product—a scholar's game—we may sympathise with his aims.

Great literature, however, as Mr. Shaw knows perfectly well, is great only so far as it is a living, organic thing, intimately related to life and related in two ways. Its tap-root lies in the soil from which it draws its sustenance; the soil of a particular age, with its limitations and characteristics; but its flower is blown upon by the breezes of heaven and fed by the rain and the sun—in this respect it is related to the universal, and is an expression not of an age but of the ages.

And the difference between great journalism and great literature is this, that great journalism deals with the application of general ideas to particular and transient problems, great literature to universal problems; great journalism has an immediate and localised aim in view; it is in a sense literature in a hurry. Its form and method, therefore, necessarily differ from the form and method of literature, inasmuch as it is essentially controversial and deliberately one-sided, and the qualities it needs are not beauty, subtlety, or symmetry, but clarity, conciseness, and sincerity. To speak of journalism as slipshod literature is quite as absurd as it would be to maintain seriously that journalism was more important than literature.

Journalism is as emphatically an art as literature; but it is a different art, and is governed by different rules—the one conforms to the poster, the other to an etching; and it is scarcely necessary to point out to-day what excellent art there may be in a first-class poster. No sensible man would maintain that a poster is more *important* than an etching, just because the poster aims at a more immediate effect upon practical life. It would be as sensible to say that a policeman was more important than the Lord Chancellor, because his immediate influence could be traced more easily.

So long as the distinction between journalism and literature is recognised, there is no reason why journalism should not exercise a wholesome influence upon letters. Each has an important work to do in focussing and reflecting contemporary life; but while journalism is concerned primarily with the stuff of life, for the sake of its content, literature seeks to enshrine that content in some permanent art-form.

The great value of journalism lies in its close correspondence with actual life; and thus it should tend to preserve literature from becoming conventional and unreal. That it is doing this to a considerable extent may be admitted, but at the present time, journalism is a much more vigorous thing than literature, and consequently in place of being merely a useful ally it is a somewhat tyrannous autocrat. The literature of to-day is like the young lady of Riga who went for a ride on a tiger. Journalism is the tiger, and the two should ever prove good friends; the young lady's refining influence proving beneficial to the tiger, and the activity of the tiger proving a perambulating blessing to the young lady. But unhappily, as we are reminded in the verse, "They returned from the ride with the lady inside, and a smile on the face of the tiger." In other words, journalism has practically swallowed up literature. Our ablest men to-day are, with few exceptions, able as journalists, not as men of letters. They have deliberately chosen journalistic methods by which to appeal to their generation; their verse is journalistic, their fiction is journalistic, their drama is journalistic, but the methods of the journalist are even more notorious when we come to the essay.

We need lament no lack of brains; we have among our writers men as vigorous in intellect as in any age of letters; but in common with their brainless comrades they are moved by the restlessness, the mutability and hurry of the day. They do not talk over their ideas with us as did the elder writers; there is no genial button-holing; no mellow discursiveness. They think it better to spring at our throats, and hurl their ideas at us with a catapultic violence that is often disconcerting and daring. This is the peculiarity of such men as Shaw, Chesterton, Bennett, and Hilaire Belloc, who throw many of their best ideas into essay form.

The essays are live enough, provocative, stimulating, but they are essentially journalistic in form.

Nor is this by any means due to contrariness or pose. Let it be frankly admitted that life as it is lived to-day is not favourable to literature. The still small voice of the artist will not be heard in the babel of sound. The journalist has better lungs, and knows he must shout in order to be heard at all; and that if the imagination of the great crowd is to be arrested, he must achieve the capture by vigorous methods.

It is improbable that the writers in question are not fully alive to this; that they do not deliberately sacrifice the more permanent value of artistic form to the more transient methods of the journalistic touch. Both Mr. Shaw and Mr. Chesterton would doubtless defend their methods by saying that they did not write for future generations, but for the present; that they were concerned with the live questions of the hour, and wished to present these with an instant urgency that would effect their ends. The attitude is not a new one. Browning, when particularly interested in some point of psychology or philosophy, frankly disregarded his manner of speech, intent only upon the thing he wished to say. The attitude is quite a reasonable one from the point of view of the reformer and dialectician; but it removes the work of such writers *to that extent* out of the domain of pure literature, and out of the domain of fine art.

While a large number of able writers deliberately adopt the poster method there are some whose interests are more literary, and whose temper is more critical; and here the elder traditions of style and form persist. Mr. Arthur Symons has carried on the best traditions of Victorian criticism, and his acute and subtle taste as a man of letters is certainly second to none among the critics of to-day. As a stylist he is as delicate and finished an artist as was Pater, and often more luminous. Mr. Max Beerbohm, again, is a delightful trifler, and excels in filigree work as a stylist, presenting a piquant contrast to Mr. Beerbohm the caricaturist.

Mention must also be made of the quiet irony of Mr. G. S. Street, and the agreeable whimsicality though more imitative art of Mr. Richard Le Gallienne's earlier essays, while Mr. Le Gallienne has done sound work in literary criticism by his studies of Meredith and Rudyard Kipling. Less personal and idiosyncratic, less inclined to abandon the elder traditions, are thoughtful and seminal writers like Dr. C. H. Herford, Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, Sir Walter Raleigh, Professor Hugh Walker; while as a literary biographer Sir Sidney Lee has admirably upheld the high critical standard of his predecessor, Sir Leslie Stephen. Among the genial discursive essayists of the day, Mr. E. V. Lucas makes an agreeable and attractive figure; while Mr. A. C. Benson, despite the greater popularity of his prose musings on life and its problems, will be better remembered by the literary student for such sympathetic, discerning studies as his Tennyson and Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

Among the best exponents of English culture, special mention must be made of Professor Gilbert Murray for his interpretation of the Greek drama; Professor A. W. Ward for his erudite contribution to special periods of English Literature; and Professor Mackail for his lectures on English Poetry.

Of travel literature on its topographical side, we have Sir Martin Conway on the Andes and Spitzbergen, Sir Harry Johnston supplements Stanley's pictures of African life, and Mr. A. H. Savage Landor has added greatly to our knowledge of Eastern peoples; on the psychological side, Fielding Hall in his *Soul of a People*, and Lafcadio Hearn, a genuine literary artist, in his studies of Japanese life, strike a fresher and more original note in travel literature.

V. Art and Letters

No account, however brief, of modern tendencies in literature can overlook the inter-action between art and letters.

Already, in dealing with the Victorian era, the work accomplished by John Ruskin and William Morris has been noted in their co-relation of art with life. Art had been democratised; beauty and social utility had been wedded, so far as was possible under modern economic conditions; and this stress on the significance of beauty and colour, rhythm, harmony, clarity of design, acted as a healthy check upon the tendency of some of the revolutionaries of the day to sacrifice everything to the purely intellectual. The weakness of the new drama lay in its formlessness, its contempt of poetry, and in its striving to be vital at all costs. The followers of Ruskin and Morris showed that beauty is as indispensable to life (and consequently to literature) as is strength, and that the one need not exclude the other.

Art, in the view of these men, was the spirit of order and lucidity and grace, that wrought on men's lives, transforming chaotic passions into harmonious forces for the good of the community in general.

Thus did Morris' *Dream of John Ball* become translated into Ebenezer Howard's garden cities. The revival of printing, and of book decoration, for which Morris did so much, was continued by men such as Emery Walker, Charles Ricketts, and Walter Crane, and worked a transformation in the book formats of the new generation.

We have but to compare the graceful and artistic publications of to-day with those of twenty-five years ago, to realise the revolution that has been wrought. Quite as remarkable as the cheapness of the modern volume, is its artistic appeal. Good print, tasteful binding, graceful decoration are no longer the prerogative of the well-to-do. The Pre-Raphaelite had restored beauty and reality to painting; the generation that succeeded did the same for black and white work, and for the art of impressionism. Whistler, of course, was the pioneer of impressionism; and Walter Crane did much for the renascence of book illustration. Here, as elsewhere, Romanticism and Realism vary in proportion according to the temperament of the artist; and while many kept more or less to the ideals of Pre-Raphaelitism, others more frankly and exclusively followed realistic methods.

The Victorian era had its notable black and white artists, as readers of *Punch* know: and the life of the age with its whims and fancies, fashions and manners is indelibly stamped on the work of such men as John Leech Charles Keene, and George du Maurier.

But in the last decade of the century and the early years of the new, there are half a dozen first-rate men where there was only one before. It is the age of Phil May, Raven Hill, Harry Furniss, Bernard Partridge, and few would dispute the place of honour for Phil May. His art epitomised all the humours of town life, from Bond Street to Whitechapel, with an ease, simplicity, and good-natured tolerance that made him equally popular with his brother artists and the public at large. There is no movement in the literature of the time that does not find pictorial expression in the black and white art. Phil May and Raven Hill stand for realism, Aubrey Beardsley in the earlier years, Sydney Sime in the later, for cynical extravagance; Romanticism found its exponents in Maurice Greiffenhagen and Walter Crane; caricature in Max Beerbohm and E. T. Reed. Everywhere the spirit of experimentalising is to be seen, and the self-conscious spirit that showed itself in letters is as fully apparent in the art of the day. There is necessarily much that is unsatisfying, whether from the point of view of art or of life, much that is wilfully grotesque and morbid. But there is life and variety; and that is as much as we have a right to expect from a period of flux and restless adventure.

SOME WRITERS OF TO-DAY. Introduction—Rudyard Kipling—William Watson—G. Bernard Shaw—H. G. Wells—Arnold Bennett—G. K. Chesterton.

SOME WRITERS OF TO-DAY

INTRODUCTION

IT is a difficult and somewhat perilous thing to discuss the work of men who are still living and expressing themselves in letters—especially in an experimental age like ours, where our ablest men are free lances, unembarrassed by the insignia of any particular school, and pioneers who are constantly prospecting fresh ground. The difficulty is a twofold one. In the first place, there is the old problem of perspective. Those who live among the hills can gain no fair idea of their relative importance and proper configuration; some distance is needed to visualise them satisfactorily. And time is required for any critic who attempts to assay his contemporaries. This is, of course, a commonplace, but it is a commonplace with which the critic of the times needs constantly to refresh himself. In the second place, although you may allow for the process of artistic development, there is an *incalculable* element in all genius, whether great or little, that may confound the most careful and detached survey of the work already accomplished.

It is easy for us, with the whole output of Keats before us, to detect the gleam of pure gold and the rich promise amid the alloy and crudities of *Endymion*. But what critic, however keen-sighted, could have divined in that poem the poet who gave us the *Ode on a Grecian Urn* or the *Ode to Autumn*? Much was written on Byron as a poet before *Beppo* and *Don Juan*; and many might have thought it quite possible to give a fair estimate of his powers and capabilities on the substantial work already achieved. Yet these poems revolutionised Byron as a literary force. The author of *Childe Harold, Manfred, Lara, The Siege of Corinth*, was little more than a second-rate rhetorician; the author of *Beppo* and *Don Juan*, a poet of the first order. Again imagine an estimate of Scott as a writer before he had written his first novel, *Waverley*. It may be said that if this is true of some cases, there are others—for instance, Wordsworth and Coleridge—where no injustice would be done by those who had appreciated their work from 1790 to 1805: since the remaining years added nothing to their reputation, while most of their work fell very far short of the *Lyrical Ballads*. But this line of reasoning confuses the criticism of finished work with criticism of the worker. To see and value the imperishable greatness of *The Ancient Mariner* is assuredly to value the poetic genius of Coleridge at its highest. But without knowing the premature flickering out of his poetic genius, and of the sudden transfer of imaginative power for creative verse to creative criticism, without reckoning with the brilliant volubility of the talker on Highgate Hill, it is impossible to measure either the extensity or intensity of his genius.

All that is possible for a critic of his contemporaries to do with any measurable utility, is to examine the character and tendency of a writer so far as it has exhibited itself, contenting himself with tentative and provisional estimates, and avoiding any suggestion of finality in his remarks. Is this desirable? Would it not be better to leave men, whose work is yet unfinished, alone? The point is an arguable one, but for my own part I think in a history of our literature such as I have attempted, there is a distinct advantage in our closing pages of trying to get some rough idea of the character and tendency of the age in which we are living. It is for this reason that I have briefly sketched a kind of ground plan of the last twenty-five years, and shall by way of conclusion select a few representative writers of to-day for more detailed treatment. We may not be able to estimate the extent of Mr. Wells' future flights, or the profundity of Mr. Bennett's maturer studies; but at any rate we can see how far Mr. Wells has flown already and the direction in which he is flying at present, and can form some idea of Mr.

Bennett's vision and the particular lines on which it is developing.

The genius of these men is incalculable, and they may confound all prophecy; but their talents and idiosyncrasies offer as fair material for analysis as the quality of their pigmentation and the character of their physique.

The writers discussed in the following pages are not selected for any supposed superiority over others who have won a place in contemporary letters during the last five-and-twenty years. They have been selected merely because they seemed typically representative of some of the most vital literary movements of the day. For this reason Mr. Bennett has been given the preference over Mr. Conrad, since Conrad's genius is less characteristic of his generation than is Bennett's. Many names, of course, of whom mention has been made in the chapter upon Present-day Tendencies, are regretfully excluded, through obvious limitations of space. But imperfect and fragmentary as this review of contemporary letters necessarily is, sufficient has been said, I hope, to indicate roughly the chief characteristics of the period, and the tendency and drift of English letters at the present time.

Mr. Rudyard Kipling

Mr. Rudyard Kipling was born at Bombay on December 30, 1865, his father, Mr. John Lockwood Kipling, C.I.E., being at that time Head of the Lahore School of Art.

In 1877, his father brought him to England, and left him for five years to store up useful knowledge at the United Services College in Devonshire. An inimitable picture of schoolboy life is given us in *Stalky & Co.*, in which he figures as the Beetle.

Having begun his literary apprenticeship as editor of the College Magazine, on returning to India he joined the staff of the *Civil and Military Gazette* and *The Pioneer*; his extravagance in ink at this time is humorously recorded by a friend who says, "He had a habit of dipping his pen frequently and deep into the inkpot, and as all his movements were abrupt, almost jerky, the ink used to fly," with the result that at the end of the day he was "spotted all over like a Dalmatian dog."

In 1891 Mr. Kipling visited America, and with Mr. Wolcott Balestier wrote *The Naulahka*; he likewise added a little romance on his own account by falling in love with his collaborator's sister, whom he married in London the following year.

A considerable traveller, Mr. Kipling has roamed through China, Japan, Australia, and Africa, and during the Boer War edited *The Friend*, a journal published in Bloemfontein. While in the United States, where he resided for seven years, he nearly succumbed to pneumonia. He has now settled down in England.

His Poetry

Known as the writer of some clever verses, *Departmental Ditties* (1886), Kipling won his early laurels as a man of letters with his *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1887), but while the critics were wondering what particular brand of story-teller they should label him, he published the *Barrack Room Ballads* (1892), and many realised that the clever verse-writer had become a poet. The roughness, the colloquialism, the frank actuality of his muse made sticklers for the old conventions gasp and objurgate. Many men hailed him as a Realist, who had come to knock the romantic stuffing out of poetry more effectually even than did Whitman; since although Whitman has shown us man as he is, Kipling shows us men as they are. In other words, Kipling was fuller of the concrete realities than Whitman; moreover, he had a sense of humour denied to the American. Consequently the average man, who feels much about poetry as Sir Isaac Newton did when he called it "ingenious nonsense," took Kipling at once to his heart. "There is no romantic high-falutin about this fellow," said the average man. High-falutin there was not, but those who blithely ticked him off as a Realist must soon have realised their error. As a matter of fact, Kipling from the start never has been a Realist; for the very good reason that no true poet ever is. Realism in his work there was, as there is bound to be in the work of any man who can talk in print about the things he has seen and experienced. But the notion that a Realistic method precludes a Romantic vision, is a popular error. Romance may lurk beneath a Cockney dialect and the coarse directness of the mess-room, as much as in a jewelled phrase, or in the pure waters of English unrefined. Romance does not necessarily go abroad in fine clothes. And Mr. Kipling is steeped in romance. He has felt the glamour and the wonder of life, as fully as the most ardent Romantic, only he does not always speak of these things. He feels them, and he can suggest both in prose and verse; but he speaks of everyday matters and familiar commonplaces. He takes us into the smoking-room and puffs tobacco smoke at us. But while we are speculating as to the brand of tobacco, the puff of smoke resolves itself into the clouds of romance; we chuckle at his masculine yarns and club-room slang, then suddenly find the club-room window, in all its familiar drabness, is really a magic casement "opening on the foam of perilous seas." The realism of Mr. Kipling's stage properties is obvious enough, but their novelty has worn off and we can see meanwhile what really took hold of us is the romance behind. We recall the haunting melody of *Mandalay*, and rhythmic vitality of the *Ballad of East and West*. Like every true romancer, he has guarded against the make-believe of romance—but he does it in his own way. Keats sang of the glamour of sex, and of the tragic folly of man, in his ballad *La Belle Dame sans Merci*; Kipling treats precisely the same thing in *The Vampire*, though in the uncompromising way of everyday talk—

> "A fool there was and he made his prayer,
> Even as you and I,
> To a rag and a bone and a hank of hair
> (We called her the woman who did not care)
> But the fool he called her his lady fair
> (Even as you and I!)."

Keats allows us to see the problem of femininity through the eyes of the bewitched man; Kipling

makes us the looker-on, that is the difference. We sympathise with the knight-at-arms; we jeer at the fool; yet Kipling realises as fully as Keats, with what lightning rapidity the best fellow in the world may be converted into the fool, when he has the ill-fortune to stumble across the woman who can bewitch him. We are all of us heroes, saints and sensible men, with the women who do *not* attract us.

Mr. Kipling can suggest a great deal in a few words. Examine his apparently careless lilting, you will find sound philosophy there. For instance, this of woman:

> "... the Colonel's Lady an' Judy O'Grady
> Are sisters under their skins."

This of the poet's art:

> "There are nine-and-sixty ways of constructing tribal lays
> And every single one of them is right."

Or he can sum up a character in a stanza, as when he wrote of Fuzzy-Wuzzy:

> "'E rushes at the smoke when we let drive,
> An' before we know, 'e's 'ackin' at our 'ed.
> 'E's all 'ot sand and ginger when alive
> And 'e's generally shammin when 'e's dead."

One of the most interesting qualities in Kipling's vision is his faculty of seeing the romance of modern life; scorning the idea that we have to fly back to a bygone age in order to catch the "light that never was on sea or land." Nor can we dispute him.

Romance, like humour, is merely a point of view. One man listens to a bird and thinks of lark pie; another it inspires with an immortal lyric. Nor are poets even agreed in the matter. The sound of the waterfall is more to Wordsworth than the voice of the nightingale; and both Wordsworth and Keats would have turned away scornfully from the steam engine:

> "... while all unseen
> Romance brought up the nine-fifteen."

Romance for Kipling is no sequestered land of beauty: he finds it in the everyday life of the men about him; while no poet has got more poetry out of machinery than he. And he has stated it with characteristic vigour through the mouth of his engineer:

> "Romance! those first-class passengers they like it very well,
> Printed an' bound in little books; but why don't poets tell?
> I'm sick of all their quirks an' turns—the loves an' doves they dream,
> Lord send a man like Robbie Burns to sing the song o' Steam."

Mr. Kipling has lived in the East, and has felt the conflict between Oriental fatalism and Western activity: between the primal man and the civilised man: he has felt as the home-staying Englishman cannot feel, the call of the Wild, and knows what it is to be caught up bewildered, and transfigured by the magic of the great open spaces of the earth. But being in many ways a typical Saxon himself Mr. Kipling seeks to keep his mental balance by an assumed indifference, and to distract attention from his excited imagination in irrelevant slang. It is this abrupt reserve, this persistent matter-of-factness, this dislike of expressing his inward feelings that has gained for the Englishman those John Bull qualities that offended sensitive men like Hawthorne. They did not see that much of it was partly a deliberate policy of self-repression. Kipling saw it, because he was built that way himself; but unlike the typical Saxon he had the gift of self-expression, and it is the conflict between this power of self-expression and the instinct for self-repression that gives his work its peculiar quality.

Mr. Kipling has been called the "Laureate of the Music Hall." If by that phrase it is meant that he is merely a clever, slangy, and superficial expositor of the inherent qualities of human nature, then the phrase is unjust. He is very much more than a maker of catch-penny jingles, though he is not above banjo strains. Some of his admirers would indignantly reject such a suggestion by recalling poems like the *Recessional*. I would rather rely entirely on his colloquial "dialect" verse, and, in place of disclaiming for him this epithet, seek to show how admirable a thing it is when rightly understood. For there is a genuine art of the music hall, as well as an art of the concert room.

Mr. Kipling is a genuine artist, but the genius of his art lies in his power to express the sentiments and primal passions of men in the rough and ready way of the music hall, not by eliminating its grotesque vulgarity, but by using it to express things that are neither grotesque nor vulgar, but vast and elemental. And when he does this he is at his best. When, on the other hand, he uses more conventional means and falls back upon the ordinary language of the poetic artist, as he does in the *Recessional*, when he wishes to be more dignified and weighty, then, curiously enough, he is really less effective and less weighty. He impresses as much as a splendid "character" actor does when he essays what is theatrically known as a "straight part." The *Recessional* is good verse; but *Mandalay* is inspired verse.

His Prose

Mr. Kipling's romantic imagination as a verse writer is more at home, and consequently more powerful when it seeks to transfigure, not to avoid, colloquial speech. As a prose writer he stands on some at different footing. There are some writers, Charlotte Brontë and John Ruskin for instance, who are far better poets in prose than in verse. The technique of poetry shackles the imagination of such writers in place of liberating it. The same, with a qualification, applies to Kipling. The qualification is that, as an artist speaking in terms of the music hall, Kipling is admirable. Otherwise he is inclined to be stiff and self-conscious. But in prose he can dispense with his music hall manner and yet can be quite as effective. But even here he is ineffective sometimes, though in another way. Why is this?

The strength and weakness of Mr. Kipling lie

in his journalistic faculty. He is a born journalist, and he is a great journalist. It is the journalistic *flair* that enables him to be Laureate of the music hall, that gives him actuality, clarity, and conciseness as a writer whether in prose or verse; but it is the journalistic *flair* that leads him to be over-generous with banjo strains, and to overburden some of his prose with irrelevancies.

It is one of the paradoxes of literature, that the more realistic you are, the less real you are. This applies to Kipling. The impression he gives us sometimes is not that he is describing a thing out of the fulness of his knowledge with an easy mastery of his material; but that he is describing a thing that he has "worked up," and is more anxious to show us how much he knows, than the artistic use he is making of his knowledge.

Mr. Kipling has wandered in his writings all over the world, and has dealt with phases of life on sea as well as on land; but often, whether dealing with life at sea, or with countries other than India, the keen journalist's notebook is too much in evidence. To read *Broad upon the Waters*, *Off*, *The Ship that Found Herself*, is like looking at a series of educational films on the cinematograph. Their scientific interest may be considerable; their artistic interest is a trifling matter.

No one is more alive to the romantic possibilities of machinery than he, but in *The Day's Work*, he revels in technicalities that have no kind of imaginative interest. *The Devil and the Deep Sea* is sheer engineering pedantry—no layman could possibly take pleasure in it. This is realism without reality. And the same criticism applies to his dull *Captains Courageous*. Here his knowledge possesses him in place of him possessing his knowledge.

But give Mr. Kipling India—the India of magic and superstition, the India of famine and pestilence, the India of the Civil Service—and the result is a series of unforgettable snapshots; clear-cut and vivid, tensely dramatic, everywhere suggestive of the clash of civilization and barbarism, and the yawning gulf between the psychic temperaments of East and West. The story-teller tears aside the veil that hides Anglo-Indian life from the average Englishman, and makes him realise its struggles, its failures, its glories and its shame. We may read about famine in the English papers, but the words did not become alive and significant to the home-staying reader till he had followed the vicissitudes of *William the Conqueror*. No man has made more terribly significant the agonies of the cruel heat of India than the author of *The City of Dreadful Night*, or the horrors of war than he who wrote *The Man Who Was*. No one has brought home the banalities of short-sighted administration better than he who drew for us the inimitable picture of Grist Chunder Dé, M.A., in *The Head of the District*.

This brings us to the most significant thing in Kipling's work—the Imperialistic note. Imperialism was in the air before Mr. Kipling took it as his inspiration. But Kipling seized on it as did no other contemporary man of letters; using it, it may be added, on the whole with a sense of responsibility and with a breadth of imagination that lifts his patriotic verse far above the level of the average patriotic writer. There is no poet, from Campbell to Macaulay, who can treat the many romantic possibilities of his subject so happily, and sound the human depths so poignantly as he. Facile rhetoric has proved the artistic downfall of many a patriotic singer. There is little of this in Kipling. Neither Tennyson nor Swinburne, in their national paeans, ever grasped so completely the idea of the solidarity of our Empire as Kipling has done. And he has achieved this even better in his prose than in his verse.

But there is one danger into which the Imperialistic gospeller too often falls; and Mr. Kipling has not escaped it. There are times in history (as we have good reason to know) when war is inevitable; when to save your life you must lose it. But, however necessary war may be, it is a stern, grim, and terrible necessity, not to be approached in a mood of swagger and bluster and the too familiar "Give 'em Hell" spirit. War may be inseparable from Imperialism. "Give 'em Hell" certainly is not an essential concomitant. Unhappily it is often associated with it. Mr. Kipling has shown us in fantasies like *The Jungle Book*, in dreams such as *The Brushwood Boy*, in imaginings like *Mandalay*, that he is alive to the pitiful tragedies of life, and to the beauty and mystery that lie outside material things. Yet a "Jingo" spirit tends at times to dull his finer sensibilities, and he drops his loftier vision for "Chops . . . bloody ones with gristle."

Yet despite the brutal strain that has fitfully shown itself in his work, Mr. Kipling has proved a strong, invigorating, and on the whole salutary influence in English life and letters.

Lowell once said that the intellectual staple of the best English poetry was "understanding schooled by imagination." As a pithy expression of the essential harmony of sense and sensibility that must exist in all poetry of a high order, the dictum is excellent. All great poetry is logic on fire. The mere playing with words, however beautifully done, may give us graceful and melodious verse, verse of fine artistic quality; but the epithet of greatness must be denied it; supreme poets (to illustrate only from modern times) like Coleridge, Shelley, Wordsworth, or Keats, are in their moments of inspiration as satisfying to the intellect as to the emotions. The beauty of the *Ode to the West Wind* is universally recognised; what is less readily perceived is the perfection of its logical presentment. Some of Swinburne's exquisite songs fail, on the other hand, to satisfy the supreme requirement, because we instinctively feel that the inner meaning has been sacrificed to the glory of tumultuous words. I do not say that everything Shelley wrote would satisfy Lowell's definition, while some of Swinburne's work undoubtedly does. But the main difference between Shelley and Swinburne as poets is, that on the whole Shelley more often satisfies this requirement than Swinburne. On the other hand, the brainwork may be unexceptionable and the imaginative beauty of the setting faulty, or, as Lowell might have said, the aëration is incomplete. Here we could illustrate from a good deal of the intellectual verse of

Browning and of Meredith. The logic is there, but it has not caught fire; it only splutters with flame.

Now while our greater poets serve as illustrations of the truth of this dictum, our lesser poets do so necessarily with greater readiness. The realistic reaction in latter-day verse has necessarily emphasized the "understanding" at expense of the "imagination." With the Pre-Raphaelites, more especially their followers and imitators, the tendency was in the opposite direction. But in spite of the "Art for Art's sake" movement that played some part in the literary life of the 'nineties, the realists were to the fore.

Mr. William Watson

Mr. William Watson (1858) is an excellent illustration of a writer plentifully endowed with the Romantic temper—one, indeed, who in his first volume, *The Prince's Quest* (1880), showed very considerable affinities with such Pre-Raphaelites as Rossetti and William Morris, yet whose work was gradually modified by the realistic spirit of the day. Some might contend, in view of the undoubted superiority of his later verse over his initial volume, that he was never a true Romantic, but found most congenial expression in work where the intellectual quality predominated. But on examination it will be found, I think, that Mr. Watson's best work shows a true balance between "understanding" and "imagination," and that in his less satisfactory work he is affected by the two extremes; excessive romanticism on the one hand, as in *The Prince's Quest*, and excessive intellectualism on the other, as in some of his political and philosophical poems.

The wit and intellectual shrewdness that characterise his *Epigrams* (1884) is unquestionable; and the rhythmic felicities that star many of his odes and sonnets, remind us, with their deliberate, clear-visioned outlook, of such masters as Milton and Wordsworth. It reveals also the essential attitude of the man towards life. He has little really of the eager, adventurous spirit of the Romantic. That was a transient phase. He is at his best as a thinker in verse; his weakness as a poet to-day is the weakness—was it not illustrated in Meredith?—of overweighting his verse with thought. None the less in a transitional age, when extravagance of style and emotion mar so much earnest poetry, he has on the whole proved a wise and moderating force; for, while the imaginative beauty of his work has been thwarted at times by his keen intellect, he has never been betrayed into those realistic extravagances fully as mischievous as romantic extravagances. Dignity, strength, and lucidity are his, at his best—and for these things we may always be grateful.

An Unknown God

When, overarched by gorgeous night,
I wave my trivial self away;
When all I was to all men's sight
Shares the erasure of the day;
Then do I cast my cumbering load,
Then do I gain a sense of God.

Not him that with fantastic boaste
A sombre people dreamed they knew;
The mere barbaric God of Hosts
That edged their sword and braced their thew;
A God they plotted 'gainst a swarm
Of neighbour Gods less vast of arm;

A God like some imperious king,
Wroth, were his realm not duly awed;
A God for ever hearkening
Unto his self-commanded laud;
A God for ever jealous grown
Of carven wood and graven stone;

A God whose ghost, in arch and aisle,
Yet haunts his temple—and his tomb;
But follows in a little while
Odin and Zeus to equal doom;
A God of kindred seed and line;
Man's giant shadow, hailed divine.

O streaming worlds, O crowded sky,
O Life, and mine own soul's abyss,
Myself am scarce so small that I
Should bow to Deity like this!
This my Begetter? This was what
Man in his virulent youth begot.

The God I know of, I shall ne'er
Know, though he dwells exceeding nigh.
Raise thou the stone and find me there,
Cleave thou the wood and there am I.
Yea, in my flesh his spirit doth flow,
Too near, too far, for me to know.

Whate'er my deeds, I am not sure
That I can pleasure him or vex:
I that must use a speech so poor
As narrows the Supreme with Sex.
Notes he the good or ill in man?
To hope he cares is all I can.

I hope—with fear. For did I trust
This vision granted me at birth,
The sire of heaven would seem less just
Than many a faulty son of earth.
And so he seems indeed! But then,
I trust it not, this bounded ken.

And dreaming much, I never dare
To dream that in my prisoned soul
The flutter of a trembling prayer
Can move the Mind that is the Whole.
Though kneeling nations watch and yearn,
Does the primordial purpose turn?

Best by remembering God, say some,
We keep our high imperial lot.
Fortune, I fear, hath oftenest come
When we forgot—when we forgot!
A lovelier faith their happier crown,
But history laughs and weeps it down!

Know they not well, how seven times seven,
Wronging our mighty arms with rust,
We dared not do the work of heaven
Lest heaven should hurl us in the dust?
The work of heaven! 'Tis wailing still
The sanction of the heavenly will.

Dumest to be profaned by prides
Is he whose coils the world unfold;
The God on whom I ever gaze,
The God I never once behold:
Above the cloud, beneath the clod;
The Unknown God, the Unknown God.

Mr. G. B. Shaw

Mr. George Bernard Shaw was born on July 26, 1858. His father was a Civil servant who, on retirement, sold his pension to embark in a commercial undertaking that proved financially disastrous.

From his mother Mr. Shaw appears to have inherited his forceful purpose, his indifference to public opinion, and also his love of the Arts, especially music.

The responsibility of instructing his early years was undertaken by a clerical relative; later, he was sent to Wesley College, in Dublin, where he remained till he was fourteen; but was an incorrigibly lazy boy whose ignorance in ordinary scholastic attainments appalled his relatives. He then tells us that he "was experimented on desultorily in a few other schools, but the result was the same . . . and the value received by my parents for their expenditure was simply the getting me out of the way for half a day." On leaving school he was placed in a land agent's office, but notwithstanding that at sixteen he was chosen to fill a responsible position which he held for four years, the life was distasteful. At twenty, this dissatisfied youth threw himself out of employment and journeyed to London.

Many efforts were made by his father to find him employment, but this square peg refused to be fitted into a round hole, and skilfully evaded such a course. His last attempt "to earn an honest living," to quote himself, was an endeavour in 1879 to assist in forming a company to exploit Edison's telephone. He then began to write novels.

By 1883 five volumes had been written for which no publisher could be found. His funds were at a very low ebb, his small daily wants being supplied from his ability as a musician. This, however, brought him into circles where he was to make many a life-long friend. Odd journalism had also brought him into notice, but the remuneration was poor. For an article in *One and All*, Mr. George R. Sims had paid him 15s.; while as a poet his success was still more discouraging. For some burlesque verse he received five shillings, but his serious verse lost him his only patron.

In 1885 W. T. Stead offered him a post as reviewer on the staff of the *Pall Mall Gazette*; this was followed by the even more congenial appointment as art critic to the *World* under Edmund Yates. As "Cornetto di Basseto" he was acting as musical critic to the *Star* in 1889–1890, and the play-writing period begins.

The first, *Widowers' Houses*, appeared in 1892, and *Arms and the Man* two years later. From 1895-1898 he was dramatic critic of the *Saturday Review*, collecting his criticisms and publishing them in two volumes of *Dramatic Opinions* (1906).

Eight months after the founding of the Fabian Society, Mr. Shaw joined its ranks on September 4, 1884, and immediately threw himself into the thickest of the work, whether organising, writing, or lecturing. One of his best known papers was that on *Ibsen*, read at St. James' Restaurant with Mrs. Besant in the chair; it was published later as *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*.

Dickens thought that the curse of English social life was hypocrisy; Thackeray considered the canker worm to be snobbery; Meredith, probing deeper, detected in its inveterate sentimentalism the source of our infirmities. Meredith practically restricted his attack against rose-pink sentimentalism, to the inter-relation of the sexes; other keen-eyed contemporaries extended this crusade in other directions. Huxley tried to crush it in educational propaganda, the Pre-Raphaelites tilted against it in art: but sentimentalism was too deep-rooted in the English character, and, we may add, too closely interwoven with its virtues as well as its failings, to suffer much damage. Then came Mr. G. Bernard Shaw. Other social critics did differentiate between sentiment and sentimentality. Sentiment for them was the natural offspring of Romanticism, and Romanticism was worthy of all respect. But Mr. Shaw suspected even Romanticism. Romanticism, in his opinion, was responsible for sentimentality. Out it must all go, root and branch. The trouble was how to draw attention to a gospel so antipathetic to the Englishman's temperament. Being endowed with unlimited pertinacity, audacity, and a pretty wit, he soon managed to attract attention.

Emerson advised—"Hitch your waggon to a star." Mr. Shaw felt that people might miss the stellar connection, unless he stood on his waggon and banged the drum. Having attracted attention, he could point out his astronomical steed.

Banging the drum is only a stage removed from playing the fool. That also is part of the showman's business. Mr. Shaw has admitted frankly that he was a "natural-born mountebank," and when it came to method P. T. Barnum appealed to him much more strongly than did Emerson.

The disadvantages attaching to this method are that many people will not take the clown seriously, however fiercely sincere he may be at heart. But Mr. Shaw was not discouraged; he went on banging the drum and playing the fool; and although the crowd still preferred to regard his homilies in the light of an amusing jest, many of the shafts had struck home. He may not have converted his generation, but he has irritated and puzzled it. And that, as Mr. Shaw had shrewdly seen, is half the battle.

As a creative force Mr. Shaw has nothing like the originality and rich fertility of Mr. Wells; and he is certainly not, as some of his disciples claim for him, a profound and original philosopher. But he has ever been a pungent and outspoken critic of his age. Nowhere is this clearer than in the following passage on Socialism:

"The Fabian declares quite simply that there is no revolution, that there exists no war of classes, that the salaried workers are far more imbued with conventions and prejudices and more *bourgeois* than the middle class itself, that there is not a single legal power democratically constituted, without excepting the House of Commons, which would not be much more progressive were it not restrained by the fear of the popular voice; that Karl Marx is no more infallible than Aristotle or Bacon, Ricardo or Buckle, and that, like them, he has committed errors now obvious to the casual student of economics; that a declared Socialist is, morally, neither better nor worse than a Liberal or a Conservative, nor a workman than a capitalist; that the workman can change the actual governmental system if he so desires while the capitalist cannot do so, because the workman would not permit him; that it is an absurd contradiction in terms to declare that the working classes are starved, impoverished and kept in ignorance by a system which loads the capitalist with food, education, and refinement of all sorts, and at the same time to pretend that the

capitalist is a scoundrel, harsh and sordid in spirit, while the workman is a high-minded, enlightened and magnanimous philanthropist; that Socialism will eventuate in the gradual establishment of public rule and a public administration set into effective action by parliaments, assemblies and common councils; and that none of these rules will lead to revolution nor occupy more place in the political programme of the time than a law for the regulation of manufactures or the ballot would do now; in a word, that the part of the Socialist will be a definitely fixed political labour, to struggle not against the malevolent machinations of the capitalist, but against the stupidity, narrowness, in a word, the bilioey (in giving to the word its precise and original sense) of the class which actually suffers most from the existing system."

While he so pitilessly exposes the Romantic illusions of his own school of thought, he is not likely to be less lenient towards the multitude of illusions that rule the average unthinking man and woman.

In *Arms and the Man* Mr. Shaw does not, as some imagine, attack war (he is not Tolstoyan in the least). What he does is to denounce the sentimental illusion that gathers round war. "Fight if you will," says he, "but for goodness' sake don't strike picturesque attitudes in the limelight about it. View it as one of the desperately irrational things of life that may, however, in certain circumstances be a brutal necessity." In *Candida* he does not attack love. Here is another irrational thing, he says—well, it can't be evaded, so let us make it as matter of fact, as rational, in short, as possible.

Candida, in deliberately electing to remain with her self-confident husband *because* "he is the weaker of the two" and needs her the more, grounds her "duty" as a wife on no conventional code of morals, but on *instinct*. The doctrinaire views of Gloria on love in *You Never Can Tell* crumble away at the first stirring of impulsive passion, and in a flash the romance of love shines through.

It looks as if Mr. Shaw, with his ascetic instincts, had started his crusade in life by attempting to rationalise existence; but, as Life is in no wise guided by logic, he had concluded perhaps that task to be an impossible one. Whatever the reason, he is only a half-hearted rationalist.

Indeed, as we read through Mr. Shaw's plays, from *Arms and the Man* to *Pygmalion*, one thing is brought home very clearly to the reader. Here is a man with a keen, cold, intellectual wit combating all the illusions that spring from the irrationality of life, yet gradually coming more and more to feel that there is not so much in rationality as, apparently, he had imagined. In fact he has found, or is at anyrate finding, that even illusions, foolish as they often are, mischievous as they sometimes are, are but bungling efforts on man's part to explain mystical realities. And by mystical realities I mean all great primal qualities: love, courage, endurance, faith, hope. Anne's pursuit of Tanner is treated with irony and cynical levity throughout the play until we come to the final scene, and then her creator practically gives her case away. "It will not be all happiness for me," says Anne, "perhaps Death." Before, we had seen only the comedy of the Life-Force, here is the tragedy.

It would seem, then, that Mr. Shaw, like Balaam, had come out to curse and remained to bless. He starts by glorifying intellectuality and deriding sentiment; then finding that sentiment is rooted in instinct and that instinct rules life, he ends by glorifying instinct. How does he square this with his ascetic leanings?

To understand Mr. Shaw's ultimate position we must examine the doctrine of the Life-Force which from *Man and Superman* onward plays so important a part in his writings.

Two important formative influences in his outlook on life have been Samuel Butler and Schopenhauer. To Butler there was an unconscious mind in nature, while to Schopenhauer this unconscious mind, a blind dynamic force, is elaborated into an important philosophy. With many of the philosophic implications Mr. Shaw did not concern himself. He was uninterested both in metaphysics and in science, but being deeply interested in man's social welfare he saw in this Life-Force a solution to his perplexities. Despite his strong rationalistic tendencies, Shaw's curious dislike of and contempt for science put definite limits on his rationalism. He was rationalistic in his hatred of sentimentality and of all the pretty insincerities that obscured men's vision of the realities of life. Romanticism bred illusions—that must go. Popular Christianity also bred illusions—that must go. Here, however, he surprises us by his hostility to Darwin and the theory of natural selection; he declares himself as "implacably anti-ritualistic and anti-materialist."

The fact is, there are two contradictory strains in Mr. Shaw's temperament—an intensely practical and utilitarian strain, and a fantastic, imaginative, and semi-mystical strain.

In his Socialistic views and in his views on Art the practical strain is to the fore. As regards the former, *Commonsense of Municipal Training* (1904) exhibits him in his most clear, cogent, and sober-headed mood, while his dramatic and musical criticisms illustrate happily his insistence on the artist-philosopher (philosopher and moralist being synonymous for Shaw), as the only kind of artist worth consideration. The social utility of Art underlies the whole of his vigour and eulogy of Wagner and Ibsen. Of course, even when dealing with Socialism and Art, there are touches here and there of the fantastic and idiosyncratic Shaw that do not fit into the general scheme. Yet, on the whole, his Art and Economic criticisms are clear and homogeneous. But the other strain in Shaw's temperament has also to be reckoned with, and this it is that inspires his anti-rationalistic views and his insistence on the "Life-Force"; and his habit, especially in his plays, of opposing Instinct to Reason. Thus Shaw is rationalistic without being a rationalist, mystical without being a mystic. He finds his mode of reconciliation in the Life-Force. It satisfies his mysticism, for it is a spiritual reality pervading matter, reaching consciousness in man, and pushing continually upwards. In short, it provides Mr. Shaw with a religion and an ethic, for the Life-Force is the God in Man and the dynamic impulse the Will of God. Thus we can see here his objection to Rationalism, for the Life-Force justifies impulse and discards reason. On the other hand,

the doctrine satisfies his practical and utilitarian side.

The Life-Force expresses itself in woman through her fertility; this instinct for fertility is no "mere itching for pleasure." Sexual attraction is for Shaw only an idle appetite unless it be linked with an impulse for the betterment of the race. In short, the Life-Force in woman is a matter of eugenics, which she disregards at her peril.

Both here and elsewhere it will be noticed by students of his writings, that Shaw, while deriding moral codes and preaching the assertion of the individual will, which logically tends to anarchy, and is compatible with the grossest licence invariably reads into the Life-Force his own ascetic and virtuous-loving nature. This frank immoralism, and Nietzschean gospel, in Shaw's hands is saturated with the strictest morality. If your own nature constrains you to live a sober, clear-minded, and unselfish life, you can afford to dispense with the constraints imposed from without by society. But what if you are naturally vicious, foul-minded, and brutal? Can you dispense then with moral codes, can you, without harming others, assert your individual will? For how does he meet the objection that the Life-Force tells one man to be kind, another to be brutal, one to be truthful, another a liar, one man to be temperate, another a sensualist? He meets it by bringing forward the very rationalism he is at other times content to spurn and deride. He says, if you choose licence and sensuality, you will have such a miserable time of it, that you will only be too glad to return to the path of rectitude. By all means, he seems to say, plunge your hands into boiling water if you wish; only you will be so uncomfortable, that you will prefer water of a normal temperature afterwards. You wish to lie? Very well, lie—but, says Shaw, "the liar's punishment is that he cannot believe anyone else." Now what is this but a defence of morality on rational grounds?

In fact, Mr. Shaw's doctrine of the Life-Force, suggestive as it is in many ways, especially in its insistence on certain undervalued psychological truths, and ingeniously as it meets the diverse strain in his temperament, at bottom affords no reconciliation. Whatever merits the theory of the Life-Force may have as a metaphysic in the hands of philosophers like M. Bergson or scientists like Sir Oliver Lodge, Mr. Shaw's more nebulous and fanciful exposition of its signification leads him into serious practical difficulties, from which he only saves himself by calling in the principle of reason which he had flouted; and he cannot have it both ways.

For this reason, Mr. Shaw's philosophy does not seem deeply illuminating. But if as a constructive thinker he may not appeal, it would be hard to exaggerate his value as a destructive force to-day. By his brilliant criticism of contemporary art and drama, he helped to raise the intellectual and moral quality of the artistic output. Ruskin and Morris had preached eloquently and earnestly Art for life's sake. Shaw took up the burden of their preaching, engineering it with all the resources of wit and dialectic cunning at his command. He helped to break down the parochial limits of the middle class; forced us to see the power and beauty of artists like Wagner, Ibsen, and Rodin; and best of all, in his splendid brochure, *The Sanity of Art*, gave the lie to Nordau's theory that genius is essentially morbid; vindicating the vitality and strength of all great art.

In his plays, by far the most valuable parts are those where he challenges the current moral and social values of the time; because his extravagant wit and keen observation so agreeably sugar the critical pill. Directly, however, we attempt to construct from them a new social order or a new morality, we find vague and contradictory elements that it is impossible to clarify and resolve. What does *Man and Superman* amount to but the will to mate treated from the eugenics standpoint, by an ascetic temperament.

The Life-Force incarnate in the sensuous female makes her seek out the intellectual male (who despises her) and lay siege to him until with desperate unwillingness he succumbs. It is for the good of the race. As a contribution to the philosophy of love, this is decidedly unconvincing; but if we view the play as an agreeable entertainment (as indeed most theatrical audiences view it), showing much witty observation of contemporary life, and suggesting (as in the brilliant interlude) some capital debating points, then there is good reason to be grateful to the playwright. An intensely interesting problem is raised in *The Doctor's Dilemma*. A specialist, Sir Colenso Ridgeon, has discovered a wonderful vaccine treatment for tuberculosis. Two cases claim his urgent attention; one that of a fine-natured "sixpenny" doctor, the other that of a blackguard who happens to be a brilliant artist. He has only room for one more patient—which shall he take? Is it to be good morals or good art? Shaw discounts the crux of the problem by complicating his story with Ridgeon's infatuation for the artist's wife. He lets the husband die in order to marry his widow. The complication adds to the play as drama—but as a medium for ideas it suffers. Unhappily, he kills even its dramatic value by the absurd epilogue. The wife, up to this point a clever study in feminine psychology, becomes a Shaw puppet. Yet, here again (barring the last scene), the play abounds in admirable matter, and the satire on the medical profession, if a shade savage at times, is on the whole excellent wise fooling. Indeed, the best way to enjoy Shaw's plays is to cheerfully ignore any attempt to construe them in terms of his philosophy, and regard them simply as wise fooling.

As a destructive force, as an intellectual irritant, Mr. Shaw is a very appreciable force in modern letters; and his ultimate aim and purpose is admirably summed up in his own significant apologia—

"I am of opinion that my life belongs to the whole community, and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can.

"I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no 'brief candle' for me. It is a sort of splendid torch, which I have got hold of for the moment; and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations."

Mr. H. G. Wells

Mr. Herbert George Wells was born on September 21, 1866, at Bromley in Kent. His parents were hard-working people who had embarked unsuccessfully in a small business. At thirteen he left school with little else but a well-filled storehouse of mathematics and the credit of being an extensive reader. Circumstances then forced him out to work, and he left Bromley for Windsor to learn the drapery trade. A year later we find him in a chemist's shop at Midhurst. While here he managed to attend some classes, and with a few certificates started for Wookey Hole in Somerset, to act as a pupil-teacher, but this venture proved an absolute failure. After another short spell of the drapery trade he found a post at Midhurst Grammar School. Here he worked hard and with a scholarship entered the College of Science at South Kensington, where he worked under Professor Huxley. In due course he passed his B.Sc., with first-class honours. This success paved the way to a mastership at Henley House School, St. John's Wood.

Little money and hard work was his lot for the next few years. He became a coach for the old University Correspondence College, and employed his scanty leisure on a *Manual of Biology*, and some odd journalism. He was working too hard and the result was a serious breakdown. Complete rest was now his only chance of recovery, so he left London for Eastbourne.

Ill as he was, he now began to write humorous articles for the press. Several of these—*Freedom in Spelling, Cheapness and my Aunt Charlotte, Chess Games*—were published anonymously in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and brought him the friendship of many well-known literary men.

Mr. Wells' first novel, *The Time Machine*, had made its first appearance in the *Phœnix*, still the successful College of Science magazine that he started while a student there; parts had also appeared in the *National Observer* and the *New Review* (one hundred pounds having been paid for the serial rights); yet in 1895, when issued in book form, it was absolutely ignored by the critics. His next attempt fared little better. Having collected the humorous papers that had been published earlier in the *Pall Mall*, they were criticised as "portentously foolish," and, to add insult to injury, the reviewer remarked "the book has a very nice cover." *The Invisible Man* (1897) and *The War of the Worlds* (1898) followed; since which time Mr. Wells has written nearly thirty novels and stories, and with each succeeding volume has gained a wider circle of thoughtful and interested readers.

Mr. H. G. Wells is known to the modern reader as a writer of scientific romances, as a social reformer, and as a sociological novelist; but he is at bottom essentially an ideologist who uses the various forms of letters, fiction or the essay, as means of airing his ideas. At first sight we might be inclined to place him in the same category as Mr. Bernard Shaw, who is also, strictly speaking, an ideologist. And certainly they have this in common,—to each the literary form of their work is a secondary matter; they are primarily concerned to promulgate certain ideas and theories, and they use the form which seems to them the most convenient or suitable for the moment to effectuate their aim. Here, however, the similarity ends. Mr. Bernard Shaw has a theory of life, which, whatever be its merits or demerits, gives a homogeneity to his work—dramatic, fictional, or purely argumentative. Mr. H. G. Wells has no definite theory of life. His writings are not the varied and continuous expression of any distinctive systematised outlook. This may seem something like heresy to those who look upon Wells as a brilliant social prophet; but if they will carefully examine the thought underlying—say, his scientific fantasies, his novels of middle-class life from *Love and Mr. Lewisham* (1900) to *The Passionate Friends* (1913); his social discussions from *Anticipations* (1901) to *The Future in America* (1906)—they will find assuredly a highly stimulating mélange of ideas dealing with the conduct of life, but little organic connection between any of these ideas, and frequently a good deal of contradiction as to the relative importance of various ideas. For instance, in two of his most important social speculations, *New Worlds for Old* (1908) and *A Modern Utopia* (1905), he vacillates between emphasizing logic and will as the mainspring of an ideal society, or emotional force. Sometimes he seems to favour a rigid collectivism, at other times he leans towards unlimited individual freedom.

I do not urge this as a reproach to Mr. Wells; I mention it to show that the way to assess his value as an intellectual force, is not to regard him as the exponent of a new social philosophy, but as a brilliant free-lance skirmisher.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Wells as a writer has become progressively more and more perplexed by the complex tangle of social conditions, and the enormous difficulties attaching to any particular nostrum for the sickness of the body politic. As a keen observer he could not fail to see the intellectual poverty of modern life, the clinging by the masses to mouldering traditions, the alternate yielding to a policy of inertia and to blind instinctive passions. When he says, "Let's plan our future and at all costs get our best men on the upper deck. We must get rid of the dead weight of the middle," all thoughtful men of every shade of opinion will agree with him. But when it comes to the *kind* of plan, and *how* to get "the best men on the upper deck," then he halts perplexed; feeling acutely the enormous difficulties of the problem.

Shaw's emotional life is strictly subordinate to his intellectual; Wells' emotional life is at war with his intellectual life. The difference is well exemplified in their respective attitudes towards sexual problems. Both Mr. Shaw and Mr. Wells are agreed that the sex impulse is a tyrant, but Wells cannot make up his mind whether to hate or love the tyrant. So we may judge from his *Ann Veronica*, *New Machiavelli*, *Marriage*, and *The Passionate Friends*.

Yet this very uncertainty, this frank hesitancy of attitude, gives a peculiar interest to Wells' writings—and his imaginative work has a far greater objective human value than Mr Shaw's.

For Wells has a subtler insight into character, and the tangled inconsistencies that baulk him as a theorist help him as a literary artist. Mr. Shaw's dramatic faculty saves him from merely creating talking-machines (as is sometimes averred of him), but the majority of his characters are little more than view-points wittily presented; he can paint them green, blue, red, yellow, as occasion demands. Wells does more than this; he knows that the same human being, if predominantly of one colour, may greatly vary in tint—that the red may be scarlet, purple, heliotrope, or pink at various times. Subtleties do not trouble Mr. Shaw. Wells' characters therefore—Kipps, Lewisham, Remington Isabel, Margaret, to mention only a few—live as Mr. Shaw's do not.

But in order to fairly appraise Mr. Wells' work as a writer, we must take two elements into consideration. In the first place, his scientific bent of mind: in the second place, his power of concrete presentment.

In all of his work, whether fantasy or middle-class study, these two elements give form and value to the matter; the ideas necessarily vary, but there is far less difference of method than is sometimes imagined. It has been said that in his scientific tales, Mr. Wells' characters are merely puppets, marionettes, introduced for the purpose of setting off a story about flying machines, escalators, or a peculiar form of food. This is unfair criticism. Obviously, the scientific speculations in these stories arrest the reader's imagination, more than do the characters. But these characters are anything but puppets. Jules Verne, to whom Wells is often likened, took no trouble with his characterisation. But, if we examine the characters in such books as *The Invisible Man* (1897), *The Food of the Gods* (1904), *The First Men in the Moon* (1901), *The Wonderful Visit* (1895), and *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896), we must realise that the dramatic persons are differentiated and drawn with delicate insight; and they are most admirably visualised. Even in *The First Men in the Moon*, where he troubles least of all with his personages, the two adventurers are individualised with a few clever touches. They are sufficiently vital for the purpose of the story. In the most painful of all of the fantasies, *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, the characterisation of Dr. Moreau and his assistant is remarkably well done; while in *The Invisible Man*, the psychology is admirable. In fact, the story owes quite as much to its excellent psychology as to its lively invention.

Mention has been made of Jules Verne, who threw so many imaginary scientific speculations into ingenious narrative form. There is a significant kinship between Verne and Wells; but it is only superficial; Jules Verne's ingenious mind never sought for any underlying *human* significance to his scientific speculations; Wells never, in his wildest fantasy, lost sight of the human factor and the cosmic note.

The rich satire of Wells' sociological fictions is of course obvious, but he is as distinctly though less obviously a satirist even in his scientific fantasies. *The Wonderful Visit* is more than the "pleasant *jeu d'esprit*" that it was termed by a leading literary journal; it is a searching satirical picture of human imperfections. In *The Food of the Gods*, we are reminded of Gulliver; it is Swift without the bitterness. Even subtler in its satire is *The Sea Lady*, where Mr. Wells reaches a level of high comedy writing which he rarely attains. There is a grimmer, cruder flavour about *Dr. Moreau*—but the satirical note is unmistakable. *The Day of the Comet* centres round certain developments of modern journalism.

Throughout all these tales the immense possibilities of science, the power of alien outside forces, the pettiness and futility of human effort are constantly dwelt upon and emphasized.

Profoundly interesting and suggestive as these scientific "dreams" are, their appeal is necessarily less wide than that of the stories of ordinary middle-class life. Here, to the qualities we already know, though less technically displayed, he adds a peculiarly retentive memory of the things he has himself seen and experienced, and a power of characterisation, that has been growing in clarity and subtlety during his earlier apprenticeship to letters. Such books as *Love and Mr. Lewisham*, *Kipps*, *Tono Bungay*, *Marriage*, are fresh and valuable contributions to the fictions dealing with English middle-class life. But there is no radical change in the story-teller. The restless scientific imagination is still there, only in place of the physical sciences he gives us the science of sociology. He applies to social and political institutions what before he had applied to chemistry and biology. The matter is different; the method remains the same. He is still more of the scientist than the artist, more of the satirist than the dispassionate painter. He is still a writer with a purpose, and a dealer in problems.

From the standpoint of literary art, Mr. Wells as a thinker overwhelms Mr. Wells as an artist. In common with many influential writers of the day, his selective faculty is weak, and the ultimate reality of his stories suffers from his insistent realism. As a consequence, while the foreground of his picture is amazingly clear, the background is vague and shadowy. The perspective is at fault. His tenacious memory and his sharp perceptive powers prove a snare as well as a blessing. Consequently his parts are better than his whole; and the lack of perspective is further embarrassed by his fertility in ideas. They are interesting enough, but he is too prodigal with them. He inundates us with ideas and details, until we are wearied. For all his originality, his undoubted power both in narrative and in characterisation, these grave defects preclude our ranking him with the great masters of fiction. The same defect that spoils his larger canvases, despite their striking merits, is quite as noticeable in his less ambitious studies. They are rarely negligible; they have thought, humour, and imagination, but their method savours more of journalism than literature. Yet one or two—like *The Country of the Blind*, and *The Door in the Wall*—have a force and beauty about them that show what a fine literary artist the author could be, if only he took the trouble.

The majority of Wells' short stories are extraordinarily clever: here there is a touch of greatness.

To have written *The Country of the Blind* and *Love and Mr. Lewisham*, is to rank among the writers who count, and when criticism has had its say with Mr. Wells' work, he remains one of the most potent literary forces to-day: a most stimulating and original ideologist.

Mr. Arnold Bennett

Mr. Arnold Bennett (1867) has one thing in common with Mr. Wells: he also has a touch of romanticism in his nature, though it is less pronounced and not mingled with the sentimentalism from which Wells is never wholly free. But unlike Mr. Wells, Mr. Bennett is half ashamed of his romanticism, and hurries its gay colouring into his lighter writings, in order that he may present the life he is more concerned to portray, in a stern grey light. Moreover, Mr. Bennett, whatever revolutionary sentiment he may possess, allows none to colour his work as a story-teller. He is content to observe and record. Shaw's wit plays fiercely round the drab routine of middle-class life, hoping to galvanise it into activity: Wells' imagination, half fascinated half repelled by the reactionary forces that keep it drab and monotonous, is less concerned to abolish than to analyse and discuss them. Bennett neither attacks them nor dissects them. He simply notes them down; and to this extent he is a sounder literary artist than either of his contemporaries.

The Old Wives' Tale (1908) is a piece of remarkable literature in its detailed picture of domestic life in a small manufacturing town. You feel, as you follow step by step the fortunes of Constance, and Sophia Barnes, that here is that perfect illusion of reality that convinces you of its fidelity to life—not life in its finest manifestation nor in its basest manifestation, but life as it happens to countless average men and women, with its mingling of joy, sorrow, tragedy and farce. It is an epic of lower middle-class provincial life, told plainly and soberly, without either bitterness or relish: but exhibiting clearly enough a vivid sense of the littleness of human existence and the mutability of things—

> "All things have rest, and ripen towards the grave
> In silence: ripen, fall and cease."

For all its multiplicity of detail the book has breadth and perspective, while its most salient quality is its consistent objectivity. The chronicler makes no attempt to satirise or to sentimentalise or to malign his subject matter: he strives his hardest to deal impartially and fairly with his various characters. No literary artist can keep his temperament out of his work, of course, however hard he tries—in his very choice of material and method of handling he displays it; and Mr. Bennett's fascination, as a writer, for the ordinary routine of life with its limited perspective, is apparent enough. But nowhere does he better display his power of making the most trivial matters, the most niggling details, absorbing and arresting, than here. None of his other books are on this high level of accomplishment; although in all his serious studies, his method remains the same. In the trilogy—*Clayhanger*, *Hilda Lessways*, and *The Card*—there is the same easy mastery over his material, and clarity of presentment, but there are too many repetitions; and what is more serious, despite much admirable portraiture, a certain dullness and aridity at times. The creative imagination seems to have flagged—and the story is beaten too thin.

Mr. Bennett's curious habit of reserving his romanticism and high spirits for what he calls his "fantasies" is partly due, as he has frankly admitted, to commercial exigencies. Humorous extravagance and ingenious melodrama pay very much better than studies of life in homespun grey. Mr. Bennett has written many extravaganzas because, as he has put it with cheerful directness, he wants to make money. But we suspect there is a subtler reason than this. Mr. Bennett is afraid that his romanticism will play havoc with his methods as a realistic novelist. So he boxes up his romanticism in a water-tight compartment. Yet if he is to sustain his rôle as the faithful chronicler of "small beer," he feels he must give his imagination an occasional holiday or more exhilarating stimulant. And so as against *Anna of the Five Towns* (1902), *The Old Wives' Tale*, *Clayhanger*, we have *Buried Alive*, *The Card*, and *The Grand Babylon Hotel*. "I cannot remain wise unless I play the fool at times," he says in effect. And it cannot be denied that he plays the fool with considerable resource and sprightliness. But this new version of Jekyll and Hyde, this chopping up of his literary personality, is not really a good thing for his art. What the gods have joined let no man put asunder. I venture to say that if Mr. Bennett had not played tricks with his personality, he would be, not merely what he is, a distinguished novelist, but a great novelist to-day. Ordinary life *is* dull, uneventful, grey; it is also melodramatic, extravagant, full of colour; and it is this just because it is so complex. Mr. Bennett would not have proved less actual but more actual if he had blended his realism with his romanticism.

Putting aside his *Man from the North*, as a promising but immature expression in fiction, let us consider more carefully his serious pictures of life.

We have in *Anna of the Five Towns*, *Leonora*, *Whom God hath Joined*—, *The Old Wives' Tale*, *Clayhanger*, and its two sequels, his most characteristic work in connection with the pottery district of Staffordshire, which he has made as much his own, as has Mr. Hardy the region of Wessex. The workmanship is not all on the same level: the last three being greatly superior to the first three. But one and all are distinguished by a power for vitalising the trivial minutiæ of everyday life, and by a plain, straightforward, pedestrian style which is wonderfully adapted for building up the effects he wishes to create.

Mr. Bennett's claim to distinction does not lie, of course, in showing that life—to use one of Holmes' phrases—is a "great bundle of little things." Many of our novelists have done that. But they have done so either as Dickens did, by

investing the little things with a fantastic humour, or as Charlotte Brontë did, by freighting them with big emotional issues. Mr. Bennett's treatment is otherwise. He records the little things in a detached, objective way, leaving the reader to trace their relationship to the larger matters—if he will. Charlotte Brontë will expatiate on the tragedy that hinges round an irritable remark—Bennett merely mentions the irritable remark as one of the details by which he builds up the life-likeness of his picture. Whether it be due to suppressed gout or active malevolence, whether it signifies little or much, he leaves you to find out. He deals with it as a chronicler, not as an oracle. Consequently his scenes have all the actuality of a series of snapshots. But while they have the merits of good snapshots, they have the corresponding disadvantages. Bennett is both too shrewd and too sincere a writer not to link them together with some unity of design; but the novelist's interest in the component parts of his scheme and his predilection for shifting the point of view, often weakens the general effect. He tries to do too much; he is over anxious to make his scenic background clear and convincing; the pall of smoke hanging over his grimy little town is so realistic that we cannot properly see the characters through it. In *The Old Wives' Tale* and its successors, we are long enough in the atmosphere to accustom our eyesight to its twilight greys. But few of the other novels are long enough to sink the author's meticulous method. Mr. Bennett makes us realise clearly enough the narrowness and dinginess of Anna's life, but she herself as a spiritual entity who takes the first short cut out of it that she can, and marries the wrong man, is nothing like so real as, for instance, the kitchen where we often find her. *Leonora* is better done, but again the perspective is at fault, and we have a much clearer notion of the fussiness of amateur theatricals during the rehearsals of *Patience*, than of the spiritual turmoil in Leonora's soul.

This is not due to any lack of sensibility on Mr. Bennett's part in big matters; it is not as if, with Jane Austen, he is peculiarly concerned *qua* artist with the infinite number of trivialities that go to make up the life of so many; it is because he feels the compelling interest of so many points of view. He is for ever taking his camera to some other part of the scene.

This is where writers like Thomas Hardy impress us with a much deeper sense of reality. Had Mr. Bennett written *Tess*, we should have heard probably quite as much of the dairymaids and other members of Tess' family as of Tess herself. In fact, Mr. Bennett hurries us so resolutely from one point to another in order to give us a comprehensive picture, that in his briefer novels we get to know no one point sufficiently well. It is quite clear as we read the succession of his novels that his strength lies in showing a diversity of new points—if he can only moderate his curiosity, and deal at such length as may enable him to give perspective to his scheme. Now, he would be immensely strong here if he had not cut adrift from his romanticism and relegated that entirely to his "bread and butter" stories. Every great novelist, when properly considered, is neither an absolute realist nor an absolute idealist, but a blend. Even the Russian writers whom Mr. Bennett admires and takes to some extent as a model, are half-romantic, half-realistic. The great eighteenth-century novelists succeeded because of this. Scott was quite as much a realist as an idealist. Dickens as much an idealist as a realist. The perfect illusion of reality, that the great novel demands, connotes depth as well as breadth. There is more of the romantic element in *The Old Wives' Tale*, than Mr. Bennett would admit to; and that is why it is the greatest of his books.

Save in lighter moods, Mr. Bennett is too afraid of the primary colours, yet life is full of these things; and in eliminating such from his most ambitious work, he eliminates also much of the poetry in life, which is fully as insistent as its prose.

Mr. Gilbert Keith Chesterton

The extravagances which Mr. Bennett's soul revels in though his critical faculty condemns them, are boldly exalted to the skies as the one thing worth having by Mr. G. K. Chesterton (1873). He is the most thorough-going vindicator of the romantic imagination that we have to-day; and as such he proves an excellent foil to the majority of our ablest writers, who either distrust romanticism, like Mr. Shaw and Mr. Galsworthy; who yield unwilling homage, like Mr. Wells; or half-hearted admiration, like Mr. Bennett.

There is nothing equivocal in Mr. Chesterton's attitude. He is, with Mark Tapley, determined to be jolly in all possible circumstances; and like that somewhat irritating optimist, Mr. Chesterton's jolliness is almost more oppressive at times than the melancholy of some of his contemporaries. If Mr. Chesterton were more sparing of gramophone effects in his writings on literature and life, and refrained more often from slapping us on the back and bidding us keep our pecker up, we should like him better; for his exuberant mannerisms make us do less than justice often to his fundamentally sane, thoughtful, and invigorating attitude towards life. His love of paradox, and his insistence on the paradox in promulgating his views, has made some people link his name with that of Bernard Shaw. But despite some affinity in methods, these two brilliant prose-men have little in common, beyond a fundamental sincerity as critics of life.

Both men use paradox as a means of promulgating their point of view; to each man paradox is merely truth standing on its head to attract attention; yet the truths they draw attention to are widely different. Mr. Shaw throws morality overboard, frankly proclaims himself an anarchist, and bids us give free expression to the instinctive life-force within us; while all the time his ascetic temperament and intellectual tastes show very clearly that he is an immoralist and an anarchist simply because he happens to be the most moral of men, and the most orderly, and has no personal need of rules and conventions to make him a highly

useful member of society. Mr. Shaw's life-force is not tempestuous, elemental, but a finely austere "tendency that makes for righteousness."

Mr. Chesterton's temperament is not ascetic. It is no more ascetic than was Dr. Johnson's—indeed the likeness between these two burly figures is remarkable in certain ways. Mr. Chesterton would never have said with Sir Toby Belch, "Dost think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale"; for to him cakes and ale are positive symbols of virtue. In fact, they typify the pleasure-loving, full-blooded Englishman, and he is proud of the fact. Greatly as he admires Mr. Shaw, he is distressed and irritated by his asceticism, which he calls Puritanism. We have only to read Mr. Chesterton on Tolstoy and the Cult of Simplicity, to realise how incensed he becomes at any gospel that threatens the jollity of life. Anæmia to him is a form of ungodliness; he hates the faddist more than he does the criminal. Nothing was more characteristic of him than his objection to Swinburne's lines about the "lilies and languors of virtue" and the "roses and raptures of vice," on the score that it were truer to ascribe viciousness to lilies and virtue to roses. The colour and opulence of life to him are good and splendid things. Here then, we have a temperament at opposite poles from that of Mr. Shaw. Chesterton is the true immoralist by nature. Yet, just as Shaw nullifies his intellectual immoralism by his temperamental expression, so does Chesterton nullify his temperamental immoralism by his intellectual conventionality. He approves loudly of the very conventions that Mr. Shaw derides. He believes stoutly in tradition. And so, when it comes to the actual conduct of life, each is quite a decorous and respectable member of society.

The affinity is one of purpose; the difference is a question of method—not of literary method, but of spiritual tactics.

Mr. Chesterton's love of extravagant statement, his partiality for paradox, his reliance on a forcible expression of his views, leaves the impression on many people that though he may disagree with Shaw and other moral revolutionaries, he is himself none the less a revolutionary, and a more or less explosive force in modern life and letters.

But this really, as Lamb said of Coleridge's metaphysics, is "only his fun." Mr. Chesterton typifies the average, healthy Englishman, and if he assumes a revolutionary swagger it is merely to call better attention to his message of boisterous common-sense. The difference between Chesterton and the average Englishman is that Chesterton can express himself and the average Englishman cannot. But that is a question of literary power. Chesterton, like the average Englishman, is tremendously sentimental, tremendously cheerful, tremendously straightforward. Nowhere is this better seen than in his study of Dickens, who is, with all his faults and merits, one of the most English of our novelists. Much has been written about the *Christmas Carol*, and as a rule the literary critic either dwells so long on its crudities that the reader feels as if the tale were a kind of catch-penny affair that has somehow hypnotised the popular imagination; or else, the critic drops his critical apparatus altogether and rhapsodises about it in a vague way, with the same furtive haste as one rhapsodises about some estimable man who is at bottom a dull dog. Mr. Chesterton divines excellently the real merits of the tale, and in a line or so satisfies both our imagination that loves Dickens and our critical faculty that boggles over him.

> "The beauty and the real blessing of the story do not lie in the mechanical plot of it, the repentance of Scrooge, probable or improbable; they lie in the great furnace of real happiness that glows through Scrooge and everything round him; that great furnace, the heart of Dickens. Whether the Christmas visions would or would not convert Scrooge, they convert us. Whether or no the visions were evoked by real Spirits of the Past, Present, and Future, they were evoked by that truly exalted order of angels who are correctly called High Spirits. They are impelled and sustained by a quality which our contemporary artists ignore or almost deny, but which in a life decently lived is as normal and attainable as sleep—positive, passionate, conscious joy. The story sings from end to end like a happy man going home; and, like a happy and good man, when it cannot sing it yells. It is lyric and exclamatory, from the first exclamatory words of it. It is strictly a Christmas Carol."

The average Englishman prefers Rudyard Kipling to William Watson, just as he prefers Dickens to Meredith. The literary critic shrugs his shoulders, "No sense of art," he murmurs. The advanced social thinker groans, "The Philistine lack of culture." I do not know what Mr. Chesterton has said, if he has said anything on the point. But I can infer pretty definitely, from what he does say in his treatment of Browning, how he would regard this attitude.

It is coming to be recognised to-day that while a good deal of Browning—chiefly the later Browning—is anathema to the general reader, there is a good deal also that appeals not only to the cultured reader but to the man in the street. And this because Browning at his best is the most human and comprehensible of poets. One reason for this Mr. Chesterton, with his customary clearness and vigorous common-sense, has pointed out:

> "Now, to say that Browning's poems, artistically considered, are fine although they are rugged, is quite as absurd as to say that a rock, artistically considered, is fine although it is rugged. Ruggedness being an essential quality in the universe, there is that in man which responds to it as to the striking of any other chord of the eternal harmonies. As the children of nature, we are akin not only to the stars and flowers, but also to the toad-stools and the monstrous tropical birds. And it is to be repeated as the essential of the question that on this side of our nature we do emphatically love the form of the toadstools, and not merely some complicated botanical and moral lessons which the philosopher may draw from them. For example, just as there is such a thing as a poetical metre being beautifully light or beautifully grave and haunting, so there is such a thing as a poetical metre being beautifully rugged. . . .
>
> "Nature may present itself to the poet too often as consisting of stars and lilies; but these are not poets

who live in the country; they are men who go to the country for inspiration and could no more live in the country than they could go to bed in Westminster Abbey. Men who live in the heart of nature, farmers and peasants, know that nature means cows and pigs, and creatures more humorous than can be found in a whole sketch-book of Callot. And the element of the grotesque in art, like the element of the grotesque in nature, means, in the main, energy, the energy which takes its own forms and goes its own way. Browning's verse, in so far as it is grotesque, is not complex or artificial; it is natural and in the legitimate tradition of nature. The verse sprawls like the trees, dances like the dust; it is ragged like the thunder-cloud, it is top-heavy like the toad-stool. Energy which disregards the standard of classical art is in nature as it is in Browning. The same sense of the amorphous force in things which makes Browning dwell on the oddity of a fungus or a jellyfish makes him dwell on the oddity of a philosophical idea."

This is both perfectly true and admirably expressed, and it expresses just what the ordinary man feels about a poet who appeals to him, or a story-teller who captivates him. It is the ruggedness, the familiar intimacy, if we will, of Kipling, that arrests him more than the polished and more classic style of Watson. It is the lack of intimate familiarity that makes him keep Meredith at a respectful distance. There is more of the universal in Kipling and in Dickens than in Watson and Meredith. The average intelligent man is right in his instincts, however badly he may reason about his instincts. And Chesterton voices precisely what the average man feels but cannot put well into words.

Mr. Chesterton's strength as a writer does not rely on any profundity of thought, nor in any original point of view, but in the clear and witty way in which he expresses commonplace truths. He is an acute critic, not a subtle one; and he is not afraid of showing us the limitations to his sympathies. He is quite emphatic in his failure to appreciate, for instance, the Russian genius, or the greatness of Mr. Thomas Hardy; pessimism and dispassionateness are qualities that enrage him in literature as in life. And he is so annoyed about them, that he will not take the trouble to find out if there is anything of value behind.

Well, here again Mr. Chesterton is very English, and although we may differ with him about some of his prejudices and predilections, it is refreshing to find a man who is so honest and straightforward concerning them. He is an aggressively honest critic, and he never worries us with that spurious breadth of sympathy affected by some critics. Like most journalists who take to literature, he has tried many forms; essay, fiction, verse, and quite recently, drama. There is a breathless, less clever cleverness about a good deal of it that compels our admiration, but if he were less breathless it would be much better. Mr. Chesterton writes too easily, and is too fond of constructing card-castles in order to knock them down. That is no drawback to him as a journalist, but it is a distinct drawback to him as a man of letters. Card-castles are good fun—but the fun is childish. Mr. Chesterton has many of the lovable qualities of a great big child; some also of the distracting qualities. With a rich and generous sense of humour, he wastes his own time and ours by filling his books with trivial witticisms like, "The fear of the waiter is the beginning of dining." It sounds smart—it is simply meaningless. And Mr. Chesterton is too fond of spoiling good writing with this shoddy wit. It is a pity. But if Mr. Chesterton annoys us with his childishness, he is, to do him justice splendidly childlike. He is childlike in his capacity for enjoyment, childlike in his power of enthusiasm. In an age that is inclined to be *blasé* and cynical it is a joy to have a writer who is not afraid of enthusiasm, and who sees the dynamic force of enthusiasm.

And we may add this. Writers to-day are for the most part either violently progressive or violently reactionary. Mr. Chesterton is neither. With all his emotional sensibility there is no writer more full of good, solid common-sense than he. Whether we agree or disagree with his religion or politics or purely literary standpoint, he never talks without saying something worth the saying, which is not admitting that all he says is worth the saying. Some of our writers to-day are for ever peering into the future; others less venturesome turn round and hug the past. Mr. Chesterton realises—to adopt a striking phrase of Edward Dowden's—that the sanest critic is he who "resumes the past and prophesies the future."

But this chronicle of English life and letters must now draw to a close.

Whatever influence the War may have upon English life and letters, one thing surely it will make as clear as noonday—that is, the spiritual degradation of Force worship.

Force worship lays emphasis on realism in literature and on militarism in life. Realism as a leaven and as a neutraliser of sentimentalism is, as we have seen, obviously a good thing: just as militarism in so far as it brings organisation and corporate efficiency into national life is a good thing. But as understood and exaggerated by Force worship, both realism and militarism are bad things.

The more immediate effect of the War may well be, not merely to check the realistic tendency in letters, but even to bring about for a while the revival of a more conventional, more artificial literature; since a psychological rebound is natural enough, but need give no ground for anxiety. Sooner or later the Art-faculty, stunned and half paralysed as it is to-day, and blindly groping for some temporary relief and distraction as it may be doing to-morrow, will resume its normal balance.

To expect, as some seem to have expected, that this catastrophic war should at once inspire our men of letters, is unreasonable. Here and there a younger writer of the day, like Rupert Brooke, reacted to its fierce thrill. But its effect on the whole has been to stun not to stimulate the imagination. It may be quite true, as Shelley urged, that we "learn in suffering what we teach in song." Art feeds upon the drama of life, shaping its raptures and agonies into forms of beauty; but there is a period when one can only *feel*—not express;

a time when the poignancy of the drama strikes us into silence. It is not to the actors in the drama then, but to those who, coming after, will view the battle from afar, that we must look for the song. We to-day are far too near its bloody horrors; too wearied by its dreadful tedium. We lack the perspective; we lack that necessary detachment and deliberation that is essential to the great artist. The great flowering time of the English Renascence was not the moment when Drake and Hawkins were defying Philip of Spain. After the defeat of the Armada came the triumphs of Shakespeare.

The Literature of to-morrow lies in the womb of to-day. What the precise character of that literature will be, it would be folly to try and forecast; but assuredly, every action, every attitude of ours to-day, is helping to mould the nature and destiny of these unborn children.

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