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DEVELOPMENT  
OF  
ENGLISH LITERATURE  
AND  
LANGUAGE

BY

ALFRED H. WELSH, A.M.

MEMBER OF VICTORIA INSTITUTE, THE PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

VOLUME I

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All profitable study is a silent disputation—an intellectual gymnastic; and the most improving books are precisely those which most excite the reader. . . . To read passively, to learn,—is, in reality, not to learn at all.—SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON

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TO

## GOVERNOR CHARLES FOSTER.

DEAR SIR:—Not the least of our national glories are the literary remains of the best of our public men. At a period when the general literature of the country was the contempt of Europe, our statesmen wrote in the English of Addison and Junius. Classic eloquence adorned the Revolutionary council, and the splendid succession of intellect in action mounted to its grandest development in the triumvirate of Calhoun, Clay, and Webster. Nor latterly has that noble lineage failed. Seward and Sumner have illustrated elegant scholarship in the trustees of power. Within a few years, historians and poets have represented us in foreign courts, while others—notably the lamented Garfield—have carried the world of ideas into that of catch-words and party habits. In this there is cause to rejoice. It signifies that we are gravitating in the ideal direction; that art, sentiment, and imagination are dividing favor with trade and government. It means the gradual uplift of the Republic towards the high-water mark of cultivated mind—catholicity of thought, sensibility, and practice. By culture we become citizens of the universe. The work of the scholar, less liable to be partisan, is more apt to be in the interest of civilization, based not upon class-feeling, but on broad grounds of general justice. Nations are not truly great solely because of their numbers, their freedom, their activity. It is in the conjunction of fine culture with sagacity, of high reason with principle, that the ideal of national greatness is to be placed. Only thus can America stand, as she is privileged to do, for the aspirations and future of mankind.

The paths proper to the statesman and the artist can rarely coincide, but they may often touch; and because I have pleasure in this tangency of pursuits which promises to organize literature into institutions, tending thus to their refinement and expansion,—I also have pleasure in the inscription of these volumes to your Excellency, who, amid the absorbing cares of business and the arduous realities of office, have never become the slave of material circumstances, nor ever been found wanting in an active sympathy with cosmopolitan aims, displaying on the theatre of politics the virtues which impart grace and dignity to private character.

But the pleasure is peculiar in remembering your early and generous friendship, through which I am now permitted to hope that these pages may contribute, albeit in a limited way, to form judicious readers, intelligent writers, or well-furnished speakers; minister to breadth of thought or beneficence of feeling; strengthen faith or enkindle hope; deepen or multiply the sense of truth, beauty, and right, whence all true manliness is fed.

Sincerely yours,

A. H. W.





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## PROLOGUE.

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A nation's literature is the outcome of its whole life. To consider it apart from the antecedents and environments which form the national genius were to misapprehend its nature and its bearing. Its growth in kind and degree is determined by four capital agencies,—RACE, or hereditary dispositions; SURROUNDINGS, or physical and social conditions; EPOCH, or spirit of the age; PERSON, or reactionary and expressive force. Historical phenomena are not all to be resolved, as with Draper, into physiological; nor all to be explained, as with Buckle, by an *a priori* necessity; nor chiefly to be referred, as with Taine, to the sky, the weather, and the nerves. On the other hand, they are as far removed from an individual spontaneity as from a depressing fatalism. Personal genius remakes the society which evolves it. In so far as it rises above the table-land of national character, it not only expresses but intensifies the national type. Shakespeare and Bacon wrought under the circumstances of their birth, but were also, by their own supremacy, original and independent sources of influence. Yet progress is according to law. In the midst of eternal change is unity. The relations of the constants and the variables have the true marks of development. On a survey of the whole, human wills, however free, are seen to conform, under a general Providence, to a definite end.

A history of English Literature requires, therefore, a description of English soil and climate, of English thought and English character, as they exist when first the English people come upon the arena of history, of the growth of that character and that

thought, as they are colored by the foreign infusions of Celt, Roman, Dane, and Norman, or impressed and fostered by the new ideal—Christianity. Nor can any man understand the American mind who fails to appreciate its connection with English history, ancient and modern. On English soil were first developed what he most values in his ancestral spirit—the habits, the principles, and the faith, which have made this country to be what it is. As we have no American language which is not a graft on the English stock, though there be minor points of difference,—so we have no American literature which does not flow in a common stream of sentiment from English hearths and English altars. What combinations will hereafter manifest themselves in consequence of democratic tendencies and a gradual amalgamation with all the other nations of Europe, is an open question; but the distinctive features which have displayed themselves within the present century can hardly be deemed of sufficient strength to color or disturb the primitive current.

So far as a historical work may be intended to be an educational appliance, it obviously should be neither a presentation of chronological details nor a mere discussion of causes. The high and natural destination of the soul is the full development of its moral and intellectual faculties. Hence knowledge is chiefly valuable as a means of mental activity. And since the desire of unity, and the necessity of referring effects to their causes, are the mainspring of energy, the knowledge that a thing is,—that a certain author wrote certain books, that a certain book contains a certain passage, that a certain passage contains a certain opinion,—is far less important than the knowledge how or why it is,—how the author, the book, the opinion are related, as consequent and antecedent, to some dominant idea or moral state; how this idea or state is shaped by natural bent and constraining force; how, from this primitive bent and moulding

force, we may see in advance, and half predict the character of human events and productions; how beneath literary remains we can unearth the beatings of living hearts centuries ago, as the lifeless wreck of a shell is a clue to the entire and living existence. The one is a knowledge of objects as isolated; the other, of objects as connected. The first gives facts; the second gives *power*. An individual may possess an ample magazine of the former, and still be little better than a barbarian. Accordingly I have aimed at the golden mean,—a judicious union of facts and philosophy, of narrative and reflection, of objective description and subjective meditation. Color and form may be desirable to attract the eye, but the interlacing, spiritual force, that blends them into harmony and coherence, is required to make their lesson disciplinary, available, and enduring.

Again, it is a law of intelligence that the greater the number of objects to which our consciousness is simultaneously extended, the smaller is the intensity with which it is able to consider each, and therefore the less vivid and distinct will be the information obtained. If the points considered are intermingled, the rays are not brought to a focus, and the mental eye,—following the lines, but nowhere abiding,—instead of a clear and well-defined image, perceives only a shadowy and confused outline. Now, to the ordinary student, it is believed that the treatment of authors in our current text-books presents the fantastic groupings of the kaleidoscope,—a bewildering show. In the whirl and entanglement of topics, he sees nothing in an undivided light, and receives no lasting and organic impressions. He reads passively, conceives feebly, and forgets speedily. Therefore each leading author is here discussed under the classified heads of BIOGRAPHY, WRITINGS, STYLE, RANK, CHARACTER, and INFLUENCE. Others are added when rising into special interest and significance. *One thing at a time* is the accepted condition for all efficient activity. While the topics are logically related as the

more or less interdependent parts of a whole, each receives the amplest justice by being made in its turn the central subject of thought. The mind in its work thus becomes more animated and energetic, because its ideas are kindred, all converging to a definite because to a single impression. By such an arrangement, moreover, the logical powers are trained, and the student unconsciously acquires a *habit* of bringing, in writing or speaking, his thoughts out of chaos into order.

Further, a great man, his career, his example, his ideas, can take no strong and permanent hold of the heart and mind, until these have become an integral part of our established associations of thoughts, feelings, and desires. But this can only be accomplished by *time*. The attention must be detained till the subject becomes real, as the face of a friend; fixed, as the sun and stars: then the energies of apprehension, of judgment, of sympathy, are aroused; and images, principles, truths, sentiments, though the words be forgotten, become fadeless acquisitions, assimilated into the very substance of the student's living self. Hence, as the end of liberal education is the cultivation of the student through the awakened exercise of his faculties, the authors studied should be relatively few and representative. Time is wasted and the powers are dissipated by attempting too much. Preëminent authors are creative and pictorial, reflecting, with singular fidelity, the peculiarities of their age; and by limiting the discussion to such, the student acquires the most in learning the least.

Regarding language as an apparatus for the conveyance of thought, and mindful that whatever force is absorbed by the machine is deducted from the result, I have carefully excluded polemical and conjectural matter from the body of the work, have seldom diverted attention by introduction of foot-notes, and have employed dates but sparingly. 'Biography,' says Lowell, 'from day to day holds dates cheaper and facts dearer,'

—not all facts, indeed, but the essential ones, those of psychological purport, which underlie the life and make the individual man. To the same end —economy of mental energy—the early poets, including Chaucer, are presented in a more or less modernized form, with an occasional retention of the antique dialect for its illustrative uses.

Neither the artist nor his art, as before stated, can be understood and estimated independently of his times. No enlarged or profound conception of intellectual culture is possible without completeness of view,—without a well-defined notion of the other elements of society, and of those products designed to convince of truth or to arouse to action, as well as of those whose prime object is to address the imagination or to please the taste. Consequently, each of the periods, into which the work is divided according to what seemed their predominant characteristics, is introduced by a sketch of the *features* which distinguish it, and of the forces which go to shape it, including POLITICS, the state of SOCIETY, RELIGION, POETRY, the DRAMA, the NOVEL, the PERIODICAL, HISTORY, THEOLOGY, ETHICS, SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY. No one who aspires now to literary power can afford to be ignorant of the scientific phase of modern thought. The educational value of philosophy is peculiarly apparent in its effects on the culture and discipline of the mind,—to quicken it, to teach it precision, to lead it to inquire into the causes and relations of things, to awaken it to a vigorous and varied exertion. Not less salutary in this point of view, and far more so in another, are theology and ethics. Moral culture and religious growth cannot be excluded from any just conception of education. Broadly stated, it is of vast moment to the student to reflect upon the motives and springs of human action, to face the unexplained mystery of thought, to ask himself, What is right, and what wrong; what am I, and whither going; what my history, and my destiny?



According to an enlightened science of education, it is difficult to see the utility of a text-book, though critical, that is wholly abstracted from the literature itself. Its criticisms, its general observations, are meaningless and powerless without illustrative specimens to verify them. They produce no answering thoughts, no questioning, and thus no valuable activity. The student is expected blindly to yield himself to the direction of another. He forms no independent judgment, is excited to no disputation, is stimulated to no profitable or pleasurable exercise. But instruction is only instruction as it enables us to teach ourselves, and leaves on the mind serviceable images and contemplations. If truth is not expansive, if it is not recast and used to interpret nature and guide the life, wherein is its value? The materials of discipline and culture are furnished, not by statements (about literature,) but by the literature itself. To refine the taste, to sharpen thought, to inspire feeling, the student must be brought closely and consciously into contact with personality,—that is, with the writer's productions. Not only are extracts to be presented, but when practicable and expedient, entire artistic products. These are to be *interpreted*; and in them, as in a mirror, the student should be taught to recognize the genius that constructed them,—his style, his character, the manners, opinions, and civilization of the period.

Particular care has been taken to insure an interest in the personal life of an author; for all the rules that have ever been prescribed for controlling the attention find their principal value in this,—that they induce or require an *interest* in the subject-matter. Hence the value of reported sayings, private journals, correspondence, striking events, gossipy incidents,—the scenery and personages that belong to the period, and which have the effect to charm the mind into a sympathetic attitude toward the author's work. 'As the enveloping English ivy lends a

living charm and attractiveness to many a ruined castle and abbey, which would prove uninviting to the tourist standing in its naked deformity, so a reasonable amplitude of treatment often throws a wonderful fascination over old names and dates, otherwise uninteresting.'

It would seem obvious that a history of English Literature should note in a catholic and liberal spirit the practical lessons suggested by its theme. If it warms not the feelings into noble earnestness, elevates not the mind's ideals, nor supplies healthful truths by which to live and to die, it is lamentably defective; and the fault is not in the subject, but in the historian. When Dr. Arnold was planning his history, he said: "My highest ambition . . . is to make my history the very reverse of Gibbon in this respect, that whereas the whole spirit of his work, from its low morality, is hostile to religion without speaking directly against it, so my greatest desire would be, in my history, by its high morals and its general tone, to be of use to the cause, *without actually bringing it forward.*" Without twisting a story into a sermon, I have humbly endeavored to present it as the artist describes nature,—with a light falling upon it from the region of the highest and truest. As to the benefits of this study *per se*, they cannot be overestimated. He can hardly hope for eminence as a writer, who has not enriched his mind and perfected his style by familiarity with the literary masters and masterpieces; while to have fed on high thoughts and to have companied with those—

'Whose soul the holy forms  
Of young imagination hath kept pure,'

are, beyond all teaching, the virtue-making powers.

Every thinker, the most original, owes his originality to the originality of all. 'Very little of me,' said Goethe, 'would be left, if I could but say what I owe to my predecessors and contemporaries.' Omnipotence creates, man combines. He can be originative, strictly, only in development, in the form of his

funded thought, in the fusion of his collected materials, as the sculptor in the conception of his statue, or the architect in the design of his edifice. My scope and purposes being such as indicated, I have drawn freely from all the fountains around me,—have wished to absorb all the light anywhere radiating. To the many who have helped me, it is a pleasure to record my obligations in the manner which seems most accordant with the objects and uses to be subserved,—either explicitly in the text, or collectively in the List of Authorities. To some sources, however, I am preëminently indebted,—to the literary histories of Anderson, Bascom, and Taine; to the critical essays of Macaulay, Hazlitt, and Whipple; to the philosophical treatises of Lecky, Buckle, Lewes, and Uberweg. I wish, also, to render acknowledgments to personal friends,—to Rev. J. L. Grover for free access to the Columbus Library; to General Joseph Geiger, and his accomplished assistant, Miss Mary Harbaugh, for the liberal privileges of the Ohio State Library; to Professor Alston Ellis, Ph.D., for valuable suggestions; to Rev. Daniel F. Smith, and Mr. James Bishop Bell, of Chicago, the scholarly readers, for their critical and unstinted revision of the proof-sheets; to Rev. F. W. Gunsaulus, and A. E. Clevenger, A.M., for large and important aid in the preparation of a copious index.

In conclusion, my supreme anxiety has been to produce not a brilliant but a useful book, and the results are therefore hopefully commended to a conscientious and catholic criticism, a criticism that shall take high ground,—that shall aim to promote the common weal,—that shall not look through a microscope when it should look through a telescope,—that shall illuminate excellences as well as indicate errors,—that shall contemplate the whole before it adjudicates on the parts,—that shall be perceptive, sympathetic, and suggestive.

THE AUTHOR.

*Columbus, Ohio, July 4, 1882.*

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DEVELOPMENT  
OF  
ENGLISH LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE.

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FORMATIVE PERIOD.

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CHAPTER I.

FORMING OF THE PEOPLE.

The harvest gathered in the fields of the Past is to be brought home for the use of the Present.—*Dr. Arnold.*

History does not stand *outside* of nature, but in her very heart, so that the historian only grasps a people's character with true precision when he keeps in full view its geographical position, and the influences which its surroundings have wrought upon it.—*Ritter.*

**Geographical.**—We see, by reference to the map, that England—the land from which our language and many of our institutions are derived—is the largest of three countries comprising the island of *Great Britain*.<sup>1</sup> The remaining two are Wales and Scotland. These three, with Ireland, constitute the *United Kingdom*; and this, with its foreign possessions, the *British Empire*.

England, consisting chiefly of low plains and gentle hills, occupies the central and southern portion of the island; and Wales, mountainous and marshy, the western. Scotland is the northern division, storm-beaten by a hostile ocean; mountainous and sterile in the north, but abounding in fertile plains in the south.

Britain is separated from France by the English Channel, from Ireland by the Irish Sea, and from Germany by the North Sea, notorious for its wrecks.

<sup>1</sup> *Great Britain*, because there is another land also called Britain,—the northwestern corner of Gaul; but this last is now commonly called *Brittany*. The two names, however, are really the same, and both are called in Latin *Britannia*.

Its entire extent is about ninety thousand square miles, or nearly twice the area of the State of New York.

It is divided into counties, or *shires*, of which England has forty, Wales twelve, Scotland thirty-three.

Its climate is moist with the vapors that rise forever from the great sea-girdle, and its sky sombre with the clouds that are fed by ceaseless exhalations,—conditions which, however conducive to splendor of verdure, are less nurturing to refined and nimble thought than to sluggish and melancholy temperament; for man, forced to accommodate himself to circumstances, contracts habits and aptitudes corresponding to them.

No European country should have a deeper interest for English or American readers; none is so rich in learning and science, in wise men and useful arts; but nothing in its early existence indicated the greatness it was destined to attain. We are to think of it in those dim old days as, intellectually and physically, an island in a northern sea—the joyless abode of rain and surge, forest and bog, wild beast and sinewy savage, which, as it struggled from chaos into order, from morning into prime, should become the residence of civilized energy and Christian sentiment, of smiling love and sweet poetic dreams.

**Britons.**—When we learn that the same grammatical principles, the same laws of structure, dominate throughout the languages of Europe, and that, even when their apparent differences are most obvious, it may yet be proved that there is a complete identity in their main roots, there can be no shadow of doubt that they were once identical, and that the many peoples who use them, once, long before the beginning of recorded annals, dwelt together in the same pastoral tents. Somewhere in the quadrilateral which extends from the Indus to the Euphrates, and from the Oxus to the Persian Gulf, amid scenery ‘grandiose yet severe,’ lived this mother-race, unknown even to tradition, but revealed by linguistic science,—parent of the speculative subtlety of Germany, of the imperial energy of England, of the vivid intelligence of France, of the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome. Its most ancient name with which we are acquainted is *Aryas*, derived from the root *ar*, to plough, and which therefore implies originally an agricultural as distinguished from a rude and nomadic people. Just when it began to wander away from its cradle-land is un-

known; but gradually, perhaps by the natural growth of population, perhaps by the restless spirit of enterprise, the old home was abandoned; and it often happened that a wandering band parted asunder into two or more others in the course of its wanderings, who forgot, as they separated, the rock whence they were hewn and the hole of the pit whence they were digged. In most cases they entered upon territory already inhabited by other races, but these were commonly either destroyed or driven from the select parts into out-of-the-way corners.

First of all, in quest of new fortunes, came the *Celts*, pressing their way into Germany, Italy, Spain, Gaul (now France), and thence into Britain. The area over which Celtic names are found diffused shows the original extent of their dominion. These pre-English Celts, ever waning and dying, survive chiefly in the modern Highlanders, Irish<sup>1</sup> and Welsh.<sup>2</sup> Their history, as Britons, finds its earliest solid footing in the narrative of a Roman soldier. Early historians, indeed, who could look into the far and shadowy past with an unquestioning confidence, marshalled kings and dynasties in complete chronology and exact succession. They made British antiquity run parallel with 'old hushed Egypt,' with the prophets and judges of Israel. We are gravely told of one British king who flourished in the time of Saul, of another who was contemporary with Solomon; that King Lear had grown old in government when Romulus and Remus were suckled; that the Britons were sprung from Trojan ancestry, and took their name from Brutus, who, an exile and troubled wanderer, was directed by the oracle of Diana to come to Albion,<sup>3</sup>—

'That pale, that white-faced shore,  
Whose foot spurns back the ocean's roaring tides.'

Standing before the altar of the goddess, with vessel of wine and blood of white hart, he had repeated nine times,—

'Goddess of woods, tremendous in the chase  
To mountain boars, and all the savage race!  
Wide o'er the ethereal walks extends thy sway,  
And o'er the infernal mansions void of day!  
Look upon us on earth! unfold our fate,  
And say what region is our destined seat!  
Where shall we next thy lasting temples raise?  
And choirs of angels celebrate thy praise?'

<sup>1</sup> Meaning 'Men of the West.'

<sup>2</sup> Meaning 'Strangers.'

<sup>3</sup> The island, not yet Britain, was ruled over by Albion, a giant, and son of Neptune, who gave it his name. Presuming, says one account, to oppose the progress of Hercules in his western march, he was slain.

In deep sleep, in vision of the night, he was answered,—

‘Brutus! there lies beyond the Gallic bounds  
 An Island which the western sea surrounds,  
 By giants once possessed; now few remain  
 To bar thy entrance, or obstruct thy reign.  
 To reach that happy shore thy sails employ;  
 There fate decrees to raise a second Troy,  
 And found an empire in thy royal line,  
 Which time shall ne'er destroy, nor bounds confine.’

We call these stories legendary; once—as late as the seventeenth century—they were accredited history. Certainly, the faith which received them as such seems to us better than the vicious scepticism which would beggar us of the accumulated inheritance of ages by destroying belief in the evidence. They may, and doubtless do, contain germs of truth—left on the shifting sands as wave after wave of forgotten generations broke on the shores of eternity. Many a mighty empire, it is true, has faded forever out of the memory of man; but much that was once thought irretrievably lost has been reclaimed; and, hereafter, historical science may bring to light from the dark oblivion of these pre-historic Britons more than is now dreamed of in our philosophy.

Fables of a line of kings before the Romans, have left one legend that has become to all a wondrous reality—the story of King Lear, transmuted by the alchemy of genius into perhaps the most impressive and awful tragedy in the range of dramatic literature.

**Roman Conquest.**—Meanwhile, our first authentic information in regard to them is given by Julius Cæsar, who, fifty-five years before Christ, led his brass-mailed legions into Britain from Gaul. If the attack was fierce, the resistance was heroic, and marks the rising pulse in that flood

‘Of British freedom which, to the open sea  
 Of the world’s praise, from dark antiquity  
 Hath flowed.’

While the Roman standard-bearer leaped into the waves, and bade his hesitating comrades follow, the Britons dashed into the surf to strike the invader before his foot polluted their soil. The invasion added nothing to the Roman power or pride. At the end of his campaigns, Cæsar had viewed the island rather than possessed it; and when he gave thanks at Rome to the

gods, it may be questioned whether it was for a conquest or an escape.

Under his successors, however, about the year 85, when the Republic had become the Empire, the central and southern portion of the country became a Roman province, and was subject to Roman rule nearly four hundred years.

Slow, feeble and imperfect victory, as in the evening of a well-fought day, when the veteran's arm is less strong and his passions less violent.

*Effects.*—During this time much was done to improve the condition of the natives. The Roman coins, laws, language, were introduced. Governed with justice, they became less estranged. Schools were established. The conquered were grouped together in cities guarded by massive walls, and linked together by a net-work of magnificent roads, which ran straight from town to town. The modern railways of England often follow the line of these Roman roads. Agriculture and the useful arts prospered. Many came from Italy, and built temples, palaces, public baths, and other splendid structures, living in great luxury and delight. Their beautiful floors, composed of differently colored brick, and arranged in elegant patterns, are occasionally unearthed—for cornfields and meadows now cover this Roman splendor, and new cities have risen upon the ruins of the old.

But Roman civilization was arrested and modified by the calamities of the fifth century. In the anarchy and bloodshed of barbarian invasion, the Romanized Britons, who had thus far preserved their national identity, went down; albeit, in their fall, they were as forest leaves strewn by autumnal winds—leaving behind them a fertilizing power in the soil, whence other trees should bud and bloom in the light of other summers, and gather strength to battle with the inclemencies of other winters. The imperial armies brought with them the Christian faith; and Britain, about to undergo a new yoke, had received the principle that was destined to save her from complete desolation. Even in the savage North, where Roman arms had failed to penetrate, Christ had conquered souls.

**Anglo-Saxon Conquest.**—In the north and west, sheltered by their mountain fastnesses, were the Celtic *Picts* and *Silures*, whom no severity could reduce to subjection and no resistance

restrain from plunder. For two centuries they had been the terror of the civilized Britons, as wild animals harass and persecute the tame of their own species.

Side by side with them, and often driving them back upon their own territory, were the *Scots*, a Celtic tribe originally from Ireland, whence they crossed in so great a number in their little flat-bottomed boats as finally to give their own name to the district they invaded. In 368 we find their united hordes pursuing their depredations as far as London, and repelled with great difficulty by Theodosius, a Roman general.

Soon thereafter the Empire began falling in pieces, and at length its legions were wholly withdrawn from Britain for the defense of Italy against the Goths. The heart of the Britons was faint. They had been so long defended by their Roman masters that when left alone they were incapable of defending themselves. Piteously, but vainly, they entreated once more for protection, exclaiming, 'The barbarians drive us to the sea, and the sea drives us back to the barbarians.' In their extremity they applied, with the usual promises of land and pay, to the Germanic tribes of the **Jutes**, who, driven by the pressure of want or of foes from the sunless woods and foggy clime of their native Jutland, had already spread their ravages along the eastern shores of Britain, and whose pirate-boats were not improbably cruising off the coast at the moment,—

'Then, sad relief, from the bleak coast that hears  
The German Ocean roar, deep-blooming, strong,  
And yellow-haired, the blue-eyed Saxon<sup>1</sup> came.'

They came to stay—to settle a people and to found a state. The fame of their adventure attracted others, till, their numbers swelling, they treacherously turned their arms against the nation they came to protect, and established themselves on the fruitful plains of *Kent*.

From the sand-flats of Holstein and the morasses of Friesland swarmed the **Saxons** in successive bands, and settled, with sword and battle-axe, to the south, west and east, founding the kingdoms of *Sussex*, *Wessex* and *Essex*.

From the wild waste of Sleswick, swept by the blast of the North, wan and ominous, poured the **Angles** in a series of

<sup>1</sup> A generic name by which they and their neighbors were known to the Romans, though conveniently applied in particular to a southern tribe.



descents, and slowly, over deserted walls and polluted shrines, penetrated into the interior, effecting the settlements of *Northumberland*, *Anglia* and *Mercia*. They seem to have been the most numerous and energetic of the invaders, since they occupied larger districts, and in the end gave their name to the land and its people. It was now that Britain began to be called *Angleland*, subsequently contracted into *England*, meaning the 'land of the Angles,' or 'English.'

After nearly two hundred years of bitter warfare the island was given over to the dominion of the pagan conquerors, who meantime grouped themselves into the several petty kingdoms indicated, which were collectively known as the *Heptarchy*. Their history is like a history of 'kites and crows.' Freed from the common pressure of war against the Britons, they turned their energies to combats with one another. Little by little, as the tide of supremacy rolled backward and forward, one predominated over the others, till eventually they were all made subject to Wessex in the year 827, and for the first time there was something like national unity, with the promise of national development.

*Effects.*—The conquest, stubbornly resisted and hardly won, was a sheer dispossession of the conquered. Priests were slain at the altar, churches fired, peasants driven by the flames to fling themselves on rings of pitiless steel. Some, the wealthier, fled in panic across the Channel, and took refuge with their kindred in Brittany. Others, who would still be free, retired to Wales, which became the secure retreat of Christianity. The rest, who were not cut down, were enslaved. These are they who, attached to the soil, will rise gradually with the rise of industry, and spread by amalgamation through all ranks of society. In the ascendancy of the Saxon, who caused his own language, customs, and laws to become paramount, was laid the sure foundation of the future nation—the one German state that rose on the wreck of Rome.

It is in this sanguinary and ineffectual struggle that romance places the fair Rowena, of fatal charms, with her golden wine-cup; the enchanter Merlin, who instructs Vortigern, king of the Britons, how to find the two sleeping dragons that hinder the building of his tower; the famous Arthur, with his Knights of the Round Table:



‘The fellowship of the table round,  
So famous in those days,  
Whereat a hundred noble knights,  
And thirty sat always.’

**Danish Conquest.**—But Saxon Britain was also to be brought to the brink of that servitude or extermination which her arms had brought upon the Celt. About the end of the eighth century, the roving Northmen,<sup>1</sup> pouring redundant from their bleak and barren regions, began to hover off the English coast, growing in numbers and hardihood as they crept southward to the Thames. For two hundred years the raven—dark and dreaded emblem of the Dane—was the terror and scourge of Saxon homes. After a long series of disasters, aggravated by internal feuds, Danish kings occupied the throne from 1016 till 1042, when the Saxon line was restored in the person of Edward the Confessor.

*Effects.*—The same wild panic, as the light black skiffs strike inland along the river reaches or moor around the river islets; the same sights of horror—reddened horizons, slaughtered men, and children tossed on spikes or sold in the market-place. Christian priests were again slain at the altar. Coveting their treasures of gold and silver, but despising their more valuable ones of knowledge, they made use of books in setting fire to the monasteries. Letters and religion disappeared before these Northmen as before the Northmen of old. The arts of peace were forgotten. Light was all but quenched in a chaotic and muddy ignorance. To an England that had forgotten its origins was brought back the barbaric England of its pirate forefathers.

When it is considered that the invaders were nearly half as many as the invaded, we are prepared to believe that their influence in language, in physical type, in manners, was far greater than is usually conceded.

**Norman Conquest.**—When the great comet of 1060 waved over England, the enervated Saxon looked up and beheld what seemed to him a portent that should, as Milton describes it,

‘—— shake from its horrid hair  
Pestilence and war.’

In the ninth century, the Northmen—these same daring and

<sup>1</sup> The terms *Northmen*, *Norsemen*, or *Scandinavians*, are general designations of the inhabitants of Scandinavia (Norway, Sweden and Denmark), who at about this period were called, without distinction, *Danes*.

rapacious warriors—penetrated into France, and in 913 had settled in the northern part, where, blending with the French and adopting their language, they rapidly grew up into great prosperity and power. Their name was softened into *Normans*, and their settlement was called Normandy, meaning the ‘Land of the North-man.’

In 1066, polished and transformed by the infusion of foreign blood, the Normans, in their well-knit coats of mail, with sword and lance, invaded and subdued England in the single battle of Hastings, under Duke William, who is therefore known as *William the Conqueror*.

*Oppression.*—The Norman was in a hostile country; and, to maintain himself, became an oppressor. He appropriated the soil, levied taxes, built for himself castles, with their parapets and loop-holes, their outer and inner courts—of which, within a century, there were eleven hundred and fifteen. William, as his power grew, went from a show of justice to ferocity. Wherever his resentment was provoked—wherever submission to his exactions was refused—were the red lights of his burnings. Men ate human flesh under the pressure of consuming famine; the perishing sold themselves into slavery to obtain food; corpses rotted in the highways because none were left to bury them. The invaders—sixty thousand—are an armed colony. The Saxon is made a body slave on his own estate. For an offence against the forest laws he will lose his eyes. At eight o’clock he is warned by the ringing of the curfew bell to cover up his fire and retire. ‘What savage unsocial nights,’ says Lamb, ‘must our ancestors have spent, wintering in caves and unilluminated fastnesses! They must have lain about and grumbled at one another in the dark. What repartees could have passed when you must have felt about for a smile, and handled your neighbor’s cheek to be sure that he understood it?’ Villages are swept away to make hunting grounds for Norman monarchs. A Norman abbot digs up the bones of his predecessors, and throws them without the gates. In a word, England, in forced and sullen repose, was under a galling yoke, and to all outward appearances was French.

*Effects.*—(1.) Introduction of Feudalism,—the distribution of land among military captains, to hold by the sword what the sword had won. In twenty years from the coronation of

William, almost the whole of English soil had been divided, on condition of fealty and assistance, among his followers, while the peasantry were bound as serfs. The meanest Norman rose to wealth and power. Here is the ordinance of the great feudal principle of service :

‘We command that all earls, barons, knights, sergeants and freemen be always provided with horses and arms as they ought, and that they be always ready to perform to us their whole service, in manner as they owe it to us of right for their fees and tenements, and as we have appointed to them by the common council of our whole kingdom, and as we have granted to them in fee with right of inheritance.’

Of the native proprietors many perished, others were impoverished, and some retained their estates as vassals of Norman lords. To cast off the chains of feudality will be the labor of six centuries.

(2.) Introduction of Chivalry,<sup>1</sup> or Knighthood, a military institution which was prompted by an enthusiastic benevolence and combined with religious ceremonies, the avowed purpose of which was to protect the weak and defend the right. It appears to have had its origin in the military distinction by which certain feudal tenants were bound to serve on horseback, equipped with the coat of mail. He who thus fought, and had been invested with helmet, shield and spear in a solemn manner, wanted nothing more to render him a knight. From the advantages of the mounted above the ordinary combatant, probably arose that far-famed valor and keen thirst for renown which ultimately became the essential qualities of a knightly character.

(3.) Introduction of French speech. This became the language of the court and polite literature. As late as the middle of the fourteenth century it was said: ‘Children in scole, agenst the usage and manir of all other nations, beeth compelled for to leve hire (their) owne langage, and for to construe hir (their) lessons and hir thynges in Frenche, and so they haveth sethe Normans came first into England.’ They made such a point of this that nobles sent their sons to France to preserve them from barbarisms. Students of the universities were obliged to converse either in French or Latin. ‘Gentilmen children beeth taught to speke Frensche from the tyme they bith rokked in hire cradell . . . and uplondish men will likne himself to gentylnen, and fondeth with great besynesse for to speke Frensche to be told of.’

<sup>1</sup> From the French *cheval*, a horse.

(4.) Introduction of French poetry. Of course, the Norman, who despised the Saxon, loved none but French ideas and verses.

(5.) Expulsion of the English language from literature and culture. No longer or scarcely written, ceasing to be studied in schools or to be spoken in higher life, English became the badge of inferiority and dependence. Thus *ox, calf, sheep, pig, deer*, are Anglo-Saxon names; while *beef, veal, mutton, pork*, and *venison* are Norman-French: because it was the business of the former part of the population to *tend* these animals while living, but of the latter to *eat* them when prepared for the feast. The distinction is noticed in his sprightly way by Walter Scott:

“Why, how call you those grunting brutes running about on their four legs?” demanded Wamba.

“Swine, fool, swine,” said the herd; “every fool knows that.”

“And swine is good Saxon,” said the Jester; “but how call you the sow when she is flayed and drawn and quartered, and hung by the heels like a traitor?”

“Pork,” answered the swineherd.

“I am very glad every fool knows that too,” said Wamba; “and pork, I think, is good Norman French; and so when the brute lives, and is in charge of a Saxon slave, she goes by her Saxon name; but becomes a Norman, and is called pork, when she is carried to the castle hall to feast among the nobles. What dost thou think of this doctrine, friend Gurth, ha?”

“It is but too true doctrine, friend Wamba, however it got into thy fool’s pate.”

“Nay, I can tell you more,” said Wamba, in the same tone. “There is old Alderman Ox continues to hold his Saxon epithet while he is under the charge of serfs and barbarians such as thou; but becomes beef, a fiery French gallant, when he arrives before the worshipful jaws that are destined to consume him. Mynheer Calf, too, becomes Monsieur de Veau in the like manner. He is Saxon when he requires tendance, and takes a Norman name when he becomes matter of enjoyment.”

Thus does language, as we shall have further occasion to observe, bear the marks and footprints of revolutions,—the ark that rides above the water-floods which sweep away other memorials of vanished ages.

(6.) Finally, the establishment of a foreign king, a foreign prelacy, a foreign nobility, the degradation of the conquered, and the division of power and riches among the conquerors. But the absence of internal wars, due to the firm government of foreign kings, will afford time for a varied progress. The stern discipline of these two hundred years will give administrative order and judicial reform.

*Fusion.*—But the great masses always form the race in the end, and generally the genius and the language. If the spirit be not broken, tyranny is but a passing storm which purifies while it devastates. The people remember their native rank and their

original independence. At the end of the twelfth century there were Saxon families who had bound themselves by a perpetual vow to wear long beards from father to son in memory of the old national custom. These subjects, trodden and vilified, had the characteristic doggedness, and their predominance was sure.

A long time is required to convert a mutual hatred into harmony and peace. Two and a half centuries were needed. Among the various agencies that worked upon the hearts and habits of Norman and Saxon may be reckoned that of the clergy. Never altogether partisan, they constantly became less so. When Anselm came over from his Norman convent to be Archbishop of Canterbury, he told his countrymen plainly that a churchman acknowledged no distinction of race. Ambitious and luxurious as some were, others were humble and self-denying, and stood between the conqueror and the people, a healing influence to mitigate oppression.

The wars of the Normans made them more dependent on the Saxons, and common victories served to produce a community of interest and feeling.

The Crusades, too, by the predominant sentiment which they inspired, doubtless helped to appease the old animosities.

The gradual change in the relation of the two races, as well as an important influence in accelerating that change, is shown by the marriage of Henry the First to a Saxon princess, which soon led to the restoration of the Saxon dynasty in the person of Henry the Second. 'At present,' says an author in the time of this monarch, 'as the English and Normans dwell together, and have constantly intermarried, the two nations are so completely mingled together, that, at least as regards freemen, one can scarcely distinguish who is Norman and who English.'

The loss of Normandy snapped the threads of French connections, and the Normans, by the necessities of their isolation, began to regard England as their home, and the English as their countrymen.

Add to these causes the softening influence of time, and we are prepared for that final fusion of the Normans with the mass by which the nation became one again.

English, though shunned by cultivation and rank, remained unshaken as the popular tongue. The Norman, too, must learn



it, in order to direct his tenants. His Saxon wife speaks it, his children are accustomed to the sound of it. Slowly, by compromise and the necessity of being understood, it prevails,—English still in root and sap, though saturated with the vocabulary of Norman-French.

But truly to understand the chemistry of the English nation, we must penetrate its soul, learn somewhat of its faculties and feelings, study the man invisible — the under-world of events and forms — distinguish the separate moulds in which the entering elements were cast.

**Celtic.**—To estimate the advantages of law and order, we must have stood with the stately blue-eyed Briton in his circular hut of timber and reeds, surmounted by a conical roof which served at once to admit daylight and to allow smoke to escape through a hole in the top; have seen a horseman ride in, converse with the inmates, then kick the sides of his steed and make his exit without having alighted; have sat in circle with the guests, each with his block of wood and piece of meat; have seen the whole family lie down to savage dreams around the central fire-place, while the wolf's long howl broke the silence of forest depth or wild fowls screamed across the wilderness of shallow waters; have wandered through their track-ways, careful to hasten home before the setting of the sun should cut us off from our village (a collection of huts amid fens and woods fortified with ramparts and ditches) to become the captive of an enemy or the prey of ravenous beast.

There is no property but arms and cattle. War is the favorite occupation. Bronze swords, spears, axes, and chariots with scythes projecting from the axle of the wheels, are the weapons. Every tribe has its own chief or chiefs, who call the common people together and confer with them upon all matters concerning the general welfare. The *cran-tara*, a stick burnt at the end and dipped in blood, carried by a dumb messenger from hamlet to hamlet, summons the warriors. A brave people, and energetic. Says Tacitus:

‘The Britons willingly furnish recruits to our armies; they pay the taxes without murmuring, and they perform with zeal their duties toward the government, provided they

have not to complain of oppression. When they are offended, their resentment is prompt and violent; they may be conquered, but not tamed; they may be led to obedience, but not to servitude.<sup>1</sup>

Would you know their savagery? Imagine them—as old Celtic story tells—mixing the brains of their slain enemies with lime, and playing with the hard balls they made of them. Such a brainstone is said to have gone through the skull of an Irish chief, who lived afterwards seven years with two brains in his head, always sitting very still, lest in shaking himself he should die. Yet they esteem it infamous for a chieftain to close the door of his house at all, ‘lest the stranger should come and behold his contracting soul.’

Their dead are buried in mounds. Here vases are discovered, containing their bones and ashes, together with their swords and hatchets, arrow-heads of flint and bronze, and beads of glass and amber,—for they believe, after the manner of savages, that things which are useful or pleasing to the living are needed, for pleasure or use, in the shadowy realm:

‘Secure beneath his ancient hill  
The British warrior slumbers still;  
There lie in order, still the same,  
The bones which reared his stately frame;  
Still at his side his spear, his bow,  
As placed two thousand years ago.’

The priests of their religion are the *Druïds*, who are so careful lest their secret doctrines be revealed to the uninitiated that they teach their disciples in hidden caves and forest recesses. They are the arbiters of disputes, and the judges of crime. Whoever refuses to submit to their decree is banished from human intercourse. The young resort to them for instruction. They teach the eternal transmigration of souls. They will not worship their gods under roofs. At noon and night, within a circular area, of enormous stones and of vast circumference,<sup>1</sup> they make their appeals with sacrifices—captives and criminals, or the innocent and fair. When the priest has ripped open the

<sup>1</sup> One of these—Stonehenge—may yet be seen standing in mysterious and awful silence on Salisbury Plain. So massive are the pieces, that it was fabled to have been built by giants or magic art:

Not less than that huge pile (from some abyss  
Of mortal power unquestionably sprung,) Whose hoary Diadem of pendant rocks  
Confines the shrill-voiced whirlwind, round and round  
Eddying within its vast circumference,  
On Sarum’s naked plain.—*Wordsworth*.

body of a human being or lighted the fires around a living mass, we may hear the shriek of mad excitement as the 'congregation' dance and shout. Nor is their teaching confined to their worship. Says Cæsar:

'The Druids discuss many things concerning the stars and their revolutions, the magnitude of the globe and its various divisions, the nature of the universe, energy and power of the immortal gods.'

There are bards, also, with power and privilege, who sing the praises of British heroes to the crowd. A wheel striking on strings is the instrument of these our ancestral lyrists. Among the three things which will secure a man from hunger and nakedness is the blessing of a bard. His curse brings fatalities upon man and beast.

Four hundred years cannot but have made a vast difference between the fierce savages who rushed into the sea on that old September day, and those who were citizens of the stately Roman towns or tillers of the fertile districts that lay around them. Tacitus is said to have expressed surprise at the facility and eagerness with which the Britons adopted the customs, the arts, and the garb of their conquerors. Under the Roman Empire there were British kings, of whom one of the few famous was Cunobelin—the Cymbeline of the drama. Government became more centralized. A milder worship and a more merciful law were the lot of the people. The Romans improved the agriculture of the country, and bestowed upon the cultivators 'the crooked plough' with 'an eight-foot beam,' of which Virgil speaks. In the middle of the fourth century, warehouses were built in Rome for the reception of corn from Britain. An export of six hundred large barks in one season assumes the existence of a large rural population. The tin and lead mines were worked with jealous care for Roman use; and the presence of cinders at this day is the visible proof of the mining and smelting of iron.

The refinement thus introduced among the Celtic Britons was not uncommunicated to the barbarous tribes whose occupation speedily followed the retirement of the imperial armies. Traces of the Roman modes of thought are indelibly stamped upon much that relates to common life. In *January* survives the 'Two-faced Janus'; *July* embalms the memory of the mighty Julius; *March* is the month of Mars, the god of war; and *August*



claims an annual reverence for the crafty Augustus. Our May-day is the festival of Flora. Our marriage ceremonies are all Roman,—the veil, the ring, the wedding gifts, the groomsmen and bridesmaids, the bride-cake. Our funeral imagery is Roman,—the cypress, the flowers strewn upon the graves, the black for mourning. The girl who says, when her ears tingle, a distant one is talking of her, recalls the Roman belief in some influence of a mesmeric nature which produced the same effect. ‘A screech-owl at midnight,’ says Addison, ‘has alarmed a family more than a band of robbers.’ It was ever an omen of evil. No Roman superstition was more intense. Men all on fire, walking up and down the streets, seemed to Casca a prodigy less dire than ‘the bird of night’ that sat

‘Even at noonday, upon the market-place,  
Hooting and shrieking.’

But there are latent qualities here which would ornament any age. With the skin of a beast slung across his loins, the exposed parts of his body painted with sundry figures, a chain of iron about his neck as a symbol of wealth, and another about his waist, his hair hanging in curling locks and covering his shoulders,—Caractacus had stood captive in the imperial presence of Claudius, and said:

‘Had my moderation in prosperity been equal to the greatness of my birth and estate, or the success of my late attempts been equal to the resolution of my mind, I might have come to this city rather as a friend to be entertained, than as a captive to be gazed upon. But what cloud soever hath darkened my present lot, yet have the Heavens and Nature given me that in birth and mind which none can vanquish or deprive me of. I well see that you make other men’s miseries the subject and matter of your triumphs, and in this my calamity, as in a still water, you now contemplate your own glory. Yet know that I am, and was, a prince, furnished with strength of men and habiliments of war; and what marvel is it if all be lost, seeing experience teacheth that the events of war are variable, and the success of policies guided by uncertain fates? As it is with me, who thought that the deep waters, like a wall enclosing our land, and it so situated by the gods as might have been a sufficient privilege and defense against foreign invasions; but now I perceive that the desire of your sovereignty admits no limitation; and if you Romans must command all, then all must obey. For mine own part, while I was able I made resistance; and unwilling I was to submit my neck to a servile yoke; so far the law of Nature alloweth every man, that he may defend himself being assailed, and to withstand force by force. Had I at first yielded, thy glory and my ruin had not been so renowned. Fortune hath now done her worst; we have nothing left us but our lives, which if thou take from us, our miseries end, and if thou spare us, we are but the objects of thy clemency.’

In many-colored robe, with a golden zone about her, Queen Boadicea exhorted the Britons on the eve of battle:

‘My friends and companions of equal fortunes!—There needeth no excuse of this my present authority or place in regard of my sex, seeing it is not unknown to you all that the

wonted manner of our nation hath been to war under the conduct of women. My blood and birth might challenge some preëminence, as sprung from the roots of most royal descents; but my breath, received from the same air, my body sustained by the same soil, and my glory clouded with imposed ignominies, I disdain all superiority, and, as a fellow in bondage, bear the yoke of oppression with as heavy weight and pressure, if not more! . . . You that have known the freedom of life, will with me confess that liberty, though in a poor estate, is better than bondage with fetters of gold. . . . Have the Heavens made us the ends of the world, and not assigned the end of our wrongs? Or hath Nature, among all our free works, created us Britons only for bondage? Why, what are the Romans? Are they more than men, or immortal? Their slain carcasses sacrificed by us, and their putrefied blood corrupting our air, doth tell us they are no gods. Our persons are more tall, our bodies more strong, and our joints better knit than theirs! But you will say—they are our conquerors. Indeed, overcome we are, but by ourselves, by our own factions, still giving way to their intrusions. . . . See we not the army of Plantius crouched together like fowls in a storm? If we but consider the number of their forces and the motives of the war, we shall resolve to vanquish or die. It is better worth to fall in honour of liberty, than be exposed again to the outrages of the Romans. This is my resolution, who am but a woman; you who are men may, if you please, live and be slaves.'

Love of bright color is a Celtic passion. Diodorus told how the Gauls wore bracelets and costly finger-rings, gold corselets, dyed tunics flowered with various hues, striped cloaks fastened with a brooch and divided into many parti-colored squares, a taste still represented by the Highland plaid. This joy in the beautiful will display itself, in poetry, in an outpouring of imagery and grace of expression, as in the Cymric<sup>1</sup> battle-ode of Aneurin:

'Have ye seen the tusky boar,  
Or the bull with sullen roar,  
On surrounding foes advancing?  
So Garadawg bore his lance.

As the flame's devouring force,  
As the whirlwind in its course,  
As the thunder's fiery stroke,  
Glancing on the shivered oak;  
Did the sword of Vedel's mow  
The crimson harvest of the foe.'

This fancy, active and bold, is not content to conceive. It must draw and paint, vividly, in detail, as in this glimpse of a Gaelic<sup>2</sup> banquet:

'As the king's people were afterwards at the assembly they saw a couple approaching them,—a woman and a man; larger than the summit of a rock or a mountain was each member of their members; sharper than a shaving-knife the edge of their shins; their heels and hams in front of them. Should a sackful of apples be thrown on their heads, not one of them would fall to the ground, but would stick on the points of the long bristly hair which grew out of their heads; blacker than the coal or darker than the smoke was each of their members; whiter than snow their eyes. A lock of the lower beard was carried round the back of the head, and a lock of the upper beard descended so as to cover the knees; the woman had whiskers, but the man was without whiskers.'

<sup>1</sup> Ancient Welsh.    <sup>2</sup> Ancient Irish.

But the true artist, with an eye to see, has also a heart to feel. A bard and a prince, who has seen his sons fall in battle, wondering why he should still be left, sings of his youngest and last dead:

‘Let the wave break noisily; let it cover the shore when the joined lancers are in battle. O, Gwenn, woe to him who is too old, since he has lost you! Let the wave break noisily; let it cover the plain when the lancers join with a shock. . . . Gwenn has been slain at the ford of Morlas. Here is the bier made for him by his fierce-conquered enemy after he had been surrounded on all sides by the army of the Lloegrians; here is the tomb of Gwenn, the son of the old Llywarch. *Sweetly a bird sang on a pear tree above the head of Gwenn, before they covered him with turf; that broke the heart of the old Llywarch.*’

This vivacity, this tenderness, this sweet melancholy, will pass, to a certain degree, into English thought.

**Danish.**—The Danes were preëminently a sea-faring and piratical people—vultures who swept the seas in quest of prey. Their sea-kings, ‘who had never slept under the smoky rafters of a roof, who had never drained the ale-horn by an inhabited hearth,’ are renowned in the stories of the North. With no territory but the waves, no dwelling but their two-sailed ships, they laughed at the storm, and sang: ‘The blast of the tempest aids our oars; the bellowing of heaven, the howling of the thunder, hurts us not; the hurricane is our servant, and drives us whither we wish to go.’ In his last hour, the sea-king looks gladly to his immortal feasts ‘in the seats of Balder’s father,’ where ‘we shall drink ale continually from the large hollowed skulls.’

Listen to their table-talk, and from it infer the rest. A youth takes his seat beside the Danish jarl, and is reproached with ‘seldom having provided the wolves with hot meat, with never having seen for the whole autumn a raven croaking over the carnage.’ But he pacifies her by singing: ‘I have marched with my bloody sword, and the raven has followed me. Furiously we fought, the fire passed over the dwellings of men; we have sent to sleep in blood those who kept the gates.’

Here is their code of honor: ‘A brave man should attack two, stand firm against three, give ground a little to four, and only retreat from five.’ No wonder they were irresistible. Add to this the deeper incitement of an immortality in Valhalla, where they should forever hew each other in bloodless conflict.

When Saxon independence was given up to a Danish king, their character was greatly changed from what it had been during their first invasions. They had embraced the Christian faith, were

centralized, had lost much of their predatory and ferocious spirit. Long settled in England, they gradually became assimilated to the natives, whose laws and language were not radically different from their own. From these sea-wolves, who lived on the pillage of the world, the English will imbibe their maritime enterprise.

**Norman.**—The Normans, as we have seen, were a Scandinavian tribe with a changed nature,—Christianized, at least in the mediæval sense, and civilized. The peculiar quality of their genius was its suppleness. They intermarried with the French, borrowed the French language, adopted French customs, imitated French thought; and, in a hundred and fifty years after their settlement, were so far cultured as to consider their kinsmen, the Saxons, unlettered and rude.

Transferred to England, they become English. To these they were superior:

1. In refinement of manners. ‘The Saxons,’ says an old writer, ‘vied with each other in their drinking feasts, and wasted their income by day and night in feasting, whilst they lived in wretched hovels; the French and Normans, on the other hand, living inexpensively in their fine large houses, were, besides, refined in their food and studiously careful in their dress.’

2. In taste,—the art of pleasing the eye, and expressing a thought by an outward representation. The Norman architecture, including the circular arch and the rose window with its elegant mouldings, made its appearance. ‘You might see amongst them (the Saxons) churches in every village, and monasteries in the cities, towering on high, and built in a style unknown before.’ They were to become the most skilful builders in Europe.

3. In weapons and warlike enterprise. They used the bow, fought on horseback, and were thus prepared for a more nimble and aggressive movement.

4. In intellectual culture. Five hundred and sixty-seven schools were established between the Conquest and the death of King John (1216). In poetry they were relatively cultivated. Another point of excellence was the intelligence of their clergy. The illiteracy of the Saxon was the excuse for banishing him from all valuable ecclesiastical dignities. The Norman bishops and abbots, who gradually supplanted him, were for the most

part of loftier minds than the mailed warriors who elevated them to wealth and authority.

Such were the points of superiority at which the Norman was prepared to contribute new impulses to the national character. In many respects, he was the reverse of the Saxon. In the movement of his intellect, he was prompt and spirited rather than profound. Like the Parisian, he was polite, elegant, graceful, talkative, dainty, superficial. Beauty pleased rather than exalted him. Nature was pretty rather than grand—never mystical. Love was a pastime rather than a devotion. Woman impressed him less by any spiritual transcendence than by a ‘vastly becoming smile,’ a ‘sweet and perfumed breath,’ a form ‘white as new-fallen snow on a branch.’ To show skill and courage for the meed of glory, to win the applause of the ladies, to display magnificence of dress and armor,—such was his desire and study. Here is a picture of the fancies and splendors in which he delights and loses himself. A king, wishing to console his afflicted daughter, proposes to take her to the chase in the following style:

‘To-morrow ye shall in hunting fare;  
 And ride, my daughter, in a chair;  
 It shall be covered with velvet red,  
 And clothes of fine gold all about your head,  
 With damask white and azure blue,  
 Well diapered with lilies new.  
 Your pommels shall be ended with gold,  
 Your chains enameled many a fold,  
 Your mantle of rich degree,  
 Purple pall and ermine free. . . .  
 Ye shall have revel, dance, and song;  
 Little children, great and small,  
 Shall sing as does the nightingale. . . .  
 A hundred knights, truly told,  
 Shall play with bowls in alleys cold,  
 Your disease to drive away. . . .  
 Forty torches burning bright  
 At your bridge to bring you light.  
 Into your chamber they shall you bring  
 With much mirth and more liking.  
 Your blankets shall be of fustian,  
 Your sheets shall be of cloth of Rennes.  
 Your head sheet shall be of pery pight,  
 With diamonds set and rubies bright.  
 When you are laid in bed so soft,  
 A cage of gold shall hang aloft,  
 With long paper fair burning,  
 And cloves that be sweet-smelling,



Frankincense and olibanum,  
 That when ye sleep the taste may come;  
 And if ye no rest can take,  
 All night minstrels for you shall wake.'

What will come of this gallantry, splendor, and pride, when the brilliant flower is engrafted on the homely Saxon stock?

**Anglo-Saxon.**—Starting from the same Aryan homestead, with the same stock of ideas, with the same manners and customs, the *Teuton* takes his westward course, and settles chiefly in Germany,—

'She of the Danube and the Northern Sea.'

After centuries of separation, these two kindred meet in mist-enveloped Britain. But climate, soil, and time have changed their characters and speech. They have forgotten their mutual relationship, and meet like the lion whelps of a common lair—as foes. The Teutonic stream,—that, too, diverged. Into the mud and slime of Holland, into the forests and fens of Denmark, up into the snow-capped mountains of Sweden and Norway, across the surging main into volcanic Iceland, it branched. Danish, Norse, and Saxon, with superficial distinctions—as of Heathen and Christian, or the like—are at bottom one, Teutonic or Germanic. Inland, in the south, away from the sea, was the great division of the **High-Germans**; near the sea, by the mouths of the Rhine and Elbe, that of the **Low-Germans**, in whom we have the deeper interest. To these latter belonged the **Jutes, Angles, and Saxons**, whose language, closely resembling modern Dutch, is the plantlet of English. These tribes, known abroad as Saxons,<sup>1</sup> early spoken of by themselves as Angles or English, have in the more careful historic use of the present been designated as Anglo-Saxons.

The orders of society were the bond and the free. Men became serfs, or slaves, either by capture in battle or by the sentence of outraged law. Over them their master had the power of life and death. He was responsible for them as for his cattle. Rank was reversed, and the freemen were divided into *earls* and *ceorls*, or *Earls* and *Churls*.

<sup>1</sup>So called from a short crooked sword, called a *seax*, carried by the warriors under their loose garments. Thus, Hengist, the Jute, invited to a banquet, instructed his companions to conceal their short swords beneath their garments. At a given signal—*Nimed eure Seaxes*, 'Draw your swords!'—the weapons were plunged into the hearts of their British entertainers.

The basis of society was the possession of land. The free land-holder was 'the free-necked man,' whose long hair floated over a neck that had never bent to a lord. He was 'the weaponed man,' who alone bore spear and sword. A nation of farmers, as they had been in the Sunny East, as they are to-day. He might not be a tiller of the soil, but he must acquire it if he would be esteemed. The landless one could hope for no distinction.

The social form was determined by the blood-bond. According to kinship, men were grouped into companies of ten, called a *tithing*. Every ten tithings was called a *hundred*; and several hundreds, a *shire*. Each kinsman was his kinsman's keeper. Every crime was held to have been committed by all who were related to the doer of it, and against all who were related to the sufferer. From this sense of the value of the family tie sprung the rudiments of English justice. So strong is it, that his kinsfolk are the sole judges of the accused, for by their oath of his innocence or guilt he stands or falls. In their British home these judges will be a fixed number—the germ of the jury system. Other methods of appeal there are,—the duel and the ordeal. The first pleases the savage nature. Besides, is not the issue in the hand of God, and will not he award the victory to the just? This practice will be revived in Normandy, introduced by the Conqueror into England, appealed to in 1631, and abolished only in 1817. The second inspires confidence; for fire and water are deities, and surely the gods will not harm the innocent or screen the guilty? Therefore, be ready to lift masses of red-hot iron in your hands, or to pass through flame.

They hate cities. Then, as now, they must have independence and free air. Their villages are knots of farms. 'They live apart,' says Tacitus, 'each by himself, as woodside, plain, or fresh spring attracts him.' Each settlement must be isolated from its fellows. Each is jealously begirt by a belt of forest or fen, which parts it from neighboring communities,—a ring of common ground which none may take for his own, but which serves as the Golgotha where traitors and deserters meet their doom. This, it is said, is the special dwelling-place of the nix and the will-o'-the-wisp. Let none cross this death-line except he blow his horn; else he will be taken for a foe, and any man may lawfully slay him.



Around some moot-hill or sacred tree the whole community meet to administer justice and to legislate. Here the field is passed from seller to buyer by the delivery of a turf cut from its soil. Here the aggrieved may present his grievance. The 'elder men' state the 'customs,' and the evil-doer is sentenced to make pecuniary reparation. 'Eye for eye,' *life for life*, or for each fair damages,—is the yet unwritten code. The body and its members have each their legal price. Only treason, desertion, and poison involve capital punishment, and sentence is pronounced by the priest. Here, too, the king of the tribe—chosen from among the ablest of its chiefs—and the *Witan*, the Wise Men, who limit his jurisdiction, convene to settle questions of peace and war, or to transact other important affairs. The warriors, met in arms, express their approval by rattling their armor, their dissent by murmurs. Later, this assembly will be known as the Parliament of a great empire. Among the nobility, there is one who is the king's chosen confidant, the 'knower of secrets,' the 'counsellor.' In after times he will be known as the Prime Minister.

Knowledge was transmitted less by writing than by oral tradition, and almost wholly in the form of verse. There was a perpetual order of men, like the rhapsodists of ancient Greece and the bards of the Celtic tribes, who were at once poets and historians; whose exclusive employment it was to learn and repeat; wandering minstrels they were, travelling about from land to land, chanting to the people the fortunes of the latest battle or the exploits of their ancestors, a delightful link of union, loved and revered. The honors bestowed upon them were natural to an age in which reading and writing were mysteries. On arms, trinkets, amulets, and utensils, sometimes on the bark of trees, and on wooden tablets, for the purpose of memorials or of epistolary correspondence, were engraven certain wonderful characters called *runes*. By their potent spells, some runes, it was believed, could lull the tempest, stop the vessel in her course, divert the arrow in its flight, arrest the career of witches through the air, cause love or hatred, raise the dead, and extort from them the secrets of the spirit-world. Thus says the heroine of a Northern romance:

'Like a Virgin of the Shield I roved o'er the sea,  
My arm was victorious, my valor was free;  
By prowess, by runic enchantment and song,  
I raised up the weak, and I beat down the strong.'

Would we know the soul of a people, let us seek it in their religion, the unseen spiritual fountain whence flow all their outward acts. In the beginning, we are told, were two worlds,—Niflheim, the frozen, and Muspel the burning. From the falling snow-flakes, quickened by the Unknown who sent the heated blast, was born Ymer the giant:

‘When Ymer lived  
Was sand, nor sea,  
Nor cooling wave;  
No earth was found  
Nor heaven above;  
One chaos all,  
And nowhere grass.’

Fallen asleep, from his arm-pits spring the frost-giants. A cow, born also of melting snow, feeds him with four milk-rivers. Whilst licking his perspiration from the rocks, there came at evening out of the stones a man’s hair, the second day a man’s head, and the third all the man was there. His name was Bure. His grandsons, Odin, Vile, and Ve, kill the giant Ymer. Dragging his body to the abyss of space, they form of it the visible universe; from his flesh, the land; from his bones, the mountains; from his hair, the forests; from his teeth and jaws, the stones and pebbles; from his blood, the ocean, in the midst of which they fix the earth; from his skull, the vaulted sky, raised and supported by a dwarf under each corner,—Austre, Westre, Nordre, and Sudre, from his brains, scattered in the air, the melancholy clouds; from his hair, trees and plants; from his eyebrows, a wall of defense against the giants. The flying sparks and red-hot flakes cast out of Muspel they placed in the heavens, and said: ‘Let there be light.’ Far in the North sits a giant, ‘the corpse swallower,’ clad with eagles’ plumes. When he spreads his wings for flight, the winds, which yet no mortal can discern, fan fire into flame, or lash the waves into foam. As the sons of Bor, ‘powerful and fair,’ were walking along the sea-beach, they found two trees, stately and graceful, and from them created the first human pair, man and woman,—Ask and Embla:

‘Odin gave spirit,  
Hœner gave mind,  
Loder gave blood  
And lovely hue.’

Nobler conception is this, than the Greek and Hebrew of clod or

stone. Diviner symbol is this of the trees, Ash and Elm, which, as they grow heavenward, show an unconscious attraction to that which is heavenly.

From the mould of Ymer are bred, as worms, the dwarfs, who by command of the gods receive human form and sense. Among the rocks, in the wild mountain-gorges they dwell. When we hear the echo from wood or hill or dale, there stands a dwarf who repeats our words. They had charge of the gold and precious minerals. With their aprons on, they hammered and smelted, and —

‘Rock crystals from sand and hard flint they made,  
Which, tinged with the rosebud’s dye,  
They cast into rubies and carbuncles red,  
And hid them in cracks hard by.’

In the summer’s sun, when the mist hangs over the sea, may be seen, sitting on the surface of the water, the mermaid, combing her long golden hair with golden comb, or driving her snow-white cattle to the strands. No household prospers without its domestic spirit. Oft the favored maid finds in the morning that her kitchen is swept and the water brought. The buried treasure has its sleepless dragon, and the rivulet its water-sprite. The Swede delights to tell of *the boy of the stream*, who haunts the glassy brooks that steal through meadows green, and sits on the silver waves at moonlight, playing his harp to the elves who dance on the flowery margin.

We retain in the days of the week a compendium of the old English creed. A son and a daughter, lovely and graceful, are appointed by the Powers to journey round heaven each day with chariot and steeds, ‘to count years for men,’ each ever pursued by a ravenous wolf. The girl is Sol, the Sun, with meteor eyes and burning plumes; the boy is Maane, the Moon, with white fire laden. The festival-days consecrated to them were hence known as Sun’s-daeg and Moon’s-daeg, whence our *Sunday* and *Monday*. Reversing the mythology of the Greeks and Romans, the Teutons worshipped the sun as a female and the moon as a male deity, from an odd notion that if the latter were addressed as a goddess their wives would be their masters. The memory of Tyr, the dark, dread, daring, and intrepid one, is embalmed in *Tuesday*; his grandmother was an ugly giantess with nine hundred heads. Wodin, or Odin, survives in *Wednesday*. He does

not create the world, but arranges and governs it. He is the all-pervading spirit, the infinite wanderer. Two wolves lie at his feet; and on his shoulders sit two gifted ravens, which fly, on his behests, to the uttermost regions. He wakes the soul to thought, gives science and lore, inspires the song of the bard and the incantation of the sorcerer, blunts the point of the javelin, renders his warriors invisible; with a hero's heart and voice, tells the brave how by valor a man may become a god; explains to mortals their destiny here,—makes existence articulate and melodious. Incarnated as a seer and magician unknown thousands of years ago, he led the Teutonic throng into Scandinavia, across seas and rivers in a wonderful ship built by dwarfs, so marvellously constructed that, when they wished to land, it could be taken to pieces, rolled up, and put in the pocket. Our *Thursday* is Thor's day, son of Odin. He is a spring-god, subduing the frost-giants. The thunder is his wrath. The gathering of the black clouds is the drawing down of his angry brows. The bursting fire-bolt is the all-rending hammer flung from his hand. The peal,—that is the roll of his chariot over the mountain-tops. In his mansion are five hundred and forty halls. Freyja, the Venus of the North, in whom are beauty, grace, gentleness, the longings, joys, and tears of love, is incarnated in *Friday*. Sæter, an obscure water-deity, represented as standing upon a fish, with a bucket in his hand, is commemorated in *Saturday*. But beyond all the gods who are known and named, there is the feeling, the instinct, the presentiment of One who is unseen and imperishable, the everlasting Adamant lower than which the confused wreck of revolutionary things cannot fall:

‘Then comes another  
 Yet more mighty,  
 But *Him* dare I not  
 Venture to name;  
 Few look further forward  
 Than to the time  
 When Odin goes  
 To meet the wolf.’

Is not the last and highest consecration of all true religion an altar to ‘The Unknown God?’

All things exist in antagonism. No sooner are the giants created than the contest for empire begins. When Ymer is killed, the crimson flood drowns all save one, who with his wife escapes

in a chest, and so continues the hated race. Huge, shaggy, demoniac beings. Jotunheim is their home, distant, dark, chaotic. Long fight the gods against them,—the Fenriswolf, whose jaws they rend asunder; the great serpent, whom they drown in the sea; the evil Loke, whom they bind to the rocks, beneath a viper whose venom drops unceasingly on his face.

That which is born must die. Hel-gate stands ever ajar to receive the child with rosy cheeks, as him of the hoary locks and faltering step. When a great man dies,—his body, with his sword in his hand, his helmet on his head, his shield by his side, and his horse under him, is burned. The ashes are collected in an earthen vessel, which is then surrounded with huge stones; and over this is heaped the memorial mound. Brynhild, an untamed maiden in an epic of these Northern races, sets her love upon Sigurd; but, seeing him married, she causes his death, laughs once, puts on her golden corselet, pierces herself, and makes this last request:

‘Let in the plain be raised a pile so spacious, that for us all like room may be; let them burn the Hun (Sigurd) on the one side of me, on the other side my household slaves, with collars splendid, two at our heads and two hawks; let also lie between us both the keen-edged sword; . . . also five female thralls, eight male slaves of gentle birth fostered with me.’

Is it not a beautiful thought that the dead in the mounds are in a state of consciousness? Out of the depths seems to come the half-dumb stifled voice of the long-buried generations of our fathers, the echo in some sort of our own painful, fruitlessly inquiring wonder:

‘Now, children, lay us in two lofty graves  
Down by the sea shore, near the deep-blue waves:  
Their sounds shall to our souls be music sweet,  
Singing our dirge as on the strand they beat.

When round the hills the pale moonlight is thrown,  
And Midnight dews fall on the Bauta-stone,  
We’ll sit, O Thorsten, in our rounded graves  
And speak together o’er the gentle waves.’

When the daughter weeps for the death of her father, she allows no tear to fall on his corpse, lest his peace be troubled:

‘Whenever thou grievest,  
My coffin is within  
As livid blood;  
Whenever thou rejoicest,  
My coffin is within  
Filled with fragrant roses.’

Even the gods must perish. Have we not seen that the germ of decay was in them from the beginning? They and their enemies, met in a world-embracing struggle, mutually destroy each other. Sun and stars, rock-built earth and crystal vault, sink into the bottomless, many-sounding sea.

But the end is also the beginning. There comes a new day, and a new heaven without rent or seam,—that is, the regeneration. There is no loss of souls, no more than of drops when the ocean yields its vapor to the touch of the summer's sun. Thought and affection are immortal. Death is but a vanishing from one realm into another—a triumph-hour of entrance through an arch of shadow into eternal day. Therefore, fall gloriously in battle, and you shall be at once transported to Valhal, the airy hall of Odin, upborne by spears, roofed with shields, and adorned with coats of mail. Fighting and feasting, which have been your fierce joys on earth, shall be lavished upon you in this supernal abode. Every day you shall have combats in the listed field,—the rush of steeds, the flash of swords, the shining of lances, and all the maddening din of conflict; helmets and bucklers riven, horses and riders overthrown, ghastly wounds exchanged: but at the setting of the sun you shall meet unscathed, victors and vanquished, around the festive board, to partake of the ample banquet and quaff full horns of beer and fragrant mead. Ragnar Lodbrok, shipwrecked on the English coast, is taken prisoner. Refusing to speak, he is thrown into a dungeon full of serpents, there to remain until he tells his name. The reptiles are powerless. The spectators say he must be a brave man indeed whom neither arms nor vipers can hurt. King Ælla, hearing this, orders his enchanted garment to be stripped off, and soon the serpents cling to him on all sides. Then Ragnar says, 'How the young cubs would roar if they knew what the old boar suffers!' But his eye is fixed upon Valhal's 'wide-flung door,' and he glories that no sigh shall disgrace his exit:

'Cease my strain! I hear a voice  
From realms where martial souls rejoice;  
I hear the maids<sup>1</sup> of slaughter call,  
Who bid me hence to Odin's hall;  
High-seated in their blest abodes,  
I soon shall quaff the drink of gods.

<sup>1</sup> The Valkyries, Odin's maids, who are sent out to choose the fallen heroes, and to sway the combat.



The hours of life have glided by—  
 I fall! but laughing will I die!  
 The hours of life have glided by—  
 I fall! but laughing will I die!'

For the virtuous who do not die in fight a more peaceful but less glorious Elysium is provided,—a resplendent golden palace, surrounded by verdant meads and shady groves and fields of spontaneous fertility.

After all, amid the raging of this warlike mood, it is virtue, on the whole, which is to be rewarded—vice which is to be punished. Far from the Sun, ever downward and northward, is the cave of the giantess Hel,—Naastrand, the strand of corpses. Here are the palace Anguish, the table Famine, the waiters Slowness and Delay, the threshold Precipice, the bed Care. Of serpents wattled together the cave is built, their heads turning inward and filling it with thick venom-streams, through which perjurers, murderers, and adulterers have to wade:

'But all the horrors  
 You cannot know,  
 That Hel's condemned endure;  
 Sweet sins there  
 Bitterly are punished,  
 False pleasures  
 Reap true pain.'

All life is figured as a tree. Ygdrasil, the Ash of existence, has its roots deep down in the kingdom of Hel, or Death; its trunk, towering heaven-high, spreads its branches over the universe. 'Stately, with white dust strewn: thence come the dews that wet the dales; it stands ever green over Urd's fountain.' Under its root that stretches into the frozen North is Mimer's well of wisdom. On its topmost bough sits an eagle; at its low-ermost base is the serpent Nidhug, with his reptile brood, that pierce it with their fangs and devour its substance. At its foot, in the Death-kingdom, sit three Norns, Fates, who water its roots from the Sacred Well, and weave, for mortals and immortals, the web of destiny. What similitude so true, so beautiful, so great?

Here is philosophy without abstractions or syllogisms; metaphysics that overleaps all categories; history woven of giant-dreams; poetry whose pictures are streams that flow together. What ideas are at the bottom of this chaos of untamed imaginings? The world is a warfare. In the sad inclement North,



amid pathless forests, bridgeless rivers, treacherous seas, inhospitable shores, the strife of frost and fire, man, as it were face to face with a beast of prey, feels profoundly that life is a battle, and, in the raging of his own moods, sees reflected the conflict of chaotic forces. Thor's far-sounding hammer, Jove's falling thunderbolt, Indra's lightning-spear, warring against the demons of the storm, till the light triumphs and the tempest rolls away, but ever returns to renew the combat,—what are they but types of the state of man, cast out of the troubled deep upon the mists of the unknown?

When the gods were unable to bind the Fenriswolf with steel or weight of mountains, because the one he snapped and the other he spurned with his heel, they put round his foot a limp band softer than silk or gossamer, and this held him: the more he struggled the stiffer it drew. So soft, so omnipotent is the ring of Fate. Balder, the good, the beautiful, the gentle, dies. All nature is searched for a remedy; but he is dead. His mother sends Hermod to seek or see him, who rides nine days and nights through a labyrinth of gloom. Arrived at the bridge with its golden roof, he is answered: 'Yes, Balder did pass here, but the Kingdom of the Dead is down yonder, far in the North.' Speeds the messenger on, leaps Hel-gate, sees Balder, and speaks with him; but Balder cannot be delivered: *Fate is inexorable*. The Valkyries are *choosers* of the fallen. Belief in Destiny is a fundamental point for this wild Teutonic soul. Perhaps it is so for all instinctive and heroic races, as for all earnest men,—a Mahomet, a Luther, a Napoleon, a Carlyle, an Emerson. The Greek, the Turk, the Arab, the Persian, accept the inevitable.

'On two days it stands not to run from thy grave,  
The appointed and the unappointed day;  
On the first, neither balm nor physicians can save,—  
Nor thee, on the second, the Universe slay.'

Who can write the order of the variable winds? On every mortal who enters the hall of the firmament fall snow-storms of illusions, though the gods still sit on their thrones; and he may see, what all great thinkers have seen:

'We are such stuff as *dreams* are made of.'

In heart-to-heart communion with Nature, these old Northmen seem to have seen what meditation has taught all men in all ages,

that this world is only an appearance, a *mirage*, a shadow hung by the primal Reality on the bosom of the void Infinite. Thor, with two chosen friends, undertakes an expedition to Giant-land. Wandering at nightfall in a trackless forest, they espy a house, whose door is the whole breadth of one end. Here they lodge; one large hall, altogether empty. Suddenly, at dead of night, loud noises are heard. Thor grasps his hammer, and stands at the door, prepared for fight, while his terrified companions take refuge in a little closet. In the morning it turns out that the noise was merely the snoring of the giant Skrymer, who lay peaceably sleeping near by; that the house was only his *mitten*, thrown carelessly aside; that the door was its *wrist*, and the closet its *thumb*. Skrymer now joins the party in travel. Thor, however, suspicious of his ways, resolves to put an end to him as he slumbers beneath a large oak. Raising his hammer, he strikes a thunderbolt blow down into the giant's face, who wakes, rubs his face, and murmurs: 'Did a leaf fall?' Thor replies that they are just going to sleep, and goes to lie down under another oak. Again he strikes, as soon as Skrymer again sleeps, a more terrible blow than before; but the giant only asks: 'Did an acorn fall? How is it with you, Thor?' Thor, going hastily away, says that he has prematurely waked up. His third stroke, delivered with both hands, seems to dint deep into the giant's skull; but he simply checks his snore, strokes his chin, and inquires: 'Are there sparrows roosting in this tree? Was it moss they dropped? It seems to me time to arise and dress.' At Utgard-castle, their journey's end, they are invited to share in the games going on. To Thor, they hand a drinking-horn, explaining that it is a common feat to drain it at one draught,—none so wretched as not to exhaust it at the third. Long and fiercely, three times over, with increasing anger, he drinks; then finding that he has made hardly any impression, gives it back to the cup-bearer. 'Poor, weak child!' they say: 'Can you lift this gray cat? Our young men think it nothing but play.' Thor, with his whole god-like strength, can at the utmost bend the creature's back and lift one foot. 'Just as we expected,' say the Utgard people. 'The cat is large, but you are little.' 'Little as you call me,' says Thor, 'I challenge any one to wrestle with me, for now I am angry.' 'Why here is a toothless old woman who will wrestle you!' Heartily

ashamed, Thor seizes her—and is worsted. On their departure, the host escorts them politely a little way, and says to Thor: ‘Be not so mortified; you have been deceived. That race you witnessed was a race with *Thought*. That horn had one end in the *Ocean*: you did diminish it, as you will see when you come to the shore; this is the *ebb*. But who can drink the fathomless? And the cat,—ah! we were terror-stricken when we saw one paw off the floor; for that is the Midgard-serpent, which, tail in mouth, girds and keeps up the created world. As for the hag,—why, she was *Time*; and who, of men or gods, can prevail over her? Then, too, look at these *three glens*,—by the timely interposition of a mountain, your strokes made these! Adieu, and a word of advice,—better come no more to Jotunheim!’ Grim humor this, overlying a sublime, uncomplaining melancholy,—mirth resting upon sadness, as the rainbow upon the tempest. To this day it runs in the blood.

Therefore, the one thing needful, the everlasting duty, is to be brave. The right use of Fate is to bring our conduct up to the loftiness of nature. Let a man have not less the flow of the river, the expansion of the oak, the steadfastness of the hills. Heroism is the highest good. Over you, at each moment, hangs a threatening sword, which may in the next prove fatal. Life in itself has no value, and its ideal termination, to be kept constantly in view, is to fall heroically in fight. The *Choosers* will lead you to the *Hall of Odin*, only the base and slavish being thrust elsewhere:

‘The coward thinks to live forever,  
If he avoid the weapon’s reach;  
But Age, which overtakes at last,  
Twines his gray hair with pain and shame.’

Hold to your purpose with the tug of gravitation, believing that you can shun no danger that is appointed nor incur one that is not. Thus did these old Northmen. Silent and indomitable,—

‘In the prow with head uplifted  
Stood the chief like wrathful Thor;  
Through his locks the snow-flakes drifted,  
Bleached their hue from gold to hoar;  
Mid the crash of mast and rafter  
Norsemen leaped through death with laughter,  
Up through Valhal’s wide-flung door.’

Old kings, about to die, had their bodies laid in a ship, the ship sent forth with sails set, and a slow fire burning it; that they might be buried at once in the sky and in the sea!

Wild and bloody was this valor of the Northmen. True, but they were ferocious—bloody-minded. Murder was their trade, and hence their pleasure. ‘Lord, deliver us from the fury of the Jutes,’ says an ancient litany. The ceremonials of religion assumed a cruel and sanguinary character. Prisoners taken in battle were sacrificed by the victors, sometimes subjects by their kings, and even children by their parents. Bodies white and huge, stomachs ravenous. Six meals a day barely sufficed. The heroes of Valhal gorge themselves upon the flesh of a boar which is cooked every morning, but becomes whole again every night. Lovers of gambling and strong drink. Seated on their stools, by the light of the torch, they listened to battle-songs and heroic legends as they drank their ale, while ‘the lordly hall thundered, and the ale was spilled.’ In Paradise, the elect drink from a river of ale! ‘Disputes,’ says Tacitus, ‘as will be the case with people in liquor, frequently arise, and are seldom confined to opprobrious epithets. The quarrel generally ends in a scene of blood.’ Here are the germs of nineteenth-century vices. Intrepid in war, in peace they lie by the fireside, sluggish and dirty, eating and drinking.

Established in England, they have brought with them their customs, sentiments, and habits. They are still gluttonous, untamed, butcherly. To dance among naked swords is their recreation. To drink is their necessity. Later on, they quarrel about the amount each shall drink from the common cup, and the Archbishop puts pegs in the vessel, that each thirsty soul shall take no more than his just proportion.

Every man is obliged to appear ready-armed, to repel predatory bands. A hundred years measure the reign of fourteen kings, seven of whom are slain and six deposed. King Ælla’s ribs are divided from his spine, his lungs drawn out, and salt thrown into his wounds. Attendants who are preparing a royal banquet are seized, their heads and limbs severed, placed in vessels of wine, mead, ale, and cider, with a message to the king: ‘If you go to your farm, you will find there plenty of salt meat, but you will do well to carry more with you.’

They have made one remove from barbarism. Once murder was expiated, as all other crimes, by blows (from five to a thousand), the gift of a female to the offended party, or a fine of gold; now, by money-fines only. Here, by implication, in the Saxon Code of laws, is the social status of the sixth century. Mark with what minutiae it seeks to repress the irruptive tendencies of a restive and disordered society:

‘These are the Laws King Ethelbert established in Agustine’s day:

2. If the king his people to him call, and any one to them harm does, two fines shall be paid, and to the king 50 shillings.

8. If in the king’s town any one a man slay, 50 shillings shall be paid.

13. If any one in an earl’s town a man kills, 12 shillings shall be paid.

19. If a highway robbery be committed, 6 shillings shall be paid.

35. If bones bare become, 3 shillings shall be paid.

36. If bones bitten are, 4 shillings shall be paid.

39. If an ear be cut off, 12 shillings shall be paid.

44. If an eye be gouged out, 50 shillings shall be paid.

55. For every nail, 1 shilling.

57. If a man beat another with the fist on the nose, 3 shillings.

64. If a thigh be broken, 12 shillings shall be paid; if he halt become, then shall be summoned friends who arbitrate.

65. If a rib broken be, 3 shillings shall be paid.

68. If a foot be cut off, 50 shillings shall compensate.

69. If the large toe be cut off, 10 shillings shall compensate.

70. For every other toe, half the sum as has been said for the fingers.

81. If any one take a maiden by force, he shall pay the owner 50 shillings; and afterwards buy her according to the owner’s will.’

Formerly, too, they slew themselves, dying as they had lived—in blood. Now, in the eleventh century, an earl, about to die of disease but unable wholly to repress the ferocious instinct, exclaims:

‘What a shame for me not to have been permitted to die in so many battles, and to end thus by a cow’s death. At least put on my breast-plate, gird on my sword, set my helmet on my head, my shield in my left hand, my battle-axe in my right, so that a stout warrior like myself may die as a warrior.’

But in this human animal—let it not be forgotten—abide noble dispositions, which will wax nobler as he climbs the heights of purer vision. In manners, severe; in inclinations, grave; valorous and liberty-loving. If he is cruel, he refuses to be shackled. In his own home, he is his own master. No Feudalism yet—only a voluntary subordination to a leader. Required to associate himself with a superior, he chooses him as a friend, and follows him to the death. ‘He is infamous as long as he lives, who returns from the field of battle without his chief.’

Amid the savagery of barbarian life, he feels no sentiment stronger than friendship. An exile, waking from his dream of the long ago, says:



'In blithe habits full oft we, too, agreed that naught else should divide us except death alone; at length this is changed, and, as if it had never been, is now our friendship. To endure enmities man orders me to dwell in the bowers of the forest, under the oak tree in this earthly cave. Cold is this earth-dwelling; I am quite wearied out. Dim are the dells, high up are the mountains, a bitter city of twigs, with briars overgrown, a joyless abode. . . . My friends are in the earth; those loved in life,—the tomb holds them. The grave is guarding, while I above alone am going. Under the oak-tree, beyond this earth-cave,—there I must sit the long summer day.'

He is over-brave. He places his happiness in battle and his beauty in death. The coward is drowned in the mud under a hurdle, or is immolated.

The true home-life, out of which are the issues of national life, is foreshadowed by the respect with which woman is treated. She inherits property and bequeaths it; associates with the men at their feasts, and is respected. The law surrounds her with guarantees, and accords her protection. The freeman who presses the finger of a freewoman, is liable to a fine of six hundred pence; of twelve hundred, if he touches the arm. 'Almost alone among the barbarians,' says Tacitus, 'they are content with one wife'; then, perhaps with a bitter thought of Rome, 'No one in Germany laughs at vice, nor do they call it the fashion to corrupt and be corrupted.' A chivalric sense of delicacy, indeed, we may not expect. She attends to the indoor and outdoor work, while her husband dozes in a half stupor by the fire. His companion in war, she is his drudge in peace. As little may we look for the finer instincts of the womanly nature. Brynhild compels her suitors to contend with her in the games of spear-throwing, leaping, and stone-hurling, under penalty of death in case of defeat. Atle's wife kills her children, and one day, on his return from the carnage, gives him their hearts to eat, served in honey, and laughs as she tells him on what he has fed. Devotion there is, stronger than life or death, and grief too deep for tears. With a fierce kind of joy, the maid expires on the grave of her lover. Balder's wife accompanies him to the Death-kingdom; and while he sends his ring to Odin, she sends as final remembrance her *thimble* to Freyja. Loke's wife stands by his side, and receives the venom-drops, as they fall, in a cup which she empties as often as it is filled.

The Celt is gay, emotional, easily elevated and as easily depressed. He knows not how to plod, would leap to results, has a passion for color and form. The Teuton is steady, is not

dazzled by show, looks more to the inner fact of things. It inspires the one to be addressed in the words of Napoleon,—‘Soldiers, from the summits of yonder Pyramids, forty ages behold you;’<sup>1</sup> it nerves the other to be told in the severe phrase of Nelson,—‘England expects every man to do his duty.’ . What sentiment is to the one, interest is to the other.

If, again, the Teuton has less of brilliancy than the Norman, he has more of patient strength. If he is less passionate, he is more reflective. If he is less voluble, he has the deep conviction and the indomitable will that have preserved his continuity through all revolutionary changes, and made him the most irresistible force in European politics. If he is less the artist of the beautiful, he is more inclined to the serious and sublime. Did ever any people form so tragic a conception of life, get so free and direct a glance into the deeps of thought, or banish so completely from its dreams the sweetness of enjoyment and the softness of pleasure? Here is the shadow, of which the Christian ideal is the substance.

Do but consider the singular adaptation of this soil for the reception of the new faith. Back in the days of heathendom we may find the first suggestion of the spirit which led to the Reformation of an after age—the revolt against the sensuous worship of Rome—when Tacitus says of the old Germanic tribes that they do not consider it consistent with the grandeur of celestial beings to confine the gods within walls, or to liken them to the form of any human countenance. They consecrate woods and groves, and they apply the names of deities to the abstraction which they see only with the spiritual eye. This feeling of a mysterious infinity, of the dark Beyond, this sincerity of personal and original sentiment, predisposes the mind to Christianity; it makes the supreme distinction between races, as between great souls and little souls. Gregory had seen slaves in the market at Rome, and their faces were beautiful. He was told they were heathen boys from the Isle of Britain. Sorry to think that forms so fair should have no light within, he asked what was the name of their nation. ‘*Angles,*’ he was told. ‘*Angles!*’ said Gregory; ‘they have the faces of *Angels,* and they ought to be made fellow-heirs of the Angels in Heaven. But of what prov-

<sup>1</sup>The Celt is the spiritual progenitor of the Frenchman.



ince are they?' '*Deira,*' said the merchant. '*De ira!*' said Gregory; 'then they must be delivered from the wrath'—in Latin *de ira*—'of God.' 'And what is the name of their king?' '*Ælla.*' '*Ælla!* then *Alleluia* shall be sung in his land.' Presently Roman missionaries bearing a silver cross with an image of Christ came in procession chanting a litany. In the council of the king, the High-Priest of Odin declared that the old gods were powerless:

'For there is no man in thy land, O King, who hath served all our gods more truly than I, yet there be many who are richer and greater, and to whom thou showest more favor; whereas, if our gods were good for anything, they would rather forewarn me who have been so zealous to serve them. Wherefore let us hearken to what these men say, and learn what their law is; and if we find it to be better than our own, let us serve their God and worship Him.'

This is the profit-and-loss estimate—not yet extinct among us—of things divine, contracting the horizon of life within the narrow circle of material interests. But in that assembly of wise men was another, of finer mould, whose eyes, lifted from the dust, could see the stars. Then a chief rose and said:

'You remember, it may be, O King, that which sometimes happens in winter when you are seated at table with your earls and thanes. Your fire is lighted, and your hall warmed, and without is rain, snow, and storm. Then comes a swallow flying across the hall; he enters by one door and leaves by another. The brief moment while he is within is pleasant to him: he feels not rain nor cheerless winter weather; but the moment is brief,—the bird flies away in the twinkling of an eye, and he passes from winter to winter. Such, methinks, is the life of man on earth, compared with the uncertain time beyond. It appears for a while; but what is the time which comes after—the time which was before? We know not. If then, this new doctrine may teach us somewhat of greater certainty—whence man cometh and whither he goeth—it were well that we should regard it.'<sup>1</sup>

Henceforth the war-gods are blotted out, the passions which created them wane; manly and moral instincts increase; new ideas take root; and a literature begins whose inspiration and soul, even to the latest generation, while it images the mingled and many-colored web of mortal experience, are essentially the God-idea—this longing after an Infinite which sense cannot touch, but reverence alone can feel—this wonder and sorrow concerning life and death which are the inheritance of the Saxon soul from the days of its first sea-kings.

<sup>1</sup> 'In this year (597),' says the Chronicle, 'Gregorius the Pope sent into Britain Augustinus with very many monks who *gospelled* God's word to the English folk.' That is, they 'preached' or 'taught,' the *Gospel*—the *good spell* or *tale*, the *good news* of what God had done for others and would do for them.

Though the Christian faith had not failed among the Britons of Wales, the British priests were not likely to try to convert their mortal enemies, the Anglo-Saxons, nor were the latter likely to listen to them. The Scots (Irish) helped much in the good work afterwards, but had nothing to do with it in the beginning.

**Results.**—The English people, it is thus seen, is a composite nation, uniting in its children the elements which, separately, in the intellectual development of Europe, have shown themselves most efficient in all great and worthy achievements. But of this British, Roman, Saxon, Danish, Norman blood, in fulfilment of the decrees of an overruling Providence, is formed the English nation—a nation that has preserved its free spirit under foreign domination and domestic oppression—a nation that has upheld, with ever increasing strength, the principle that power is derived from the governed for the general good—a nation that in literature and life has furnished the moral pioneers and teachers of the world. Its body, its substance, is Saxon, which receives first the Celt, with his bold imagination and self-sacrificing zeal; then the Dane, with his tacit rage and adventurous maritime spirit; then the Norman, with his flexible genius, his trickery, his subtlety, his drawing-room polish, and his keen sense of enjoyment. Herein consists its true greatness, which comes of no transfusion,—its energetic sense of truth, its assertion of the right of individual liberty, its resolute habit of looking to the end, its deep power of love and its grand power of will.

We may therefore expect from this blending of diverse parts a many-sided intellectual progress and a wide variety of individual character,—the multifariousness of Shakespeare, the austerity of Milton, the materialism of Spencer, the transcendentalism of Emerson, the grace of Addison, the solidity of Johnson, the oddity of Swift, the sadness and madness of Byron.

## CHAPTER II.

### FORMING OF THE LANGUAGE.

Words are the sounds of the heart.—*Chinese Proverb.*

Words are the only things that live forever.—*Hazlitt.*

**Definition.**—Speech is the utterance of sounds which usage has made the representatives of ideas. When, in any community, the same sounds are customarily associated with the same ideas, the expression of these sounds by the speaker renders his ideas intelligible to the hearer.

Man possesses in the organs of utterance—though he seldom thinks of it, or forgets the blessing because it is given—a musical instrument which is at once a harp, an organ, and a flute; an instrument on which Nature gives him the mastery of a finished performer. *How* its notes are struck, so as to express in coördination the many-colored world without and the shadow-world within, is the mystery of language. This, however, is the observed phenomenon: a person having a thought, and wishing to awaken a corresponding thought in the mind of another, emits, at stated intervals, a portion of his breath, modified by certain movements of the vocal organs; these movements are transmitted to the atmosphere, and thence to the ear of the listener, producing there vibrations identical with the original; then, through the agency of instinct, memory, and invention, the two have the same thought. A result reached without any conscious effort, and therefore seemingly simple and commonplace, yet seen, on reflection, to be truly wonderful. Short as is the reach of its pulse, vanishing as are its undulations, by that fluid air, articulated into living words, man graves on the rock or prints in the book the records of his outward history and his inner soul, in symbols more enduring than Babylonian palace or Egyptian pyramid.

**Origin.**—Whether man was the special creation of God or was developed from inarticulate creatures, it would seem evident

that speech, *in its inception*, like the bark of a dog, is a natural product, and hence originates in the instinct divinely implanted, directly, or indirectly, in man's nature to communicate thought.<sup>1</sup> The Providence that provided soil, fuel, minerals, and vegetables, to meet his physical needs, and religion to meet his spiritual demands, would, it is reasonable to expect, furnish at the outset suitable means of communication.

We must suppose, however, that what is known to be true in other directions of his development will be found to be true in this,—an imperfect beginning and a gradual ascent. Clothing began with leaves and bark, with skins of wild animals and the like; shelter was first a hole in the ground, or the hollow of a tree; tools were first of bone, wood, or stone: but in time the sheltering cave became a nest of interwoven branches, this, in many ages, a log hut, and this, by improvement in shape, material, and size, after centuries of toil, a stately palace; in long ages of cultivation, dress-making and tool-making became arts, each giving us forms of elegance and beauty. When first the infant is moved to express itself to others, it does so by motions or natural cries, then by simple words of one syllable—very few in number, for its ideas are few—progressing slowly in its powers of utterance, yet increasing its vocabulary as intelligence expands.

So, by analogy, was it with man. His beginning was less a song or a poem than a cry or gesture. His first words, like those of the child, were probably monosyllables, and, like those of the child or savage, referred mainly to his bodily wants and to surrounding objects which impressed him strongly.

The origin of speech—so mysterious is the power—excited some speculation even among the rude primeval races. The Esthonians tell that the Aged One, as they call the Deity, placed on the fire a kettle of water, from the hissing and bubbling of which the various nations learned their languages; that is, by imitating these vague sounds, they modulated them into intelligible utterances. The Australians explain the gift of speech by saying that people had eaten an old woman, named Wururi, who

<sup>1</sup> Man is not less divine, nor his speech less God-given, on the supposition that he has been evolved from lower organisms; for still an adequate Cause—a Supreme Intelligence—must have impressed such attributes upon primordial matter as to make such evolution possible.

went about at night quenching fires with a damp stick. *Wururi* is supposed to mean the damp night-wind, and the languages learned from devouring her are the guttural, or wind-like, reproduction of natural sounds made by the material objects around them. There is the beautiful legend that Wannemunume, the god of song, descended into a sacred wood, and there played and sang. The birds learned the prelude of the song; the listening trees, their rustle; the streams, their ripple and roar; and the winds, their shrill tones and desolate moans: but the fish remained dumb, because, though they protruded their heads, as far as the eyes, out of the water, their ears continued under water, and they could only imitate the motion of the god's mouth. Man alone grasped it all, and so his song pierces down into the depths of the heart and up into the home of the gods.

**Development.**—Two principles have been especially active in the growth of speech:

1. *Onomatopœia*, or *sound-imitation*.—Thus the cry of a cat to children of different nationalities is *e-yow*; the watch is *tick-tick*. Thus, also, the interjection *ah* or *ach* gives the root *aka* (Sanskrit), *acam* (Anglo-Saxon), and thence our *ache*; whence also *anxious*, *anguish*, and *agony*. The root *mur* in *murmur*, implying the rush of water-drops, gives *myriad*. The Australian, imitating the noise it makes, calls the frog *kong-kung*. The North American Indian, repeating the hooting of the bird, calls the owl *kos-kos-koo-oo*, a verbal sign which immediately suggests to all who have heard it, the thing signified. Several tribes on the coast of New Guinea give names to their children in imitation of the first sound the child utters. Familiar instances of inventing names by imitating natural sounds, are *whip-poor-will*, *pee-wee*, *bob-white*, *buzz*, *whiz*, *hiss*, *snap*, *snarl*, *bang*, *roar*. There is the story of the Englishman who, wanting to know the nature of the meat on his plate at a Chinese entertainment, turned to the native servant behind him, and, pointing to the dish, inquired, 'Quack, quack?' The Chinaman replied, 'Bow-wow.' Thus the two were mutually intelligible, though they understood not a word of each other's language.

2. *Metaphor*, or *the use of words in new applications*.—When a strange object is seen, men are not satisfied till they have heard its name. If it has none, as would happen in the



first settlement of a country, they proceed to give it one; and in doing so, the prevailing tendency, as has been observed from the earliest times, is to use the name of some *known* object nearly resembling the one to be named. To combine and reapply old names is easier than to invent new ones; and, wherever this is done, the result is a *metaphor*. Thus the French, on the first introduction of the potato, called it, 'the apple of the earth.' Captain Erskine relates that in the Fiji Islands, man, dressed and prepared for food, is known as 'long pig'; human flesh and pork being the two staple articles of food, and the natural pig being the *shorter*. The New Zealanders called their first horses 'large dogs'; and the Highlanders styled their first donkey a 'large hare.' The Kaffirs called the parasol 'a cloud,' transferring to the new object a name belonging to one which resembled it somewhat in figure and effect. Among the Malays, the sun is *mata-ari*, literally, 'the eye of day'; the ankle is *mata-kaki*, 'the eye of the foot'; and the key is 'child of the lock.'

These transfers, it is seen, are made between one material substance and another; but frequently they are made between matter and spirit. Man's earliest words, like the child's, related, not to his soul, but to his body and material objects. As he advanced to consider and explain thinking, feeling, and willing, his own yearnings and passions, he could neither understand them himself nor make them intelligible to others, except by reference to things which he could see, hear, taste, smell, or touch,—that is, by the use of old terms in a new sense. The ideal, the spiritual, the mental, is, of itself, dim, shadowy, and unseen, and is *incapable of being known at all* but by a material image that shall make it in some sort visible, as a diagram illustrates a truth in geometry. Thus our 'soul'—German *seele*—is derived from the same root as the word 'sea.' The word 'reason' is supposed to be connected with the Greek *rheo*, 'I flow.' 'Consider,' from the Latin *considerare*, means 'to fix the eyes on the stars'; 'deliberate,' from *deliberare*, 'to weigh.' The Greek for the soul of man means 'wind,' and the Hebrew 'breath.'

Some of the metaphors in use among savages are highly picturesque. The Malays signify affront by 'charcoal on the face'; malice by 'rust of the heart'; impudence by 'face of board'; sincerity by 'white heart.' Scarcely less ingenious are



the metaphors in *Chinese*. Capricious is expressed by 'three mornings, four evenings'; cunning speech by 'convenient hind-teeth' persuasive speech by 'convenient front-teeth'; disagreement by 'you east, I west.'

Now, when the same word is applied successively to different objects, the effect is similar to adding so many new words to the language, making it more copious and rich. Mark the various ways in which the shining of the sun is here represented:

'And all his splendor *floods* the towered walls.'  
 'Sow'd the earth with *orient pearl*.'  
 'With *rosy* fingers *unbarred* the gates of light.'  
 'Each purple peak, each flinty spire,  
 Was *bathed in floods* of living fire.'  
 'A *dazzling deluge* reigns.'  
 'The western *waves* of ebbing day  
 Roll'd o'er the glen their level way.'  
 'The *sanguine* sunrise, with his *meteor eyes*,  
 And his *burning plumes* outspread.'

Thus language, in its *entirety*, is not given, but grows with the growth of thought and experience. New ideas spring up which require new forms of expression. New inventions in art or new discoveries in science require new terms. When moral and spiritual forces are especially active, the language of a people is required to utter new truths, and so is extended and multiplied, as the channel of a river is deepened and widened by increasing the volume of the waters which flow through it.

It is to be observed, further, that while an articulate word, addressed to the *ear*, is the sign of an idea, a written word, merely exhibiting the same thing to the *eye*, is but the sign of this sign—an artificial dress. Language, therefore, in its proper nature, consists not of strokes made by the pen, nor of marks made in any other way, but of *sounds* uttered by the voice and the organs of articulation, being to man somewhat as neighing is to a horse or squealing to a pig. Many languages have existed that never were written, and those that in time have come to be written, first existed in an unwritten state.

**Diversities.**—The following is a specimen of the English tongue, as spoken and written in London, in the year 1300:

Ac heo and hi beoth ifuled mid sunnen, and so ich habbe iseid to thilke  
 But she they both are filled with sins, I have said that  
 levedy uche day; answereth, men, nis it nought so?  
 lady each answer, is not

Three hundred years later, our Shakespeare wrote:

‘Romans, Country-men and Louers, heare mee for my cause, and be silent, that you may heare. Beleeue mee for mine Honor, and have respect to mine Honor, that you may beleene. Censure mee in your Wisdom, and awake your Senses, that you may the better Judge. If there be any in this Assembly, any deere Friend of *Cæsar’s*, to him I say that *Brutus’* love to *Cæsar* was no less than his.’

From these illustrations, the student will see, as other examples may have suggested, that our language had not always its present form; and this is only a particular instance of the changes that are always going on, everywhere. Thus the language of a people in one age may become unintelligible to their descendants in another: or, if a people have parted company, one portion going forth to new seats, while the other remained in the old; or, if both have travelled on, separating continually from one another, either section may cease to be understood by the other, and their once common speech, by the gradual unfolding of differences, may be separated into two. Thus the Celts in Britain were, in time, unable to communicate with the Celts in Gaul; and the Britons in Wales could no longer converse with the Britons in Cornwall, from whom they were separated by the intrusion of a hostile tribe, like a wedge, between them. Thus the Russian, and German, and Icelandic, and Greek, and Latin, and Persian, and French, and English, were all produced from one language, spoken by the common ancestors of these nations, when they were living together as an undivided family; and the multitude of human languages—certainly not fewer than seven hundred and fifty in number—sprang, if not from one, from two or three original tongues. The causes of this divergence are:

1. *Difference of occupation.*—The vocabulary of a farmer must differ from that of a mariner, for his subjects of thought are different. When the *Aryans* distributed themselves over the poetic hills of Italy and Greece, they became, in the former, a nation of warriors—wars engrossing their thoughts for seven hundred years; in the latter, a nation of warriors, statesmen, orators, historians, poets, critics, painters, sculptors, architects, philosophers; and this difference was evermore at work to make two the languages that once were one. Language, in the former, became copious in terms expressive of things *political*; in the latter, it became *universal*, like the ideas for which it stood.

2. *Difference of progress in the sciences and the arts.*—New

facts or new ideas require new words. Wherever any science is progressive, there must be a corresponding progress in its forms of expression. Any considerable change in society—in its government, religion, or habits—demands the invention of words which in a former period were not required.

3. *Difference of geographical position.*—When a people with a common tongue is divided into separate tribes by emigration, or by any of the causes which break up large nations into smaller fragments, their speeches become distinct, as differences of character are developed, or in the degree in which communication between them is interrupted. (a.) One branch comes into contact with new races or objects which the other does not encounter, and so upon the old stock engrafts numerous words which the other does not. (b.) In one branch a word will perish, or be thrust out of general use, but live on in the other. For example, the words *snag*, *bluff*, *slick*, and others, would now be lost to the English tongue, were it not for the American branch of the English-speaking race. (c.) Words will gradually acquire a different meaning in one branch from what they have in another. Thus, in Northumberland, they ‘shear’ their *wheat*; here, we ‘shear’ our *sheep*. (d.) The pronunciation and spelling of the same word will, in one, be different from what it is in the other. Thus the Germans and the English, using the very same word, pronounce and spell it,—the former, ‘fowl’; the latter, ‘vogel.’ (e.) The language of one section may remain stationary, because their ideas remain so; while that of the other is kept in motion, because their understanding is ever advancing, and their knowledge is ever increasing.

4. *Difference of climate.*—Influences of climate and soil account, in large measure, for the harsh and guttural sounds muttered by those who live in moist or cold mountainous regions, and the soft and liquid tones of those who live in fertile plains under a more genial sky. Thus Byron:

‘I love the language, that soft bastard Latin,  
Which melts like kisses from a female mouth,  
And sounds as if it should be writ on satin,  
With syllables that *breathe* of the *sweet* South.  
And gentle liquids gliding all so pat in,  
That not a single accent seems uncouth,  
Like our *harsh*, *northern*, *whistling*, *grunting*, *guttural*,  
Which we’re obliged to *hiss*, and *spit* and *sputter* all.’

Physical circumstances reach far in their effects, not alone upon the organs of speech, but upon the character as well. It is not too much to assert that the profound differences which are manifest between the German races on the one side, heavy, bent on fighting, prone to drunkenness and gluttony, and the Greek and Latin races on the other, ready, flexible, inquisitive, artistic, loving conversations and tales of adventure,—arise chiefly from the difference between the countries in which they are settled. Religion, to the Greek, is an epic; to the Teuton, a tragedy.

**Dialects.**—Whenever a homogeneous people is divided into separate and unconnected tribes by emigration or local causes, the speeches of the different members of the race become, therefore, more or less distinct; and each, in this changed condition, is called a dialect: in other words, a dialect is a branch of a parent language, with such alterations as time or revolution may have introduced among descendants of the same people, living in separate or remote situations. Dialects, then, are those forms of speech which have a certain character of their own by which they are distinguished from one another, yet a common character by which they are allied to one another and hence to some mother tongue, just as indigo and sky-blue are different shades of the same color. Their *common* character will be shown: first, by their similar grammatical forms, such as the endings of nouns, verbs, and the like; second, by their having many of the most common and most necessary words essentially the same. Thus, when the Teutons settled in the western provinces of the Roman Empire, there arose a new state of things, which was neither Roman nor Teutonic, but a combination of both. Being much fewer in number, the conquerors adopted the religion, and a great deal of the laws and manners, and especially the language of the conquered. At this time, the common language of Spain, Italy, and Gaul, was *Latin*—not quite the same as the earlier Latin of Cicero, and, no doubt, more or less different in different localities. As the Germans had to learn this Latin in order to get on with the people, many German words crept into it, and it naturally became still more unlike what it had been. At last, men began to understand that quite new languages had really grown up. Thus, from the mixture of the Teutonic settlers with the Roman inhab-

itants, there slowly arose the modern nations of Spain, Italy, and France, and from the mixture of their languages, there gradually sprung the modern *Spanish*, *Italian*, and *French*,—each, when considered with reference to the Latin, called a *dialect*; but viewed by itself, as distinct from either of the others, a *language*. These newly formed languages, derived by more or less direct processes from one and the same ancient tongue—the Roman Latin—are known as the *Romance* tongues. Their homogeneity is clearly traceable in the following versions of the first verse, first chapter, of *St. John*:

*Latin*.—In principio (*beginning*) erat (*was*) Verbum (*Word*), et (*and*) Verbum erat apud (*with*) Deum (*God*), et Deus erat Verbum.

*Italian*.—Nel principio la Parola era, e la Parola era appo Iddio, e la Parola era Dio.

*French*.—Au commencement était la Parole, et la Parole était avec Dieu, et cette Parole était Dieu.

*Spanish*.—En el principio era el Verbo, y el Verbo estaba con Dios, y el Verbo era Dios.

Again, any of these, as split up into different local forms or provincial idioms, may be regarded as composed of an aggregate of dialects proper; for every language is marked by certain peculiarities in different quarters of the same country. Thus two hundred years ago, a man in London would say, 'I would eat more cheese, if I had it.' One in the Northern counties would have said, 'Ay sud eat mare cheese, gin ay had it.' The Western man said, 'Chud eat more cheese, and chad it.' The rustic Westmorelander, to the question, 'How far is it?' replies, 'Why, like it garly nigh like to four miles like.' The conjugation of the Southern slave is, 'I was done gone, you was done gone, he was done gone.'

We are not, however, to think of a dialect as a vulgar form of the classical or literary speech, and its modes of expression as violations of grammar, but rather as one of the forms in which language, passing through its successive phases, once existed. Here and there its departures from what we have been used to, may be set down to the ignorance or stupidity of the speaker. But much oftener its words, its singular combinations, which appear to us as barbarisms, were once reputable, employed by all, and happen to have found an abiding place in certain districts which have not kept abreast with the advances which the language has made. Thus, in parts of England, for 'we sing,' 'ye sing,' 'they sing,' they yet use the plurals 'we singen,' 'ye



singen,' 'they singen,'—a mode of declension which arose in the time of Chaucer, and was constantly employed by Spenser. We are told, indeed, that this form of the plural is still retained in parts of Maryland. It is not very uncommon, in the country, to hear one say, 'I'm *afear'd*,' or 'I'll *ax* him,' or 'the price *riz* yesterday,' or 'I'll tell *ye*'; and we are apt to esteem such phrases violations of the primary rules of grammar, but they are the forms which the words once regularly and grammatically assumed. An old Dative, *tham*, from *tha*, is still in use among our lower orders; as, 'Look at *them* boys.' *Ourn* for *ours*, and *hern* for *hers*, which are not infrequent among us, were freely employed by Wycliffe, who wrote standard English. We are not therefore to conclude that these forms are good English now: for in writing or speaking we are bound to conform to present use and custom, just as in buying or selling we are to use the form of money that is circulating, not that which was current in the Revolution, or which has long been withdrawn from circulation.

**Idioms.**—Nations, like individuals, have their *peculiar* ideas; and, since the sign must correspond to the thing signified, these peculiar ideas become the *genius* of their language. The *idioms*<sup>1</sup> of a given tongue are the modes of expression in harmony with its genius. For example:

Arma virumque cano, Trojae qui primus ab oris Italian, fato  
*Arms man-and, (I)-sing (of)-Troy who first from coasts (to)-Italy (by)-fate*  
 profugus, Laviniaque venit litora.—*Virgil.*  
*(an)-exile Lavinian-and came shores.*

Such an arrangement, though natural to Latin, is quite foreign to English:

*I sing of arms, and the man who first from the coasts of Troy, by fate an exile, came to Italy and the Lavinian shores.*

That order and diction are idiomatic which are used *habitually*,—in conversation or familiar letters. Thus, when Dr. Johnson said of the *Rehearsal*, 'It has not wit enough to keep it sweet,' he was idiomatic; but when, after a moment's reflection, he expressed it, 'It has not sufficient virtue to preserve it from putrefaction,' he was *unidiomatic*. When he wrote, 'I bore the diminution of my riches without any outrages of sorrow or pusillanimity of dejection,' he used a style in which no one quarrels, makes love, or

<sup>1</sup> From the Greek, meaning *proper* or *peculiar*.



thinks. The native idiom is forcibly distinguished from the foreign in the following:

*Idiomatic.*—Then Apollyon straddled quite over the whole breadth of the way, and said, I am void of fear in this matter: prepare thyself to die; for I swear by my infernal Den that thou shalt go no further: here will I spill thy soul.—*Pilgrim's Progress.*

*Unidiomatic.*—Unquestionably, benignity and commiseration shall contingence all the diuturnity of my vitality, and I will eternalize my habitude in the metropolis of nature.—*Psalm xxiii, 6 (a modern version).*

It is remarked by De Quincey, that 'the pure idiom of our mother-tongue survives only amongst our women and children; not, heaven knows, amongst our women who write books.' 'Would you desire at this day,' he continues, 'to read our noble language in its native beauty, picturesque form, idiomatic propriety, racy in its phraseology, delicate yet sinewy in its composition,—steal the mail-bags, and break open all the letters in female handwriting.'

It need not be a matter of surprise, therefore, that those writers who are most idiomatic—as Bunyan, Shakespeare, Longfellow—are the most popular. They are understood with least effort.

**Indo-European.**—On noticing how closely our word *house* resembles the German *haus*, or the English *thou hast* the German *du hast*, the reader might suspect, without other evidence than this *likeness* in words and in grammar, that the two languages are *brothers* and *sisters*. By extending this comparison to a large number of languages, scholars have shown that nearly all the languages in Europe, with a part of those in Asia, are related by having descended from a common parent, namely a language spoken somewhere between the Indus and the Euphrates. These kindred tongues are therefore called the *Indo-European*,<sup>1</sup> or the *Aryan*<sup>2</sup> family. This family is subdivided into several groups, each group consisting of those languages which most resemble one another:

1. *Celtic*, preserved to us chiefly in two dialects,—the *Welsh*, whose oldest literature extends back to the sixth century; and the *Irish*, with a literature dating from the fifth.

2. *Latin*, containing the dialects sprung from it, or the *Romance* (modified Roman) languages,—*Italian, French, Spanish,* and *Portuguese*. Its oldest literary records date from 300 B.C.

<sup>1</sup> Referring to the territorial position and the geographical connection of the races which speak the languages it represents.

<sup>2</sup> The historic name applied to the people originally speaking this mother-tongue.

3. *Greek*, represented by the modern Greek, or *Romaic*, which is descended from it. Its earliest records are the poems of Homer, 1000 B.C.

4. *Persian*, containing *Ancient* and *Modern Persian*. Its earliest extant writing is the *Avesta*, or the Bible of Zoroaster, claiming an antiquity of seven thousand years.

5. *Indian*, containing the *Sanskrit*,<sup>1</sup> which is the oldest of all the Indo-European languages, and the modern dialect of India. Among the earliest extant works in this language are the *Vedas*, or the Bible of the Hindoos, written in Sanskrit, probably five thousand years ago.

6. *Slavonic*,<sup>2</sup> containing the *Russian* (its most important representative), *Polish*, and *Bohemian*.

7. *Teutonic*, or *Germanic*, containing:

(1.) The *Mæso-Gothic*, the language of the Goths (a nation of Teutons), in Mæsia. The oldest German dialect in existence. Extinct as a spoken language, but preserved to us by one Ulfilas, a bishop of the Goths, who translated the Scriptures into Gothic for the benefit of his countrymen, about the close of the fourth century. Only parts of this translation remain, of which the most famous is the *Silver Book*, so called from its being transmitted to us in letters of silver and gold.

(2.) The *High German*, at first only spoken in the highlands of Central and Southern Germany. It may be represented by the modern literary German, the language into which Luther translated the Bible.

(3.) The *Low German*, spoken originally along the low-lying shores of the German Ocean and the Baltic Sea. From this region our Saxon fathers came, and hence the Low German includes our present English. It may now be represented by the language of Holland, or *Low Dutch*, to which English bears the strongest likeness, as appears in the following:

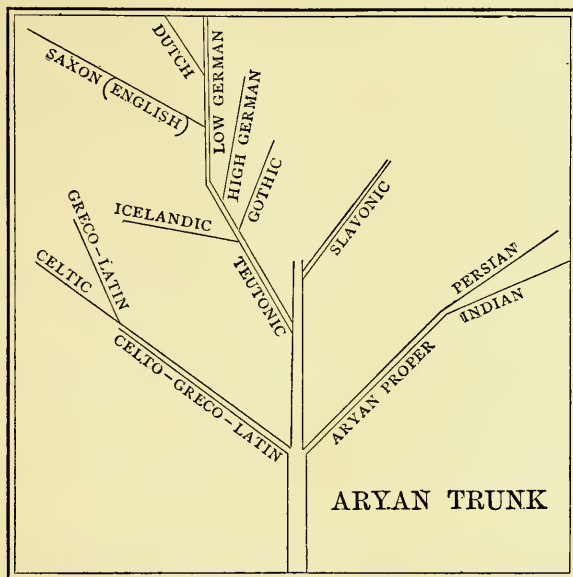
In den beginne was het woord, en het woord was bij God, en het woord was God.—*St. John i, 1.*

(4.) The *Scandinavian*, represented by the Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian; but best by the Icelandic, from which come its earliest literary memorials.

<sup>1</sup> Meaning *classical* or *literary*, in distinction from the language used by the common people.

<sup>2</sup> The *Slavs* were the third stream of Aryan emigrants into Europe.

The accompanying Linguistic Tree may be assumed to represent the Aryan mother-tongue in process of ramification, while it may furnish a general conception of the Aryan migrations. One main fact will be apparent—‘Westward the course of empire takes its way.’



**English.**—This is the language used by the people of England, and by all who speak like them elsewhere; for example, in the United States.

**Historical Elements.**—Its ingredients are derived from sources as varied as the English blood. Of these, as the reader will understand from the historical sketch, the most important are:

1. *Celtic*, the oldest of our philological benefactors.—It does not appear, however, to have at all modified the syntax or affected the articulation of the language, but to have remained a foreign unassimilated accretion. It contributes to the vocabulary a large number of geographical names, as *Thames*, *Kent*; and some miscellaneous words, as *basket*, *button*, *mop*, *pail*, *rail*, *bard*, etc. Between the Anglo-Saxons and the Celts, and hence between

their respective tongues, there was, as we have seen, a reciprocal repulsion.

2. *Latin*.—From this we have borrowed more or less freely for many centuries. To the Roman conquest we are indebted comparatively little. A few civil and military terms were adopted by the Saxon invaders. Of these, some are lost, and others are changed. Thus, *strata*, denoting a paved road, is changed to *street*; *vallum*, a rampart, is retained in *wall*; *castra*, a fortified camp, reappears in *Gloucester*, once written Glevæ castra; *colonia*, a colony, is changed to *coln*, as in *Lincoln* (*Lindi colonia*).

The Christian missionaries of the sixth century made Latin the official language of the Church, and, to some extent, the medium of religious, moral and intellectual instruction; and thus introduced a considerable number of Latin words, chiefly ecclesiastical. Examples are, *episcopus*, bishop; *monachus*, monk; *epistola*, epistle; which were written, *bisceop*, *munuc*, *pistel*.

But the great majority of Latinisms have arisen in three epochs,—the thirteenth century, which followed an age devoted to classical studies; the sixteenth, which witnessed a new revival of admiration for antiquity; and the eighteenth, when Johnson, who loved to coin in the Roman mint, was the dictator of prose style.

3. *Danish*.—The Danes have bequeathed us few words and relatively unimportant; such as *fellow*, *fro*, *gait*, *ill*, *etc.*, including some local names extending over the grounds of their settlements.

4. *Norman-French*.—This was spoken in Northern France—Normandy; and, as the student should now be aware, was composed of three elements,—the Celtic,<sup>1</sup> the Latin, the Teutonic.<sup>2</sup> It was the dominant speech in England between two and three hundred years, the vernacular finding its refuge in the cottages of the rustic and illiterate. By the gradual coalescence of the two races, its influence was very great, both by introducing many new words and by changing the spelling and sound of old ones.

5. *Greek*.—To this source we are indebted for scientific terms, slightly for terms in common use; as, *botany*, *physics*, *ethics*, *music*, *didactic*, *melancholy* (literally, *black-bile*).

<sup>1</sup> The Celts settled in this region were known, it will be remembered, as Gauls.

<sup>2</sup> The Franks and Danes.

6. *Anglo-Saxon*.—This is not so much an element, evidently, as it is the mother tongue, or the stock,—the stream to which the rest have been tributary. It is estimated that the percentage of Anglo-Saxon in modern English, exclusive of scientific and provincial terms, is about five-eighths; in the vocabulary of conversation, four-fifths. The following table may be of interest, as showing approximately, the relative proportion of Anglo-Saxon in the departments of general literature:

Bible, - - - - -	93	Prayer-Book, - - - - -	87
Poetry, - - - - -	88	Fiction, - - - - -	87
Essay, - - - - -	78	Oratory, - - - - -	76
History, - - - - -	72	Newspaper, - - - - -	72
Rhetoric, - - - - -	69		

**Original English (449—1066).**—This, as we have learned, was *Anglo-Saxon*. From what has been said, it is evident that this form of English, or Old English, as it is sometimes called, resulted from the blending together of the several kindred dialects spoken by the Germanic tribes who invaded Britain between the middle of the fifth and the middle of the sixth centuries. We have used the word ‘kindred’ to indicate that while there was a difference of dialect among the invaders, they all used substantially the same language.

From the specimens already given, the reader need not be told that the language first brought from Northern Germany to England was so different from ours that we should not understand it if we heard it spoken; nor can we learn to read it without very nearly as much study as is required to learn French or German. Its alphabet consisted of twenty-four characters, only two of which, as Anglo-Saxon books are now printed, are familiar to the eye. These represent the two sounds of *th* as heard in *thine* and *thin*. As compared with our present English, the Anglo-Saxon is called an *inflectional* tongue; that is, it indicated the relations of words by a correspondence of *forms*, the form being varied according to the number, person, case, mood, tense, gender, degree of comparison, and other conditions; whereas, such relations are now indicated by position, auxiliaries and particles, the words themselves remaining for the most part unvaried.

Thus the Latin ‘*bib-ere*’ was translated by ‘*drinc-an,*’ but now by *to* drink. We now say ‘I love’ and ‘We love,’ without any



change in the form of the word *love*; but the Anglo-Saxons used, for the first, *lufige*, and for the second *lufiath*. To say 'I shall help,' and 'We shall help,' the same form of the verb serves us equally well; but they thought different forms were necessary,—*sceal helpan*, and *sculon helpan*: whence we see that our present auxiliary verbs, used as mere indications of time, were once inflected and used as principal verbs,—for example, I **shall to help** and we **shall to help**. In the sentences, '*They were good hunters,*' and '*They had the appearance of good hunters,*' the one form 'good hunters' expresses equally well both relations; but the Anglo-Saxons would have expressed it, 'hunt-an gód-e,' and 'hunt-ena gód-ra,' varying the form both of the adjective and the noun. This variation of *form*, therefore, to suit the offices which a word may have to perform in the sentence, is what we are to understand by *inflection*. The accident and arrangement of English then, as distinguished from its analytic character now, are well illustrated in the following passage from King Alfred, in whose time the language, as a synthetic tongue, reached its best estate:

'Fela spella him sædon tha  
Beormas æhter ge of hym  
agenum lande, ge of thæm lande the  
ymb hy utan wæron: ac he  
nyste hwæt thæs sothes wær,  
for thæm he hit sylf ne ge seah.'

Many tidings (to) him said the  
Beormas either (*i.e.* both) of their  
own lande, and of them lands that  
around them about were: but he  
wist-not what (of) the sooth (truth) was,  
for that he itself not 'y-saw.

**Transition English.**—After a while men began to think that so many terminations were useless, that they were too cumbersome, involving a waste of time and energy in writing and speaking; for man is either a very lazy or a very practical animal, and dislikes to say *do not*, *can not*, and *shall not*, when he can more easily and quickly say *don't*, *can't*, and *shan't*. *I have been loved* is not quite so laborious as 'Ic was fulfremedlice gelufod.' So, as a matter of economy, to save breath and secure a freer utterance, sentential structure became less periodic, most of the inflections were dropped; while short auxiliaries, or help-words, were used instead. This result, though natural, was very much accelerated by the Norman Conquest; for by that event the language was driven from literature and polite society, being there displaced by French and Latin. No longer fixed in books, and living only on the lips of the ignorant, it was broken up into



numerous diverging dialects, of which the chief were the Northern, Midland, and Southern; nor did it again receive literary culture till the beginning of the thirteenth century, from which date it steadily advanced, till, in the form of the East Midland dialect, it acquired complete and final ascendancy in the hands of Chaucer and Wycliffe—the first the forerunner of English Literature, the second, of the Reformation.

This, then, was a period of confusion, alike perplexing to those who used the language and to those who wish to trace its vicissitudes,—a period in which the old was passing, through a state of ruin, into the new. The two languages, native and stranger, hitherto repellent, began slowly to melt into a harmonious whole; and the former, with a distinct and recognizable existence, though gorged with unorganized material, was fitting for a vigorous and prolific growth.

The process of disorganization and decay may be exhibited to the eye by the following extract from the Saxon Chronicle, the second column showing what the text would be if written in purer Saxon:

'Hi swencten the wreccen men of  
the land mid castel-weorces.  
Tha the castles waren maked  
tha fylden hi mid yvele men. Tha  
namen hi tha men the hi wendon  
thæt *ani* God hæfden bathe be  
nights and be dæies.'

Hi swencon tha wreccan menn of  
tham lande mid castel-weorcum.  
Tha tha castel wæron gemacod  
tha fyldon hi mid yfelon manum. Tha  
namon hi tha menn tha hi wendon  
thæt ænig God hæfdon batwa be  
nihte & be dæge.

It may be of interest to watch, in early versions of the *Lord's Prayer*, that series of mutations by which Anglo-Saxon was passing gradually into modern English:

A.D. 700. Thu ure Fader, the eart on heofenum,  
Si thin noman gehalgod,  
Cume thin rike,  
Si thin Willa on eorþan twa on heofenum;  
Syle us todag orne dægwanlican hlaf,  
And forgif us ure gylder,  
Swa we fogifath tham the with us agylthat;  
And ne læd thu na us on kostnunge;  
Ac alys us fronn yfele.  
Si bit swa.

A.D. 890. Fæder ure thu the eart on hoefenum,  
Si thin nama gehalgod;  
To becume thin rice.  
Gewurthe thin willa on eorþan swa swa on heofenum,  
Urne dæghwamlican hlaf syle us to dæg;  
And forgyf us ure gyltas, swa swa we forgifoth urum gyltendum;

And ne gelaedde thn us on costnunge,  
Ac alys us of yfele. Sothlice.

A.D. 1120.

Ure Fader in Heven rich,  
Thy name be halyed ever lich.  
Thou bring ns thy michel bliese,  
Als bit in heven y doe;  
Evear in yearth been it alsoe.  
That holy brede that lasteth ay,  
Thou send us this ilke day.  
Forgive us all that we have done  
As we forgive ech other one.  
Ne let us fall into no founding,  
Ne sheld us frym the foule thing.

A.D. 1250.

Fadir ur that es in hevene,  
Halud be thy nam to nevene:  
Thou do us thy rich rike:  
Thi will on erd be wrought elk,  
Als it es wrought in heven ay:  
Ur ilk day brede give us to day:  
Forgive thou all us dettes urs  
Als we forgive all nr detturs:  
And ledde us na in na fanding,  
But seuld ns fra ivel thing.

A.D. 1250.

*(East Midland.)*

Ure fadir that hart in hevene,  
Halged be thi name with giftis sevene;  
Samin eume thi kingdom,  
Thi wille in herthe als in hevene be don;  
Ure bred that lastes ai  
Gyve it hus this hilke dai,  
And ure misdedis thn forgyve hus,  
Als we forgyve tham that misdou hus,  
And leod us intol na fandinge,  
Bot frels ns fra alle ivele thinge. Amen.

**Native Features of English.**—1. Its grammar is almost exclusively Anglo-Saxon. 2. Anglo-Saxon is eminently the organ of practical action—the language of business, of the street, market, and farm. 3. The specific terms of the English tongue are Anglo-Saxon, while the generic terms are foreign—Latin, Greek, or French. Thus, we are Romans when we speak, in a general way, of *moving*; but Teutons when we *run, walk, leap, stagger, slip, ride, slide, glide*. 4. The Saxon gives us names for the greater part of natural objects; as, *sun, moon, stars, rain, snow, hill, dale*. 5. Those words expressive of strongest feelings are Saxon; as, *home, hearth, fireside, life, death, man and wife, father and mother, brother and sister, love and hate, hope and fear, gladness and sorrow*. 6. A large proportion of the language of *invective, humor, satire, and colloquial pleasantry*, is Saxon. 7. In short, to the Saxon belongs the vocabu-

lary of common life, including our colloquialisms, idiomatic phrases, and the language of conversation. Thus we see that the essential element in English is native. Between its past and present there is only the difference that exists between the sapling and the tree, or between the boy and the man.

**Anglo-Norman History in English.**—Supposing all other records to have perished, we could still trace the reciprocal relations of the Saxon and Norman occupants of England in their contributions to the language which they have jointly bequeathed us. Thus we should conclude that the Norman was the ruling race from the noticeable fact that nearly all the words of state descend to us from them,—*sovereign, throne, crown, sceptre, realm, royalty, prince, chancellor, treasurer*. Norman aristocracy transmits us *duke, baron, peer, esquire, count, palace, castle, hall, mansion*. Common articles of dress are Saxon,—*shirt, shoes, hat, breeches, cloak*; but other articles, subject to changes of fashion, are of Norman origin,—*gown, coat, boots, mantle, cap, bonnet*, etc. *Room* and *kitchen* are Saxon; *chambers, parlors, galleries, pantries, and laundries* are Norman. The Saxon's *stool, bench, bed, and board*—often probably it was no more—are less luxurious than the *table, chair, and couch* of his Norman lord. The *boor* whose sturdy arms turned the soil, opened wide his eyes at the Norman *carpet* and *curtain*. While luxury, chivalry, adornment, are Norman, the instruments used in cultivating the earth, as well as its main products, are Saxon,—*plough, share, rake, scythe, harrow, sickle, spade, wheat, rye, oats, grass, hay, flax*.

Thus are words, when we remove the veil which custom and familiarity have thrown over them, seen to be illustrative of national life. As the earth has its strata and deposits from which the geologist is able to arrive at a knowledge of the successive physical changes through which a region has passed, so language has its alluvium and drift from which the linguist may disinter, in fossil form, the social condition, the imaginations and feelings, of a period—a period far more remote than any here suggested.

**Superiority of Saxon English.**—The special reasons assignable for this are:

1. *Early association.*—A child's vocabulary is almost wholly Saxon. He calls a thing *nice* or *nasty*, not *pleasant* or *disagreeable*. Words acquired later in life are less familiar—less organically connected with his ideas, and hence less rapidly suggestive.

2. *Brevity.*—The fewer the words, the more effective the idea,—as, to point to the door is more expressive than to say, 'Leave the room.' On the same principle, the fewer the syllables, the stronger the impression produced,—less time and effort are required to read the sign and perceive the thing signified. Hence the shortness of Saxon words becomes a cause of their greater force. One qualification must be made. When great power or intensity is to be suggested, an expansive and sonorous word, allowing the consciousness a longer time to dwell on the quality predicated, may be an advantage. A devout and poetic soul gazing, in stilly night, into stellar spaces,—what verb will express its emotion? *See, look, think?*—only the Latin *contemplate*. The noise going to and returning from hill to hill,—what word will describe it? *Sound, boom, roar, echo*, are all too tame; only *reverberate* tells the whole. Hence the value of the Latin element in contributing to copiousness and strength of expression. It is a pleasing study to observe how, in all the best writers, the long and short are harmoniously combined, as in these lines from *Macbeth*:

'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.'

3. *Definiteness.*—'Well-being arises from well-doing,' is Saxon. 'Felicity attends virtue,' is Latin. How inferior is the second, because less definite than the first. The more concrete the terms, the brighter the picture, as *wagon* and *cart* are more vivid than *vehicle*.

Therefore, though many words of Latin origin are equally simple and clear, those of Saxon origin are, as a whole, more so, and should be preferred. This is the current maxim of composition, most happily enforced in the following lines:

'Think not that strength lies in the big, round word,  
Or that the brief and plain must needs be weak.  
To whom can this be true who once has heard  
The cry for help, the tongue that all men speak,  
When want, or fear, or woe, is in the throat,

So that each word gasped out is like a shriek  
 Pressed from the sore heart, or a strange, wild note,  
 Sung by some fay or fiend? There is a strength,  
 Which dies if stretched too far, or spun too fine,  
 Which has more height than breadth, more depth than length.  
 Let but this force of thought and speech be mine,  
 And he that will, may take the sleek, fat phrase,  
 Which glows, but burns not, though it beam and shine,  
 Light, but no heat,—a flash, but not a blaze.<sup>1</sup>

**Results.**—So does the English language combine, to an extent unequalled by any other living tongue, the classic (Latin) and the Teutonic,—the euphony, sonorousness, and harmony of the first; the strength, tenderness, and simplicity of the second; a happy medium between French and German,—more grave than the former, less harsh and cumbersome than the latter, grammatically simpler than either. From its composite character come that wealth and compass, that rich and varied music, which have made English Literature the crown and glory of the works of man. It has an abode, far and wide, in the islands of the earth; gives greeting on the shores of the Pacific, as of the Atlantic. Fixed in multitudes of standard works and endeared to the increasing millions who read and speak it, the natural growth of population, the love of conquest and colonization which has distinguished the Saxon race since they traversed the German Ocean in their frail barks, will help to extend and perpetuate its empire.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. J. A. Alexander.

## CHAPTER III.

### FORMING OF THE LITERATURE.

Wherever possible, let us not be told about this man or that. Let us hear the man himself speak, let us see him act, and let us be left to form our own opinions about him.—*Froude*.

My friend, the times which are gone are a book with seven seals; and what you call the spirit of past ages is but the spirit of this or that worthy gentleman in whose mind those ages are reflected.—*Goethe*.

The view of human manners, in all their variety of appearances, is both profitable and agreeable; and if the aspect in some periods seem horrid and deformed, we may thence learn to cherish with the greater anxiety that science and civility, which has so close a connection with virtue and humanity, and which as it is a sovereign antidote against superstition, is also the most effectual remedy against vice and disorder of every kind.—*Hume*.

**Politics.**—From the primitive stock—Angles and Saxons, reinforced by the Danish ravagers, buried, re-elevated, and modified, by the Conquest—were to spring the nation and its history. In pursuance of Germanic custom, there was an early division of the kingdom, as we have seen, into counties, and of these into hundreds, the latter partition supposed to contain a hundred free families. Each had its tribunal; the *Court of the Hundred*—held by an alderman, next in authority to the king—being the lower. In course of time, the *County Court* became the real arbiter of important suits, the first contenting itself with punishing petty offences and keeping up a local police. Chiefly to this the English freeman looked for the maintenance of his civil rights. The hundreds were further distributed into *decennaries*, or tithings, known as ‘ten men’s tale.’ In one of these, every freeman above the age of twelve was required to be enrolled. The members were a perpetual bail for each other; so that if one of the ten committed any fault, the nine were indirectly responsible. From earliest English times there had prevailed the usage of *compurgation*, under which the accused could be acquitted by the oath of his friends, who pledged their knowledge, or at least their belief, of his innocence. The following passage in the laws of Alfred refers to this practice:



‘If any one accuse a king’s thane of homicide, if he dare to purge himself, let him do it along with twelve king’s thanes.’ ‘If any one accuse a thane of less rank than a king’s thane, let him purge himself along with eleven of his equals, and one king’s thane.’

Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence proceeded, as here, upon the maxim that the best guarantee of every man’s obedience to the government was to be sought in the confidence of his neighbors. This privilege, the manifest fountain of unblushing perjury, was abolished by Henry II; though it long afterwards was preserved, by exemption, in London and in boroughs. There was left, however, the favorite mode of defence,—the *ordeal*, or ‘judgment of God.’ Innocence could be proved by the power of holding hot iron in the hand, or by sinking when flung into the water, for swimming was a proof of guilt. When these were annulled in 1216, the combat remained, but no longer applicable unless an injured prosecutor came forward to demand it. This was of Norman origin. The nobleman fought on horseback; the plebeian on foot, with his club and target. The vanquished party forfeited his claim and paid a fine. It was the function of the court to see that the formalities of the combat, the ordeal, or the compurgation, were duly regarded, and to observe whether the party succeeded or succumbed,—a function which required neither a knowledge of positive law nor the dictates of natural sagacity.

The seed of our present form of *Trial by Jury* may be discovered in a law of Ethelred II, binding the sheriff and twelve principal thanes to swear that they would neither acquit any criminal nor convict any innocent person. In 1176, precise enactment established the jury system, still rude and imperfect, as the usual mode of trial:

‘The justices, who represented the king’s person, were to make inquiry by the oaths of twelve knights, or other lawful men, of each hundred, together with the four men from each township, of all murders, robberies, and thefts, and of all who had harboured such offenders, since the king’s (Henry II) accession to the throne.’

The jurors were essentially witnesses distinguished from other witnesses only by customs which imposed upon them the obligation of an oath and<sup>v</sup> regulated their number. For fifty years yet their duties were to present offenders for trial by ordeal or combat. Under Edward I, witnesses acquainted with the particular fact in question were added to the general jury; and later these became simply ‘witnesses,’ without judicial power,

while the first ceased to be witnesses and became only judges of the testimony given. It was the abolition of the ordeal system in 1216 which led the way to the establishment of what is called a 'petty jury' for the final trial of the prisoner. Centuries were to pass, however, before the complete separation of the functions of juryman and witness should be effected.

The 'Meeting of Wise Men' no longer retained, under Alfred, its character of a national gathering, as when the Saxons preserved in simplicity their Germanic institutions. Then all freemen, whether owners of land or not, composed part of it. Gradually, by the non-attendance or indifference of the people, only the great proprietors were left; and, without the formal exclusion of any class of its members, it shrunk up into an aristocratic assembly.

After the Conquest, in the reign of John, the national council was a gathering, at the king's bidding, of all who held their lands directly from the crown, both clerical and lay. It was like the 'Meeting of the Wise Men,' only more people sat in it, and they were the king's feudal vassals. Those who were entitled to be present, could only be present themselves — could not send representatives. At the county courts, groups of men sent from the various parts of the shire represented, in the transaction of business, the whole free folk of the shire. Slowly and tentatively this principle was applied to the constitution of the Great Council. Henry III and his barons alike ordered the choice of 'discreet knights' from every county, 'to meet on the common business of the realm.' In 1246, the word *parliament* was first used as the name of the council. The extension of electoral rights to the freeholders at large is seen in the king's writ of 1264, sent to the higher clergy, earls, and barons; to the sheriffs, cities, and boroughs throughout England, commanding the former three to come in person, the latter to send representatives. It was long, however, before the chosen deputies were admitted to a share in deliberative power. In 1295, Edward gathered at Westminster an assembly that was in every sense a national Parliament. It straightway fulfilled the sole duty of a Parliament in those days,—voted the king a supply. Two years later the one thing still wanting was gained,—a solemn acknowledgment by the king that it alone had power to tax the nation. The idea of

representation has risen. 'It is a most just law,' says Edward, 'that what concerns all should be approved of by all, and that common dangers should be met by measures provided in common.' In Edward's reign, the barons began to hold their deliberations privately. The knights from the shires and the deputies from the towns formed a second chamber. From this time, therefore, dates the origin of the House of Lords and the House of Commons.

The rights of self-government, of free speech in free meeting, of equal justice by one's peers, were brought safely across the ages of Norman tyranny by the traders and shopkeepers, who alone, unnoticed and despised by prelate and noble, had preserved the full tradition of Teutonic liberty. Henry I, promising to govern the English according to their own wishes, with wisdom and moderation, granted them a first charter, which, though of short duration, was the first limitation imposed on the despotism of the Conquest. A hundred years later, the barons extorted from King John the glorious and powerful *Magna Charta*,—ever after the basis of the English freedom, the corner-stone of the noble edifice of the Constitution. Life, liberty, and property were protected. No man could henceforth be detained in prison without trial. No man would have to buy justice. These words, honestly interpreted, convey an ample security for the two main rights of civil society:

'No freeman shall be seized or imprisoned, or dispossessed, or outlawed, or in any way brought to ruin: we will not go against any man nor send against him, save by legal judgment of his peers or by the law of the land. To no man will we sell, to no man will we deny or delay, justice or right.'

At the end of the thirteenth century, the charters were so firmly established that no monarch would venture to disturb them.

Small and obscure are the beginnings of great political institutions, and unforeseen are the tremendous results of the actor's deeds, who, as he casts the seed into the soil, little dreams of the mighty and perpetual germination it will disclose in after days.

**Society.**—By Alfred's day, it was assumed that no man could exist without dependence upon a superior. The ravages and long insecurity of the Danish wars drove the freeholder to seek protection from the thane. His freehold was surrendered to be received back as a fief, laden with service to its lord. Gradually

the 'lordless' man became a sort of outlaw; the free churl, who had held his land straight from the Maker of it, sank into the villain,<sup>1</sup> and with his personal freedom went his share in the government. The bulk of the workmen are serfs. In a dialogue of the tenth century, written for popular instruction, the ploughman says: 'I labor much. I go out at daybreak, urging the oxen to the field, and I yoke them to the plough. I am bound to plough every day a full acre or more.' The herdsman says: 'When the ploughman separates the oxen, I lead them to the meadows, and all night I stand watching over them on account of thieves; and again in the morning I take them to the plough, well-fed and watered.' And the shepherd: 'In the first part of the morning I drive my sheep to their pasture, and stand over them in heat and cold with my dogs, lest the wolves destroy them. I lead them back to their folds, and milk them twice a day; and I move their folds, and make cheese and butter, and am faithful to my lord.'

The military oppression of the Normans levelled all degrees of tenants and servants into a modified slavery. The English lord was pushed from his place by the Norman baron, and sank into the position from which he had thrust the churl. The peasant—the producer—had no alternative but to abide from the cradle to the grave in one spot, and was held to be only fulfilling his natural destiny when he toiled without hope for the privileged consumer. 'Why should villains eat beef or any dainty food?' asks one of the Norman minstrels.

The social organization of every rural part of England rested on the manorial system,—a division of the land, for purposes of cultivation and internal order, into a number of large estates. The lord of the manor, instead of cultivating the estate through his own bailiff, at length found it more convenient and profitable to distribute it among tenants at a given rent, payable either in money or in produce. This habit of leasing afforded an opportunity by which the aspiring among the tenantry could rise to a position of apparent equality with their older masters. The growing use of the words 'farm' and 'farmer' from the twelfth century mark the initial steps of a peasant revolution. The

<sup>1</sup> A peasant, one of the lowest class of feudal tenants; a bondman, and later a vile, wicked person. One of the many words which men have dragged downwards with themselves, and made more or less partakers of their own fall.

tenants were subject to many exactions. The lord's bull and boar were free, under the conditions of tenure, to range at night through their standing corn and grass; and their sheep,—for they were permitted to acquire and hold property upon sufferance,—were always to be folded on their master's land. That the land was indifferently farmed we may well believe, when we learn that the highest rent was seven pence an acre, and the lowest a farthing. The rise of the farmer class was soon followed by that of the free laborer. Influences, indeed, had long been quietly freeing the peasantry from their local bondage. Prior to the Conquest, pure slavery was gradually disappearing before the efforts of the Church. Subsequently she urged emancipation, as a mark of piety, on all estates but her own. The fugitive bondsman found freedom in chartered towns, where a residence of one year and a day conferred franchise. The pomp of chivalry and the cost of incessant campaigns drained the royal and baronial purse; and the sale of freedom to the serf, or of exemption from services to the villain, afforded an easy and tempting mode of replenishment. Thus, by a solemn deed in 1302, for forty marks, 'Robert Crul and Matilda his wife, with all his offspring begotten and to be begotten, together with all his goods holden and to be holden,' was rendered 'forever free and quit from all yoke of servitude.'

In the silent growth and elevation of the people, the boroughs led the way. The English town was originally a piece of the general country, where people, either for purposes of trade or protection, happened to cluster more closely than elsewhere. It was organized and governed in the same way as the manors around it,—justice was administered, its customary services exacted, its annual rent collected, by the officer of the king, noble, or ecclesiastic, to whose estate it belonged. Its inhabitants were bound to reap their lord's corn crops, to grind at his mill, to redeem their strayed cattle from his pound. Its dues paid and services rendered, however, property and person alike were secured against arbitrary seizure. The townsman's rights were rigidly defined by custom, and by custom were constantly widening. By disuse or forgetfulness, services would disappear, while privileges and immunities were being for the most part purchased by hard bargaining. At Leicester, for instance, one of the chief



aims of its burgesses was to regain their old English practice of compurgation, for which had been substituted the foreign trial by duel. Says a charter of the time:

‘It chanced that two kinsmen . . . waged a duel about a certain piece of land, concerning which a dispute had arisen between them; and they fought from the first to the ninth hour, each conquering by turns. Then one of them fleeing from the other till he came to a certain little pit, as he stood on the brink of the pit, and was about to fall therein, his kinsman said to him, “Take care of the pit, turn back lest thou shouldest fall into it.” Thereat so much clamor and noise was made by the by-standers and those who were sitting around, that the Earl heard these clamors as far off as the castle, and he inquired of some how it was there was such a clamor, and answer was made to him that two kinsmen were fighting about a certain piece of ground, and that one had fled till he reached a certain little pit, and that, as he stood over the pit and was about to fall into it, the other warned him. Then the townsmen, being moved with pity, made a covenant with the Earl that they should give him three pence yearly for each house in the High Street that had a gable, on condition that he should grant to them that the twenty-four jurors who were in Leicester from ancient times should from that time forward discuss and decide all pleas they might have among themselves.’

At the close of the thirteenth century, all the more important towns had secured freedom of trade, of justice, and of government. Their liberties and charters served as models and incentives to the smaller communities struggling into existence. While the tendency at first seems to have been agricultural, at the Conquest it had become mercantile, and the controlling class was the merchant guild. Wealth and industry developed into dangerous rivalry a second class, composed of escaped serfs, of traders without lands, of the artisans and the poor. Without share in the right and regulation of trade, their struggles for power and privilege began in the reign of the first Henry, and their turbulent election of a London mayor in 1261 marks their final victory.

In the tenth century, a man wished for two things,—not to be slain, and to have a good leather coat. The state of warfare still contends against the state of order. The right of aggrieved persons to interfere with the sober course of the law is acknowledged even by Alfred:

‘We also command that the man who knows his foe to be home-sitting, fight not before he demand justice of him. If he have such power that he can beset his foe and besiege him within, let him keep him within for seven days, and attack him not if he will remain within.’

There are so many pagan Danes and other disreputable persons scattered up and down the land, that society must protect itself in a summary fashion:

‘If a stranger or foreigner shall wander from the highway, and then neither call out nor sound a horn, he is to be taken for a thief and killed, or redeemed by fine.’



When Henry II, succeeding the Norman king, ascended the throne in 1154, he found his kingdom a prey to horrible anarchy. The royal domains were surrounded on all sides by menacing fortresses garrisoned by resolute soldiers who recognized no authority but that of their chiefs. Within three years, eleven hundred of these castles, the haunts of robbers, were razed to the ground, while the peasants and townspeople applauded the work of destruction. He may be truly said to have initiated 'the rule of law.' Ten years after his accession the principle of pecuniary compensation for crime had, for the most part, been superseded by criminal laws, administered with stern severity. Yet outrage continues to be the constant theme of legislation. In the reign of the first Edward, every man was bound to hold himself in readiness, duly armed, for the king's service or the hue and cry which pursued the felon. An act for the suppression of crimes directs that,—

'For the greater security of the people, walled towns shall keep their gates shut from sun-set to sun-rise; and none shall lodge all night in their suburbs, unless his host shall answer for him. All towns shall be kept as in times past, with a watch all night at each gate, with a number of men.'

Another, after reciting the commission of robberies, murders, and riots, in the city of London, enjoins:

'That none be found in the streets, either with spear or buckler, after the curfew-bell rings out, except they be great lords, or other persons of note; also, that no tavern, either for wine or ale, be kept open after that hour on forfeiture of forty pence.'

Once, during this reign, a band of lesser nobles disguise their way into a great merchant fair; fire every booth, rob and slaughter the merchants, and carry the booty off to ships lying in wait. Molten streams of silver and gold, says the tale of horror, flowed down the gutters to the sea. Lawless companies of club-men maintain themselves by general violence, aid the country nobles in their feuds, wrest money and goods from the tradesmen. Under a show of courtesy the bloodthirsty instinct breaks out. Richard of the Lion-heart has a lion's appetite. Under the walls of Acre he wants some pork. There being none to be had, a young Saracen is killed, cooked, salted, and served him. He eats it with a relish, and desires to see the head of the pig. The cook produces it trembling, the king laughs, and says the army, having provisions so convenient, has nothing to fear from famine. The town taken, he has thirty of the most noble prisoners beheaded,

bids his cook boil the heads and serve one to each of the ambassadors who came to sue for their pardon. Thereupon the sixty thousand prisoners are led into the plain for execution.

Theodore, who founded the English Church, denied Christian burial to the kidnapper, and prohibited the sale of children by their parents after the age of seven. The murder of a slave, though no crime in the eye of the State, became a sin for which penance was due to the Church. Manumission became frequent in wills, as a boon to the souls of the dead. Usually the slave was set free before the altar; sometimes at the spot where four roads met, and there bidden go whither he would. In the more solemn form, his master took him by the hand in full shire meeting, showed him the open road and door, and gave him the lance and sword of the freeman. A hundred years after the prohibition, in the ninth century, of the slave-traffic from English ports, men and women are said to have been bought in all parts of England and carried to Ireland for sale. 'You might,' says a chronicler, 'have seen with sorrow long files of young people of both sexes and of the greatest beauty bound with ropes and daily exposed for sale. . . . They sold in this manner as slaves their own children.' Not till the reign of Henry II was it finally suppressed in its last stronghold, the port of Bristol.

A law of 1285, relating to highways, directs:

'That those ways shall be enlarged where bushes, woods, or dykes be, where men may lurk, so that there be neither dyke, tree, nor bush within two hundred feet on each side of those roads, great trees excepted.'

A provision which illustrates at once the social and physical condition of the country at the time. The roads are narrow—from four to eight feet—and of difficult passage. A bishop, journeying to London, is obliged to rest his beasts of burden on alternate days of travel. Returning, he accomplishes the first day only five miles. Travellers ride on horseback, and convey their culinary wares or merchandise in pack-saddles. The dead, the invalid, ladies of rank, are carried in a *horse-litter*, borne by horses and mules, sometimes by men. *Carts* are the carriages of the nobility, distinguished from the common description by ornament. Even that of King John is springless,—the body rests upon the axletree, the wheels are cut from solid pieces of circular wood, covered ornamentally, and bound round with a thick wooden

tire. For obvious reasons, a solitary journey in these early days will be a matter of grave anxiety. Friends setting out from the same place, or strangers becoming acquainted upon the road, join in parties for mutual protection and cheer through the semi-desert.

The houses of the people in the thirteenth century were generally of one story, consisting of a hall and a bed-chamber. The first was kitchen, dining-room, reception-room, as well as sleeping apartment for strangers and visitors indiscriminately; the second was the resort of the female portion of the household. The door opened outward, and was left open,—a sign of hospitality, which even in turbulent times was almost boundless between those who had established friendly relations. The roof, covered with oval tiles, exhibited two ornamental points. Dwellings of the opulent sometimes had upper floors, reached by *an external staircase*. The upper part was considered the place of greatest security, as it could be entered only by one door, which was approached by a flight of steps, and hence was more readily defended. The hall was generally the whole height of the house. Adjacent to it was the stable, in which the servants, if any, were well content to lodge. Palaces and manor-houses had essentially the same arrangement,—a private room for the lord, and the great hall which was the usual living apartment for the whole family, and in which retainers and guests, often to the number of three or four hundred, were kennelled, the floor being strewn with dry rushes in winter, and with hay or straw in summer.

Already the Jew was a capitalist,—the only one in Europe. He had followed William from Normandy. Without citizenship, absolutely at the king's mercy, he was the engine of finance; and, as such, compelled the kingly regard. Castle and cathedral alike owed their existence to his loans. His wealth—wrung from him by torture when mild entreaty failed—filled the royal exchequer at the outbreak of war or revolt. The 'Jews' Houses' were almost the first of stone, which superseded the mere hovels of the English burghers. John, having wrested from them a sum equal to a year's revenue, might suffer none to plunder them save himself. Hated by the people, persecuted at last by the law, forbidden to appear in the street without the colored tablet which distinguished the race, their long agony

ended in their expulsion from the realm by Edward. Of the sixteen thousand who preferred exile to apostasy, many were wrecked, others robbed and flung overboard. From that time till their restoration by Cromwell, no Jew touched English soil.

Under the worst of rulers it is 'Merry England.' Of indoor amusements, the most attractive to high and low is gambling. So universal was the passion in the twelfth century, that in the Crusades the kings of France and England made the most stringent regulations to restrict it. No man in the army was to play for money, except the knights and the clergy; nor were the latter to lose more than twenty shillings in one day. The lower orders who should be found playing without the permission and supervision of their masters, were to be whipped; and, if mariners, were to be plunged into the sea on three successive mornings. Love of hardy sports, so characteristic of the English, is not of modern growth. It was one of the most important parts of popular education seven centuries ago. Wrestling was the national pastime. The sturdy yeoman wrestled for prizes,—a ram or a bull, a ring or a pipe of wine. Foot-ball was the favorite game. In the Easter holidays they had river tournaments. In the summer, the youths exercised themselves in leaping, archery, stone-throwing, slinging javelins, and fighting with bucklers. The sword-dance of the Saxons, descending to their successors, held an honored place among popular sports. The acrobat went about to market and fair, circling knives and balls adroitly through his hands, and the 'musical girls' danced before knight and peasant as the daughter of Herodias before Herod. A very ancient and popular game was that of throwing a peculiar stick at cocks. It was practised especially by school-boys. Three origins of it have been given: first, that in the Danish wars, the Saxons failed to surprise a certain city in consequence of the crowing of cocks, and had therefore a great hatred of that bird; second, that the cocks were special representatives of Frenchmen, with whom the English were constantly at war; third, that they were connected with Peter's denial of Christ. Two diversions of the Middle Ages, however, were a pride and ornament, the theme of song, the object of law, and the business of life,—hunting and hawking. A knight seldom

stirred from his house without a falcon<sup>1</sup> on his wrist or a greyhound at his feet. Into these pastimes the clergy rushed with an irrepressible eagerness. To the country revel came the taborer, the bagpiper, and the minstrel—a privileged wanderer. Music, with its immemorial talismanic power to charm, seems always to have ranked as a favorite accomplishment. The complaint of a Scotch abbot in 1160 suggests rather amusingly the innovations it was making in the devotional customs of the Church:

‘Since all types and figures are now ceased, why so many organs and cymbals in our churches? Why, I say, that terrible blowing of bellows which rather imitates noise of thunder than the sweet harmony of voice?’

Again:

‘One restrains his breath, another breaks his breath, and a third unaccountably dilates his voice. Sometimes (I blush to say it) they fall and quiver like the neighing of horses; at other times they look like persons in the agonies of death; their eyes roll; their shoulders are moved upwards and downwards; and their fingers dance to every note.’

Intellectually, the real character of these times is to be judged by their multitude of superstitions. On the Continent, in particular, credulity was habitual and universal. The west of Britain was believed to be inhabited by the souls of the dead. In a lake in Munster, Ireland, there were two islands. Into the first, death could never enter; but age, disease, and weariness wrought upon the inhabitants till they grew tired of their immortality, and learned to look upon the second as a haven of repose; they launched their barks upon its dark waters, touched its shore, and were at rest. The three companions of St. Colman were a cock, which announced the hour of devotion; a mouse, which bit the ear of the drowsy saint till he rose; and a fly, which, if in the course of his studies his thoughts wandered, or he was called away, alighted on the line where he had left off, and kept the place. In the Church of St. Sabina at Rome was long shown a ponderous stone which the devil had flung at St. Dominic, vainly hoping to crush a head that was shielded by the guardian angel. The Gospel of St. John suspended around the neck, a rosary, a relic of Christ or of a saint,—any of the thousand talismans distributed among the faithful, would baffle the utmost efforts of diabolical malice. The more terrible phenomena of nature, unmoved by exorcisms and sprinklings, were invariably

<sup>1</sup> A bird of great destructive power, trained to the pursuit of other birds.



attributed to the intervention of spirits. Such phenomena were by the clergy frequently identified with acts of rebellion against themselves. In the tenth century, the opinion everywhere prevailed that the end of the world was approaching. Many charters begin with these words: 'As the world is now drawing to its close.' An army was so terrified by a solar eclipse, which it conceived to announce this consummation, as to disperse hastily on all sides. More than once the apparition of a comet filled Europe with terror. In the shadows of the universal ignorance, nothing was too absurd for belief and practice. In France, animals were accused of high crimes and misdemeanors, tried, and acquitted or convicted, with all the solemnity of law. The wild were referred to ecclesiastical tribunals; the domestic to the civil. In 1120, a French bishop pronounced an injunction against the caterpillars and field-mice for the ravages they made on the crops. If after three days' notice the condemned did not 'wither off the face of the earth,' they were solemnly anathematized. If, instead, they became perversely more numerous and destructive, the lawyers ascribed it, not to any injustice of the sentence nor to the inefficiency of the court, but to the machinations of Satan. From the thirteenth century to the sixteenth, there are not a few records of proceedings in criminal courts against hogs for devouring children.

About the twelfth century, the brood of superstitions, which had once consisted for the most part in wild legends of fairies, mermaids, giants, dragons, conflicts in which the Devil took a prominent part but was always defeated, or illustrations of the boundless efficacy of some charm or relic,—began to assume a darker hue, and the ages of religious terrorism commenced. Never was the sense of Satanic power and presence more profound and universal. In Christian art, the aspect of Christ became less engaging; that of Satan more formidable: the Good Shepherd disappeared, the miracles of mercy declined, and were replaced by the details of the Passion and the horrors of the Last Judgment. Now it was that the modern conception of a witch—namely, a woman in compact with Satan, who could exercise the miraculous gift at pleasure, and who at night was transported through the air to the Sabbath, where she paid her homage to the Evil One—first appeared. Owing in part to its



insular position, in part to the intense political life which from the earliest period animated its people, there was formed in England a self-reliant type of character which was essentially distinct from that common in Europe, averse to the more depressing aspect of religion, and less subject to its morbid fears. In consequence, the darker superstitions which prevailed on the Continent, and which were to act so tragically on the imaginations of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, had not here arisen. Nevertheless, as will presently appear in our sketch of historical method, there existed a condition of thought so far removed from that of the present day as to be scarcely conceivable. It will show itself in literature as a controlling love of the marvellous; in religion, as the intellectual basis of witchcraft.

**Religion.**—When the island was yet without political unity, a Greek monk, sent from Rome, organized an episcopate, divided the land into parishes representing the different provinces of its disunited state, linked them all to Canterbury as ecclesiastical centre, and thus founded the *Church of England*. In veneration of the source of light, Anglo-Saxons began pilgrimages to the ‘Eternal City,’ in the hope that, dying there, a more ready acceptance would be accorded them by the saints in Heaven. In gratitude they established a tax, called St. Peter’s penny, for the relief of pilgrims and the education of the clergy. The claims of the Roman See, based as here upon filial regard, were to become a tremendous peril alike to monarch and to subject.

As Rome was the queen of cities, so, as the chief seat of Christianity, her Church was naturally held to be the first of Churches, and her bishop first of bishops—the Pope.<sup>1</sup> When the capital was transferred to Constantinople, and the Vandals had dissolved the framework of Roman society, he gradually became the chief man in Italy, indeed in the whole West. But wealth is dangerous to simplicity, and power to moderation. From being a father and a counsellor merely, forgetting humility, he became a schemer and a ruler. Love of souls was gradually supplanted by love of empire. The evil was possible to the system. Each country in Christendom was mapped out into an all-embracing territorial organization, in which the priest was under

<sup>1</sup> Meaning *father*, *papa*, Greek *πάππας*.

the bishop, he under the archbishop, and the archbishop in turn responsible to the pope, who thus held in his hand the converging reins of ecclesiastical control. While the prelates, each within his respective sphere, were encroaching little by little upon the laity, the Church of Rome was forming and maturing her plans to enthrall both the national churches and the temporal governments. A prime condition of conquest is a replete exchequer. Covetousness was characteristic. Gifts by the rich on assuming the cowl, by some before entering upon military expeditions, bequests by many in the terrors of dissolution; the commutation for money of penance imposed upon repentant offenders,—were a few of the various sources of her revenue. No atonement, she taught, could be so acceptable to Heaven as liberal donations to its earthly delegates. The rich widow was surrounded by a swarm of clerical sycophants who addressed her in terms of endearment and, under the guise of piety, lay in wait for a legacy. A special place, it was said, was reserved in purgatory for those who had been slow in paying their tithes. A man who in a contested election for the popedom had supported the wrong candidate, was placed after death in boiling water. The bereft widow, in the first dark hour of anguish, was told that he who was dearer to her than all the world besides, was now writhing in the flames that encircled him, and could be relieved only by a pecuniary present. Masterly adaptation of means to ends. The end of the twelfth century saw the Church at the zenith of territorial possession. She enjoyed nearly one-half of England, and a still greater portion in some countries of the Continent. To her John solemnly resigned his crown, and humbly received it as a fief. But landed acquisitions scarcely contributed so much to her greatness as ecclesiastical jurisdiction and immunity. Her spiritual court, claiming a loftier origin than the civil, acquired absolute exemption from secular authority, and ended by usurping almost the whole administration of justice. Kings were expected to obtain its sanction as a security to their thrones, and to hold those thrones by compliance with its demands. It could try citizens, but ecclesiastics were amenable to it only. The mainspring of her machinery was excommunication and interdict. The former was equivalent to outlawry. The victim was shunned, as one infected with the leprosy, by his servants, his friends, his

family. Two attendants only remained with an excommunicated king of France, and these threw all the meats that passed his table into the fire. By the latter—inflicted perhaps to revenge a wounded pride—a county or a kingdom was under suspension of religious offices; churches were closed, bells silent, and the dead unburied. She also derived material support from the multitudinous monks, who, in return for extensive favors, vied with each other in magnifying the papal supremacy. The thirteenth century was the noonday of her predominance. Rome was once more the Niobe of nations; and kings, as of old, paid her homage. Vast sums from England flowed into her treasury, carried by pilgrims; by suitors with appeals in all manner of disputes; by prelates going thither for consecration and for the confirmation of their elections; by applicants for church preferment, which was almost exclusively at the Pope's disposal, and must be bought; by Italian priests who, pasturing on the richest benefices, drew an annual sum far exceeding the royal revenue. In 1300, Boniface VIII, straining to a higher pitch the despotic pretensions of former pontiffs, is said to have appeared at a festival dressed in imperial habits, with two swords borne before him, emblems of his temporal as well 'as spiritual sovereignty over the earth.

As the Church rose in splendor, she sank in vice. All her institutions had been noble in their first years, but success had ruined them. The monastic movement, inspired by a strong religious motive, tended to soften every sentiment of pride, to repress all worldly desires, to make preëminent the practice of charity, to give humility a foremost place in the hierarchy of virtues. Every monastery was a focus which radiated benevolence. By the monk, savage nobles were overawed, the poor protected, wayfarers comforted. Legend tells how St. Christopher planted himself, with his little boat, by a bridgeless stream, to ferry over travellers. Not without reward, for once, embarking on a very stormy and dangerous night, at the voice of distress, he received Christ. When hideous leprosy extended its ravages over Europe, while the minds of men were filled with terror by its contagion and supposed supernatural character, monks flocked in multitudes to serve in the hospitals. Sometimes, the legends say, the leper was in a moment transfigured, and he who came in mercy to the

most loathsome of mortals, found himself in the presence of his Lord. As organized later by St. Benedict, the monastery was the asylum of peaceful industry, the refuge of the flying peasant, the retreat of the timid, the abode of the princely, the portal to knowledge and dignity for the inquisitive and ambitious, a field of civilizing activity to the ardent and philanthropic, the symbol of moral power in an age of turbulence and war, the fountain whence issued far and wide a constant stream of missionaries,—often the nucleus of a city, where had been gigantic forests and inhospitable marshes. In the tenth century, when the English Church, inundated by the Danes, had fallen into worldliness and ignorance, Dunstan the reformer saw in vision a tree of wondrous height stretching its branches over Britain, its boughs laden with countless cowls. In the revival of a stricter monasticism, he fancied, lay the remedy for Church abuses. The clergy were displaced by monks, bound by vows to a life of celibacy and religious exercise. Freed ere long by the popes from the control of the bishops, they speedily became ascendant in the Church, and so continued till the Reformation. Parish endowments were transferred to monasteries, of which Dunstan himself established forty-eight, setting an example widely followed in every quarter of the land. Pious, learned, and energetic as were the prelates of William's appointment, they were not English. In language, manner, and sympathy, they were thus severed from the lower priesthood and the people; and the whole influence of the Church was for the moment paralyzed. In the twelfth century a new spirit of devotion woke the slumber of the religious houses, and changed the aspect of town and country. Everywhere men banded themselves together for prayer, hermits flocked to the woods, noble and churl welcomed the austere Cistercians, a reformed offshoot of the Benedictine order. Their rule was one of the most severe mortification and self-denial. Their lives were spent in labor and prayer, and their one frugal daily meal was eaten in silence. They humbly asked for grants of land in the most solitary places, where they could meditate in retirement, amidst desolate moors and the wild gorges of inaccessible mountains. A hundred years later, when the administration of forms had become the sole occupation of the clergy, came the Friars,—Dominicans and Franciscans, to win back the public esteem and reanimate a waning religion.

They called the wind their brother, the water their sister, and poverty their bride. Incapable by the principle of their foundation of possessing estates, they subsisted on alms and pious remunerations. 'You need no little mountains to lift your heads to heaven,' was the scornful reply of Francis to a request for pillows. Only the sick went shod. An Oxford Friar found a pair of shoes one morning, and wore them. At night he dreamed that robbers leaped on him, with shouts of 'Kill, kill!' 'I am a Friar,' shrieked the terror-stricken brother. 'You lie,' was the instant answer, 'for you go shod.' In disproof he lifted up his foot, saw the shoe, and in an agony of repentance flung the pair out of the window. Says a contemporary:

'The Lord added, not so much a new order, as renewed the old, raised the fallen, and revived religion, now almost dead, in the evening of the world, hastening to its end, in the near time of the Son of Perdition. . . . They have no monasteries or churches, no fields, or vines, or beasts, or houses, or lands, or even where they may lay their head. They wear no furs or linen, only woolen gowns with a hood; no head-coverings, or cloaks, or mantles, or any other garments have they. If any one invite them, they eat and drink what is set before them. If any one, in charity, give them anything, they keep nothing of it to the morrow.'

Self-sacrificing love, for Christ, was the sum of their lives, food and shelter their reward. The recluse of the cloister was exchanged for the preacher. As the older orders had chosen the country, the Friars chose the town. In frocks of serge and girdles of rope, they wandered bare-foot on errands of salvation, fixed themselves in haunts where fever and pestilence festered, in huts of mud and timber mean as the huts around them. To the burgher and artisan, who had heard the mass-priest in an unknown tongue, spelling out what instruction they might from gorgeous ritual and graven wall, their preaching, fluent and familiar, was a wonder and a delight. Not deviating from the current faith, they professed rather to teach it in greater purity, while they imputed supineness and debasement to the secular clergy. They addressed the crowd in the public streets, with fervid appeal, rough wit, or telling anecdote, and administered the communion on a portable altar, carrying the multitude by their enthusiasm and novelty. Disinterested sincerity is at all times attractive to the popular heart, and, when associated with the hopes and fears of life, is irresistible. These Methodists started a revolution. There will be another such five hundred years hence. Had they been as faithful to their mission as the Wesleys to theirs, it had



been well. Seeing their power to move the masses, the pontiffs accumulated privileges upon them. The bishops were ordered to secure them a hearty reception. They were exempted from episcopal supervision; were permitted to preach or hear confessions without leave of the ordinary, to accept legacies, to inter any who desired it in their enclosure. The door was thus open to wealth, and wealth brought ruin. Even so early as 1243, Matthew Paris writes of them:

‘It is only twenty-four years since they built their first houses in England, and now they raise buildings like palaces, and show their boundless wealth by making them daily more sumptuous, with great rooms and lofty ceilings, impudently transgressing the vows of poverty which are the very basis of their order. If a great or rich man is like to die, they take care to crowd in, to the injury and slight of the clergy, that they may hunt up money, extort confessions, and make secret wills, always seeking the good of their order, as their one end. They have got it believed that no one can hope to be saved if he do not follow the Dominicans or Franciscans. They are restless in trying to get privileges; to get the ear of kings and princes, to be chamberlains, treasurers, bridesmen, and match-makers, and agents of papal extortions. In their preaching, they either flatter or abuse without bounds, or reveal confessions, or gabble nonsense.’

So had it ever been,—so, under a similar constitution, must it ever be. Vast societies living in enforced celibacy, exercising an unbounded influence, and possessing enormous riches, inevitably become hot-beds of corruption, when the zeal that created them expires. Monk, friar, clergy, pope, and Church reached ultimately one level. ‘You are a worthy man, though you be a priest,’ says a female speaker in a poem of the times. A bishop of the thirteenth century, while consecrating a church, was addressed by the devil, who stood behind the altar in a pontifical vestment: ‘Cease from consecrating the church; for it pertaineth to my jurisdiction, since it is built from the fruits of usuries and robberies.’ To give money to the priests was the chief article of the moral code, the surest means of atoning for crime and gaining Paradise. The ecclesiastical courts were perennial fountains, feeding the ecclesiastical coffers. Instituted to visit with temporal penalties the breach of the moral law, they were implements of mischief, a public scandal and oppression, when saints had ceased to wield them. So corrupt were both priests and monks, that an English bishop had to forbid those of his diocese from ‘haunting taverns, gambling, or drinking, and from rioting or debauchery.’ The common degeneracy was the normal result of the profound corruption at the centre of the Church—the See of Rome. Says Dante, addressing the popes:



'Of gold and silver ye have made your god;  
Differing wherein from an idolater  
But that he worships one, a hundred 'ye?'

Four of them, of his own day, he locates in hell, and makes the last say:

'Under my head are dragged  
The rest, my predecessors in the guilt  
Of simony.<sup>1</sup> Stretched at their length they lie.'

To the ambition of the Papacy a spirit of resistance, especially in England, had not been wanting. William the Conqueror, asserting the royal supremacy, had sternly refused to do fealty for his throne, and exacted homage from bishops as from barons. While the effect of his policy had been to weld the English Church more firmly with Rome—a dependence from which it had hitherto been preserved by its insular position—he had vigorously maintained the subjection of the ecclesiastical to the civil. Henry II, vindicating the authority of the state, had required that every priest degraded for his misdeeds should be given up to the civil tribunals. Edward I had compelled the clergy to pay taxes and forbidden bequests to any religious bodies without the king's license. Pillaged by the pope upon every slight pretence, without law and without redress, chafed by the immunities of the mendicant orders, the clergy came to regard their once paternal monarch as an arbitrary oppressor. The venality and avarice of pope, clergy, and mendicants, were sapping the ancient reverence of the people for each. Among the laity, a spirit of inveterate hatred had grown up, not only towards the papal tyranny, but the whole ecclesiastical system. It was complained that English money was pouring into Rome; that the best livings were given by the Roman See to non-resident strangers; that the clergy, being judged only by the clergy, abandoned themselves to their vices, and abused their state of immunity. In the first years of the reign of Henry III, a hundred murders were committed by priests then alive. Walter Map, a bright man of the world, with a high purpose in his life, had personified the prevalent corruption under the assumed name of a gluttonous dignitary,—Bishop Golias,<sup>2</sup> who confesses the levity of his mind, its lustful desires; recalls the tavern he has never scorned, nor will till the angels sing his requiem; images

<sup>1</sup> Buying or selling ecclesiastical preferment.

<sup>2</sup> From *gula*, the gullet.

the heavens opening upon him as he lies intoxicated, too weak to hold the wine cup he has put to his lips, so dying in his shame: 'What I set before me is to die in a tavern; let there be wine put to my mouth when I am dying, that the choirs of the angels when they come may say, "The grace of God be on this bibber!"' Goliath's poetry became a fashion, and the earnest man of genius had plenty of co-laborers.

We must think of these things if we would understand the deep union that subsists between literature and religion, if we would comprehend the signs of the times and the voices of the future, or interpret the countless crowd of quaint and often beautiful legends which, while they witness to the activity of the time, reveal, better than decrees of councils, what was realized in the imagination or enshrined in the heart.

We must think of them, too, if we would understand that grand awakening of reason and conscience which is the Reformation. Every great change has its root in the soul, long preparing, far back in the national soil. Already have we had premonitory throes of the moral earthquake. We shall see the storm gather and pass, once and again, without breaking. The discontent will spread. The welling spring, despite the efforts to repress it, will bubble and leap, till its surplus overflows, bursting asunder its constraint. While men of low birth and low estate are stealing by night along the lanes and alleys of London, carrying some dear treasure of books at the peril of their lives, the finger that crawls around the dial plate will touch the hour, and the mighty fabric of iniquity will be shivered into ruins.

But amid the sins and failings of the Church, let us not forget the priceless blessings she bestowed upon mankind. The inundations of barbarian invasion left her a virgin soil, and made her for a long period the chief and indeed the sole centre of civilization,—the one mighty witness for light in an age of darkness, for order in an age of lawlessness, for personal holiness in an epoch of licentious rage.

She suppressed the bloody and imbruting games of the amphitheatre, discouraged the enslavement of prisoners, redeemed captives from servitude, established slowly the international principle that no Christian prisoners should be reduced to slavery;

created a new warrior ideal,—the ideal knight of the Crusades and chivalry, wedding the Christian virtues of humility and tenderness with the natural graces of courtesy and strength, rarely or never perfectly realized, yet the type and model of warlike excellence to which many generations aspired.

She imparted a moral dignity to the servile class, by introducing into the ideal type of morals the servile virtues of humility, obedience, gentleness, patience, resignation; and by associating poverty and labor with the monastic life so profoundly revered. When men, awed and attracted by reports of the sanctity and miracles of some illustrious saint, made pilgrimages to behold him, and found him in peasant's garb, with a scythe on his shoulder, sharing and superintending the work of the farm, or sitting in a small attic mending lamps, they could hardly fail to return with an increased sense of the dignity of toil.

By inclining the moral type to the servile position, she gave an unexampled impetus to the movement of enfranchisement. The multitude of slaves who embraced the new faith was one of the reproaches of the Pagans. The first and grandest edifice of Byzantine architecture in Italy was dedicated by Justinian to the memory of a martyred slave. Manumission, though not proclaimed a matter of duty or necessity, was always regarded as one of the most acceptable expiations of sin. Clergy and laity freed their slaves as an act of piety. It became customary to do so on occasions of national or personal thanksgiving, on recovery from sickness, on the birth of a child, at the hour of death, in testamentary bequests. In the thirteenth century, when there were no slaves to emancipate in France, caged pigeons were released on ecclesiastical festivals, in memory of the ancient charity, and that prisoners might still be freed in the name of Christ.

None of her achievements are more truly great than those she effected in the sphere of charity. For the first time in history, she inspired thousands to devote their entire lives, through sacrifice and danger, to the single object of assuaging the sufferings of humanity. Uniting the idea of supreme goodness with that of active and constant benevolence, she covered the globe with institutions of mercy unknown to pagan Rome and Greece. Through disastrous eclipse and wintry night, we may trace the

subduing influence of her spell, blending strangely with every excess of violence and every outburst of superstition. Of an Irish chieftain—the most ferocious that ever defied the English power—it is related, amid a legion of horrible crimes, that, ‘sitting at meat, before he put one morsel into his mouth, he would slice a portion above the daily alms, and send it to some beggar at the gate, saying it was meet to serve Christ first.’

The monastic bodies that everywhere arose, were an invaluable counterpoise to military violence; pioneers in most forms of peaceful labor; green spots in a wilderness of rapine and tumult, where the feeble and persecuted could find refuge. As secure repositories for books, when libraries were almost unknown, they bridged the chaos of the Middle Ages, and linked the two periods of ancient and modern civilization.

The Church peopled the imagination with forms of tender beauty and gentle pathos, which—more than any dogmatic teaching—softened and transformed the character, till it learned to realize the sanctity of weakness and the majesty of compassion. The lowliness and sorrow of her Founder, the grace of His person, the agonies of Gethsemane or of Calvary, the gentleness of the Virgin Mother, are the pictures which, for eighteen hundred years, have inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love, formed the governing ideals of the rudest and most ignorant, furnished the highest patterns of virtue and the strongest incentives to its practice. Here, in the character and example of the crucified Nazarene, Christianity finds an enduring principle of regeneration, by which, though shrouded by disastrous eclipse or dimmed by passing mist, her light is never quenched,—by which, when luxury, ambition, worldliness and vice have wounded her well-nigh to death, she has renewed her strength like the eagle, has run and not been weary, has walked and not been faint. So has her mightiest apology, from age to age, been lives of holiness and fidelity; and never, though she seemed to be dying, has she lacked such. Side by side with those who lived and schemed in ecclesiastical politics as their chosen element, were men to whom worldly honors were indifferent,—to whose meekness and self-denial, more than to diadem, tiara, sword, or logic, she owes her empire over the human heart.

**Learning.**—From the age of Augustus, Latin and Greek

learning which we call ancient or classical, sensibly declined, first by organic decay; and its downfall, begun by disease, was accelerated by violence. Libraries were destroyed, schools closed, and intellectual energy of a secular kind almost ceased, in the irruption of the Northern barbarians, who gloried in their original rudeness, and viewed with disdain arts that had neither preserved their cultivators from degeneracy nor raised them from servitude.

A collateral cause of this prostration was the neglect, by the Christian Church, of Pagan literature. For the most part, the study of the Latin classics was positively discouraged. The writers, it was believed, were burning in hell. When a monk, under the discipline of silence, desired to ask for Virgil, Horace, or other Gentile author, he was wont to signify his wish by scratching his ear like a dog, to which animal it was thought the Pagans might properly be compared.

The human intellect, sinking deeper every age into stupidity and superstition, reached its lowest point of depression about the middle of the eleventh century. On the survey of society, no circumstance is so prominent as the depth of ignorance in which it was immersed. It was rare for a layman, of whatever rank, to know how to sign his name. Contracts were made verbally. The royal charters, instead of the names of the kings, sometimes exhibit their mark — the cross. In England, Alfred declares that he could not recollect a single priest who, at his accession, understood the common prayers, or could render a Latin sentence into English.

The darkness which reigned far and wide was rendered unavoidable, among other causes, by the scarcity of books, which — as they were in manuscript form, and written or copied with cost, labor, and delay — could be procured only at an immense price. In 855, a French abbot sent two of his monks to the Pope, to beg a copy of Cicero's *De Oratore*, of Quintilian's *Institutes*, and some others; 'for, although we have part of these books, yet there is no whole or complete copy of them in all France.' In Spain at the beginning of the tenth century one and the same copy of the Bible often served different monasteries. In 1299, the bishop of Winchester, borrowing a copy of the Bible with marginal notes, gives a solemn bond for due return of the loan. A book donated to a religious house was



believed to merit eternal salvation, and was offered on the altar with great ceremony. Sometimes a book was given to a private party, with the reservation, 'Pray for my soul.' When a book was bought, persons of consequence and character were assembled to make formal record that they were present on the occasion. It was common to lend money on the deposit of a book. In the universities were chests for the reception of books so deposited. Bede records that Benedict sold a volume to his sovereign Alfred for eight hides of land—about eight hundred acres.

Moreover, when Latin ceased to be a living tongue, the whole treasury of knowledge was locked up from the eyes of the people. In this linguistic corpse were sealed the Scriptures, the liturgy, and the teachings of the Christian Fathers, and there they were tenaciously held. Through this venerable medium, as a learned language, the Church of Rome stood in an attitude strictly European, enabled to maintain a general international relation. Its prevalence was the condition of her unity, and therefore of her power. Thus, intent upon her own emoluments and temporalities, by guarding from the unlearned vulgar this key to erudition, she was yet the sole hope for literature. Learning was confined almost wholly to the ecclesiastical order. Manuscripts found secure repositories in the abbeys, which floated through the storms of war and conquest, like the Ark upon the waves of the flood; in the midst of violence remaining inviolate, through the awful reverence which surrounded them. The monastery became the one sphere of intellectual labor. Here with no craving for human fame, were composed the sermons and defences of mediæval faith, and the voluminous Lives of Saints—heroic patterns of excellence which each Christian within his own limits was endeavoring to realize. Here the monkish scholar, his hopes fixed upon the pardon of his sins and the rewards of the unseen life, pursued his studies in a spirit which has now almost faded from the world. In the deep calm and chilly barrenness of the *Scriptorium*—what the printing-office is to us—might be seen the sombre figures of the tonsured workmen, whose task it was, seated at the rude desks or tables, to copy and adorn, letter by letter, point by point, the precious manuscripts that filled the wooden chests ranged around the naked stone walls. With pen-



cil of hair, pen of reed or quill, and ink of many-hued splendors, the artist laid on colors and produced designs which for richness and beauty command our admiration; on papyrus or parchment, writing the headings in bright red; forming the initial letter of a chapter with a brilliant tracery, in scarlet and gold and blue lace-work, of intermingled flowers and birds; tracing in black the thick perpendicular strokes of the text-hand; then when the book is finished—which may be the work of years if the decorations are minute and profuse, painting the title in scarlet, with the name of the copyist in colors at the foot of the last page, and a marginal embroidery of angelic and human figures, birds, beasts and fishes, flowers, shells and leaves.

But as in the natural world every night brightens into a new morning, so in the spiritual the sun of science, having reached its nadir of decline, begins its reascension to the zenith, throwing out many premonitory gleams of light ere the dawn reddens into the lustre of day.

The leading circumstances in the gradual renewal of European thought are the study of civil law, presaging progress in the science of government; the development of modern languages, with its taste for poetry and its swarm of lay poets; the cultivation, in the twelfth century, of Latin classics, quotations from which, however, during the Dark Ages, were hardly to be called unusual; the partial restoration of Greek literature—mathematical, physical, and metaphysical, which, with the exception of scattered instances where some ‘petty patristic treatise’ or later commentator on Aristotle was rendered into Latin, had been almost entirely forgotten within the pale of the Romish Church, but now in the eleventh century, imported across the Pyrenees into France from the Arab conquerors of Spain, glimmered with pulsation of—

‘That earlier dawn  
Whose glimpses are again withdrawn,  
As if the morn had waked, and then  
Shut close her lids of light again.’

Lastly, as the special mark of that new fervor of study which sprang up in the West from its contact with the more civilized East,—the institution of universities.

From an early period, in England as well as elsewhere, there were schools, though in general confined to the cathedrals and monasteries, and designed exclusively for religious purposes.

Nor is it to be presumed that the laity, though excluded, as a rule, from the benefits of a liberal training, were left wholly without the means of obtaining some elementary instruction. Canterbury, Yarrow, and York commemorate the golden age of Old English scholarship. Alcuin was called from the last to the court of Charlemagne, to assist him in the educational reform of France. In a letter to his patron he enumerates, in the fantastic rhetoric of the period, the branches in which he instructed his pupils at Paris:

‘To some I administer the honey of the sacred writings; others I try to inebriate with the wine of the ancient classics. I begin the nourishment of some with the apples of grammatical subtlety. I strive to illuminate many by the arrangement of the stars, as from the painted roof of a lofty palace.’

That is, *Grammar, Greek and Latin, Astronomy and Theology*. Here is a specimen of the literary conversations of the palace school:

‘What is writing?—The guardian of History. What is speech?—The interpreter of the soul. What is it that gives birth to speech?—The tongue. What is the tongue?—The whip of the air. What is air?—The preserver of life. What is life?—A joy for the happy, a pain for the miserable, the expectation of death. What is death?—An inevitable event, an uncertain voyage, a subject of tears for the living, the confirmation of testaments, the robber of men. . . . What is heaven?—A moving sphere, an immense vault. What is light?—The torch of all things. What is the day?—A call to labor. What is the sun?—The splendor of the universe, the beauty of the firmament, the grace of nature, the glory of the day, the distributor of the hours. . . . What is friendship?—The similarity of souls. . . .’

‘As you are a youth of good disposition, and endowed with natural capacity, I will put to you several other unusual questions: endeavor to solve them.—I will do my best; if I make mistakes, you must correct them. I shall do as you desire. Some one who is unknown to me has conversed with me, having no tongue and no voice; he was not before, he will not be hereafter, and I neither heard nor knew him. What means this?—Perhaps a dream moved you, master? Exactly so, my son. Still another one. I have seen the dead engender the living, and the dead consumed by the breath of the living.—Fire was born from the rubbing of branches, and it consumed the branches.’

Such are the giants of a generation—glimmering lights that, hardly breaking the leaden cloud of ignorance, owe much of their distinction to the surrounding gloom. The studies pursued at York, the same writer informs us, comprehended, besides grammar, rhetoric, and poetry,—

‘The harmony of the sky, the labor of the sun and moon, the five zones, the seven wandering planets; the laws, risings, and settings of the stars, and the aerial motions of the sea; earthquakes; the nature of man, cattle, birds, and wild beasts, with their various kinds and forms; and the sacred Scriptures.’

In short, a long established division of literary and scientific knowledge was the *Trivium*, embracing Grammar, Rhetoric, and

Logic; and *Quadrivium*, embracing Music, Arithmetic, Geometry, and Astronomy; all of which were referred to theology, and that in the narrowest manner. To be perfect in the three former was a rare accomplishment; and scarcely any one mastered the latter four. John of Salisbury, writing in the twelfth century, when the simplicity of this arrangement had been outgrown, says:

‘The Trivium and the Quadrivium were so much admired by our ancestors in former ages, that they imagined they comprehended all wisdom and learning, and were sufficient for the solution of all questions and the removing of all difficulties; for whoever understood the Trivium could explain all manner of books without a teacher; but he who was farther advanced, and was master also of Quadrivium, could answer all questions and unfold all the secrets of nature.’

But in the twelfth century, the older educational foundations burst into the larger, freer life of the universities, whose democratic spirit threatened feudalism, and whose intellectual spirit threatened the Church, though to outer seeming they were ecclesiastical bodies. None of these grew so early into fame as that of Paris, unrivalled for theological discussion. Here the rationalism of Abelard, the knight-errant of philosophy, drew down the menaces of councils and the thunders of Rome. Said the Council of Sens in 1140:

‘He makes void the whole Christian faith by attempting to comprehend the nature of God through human reason. He ascends up into Heaven; he goes down into hell. Nothing can elude him, either in the height above or in the nethermost depths. His branches spread over the whole earth. He boasts that he has disciples in Rome itself, even in the College of Cardinals. He draws the whole earth after him. It is time, therefore, to silence him by apostolic authority.’

So great was the influx of his disciples, that the boundaries of the city were enlarged. When he retired to solitude the wilderness became a town. Twenty cardinals and fifty bishops had been among his hearers.

At the opening of the thirteenth century, Oxford was second only to Paris in the multitude of its students and the celebrity of its disputations. Thirty thousand scholars, thinking more of success in polemics than of the truths involved, swelled the stir and turbulence of its life. Yet be not deceived. Thousands of pupils poorly lodged, clustering around teachers as poor as themselves,—drinking, quarrelling, begging; retainers fighting out the feuds of their young lords in the streets; roisterer and reveller roaming with torches through the dark and filthy lanes, defying bailiffs and cutting down citizens; a tavern row spread-

ing into a general broil, bells clanging to arms,—this is the seething, surging Oxford of mediæval history. Upon the vision of these young and valiant minds flashed, as they thought, the temple of truth, and they rushed at it headlong, as knightly warriors with battle-axe might storm a castle.

**Language.**—The principal literature was in Latin, and, after the Conquest, in French. The former—the only language in which the scholar might hope to address, not merely the few among a single people, but the whole Republic of Letters—was used in books habitually, as the common language of the educated throughout Europe. In it were written, in particular, most works on subjects of theology, science, and history; in the latter, those intended rather to amuse than to instruct, and addressed, not to students, but to the idlers of the court and the gentry, by whom they were seldom read, but only heard as they were recited or chanted. In the thirteenth century, French acquired that widely diffused currency as a generally known and hence convenient common medium which it has ever since maintained. A Venetian annalist of the time composed his chronicle in it, because, to use his own words: ‘The French tongue is current throughout the world, and is more delectable to read and hear than any other.’ Dante’s teacher employed it, and thus apologized for using it instead of Italian:

‘If any shall ask why this book is written in Romance, according to the *patois* of France, I being born Italian, I will say it is for divers reasons. The one is that I am now in France; the other is that French is the most delightful of tongues, and partaketh most of the common nature of all other languages.’

Its frequent use by English writers is to be ascribed, not wholly to the predominance of Norman influence, but, in a considerable degree, to the fact that, for the time, it occupied much the same position as had hitherto been awarded to the Latin as the common dialect of learned Europe.

Of the vernacular, many of the most important terms, ethical and mental, had become obsolete. Of foreign words in it, there were yet relatively few. The whole number of Romance derivatives found in the printed works of authors of the thirteenth century scarcely exceeds one thousand, or one-eighth of the total vocabulary of that era. What would the myriad-minded Shakespeare, with his vast requirement of fifteen thousand, have done

in this age, with its pittance of eight thousand words? The following extract is from the Proclamation of Henry III, addressed in 1258 to the people of Huntingdon, copies being sent to all the shires of England and Ireland. Prepositions, it will be observed, are doing the work of the lost inflections; and the sense is made to depend upon the sequence of the words alone:

‘Henry, thurg Godes fultume  
King on Englene-loande . . .  
send igretege to all hise  
halde ilaerde and ilaewede.  
Thaet witen ye wel alle, thaet we  
willen and unnen thaet thaet ure raedes-  
men alle other, the moare dael of heom,  
thaet beoth ichosen thurg us. . . . And  
this wes idon aet foren ure isworene redes-  
men. And al on tho ilche worden is  
isend in to aeurihce othre schire over all  
thaere kuneriche on Englene-loande and ek  
intel Irelande.’

‘Henry, through God’s grace  
king in England . . .  
sends greeting to all his  
subjects, learned and unlearned.  
This know ye well all, that we  
will and grant, that what our council-  
lors all or the more deal of them,  
that are chosen by us. . . . And  
this was done before our sworn council-  
lors. And all in the same words is  
sent into every other shire over all  
the kingdom in England and eke  
into Ireland.’

The popular speech was forcing its way to the throne.

**Poetry.**—In early periods, feeling and fancy, with nations as with children, are strongest. Emotion seeks utterance before logic; and the natural expression of emotion is a chant, a song. There is a real kinship between the waves of excited feeling and the rhythmical cadence of words which utter it. Early literature, therefore, is almost exclusively one of poetry. Language, too, then picturesque and bold, lives chiefly on the tongue and in the ear; and poetry, by its rhythm, uniting with the charm of music, allows an oral transfer which prose does not. Rhythm—the recurrence of sounds and silences at regular intervals of time, the essential principle of poetry—is the oldest and widest artistic instinct in man; for man is the emotive part of nature, and the movement of nature, it is the grand distinction of modern science to have shown, is rhythmic. Light and heat go in undulations; the seasons, the sun-spots, come and go in correspondencies; the variable stars brighten and pale at rhythmic intervals; the ocean-tides and trade-winds flow by rhythmic rule; planet, satellite, and comet revolve and return in proportionate periods. The mystic Hindoo’s doctrine of the primal diffusion of matter in space, the aggregation of atoms into worlds, the revolution of these worlds, their necessary absorption into Brahma, their necessary rediffusion, again to be aggregated, and again to be absorbed,—ever



contracting, ever expanding,—what is this but the rhythmic beating of the heart of the Eternal—a divine shuttle that weaves a definite pattern into the chaotic fabric of things? After two thousand years or more, we are beginning to see dimly into Pythagoras' fanciful dream of 'the music of the spheres'; Plato's dictum, 'Time itself is the moving image of Eternity'; and the Orphic saying of the seer, 'The father of metre is rhythm, and the father of rhythm is God.'

During the antique and mediæval periods, music, though in process of differentiation, has no confirmed separate existence from poetry; and both are at first united in closest bonds with the dance. The poet is then a wandering minstrel—*Gleeman*, the Saxons called him. His training from early childhood was to store his memory with the poetic legends of his land; and when later he wove into rude verse the story of his own day, it went nameless into the common stock of the craft. When the shadows had fallen, and the festive hall was filled, while the beer-horn passed merrily from mouth to mouth, the Gleeman with his 'wood of joy' roused or soothed the fiery passions of the warriors as he related the deeds of the heroic dead or sung the praises of their posterity, chanting to his harp, now one adventure, now another, as the guests or their lord might call for this or that favorite incident. No festival was complete without him and his harp. He travelled far and wide, songster, poet, and historian, everywhere received with consideration. By the winter fire or beneath the summer trees, flushed brows grew a darker red, or the war-shout faded into gentler tones, as war or love varied the theme of his wild rough melody. Proudly says one of them, who had dwelt with the high-born of many lands:

'Thus North and South, where'er they roam,  
The sons of song still find a home,  
Speak unproved their wants, and raise  
Their grateful lay of thanks and praise;  
For still the chief who seeks to grace  
By fairest fame his pride of place,  
Withholds not from the sacred Bard  
His well-earned praise and high reward;  
But free of hand and large of soul,  
Where'er extends his wide control,  
Unnumbered gifts his princely love proclaim,  
Unnumbered voices raise to heaven his princely name.'



As to form, Saxon poetry illustrates the overpowering passion of the English ear for 3-rhythm, or the recurrence of the rhythmic accent at that interval of time represented by three units of any sort,—no matter among how many sounds this amount of time may be distributed. The prevailing type is an alternation of feet, or ‘bars,’ of the form  $\frac{3}{8}$  ♪ ♪ ♪ | with bars of the form  $\frac{3}{8}$  ♪ ♪ | ; the musical sign ♪—called an ‘eighth-note’—representing a sound whose duration is that of an ordinary syllable, and the sign ♪—called a ‘quarter-note’—representing a sound twice as long. The type may be varied from bar to bar, to prevent the movement from growing monotonous, thus yielding the effect of an ‘air with variations.’ In the rhythm of hurrying rush and martial din, Byrhtnoth defies the invading pirates in *The Battle of Maldon*:

Brim - man - na bod - a, a - beod eft on - gean;  
 se - ge thin - um leod - um micl - e lath - re spell, thæt  
 her stent un - for - euth eorl mid his we - ro - de  
 the wi - le gealg - i - an e - thel thys - ne,  
 Æth - el - ræd - es eard, eald - res min - es,  
 folc and fold - an: feal - lan sceol - on

‘Brimmana boda, abeod eft ongean;  
 sege thinum leodum micle lathre spell,  
 thæt her stent unforcuth eorl mid his werode,

the wile gealgian ethel thysne,  
 Æthelrædes eard, ealdres mines,  
 folc and foldan: feallan sceolon  
 hæthene æt hilde. Too heanlic me thynceth,

Herald of pirates, be herald once more:  
 bear to thy people a bitterer message,—  
 that here stands dauntless an earl with  
 his warriors,

who will keep us this country,  
 land of my lord, Prince Æthelred,  
 folk and field: perish shall  
 the heathen in battle. Too base, me  
 thinketh.

þæt ge mid urum sceattum to scipe gangon  
unbefohtene, nu ge thus feor hider  
on urne eard inn becomon;  
ne sceole ge swa softe sinc gegangan,

us sceal ord and ecg ær geseman  
grimm guthplega, ær we gafol syllog.

that ye with gold should to ship get  
unfought, now ye thus far hither  
to be in our land have come;  
never shall ye so soft go hence with your  
treasure:

us shall point and blade persuade—  
grim game of war—ere we pay for peace.

Each line, it is seen, consists of four bars; each bar, of a number of syllables which mark off determinate periods of time for the ear. The first note in a bar, as every musician understands, is to be given with a slight increase of intensity—stress or accent. The same form appears in the Anglo-Saxon epic of *Beowulf*:

$\frac{3}{8}$

Tha	waes	on	heal	-	le	heard	-	ecg	to	-	gen,		
<i>There</i>	<i>was</i>	<i>in</i>	<i>hall</i>		<i>(the)</i>	<i>falch</i>	-	<i>ion</i>	<i>brand</i>	-	<i>ished,</i>		
Sweord	o	-	fer	setl	-	um,	sid	-	rand	man	-	ig	
<i>Swords</i>	<i>o</i>	-	<i>ver</i>	<i>bench</i>	-	<i>es,</i>	<i>buck</i>	-	<i>ler</i>	<i>man</i>	-	<i>y</i>	
haf	-	en	hand	-	a	fæst	helm	ne	ge	-	mund	-	e
<i>(was) hov</i>	-	<i>en,</i>	<i>hand-in</i>	<i>fast,</i>			<i>helmet</i>	<i>not</i>			<i>mind</i>	-	<i>ed.</i>

Again, in the mournful melody of *The Wanderer*:

$\frac{3}{8}$

Oft	him	an	-	ha	-	ga	a	-	re	ge	-	bid	-	eþ,	
<i>Oft</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>Solitary</i>					<i>(for)</i>	<i>mer</i>	-	<i>cy</i>		<i>pray</i>	-	<i>eth,</i>	
Met	-	od	-	es	milts	-	e,	theah	the	he	mod	-	cea	-	rig
<i>(for)</i>	<i>God's</i>				<i>compassion,</i>			<i>though</i>	<i>he,</i>		<i>mood</i>	-	<i>careful,</i>		
geond	lag	-	n	-	lad	-	e	long	-	e	sceold	-	e		
<i>over</i>	<i>(the)</i>				<i>water</i>	-	<i>ways</i>	<i>long</i>		<i>(time)</i>	<i>should</i>				
hre	-	ran	mid	hond	-	um	hrim	-	cald	-	e	sæ.			
<i>stir</i>		<i>with</i>		<i>(his)</i>		<i>hands</i>	<i>rime</i>	-	<i>cold</i>	<i>(the)</i>	<i>sea.</i>				

Old English verse has one peculiarity to establish and fortify its rhythm. This is alliteration. The first three bars or feet begin, in most lines, with the same consonant-color; less frequently with the same vowel-color; sometimes the two middle bars begin alike,

or the first and third. The dominant type is illustrated by the following passage from *The Phoenix*,—the third line excepted, which presents the second:

‘Ne *Forestes Fnaest*, ne *Fyres blaest*,  
 ne *Hægles Hryre*, ne *Hrymes dryre*,  
 ne *Sunnan hætu*, ne *Sincald*,  
 ne *Warm Weder*, ne *Winter scur*,  
*Wihte ge Wirdan*, ac se *Wong seomath*.’

Inasmuch as the alliterative letter is the initial letter of an important word,—moreover, of an important sound of that word,—the rhythmic beat, by this coincidence of pronunciative, logical, and rhythmic accent, is rendered strong and commanding. Anon we may hear the sharp ringing blows of the hammer upon the anvil:

‘ <i>F</i> lah mah <i>F</i> liteth	The strong dart <i>f</i> itteth,
<i>F</i> lan man <i>h</i> witeth,	The spear man <i>w</i> hetteth,
<i>B</i> urg sorg <i>B</i> iteth,	The town sorrow <i>b</i> iteth,
<i>B</i> ald ald <i>t</i> hwiteth,	The bold age <i>q</i> uelleth,
<i>W</i> ræc-fæc <i>W</i> riteth,	Wreck suspicion <i>w</i> orketh,
<i>W</i> rath ath <i>s</i> miteth.’	Wrath the city <i>s</i> miteth. <sup>1</sup>

This fondness for alliteration lives imperishably in a thousand proverbs, saws, and sayings; as, ‘*Many men, many minds*,’ ‘*Time and tide wait for no man*.’

As suggested by these extracts, another feature of Saxon verse, though occurring much less freely, is rhyme, at once a color and an artifice to mark agreeably for the ear each rhythmic group of bars,—a marble statue on the highway instead of a mile-stone. In brief resounding metre, with the measured stroke of a passing bell, a converted warrior, passing into the shadows of the Night, reviews in quick luminous vision the pride and glory of his morning and noon:

$\frac{3}{8}$						
	Wic	o	fer		wong	- um
		-				
	Wen	-	nan		gong	- um
						
	Lis	- se	mid		long	- um
	Leo	- ma	ge	-	tong	- um.

<sup>1</sup> From the *Exeter Book*, comprising the main body of the first English poetry.

Me lifes onlah  
 Se this leoh onwrah,  
 And thæt torhte geteoh  
 Tilliee onwrah.  
 Glæd was ic gliwum,  
 Glenged hiwum,  
 Blissa bleoum  
 Blostma hiwum. . .  
 Horsee mee heredon,  
 Hilde generedon,  
 Fægrec feredon,  
 Feondon biweredon. . .  
 Sealcas weron scearpe  
 Scyl was hearpe.  
 Hulde hlynde,  
 Hleothor dynede,  
 Swegl-rad swinsade  
 Swithe, ne minsade. . .  
 Nu min hrether is breoh  
 Heoh-sithum sceoh,  
 Nyd bisgum neah;  
 Gewited nihtes infleah  
 Se ær in dæge was dyre. . .  
 Wid sith onginneþ,  
 Sar ne sinneth,  
 Sorgum cinnith,  
 Blæd his blinnith,  
 Blisse linnath,  
 Listum lieth,  
 Lustum ne cinneth.  
 Dreamas swa her gedresath,  
 Dryht scyre gehreosath; . . .  
 Thonne lichoma ligeth,  
 Linna wurm friteth,  
 Ac him wen ne gewigeth,  
 And tha wist gehygeth;  
 Oththæt beath tha ban an. . .

He raised me to life  
 Who displayed this light,  
 And this bright possession  
 Bountifully disclosed.  
 Glad was I in glee,  
 Adorned with [fair] colors,  
 With the hues of bliss  
 And the tints of blossoms. . .  
 Warriors obeyed me,  
 Delivered me in battle,  
 Fairly supported me,  
 Protected me from enemies. . .  
 My servants were sagacious,  
 There was skill in their harping.  
 It resounded loud,  
 The strain re-echoed,  
 Melody was heard  
 Powerfully, nor did it cease. . .  
 But now my breast is stormy  
 Shaken by the season of woe,  
 Need is nigh;  
 And night's approach torments him  
 Who before in the day was dear. . .  
 A wide journey beginneþ,  
 Affliction ceaseth not;  
 He exclaimeth in sorrows,  
 His joy hath ceased,  
 His bliss hath declined,  
 He is fallen from his delights;  
 He exclaimeth not in happiness.  
 Thus glories here are prostrated,  
 And the lordly lot brought low; . . .  
 Then the corpse lieth,  
 Worm fretteth the limbs,  
 And the worm departeth not,  
 And there chooseth its repast,  
 Until there be bone only left.<sup>1</sup> . . .

In style, it is seen to be elliptical and inverted, abrupt, exclamatory, and glowing, the more vigorous by the absence of the usual particles,—a concrete of quick, passionate images, like a succession of lightning-flashes. Alfred thus renders a sentence

<sup>1</sup> After this exposition of Anglo-Saxon verse-form, the following statements may appear to the reader not a little surprising:

'In none (of the Anglo-Saxon poems) is found the slightest trace of temporal rhythm.'—*Dr. Guest*.

'The number of unaccented syllables is indifferent.'—*Sweet*.

'It was not written in rime nor were its syllables counted.'—*Rev. Stopford Brooke*.

'We do not see any marks of studied alliteration in the old Saxon poetry.'—*Tyrwhitt*.

'There is no rhyme, and no counting of syllables.'—*Morley*.

'Their poets . . . arranged their vernacular verses without any distinct rules'; and again, 'They used it [alliteration] without special rules.'—*Coppée*.

'Nor is there any rhyming, for rhyme was an adornment unknown in English poetry until after the Norman Conquest.'—*Shaw*.

'No work in which rhyme or metre was used, can be traced in our literature until after the Norman Conquest.'—*Collier*.

of prose — ‘So doth the moon with his pale light, that the bright stars he obscures in the heavens’ — into verse:

‘With pale light  
Bright stars  
Moon lesseneth.’

Or again:

<p>‘Then went over the sea-waves, Hurried by the wind, The ship with foamy neck, Most like a sea-fowl; Till about one hour Of the second day The curved prow Had passed onward,</p>	<p>So that the sailors The land saw, The shore-cliffs shining, Mountains steep, And broad sea-noses. Then was the sea sailing Of the Earl at an end.’</p>
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From the life we have traced, we can infer the kind of poetry most in harmony with Old English sentiments. Its poetry will be the revelation of its soul,—the embodiment of its ideals; and human ideals, in the young generations of the world as in the old, are determined by the point of view at which men stand, being little or great, serene or stormy, sincere or hollow, as is the life of the artist, whether that artist be one or a community, one age or many ages. Every people has its Hercules or Samson—its ideal of brute force, of vast bodily strength or cunning, who strangles serpents, rends lions, and slaughters hostile hosts. A type perceptibly higher is the valiant one whose might, prowess, and indomitable will exorcise his native land of giant-fiends or dragons,—a heroic Captain, peradventure, true-hearted, just, and noble. Such is the central figure of our nameless English epic,—*Beowulf*, imported from the Continental homestead and revised by an unknown Christian bard: Christian, for none other could have spoken of Cain; none other would have called the people heathens; none other would have said:

‘When sorrow on him came and pain befell,  
*He left the joy of men and chose God’s light.*’

Beowulf is a hero, a knight-errant before the days of chivalry, who, with his sword hard in his hand, has rowed ‘amidst the fierce waves and coldest of storms, and the rage of the winter hurtled over the waves of the deep’; whom the many-colored foes, sea monsters, drew to the bottom of the sea, and held fast in their gripe, but he reached ‘the wretches with his point and with his war-bill.’ Across the path of the swans (the sea) he comes

to succor the Danish King Hrothgar, in whose hall, where the banquet, the song, and the dance were wont to go on, is much sorrow; for Grendel, 'a mighty haunter of the marshes,' has entered during the night, seized thirty of the sleeping warriors, and returned with their carcasses to his fen-dwelling. For twelve winters' tide, the fiend has devoured men, till the best of houses stand empty. Beowulf, the valiant, offers to grapple with the dreadful ogre, asking only that if death takes him, they will mark his burial place, and send to his chief the war-shroud that guards his breast. When the mists have risen and all is still, Grendel enters in hope of dainty glut, seizes a sleeping warrior, bites his bone-casings, drinks the blood from the veins, and swallows him with 'continual tearings.' But the hero seizes him in turn, and, when he would fain return to his haunt, holds him:

'These warders strong waxed wrathful, fiercer grew,  
The hall resounded; wonder much there was  
That it so well withstood the warring beasts,—  
That fell not to the earth this fair land-house.

And then arose strange sound; upon the Danes  
Dire terror stood, of all who heard the whoop,  
The horrid lay of God's denier,  
The song that sang defeat and pain bewailed—  
Hell's captive's lay—for in his grasp too firm  
Did he, of men the strongest, hold his prey.'

In his efforts to get away, the monster's sinews spring asunder, the bone-casings burst; and leaving on the ground his hand, arm, and shoulder, he flees to his joyless home, 'sick unto death,' for 'the number of his days was gone by.' Then are great rejoicings in the palace. But there remains the 'sea-wolf of the abyss, the mighty sea-woman,' his mother, who comes by night, and amidst drawn swords tears and devours the king's chosen friend. Again Beowulf offers himself, seeks the ogress in her dread abode, where strange dragons and serpents swim, and one by night may behold the marvel of fire upon the flood, while ever and anon the horn sings a wild terrible dirge. He plunges into the surge, descends, passes monsters who tear his coat of mail, to the 'hateful man-slayer.' She seizes the champion in her horrid clutches, and bears him off to her den, where a pale gleam shines brightly and shows them face to face. With his 'beam of war' he smites on her head till 'the ring-mail' sings



‘aloud a greedy war-song’; but the weapon will not ‘bite.’ She overthrows him, but he rescues himself, espies ‘an old gigantic sword, doughty of edge, ready for use, the work of giants.’ ‘Fierce and savage, despairing of life,’ he strikes furiously, so that it grapples ‘hard with her about the neck,’ breaks ‘the bone-rings,’ passes through the doomed body, which sinks, and all is silent:

‘The sword was bloody, the man rejoiced in his deed; the beam shone, light stood within, even as from heaven mildly shines the lamp of the firmament.’

Another triumph, and renewed joy. Afterwards he is himself ruler. When he had reigned fifty years, a dragon, who had been robbed of his treasure which he had guarded three hundred years, came from the hill and burned men and houses with ‘waves of fire.’ Ordering for himself a variegated shield, all of iron, he goes to battle with ‘the foul, insidious stranger,’ in a cavern ‘under the earth, nigh to the sea wave,’ full within of embossed ornaments and wires; ‘too proud to seek the wide flier with a troop, with a large company’; yet sadly, as if with a presentiment that the end is near:

‘Firm rose the stone-wrought vault, a living stream  
 Burst from the barrow, red with ceaseless flame  
 That torrent glowed; nor lived there soul of man  
 Might tempt the dread abyss, nor feel its rage.  
 So watched the fire-drake o’er his hoard;— and now  
 Deep from his laboring breast the indignant Goth  
 Gave utterance to the war-cry. Loud and clear  
 Beneath the hoar stone rung the deafening sound,  
 And strife uprose: the watcher of the gold  
 Had marked the voice of man. First from his lair,  
 Shaking firm earth, and vomiting, as he strode,  
 A foul and fiery blast, the monster came.  
 Yet stood beneath the barrow’s lofty side  
 The Goth’s unshaken champion, and opposed  
 To that infuriate foe his full-orbed shield.  
 Then the good war-king bared his trenchant blade:  
 Tried was its edge of old, the stranger’s dread,  
 And keen to work the foul aggressor’s woe.

. . . . . The kingly Goth

Reared high his hand, and smote the grisly foe;  
 But the dark steel upon the unyielding mail  
 Fell impotent, nor served its master’s need  
 Now at his utmost peril. Nor less that stroke  
 To maddening mood the barrow’s warder roused:  
 Outburst the flame of strife, and blaze of war  
 Beamed horribly; still no triumph won the Goth,  
 Still failed his keen brand in the unequal fray . . .

Again they met—again with freshened strength  
 Forth from his breast the unconquered monster poured  
 That pestilent breath. Encompassed by its flames,  
 Sad jeopardy and new the chieftain held.'

With the assistance of a trusty comrade, he carves the worm in twain. Burning and faint with mortal wounds, he forgets himself in death, thinking only that his valor profits others; and says, grandly, the man breathing manifest beneath the hero:

'I have held this people fifty years; there was not any king of my neighbors, who dared to greet me with warriors, to oppress me with terror. . . . I held my 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 be yet of advantage at the need of the people. . . . I give thanks . . . that I might before my dying day obtain such for my people . . . longer may I not here be.'

He dies, killed by the dragon's flame-breath, and is solemnly buried under a great barrow rising high above the deep blue waves:

'And round about the mound rode his hearth-sharers, who sang that he was of kings, of men, the mildest, kindest, to his people sweetest, and the readiest in search of praise.'

There —

'No sound of harp shall the warrior awake; but the dusky raven ready o'er the fallen shall speak many things,—to the eagle shall tell how he fared at his food while with the wolf he spoiled the slain.'

Here, under the light of poetry, through the mist of real events, transformed into legendary marvels, we see the actual life of Scandinavian English,—its pride, its melancholy, its reliance upon strength of arm, its practical spirit of adventure, its fatalism—'What is to be goes ever as it must'—tinged with the energetic sense that 'the Must-Be often helps an undoomed man when he is brave.' Thought is too impassioned for the details of comparison,—a characteristic of all Anglo-Saxon verse. In the six thousand and odd lines there are only five similes. Compare the Celtic fancy, with its love of ornament, as displayed in an average stanza on a Cymric chief who fell before the advancing Saxon:

'Both shoulders covered with his painted shield  
 The hero there, swift as the war-horse, rushed.  
 Noise in the mount of slaughter, noise and fire;  
 The darting lances were as gleams of sun.  
 There the glad raven fed. The foe must fly

While he so swept them as when in his course  
 An eagle strikes the morning dews aside,  
 And like a whelming billow struck their front.  
 Brave men, so say the bards, are dumb to slaves.  
 Spears wasted men, and ere the swan-white steeds  
 Trod the still grave that hushed the master voice,  
 His blood washed all his arms. Such was Buddvan,  
 Son of Bleedvan the Bold.'

A vehement phrase, without connectives, without order, with no ornament but three words beginning alike, an exclamation, a cry, a glowing image,—such is the style of the Saxon poets. Joy and fury neglect art. When passion bellows, ideas are crowded and clashed. See it all in the battle-song of *The Fight at Finsburg*:

'The army goes forth: the birds sing, the cricket chirps, the war-weapons sound, the lance clangs against the shield. Now shineth the moon, wandering under the sky. Now arise deeds of woe, which the enmity of this people prepares to do. . . . Then in the court came the tumult of war-carnage. . . . The raven whirled about, dark and sombre, like a willow leaf. There was a sparkling of blades, as if all Finsburg were on fire. Never have I heard of a more worthy battle in war.'

From the introduction of Christianity, the predominant tone of Saxon poetry is religious. But its voice, if less savage, is otherwise unchanged. Still its soul is tragic; its tones passionate and lightning-like. It is the old heart in transition,—yet a strong barbarous heart. If it essays a Bible narrative, as in the tragedy of *Judith*, we may see the pagan flesh and blood in the tumult, murder, vengeance, and combat of the verses. Holofernes gives a feast:

'All his fierce chiefs, bold mail-clad warriors, went at the feast to sit, eager to drink wine. There were often carried the deep bowls behind the benches; so likewise vessels and orcas full to those sitting at supper. . . . Then was Holofernes rejoiced with wine; in the halls of his guests he laughed and shouted, he roared and dined. Afar off might the stern one be heard to storm and clamor. . . . So was the wicked one—the lord and his men—drunk with wine, . . . till that they swimming lay . . . as they were death-slain.'

The night having arrived he falls drunk on his bed. The moment is come for Judith, 'the maid of the Creator, the holy woman,' to deliver Israel:

'She took the heathen man fast by his hair; she drew him by his limbs toward her disgracefully; and the mischief-full, odious man, at her pleasure laid, so as the wretch she might the easiest well command. She with the twisted locks struck the hateful enemy, meditating hate, with the red sword, till she had half cut off his neck; so that he lay in a swoon, drunk and mortally wounded. He was not then dead,—not entirely lifeless; earnest then she struck another time the heathen hound—she the woman

illustrious in strength—till that his head rolled forth upon the floor. Coffinless lay the foul one; downward turned his spirit under the abyss, and there was plunged below with sulphur fastened; forever afterward wounded by worms. In torments bound—hard imprisoned—he burns in hell. After his course he need not hope that he may escape from that mansion of worms, with darkness overwhelmed; but there he shall remain ever and ever—without end—henceforth void of the joys of hope, in that cavern home.'

Judith, returning to the city with the head of this wicked one, is met by the people, and the warrior instinct swells into flame, as she exhorts them to battle:

'Men under helms (went out) from the holy city at the dawn itself. They dinned shields; men roared loudly. At this rejoiced the lank wolf in the wood, and the wan raven, the fowl greedy of slaughter, both from the west, that the sons of men for them should have thought to prepare their fill on corpses. And to them flew in their paths the active devourer, the eagle, hoary in his feathers. The willowed kite, with his horned beak, sang the song of Hilda. The noble warriors proceeded, they in mail, to the battle, furnished with shields, with swelling banners.'

Men of any high mental power must be serious, whether in ancient or modern days. Only consider the reflective mood, the intense seriousness of this Saxon poetry. The *Hydriotaphia* of Browne and the *Thanatopsis* of Bryant are here in the bud. There is no passing by on the other side; but down to its uttermost depth, to its most appalling detail, it strives, like the Greek, to sound the secrets of sorrow. If any hope, relief, or triumph may hereafter seem possible,—well; but if not, still hopeless, reliefless, eternal, the sorrow shall be met face to face. This Northern imagination, which compared life to the flight of a bird,—in at one door and out at another, whence it came and whither it went being equally unknown to the lookers-on, now contemplates the stern agony of the 'breathless darkness' in a poem called *The Grave*, sad and grand like the life of man.

'For thee was a house built ere thou wert born; for thee a mould shapen ere thou of thy mother camest. Its height is not determined, nor is its depth measured; nor is it closed up (however long it may be), until I thee bring where thou shalt remain; until I shall measure thee and the sod of the earth. Thy house is not highly built; it is n-high and low. When thou art in it, the heel-ways are low, the side-ways unhigh. The roof is built thy breast full nigh; so thou shalt in earth dwell full cold, dim, and dark. Doorless is that house, and dark is it within. There thou art fast detained, and Death holds the key. Loathly is that earth-house, and grim to dwell in. There thou shalt dwell, and worms shall share thee. Thus thou art laid, and leavest thy friends. Thou hast no friend that will come to thee, who will ever inquire how that house liketh thee, who shall ever open for thee the door, and seek thee, for soon thou becomest loathly and hateful to look upon.'

To this people, which has forgotten the halls of Valhalla, to which danger is a delight, which loves gloomy pictures, the

shadowy is a fascination, as to the Hindoo, the Egyptian and the Greek. *The Soul's Complaint of the Body* suggests the underworld rivers and the wandering hapless ghosts of Greek and Roman mythology:

'Befits it well that man should deeply weigh  
His soul's last journey; how he then may fare  
When death comes on him, and breaks short in twain  
The bond that held his flesh and spirit linked:  
Long is it thence ere at the hands of Heaven  
The spirit shall reap joy or punishment,  
E'en as she did in this her earthly frame.  
For ere the seventh night of death hath past,  
Ghastly and shrieking shall that spirit come,—  
The soul to find its body. Restless thus  
(Unless high Heaven first work the end of all things)  
A hundred years thrice told the shade shall roam.'

So Virgil represents the souls of the unburied haunting the banks of the Styx, sad and tombless, vainly entreating in pathetic supplication the dread Charon to ferry them over:

'There stood the first and prayed him hard to waft their bodies o'er,  
With hands stretched out for utter love of that far-lying shore;  
But that grim sailor now takes these, now those, from out the band,  
While all the others far away he thrusteth from the sand.' . . .

For—

'Those borne across the wave  
Are buried: none may ever cross the awful roaring road  
Until their bones are laid at rest within their last abode.  
An hundred years they stray about and wander round the shore,  
Then they at last have grace to gain the pools desired so sore.'

All who know what pathos there is in the memory of faces that have vanished, of joys that have faded, of days gone by,—holy as spots of earth where angel-feet have stepped, will appreciate the rare poetical power of the mutilated poem of *The Ruin*:

'Wondrous is this wall-stone, the fates have broken it—have burst the burgh-place. Perishes the work of giants; fallen are the roofs, the towers tottering—the hoar gate-towers despoiled—rime on the lime—*hrim on lime*; shattered are the battlements, riven, fallen under the Eotnish race; the earth-grave has its powerful workmen; decayed, departed, the hard of gripe are fallen and passed away to a hundred generations of people. . . . Bright were the burgh-dwellings, many its princely halls, high its steepled splendor; there was martial sound great, many a mead-hall full of human joys, until obdurate fate changed it all; they perished in wide slaughter. . . . There many a chief of old, joyous and gold-bright, splendidly decorated, proud, and with wine elate, in warlike decorations shone; looked on treasures, on silver, on curious gems, on luxury, on wealth, on precious stone, on this bright burgh of a broad realm.'

Among the unknown poets, there is one, **Cædmon**, whose vigor and grandeur will presently be the subject of special consideration. Meanwhile, that which is sown is not quickened



except it die. The decay of an old literature is the antecedent condition for a new mode of intellectual life. This old poetic genius of sublimity and fury, waning before the Conquest, disappears after it, to emerge once more when the wounds have closed and the saps have mingled. Till then, the current that flows shallow and fantastic above ground is of French origin.

What was this new literature, by which a broader spreading and a more generous vine should spring from the regenerated root of the old stock? Romantic fiction.

*Its origin.*—The child personifies the stone that hurts him, and his first impulse is to resent the injury as if he imagined it to be endowed with consciousness and to be acting with design. The childhood of superstition personifies each individual existence,—the plant and the rock. The childhood of philosophy personifies the universe. The barbarian is fascinated by the incomprehensible. Unable to assign, for a natural phenomenon, a cause within nature, he has recourse to a living personality enshrined in it. To every grotto he gives a genius; to every tree, river, spring, a divinity. Out of the darkness he cannot tell what alarming spectre may emerge. Everywhere he is a believer in sorcery, witchcraft, enchantments. In an advanced stage of development, he conceives a number of personal beings distinct from the material creation, which preside over the different provinces of nature,—the sea, the air, the winds, the streams, the heavens, and assume the guardianship of individuals, tribes, and nations. Remembering this tendency for personification which marks the early life of man, his necessity of referring effects to their causes, and his interpretation of things according to outward appearances, we shall better understand how the Hours, the Dawn, and the Night, with her black mantle bespangled with stars, came to receive their forms; how the clouds were sacred cattle driven to their milking, or sheep of the golden fleece; how the fall of the dew was the shedding of divine tears, and the fatal sun-shafts the arrows of Apollo shot from his golden bow; how the west, where the sun and stars go down, was the portal of descent to hell, and the morning twilight a reflection from the Elysian Fields; how the eruptions of the volcano were due to the throes of the agonized giant, vainly struggling to rise; how earthquakes, famine, hail, snow, and tempests were the work of supernatural



fiends; how the traditions of every land are replete with the exploits of gods, magicians, and devils. Further, under the operation of this principle, a similarity of imagery will exist wherever there exists a resemblance in the objects calling it forth; and a multitude of the symbols thus brought into circulation will be found recurring, like the primitive roots of a language, in almost every country, as common property inherited by descent. Thus, a mound of earth becomes the sepulchre of a favorite hero; a pile of enormous stones, the labor of a giant; a single one, the stupendous instrument of daily exercise to a fabled king; the figure of a rock, proof of some deity's wrath or presence,—the foot-print of Hercules or the weeping Niobe: every one, of Aryan blood, knows that the moon is inhabited by a man with a bundle of sticks on his back, exiled thither many centuries, and so far away that he is beyond the reach of death; from the remotest period, the rod has been employed in divination; in Bohemia, in Scotland, in Switzerland, in Iceland, in North America, is the story of some Rip Van Winkle who slumbers while years or ages glide by like a watch in the night; and of that great mystery of human life which is an enigma never solved, and ever originating speculation, is born the myth of the Wandering Jew. Consider, again, how incidents change by distance, and we by age. How a thing grows in memory when love or hate is there to idealize it! The philosophic Agis had to console his desponding countrymen with a remark which every man's experience has made familiar,—that 'the fading virtues of later times were a cause of grief to his father, who in turn had listened to the same regrets from his own venerable sire.' Washington, whose picture even now transcends the fact, would be a *myth*, had there been no books. In the days of Alfred, golden bracelets hung untouched in the open road. In the native vigor of the youthful world, a thousand years are given to the life of man. The national hero, through the lengthened vista, acquires a gigantic stature. The body of Orestes when found measured seven cubits, and the sandals of Perseus two. How prismatic must be the imagination, when the national mind, as here, is yet in the fresh young radiance of hope and wonder, as of the young child's thoughts in the wild lion-hearts of men. Time is a *camera obscura*, through which a man, if great while living, becomes ten-fold greater when

dead. Henceforward he exists to society by some shining trait of beauty or utility which he had; and, borrowing his proportions from the one fine feature, we finish the portrait symmetrically. That feature is the small real star that gleams out of the dark vortex of the ages through the madness of rioting fancy and the whirlwind-chaos of images, expanding, according to the glass it shines through, into wondrous thousand-fold form and color.

Such is the foundation of fiction in general; originating as a whole from no single point as to country or to time, but in part springing from common organic causes, and in part travelling from region to region, on airy wing scattering the seeds of its wild flowers imperceptibly over the world, from the gorgeous East to the virgin West and the frozen North. Its radical types, much as the root-words of speech, are amplified and compounded to meet the demands of new occasions, transferred from one subject to another, and embellished according to the taste, temper, and resources of the artist. Thus, the Macedonian conqueror and his contemporaries are accoutred in the garb of feudalism, and his wars transformed into chivalrous adventures. The Naiads of Greece differ only in name from the Nixen of Germany, and the Norwegian Thor is brother to Olympian Jove. The Persian Goblet of the Sun reappears as the horn of the Celtic Bran, producing whatever liquor is called for; or as the Saint Graal, of the Round Table,—for which is reserved the ‘Seat Perilous,’—the miraculous cup, the giver of sumptuous banquets, the healer of maladies, to the pure the interpreter of the will of Heaven. The magic ship of Odin, which could be folded like a handkerchief, becomes, under the play of Homeric fancy, self-directing and prophetic:

‘So shalt thou instant reach the realm assign’d,  
In wondrous ships, self-moved, instinct with mind;  
No helm secures their course, no pilot guides;  
Like men intelligent, they plough the tides,  
Conscious of every coast and every bay  
That lies beneath the sun’s alluring ray.’

The story of Jack and Jill is a venerable one in Icelandic mythology, and Jack and the Beanstalk has found eager listeners in Africa, as in every quarter of Europe. All the machinery of the Iliad is reproduced in the legend of Charlemagne, and if in his case myth were not controlled and rectified by history, he would

be for us, under his adventitious ornaments, as unreal as Agamemnon. Thus the popular literature of the Middle Ages, indigenous and imported, fostered by a like credulity, vision, and mystery, was invested with the same tissue of marvels,—personified and supernatural agents, heroes, elves, fairies, dwarfs, giants, enchanters, spells, charms, and amulets. Written in the Romance dialects—principally in French and Italian—tales of dimly remembered kings, of marvellous agency and gallant daring, are hence designated as **Romances**; and differ from the similar productions of antiquity chiefly in a change of names and places, with an admixture of the refinement and pageantry of feudal religion and manners.

*Its themes.*—During a long period, saintly legends, in which self-torture was the chief measure of excellence, formed the guiding ideals of Christendom; and the first romances were little more than legends of devotion, containing the pilgrimage of an old warrior. As chivalry grew in splendor and fascination, martial exploits were added to his youth, his religious shaded into the heroic character, and the penitent was lost in the knight-errant. Penance, which was the governing image of the one, gradually became the remote sequel of the other, till it was almost an established rule of romance for the knight to end his days in a hermitage. By the reactionary influence of worship, valor was consecrated, and a Christian soul gave tone and coloring to the whole body of romantic fiction. Thus the Holy Graal, in the midst of the bright animal life of the Arthur legends, became a type of the mystery of Godliness. Whatever impure man sat in the Seat Perilous the earth swallowed. When men became sinful, it, visible only to pure eyes, disappeared; and in the quest for it, only the spotless Sir Galahad succeeded.

A general homage to the fair, independent of personal attachment, forms a distinguishing and most important element of mediæval romance. This also, in its best development, was the offspring of the Christian dispensation. True, as we have seen, its rudiments already existed in the deference paid to the female sex by the Teutons, who believed some divine quality to be inherent in their women. Thus Tacitus relates that Velleda, a German prophetess, held frequent conferences with the Roman generals; and on some occasions, on account of the sacredness of her person,

was placed at a great distance on a high tower, whence, as an oracle, she conveyed her answers by a chosen messenger. But that rapturous adoration of woman which produced the spirit of gallantry was the inevitable result of the new ideal introduced by Christianity, which, over the qualities of strength, courage, self-reliance, and patriotism, enthroned the gentler virtues of meekness, patience, humility, faith, and love. This was no other than change from a type essentially masculine to one which was essentially feminine. The Virgin Mary was exalted by the Church to a central figure of devotion, and in her elevation, woman, from being associated with ideas of degradation and of sensuality, rose into a new sphere, and became the object of a reverential regard unknown to the proudest civilizations of the past. Love was idealized. The moral charm of female excellence was felt. Into a harsh and benighted age were infused a conception of gentleness and of purity, a sense of delicacy and elegance, around which clustered all that was best in Europe. Chivalry took systematic shape as the adventurous service of God and womankind. The Crusades were its first outgrowth in action, and love-poetry its first symmetrical expression in art. Valor was exerted to protect the innocent from violence, to succor the distressed, to release captive beauty from embattled walls. The knight, fond dreamer whom the dream forever fled, turned him to far lands and conflicts, to merit and win the favor of his fair adored, whose point of honor it was to be chaste and inaccessible.<sup>1</sup>

But loving chivalry for its nobleness, let us not be blind to its folly and excess. To a bitter winter's day it gave the tint of amethyst. Over the darkness it threw a cheering light. Its incentives, exalted and sublime as they were, too often in this unripe civilization made its possessors implacable and infuriate. The feudal hero did less than he imagined. His profession of courtesy and courage was not infrequently the brilliant disguise that concealed tyranny and rapine. A reduction and softening-down of a rough and lawless period, it often rose to fanaticism or

<sup>1</sup> This respectful enthusiasm for woman forms one of the most remarkable facts in the intellectual development of Europe. Warton derives it from Teutonic manners; Hallam, from the secular institutions of Rome and the gay idleness of the nobility. A profounder philosophy must have shown them that more influential than any of these causes, or all combined, were the prominence given by Christianity to the female virtues, woman's conspicuous position in the conversion of the Empire by reason of the better adaptation of her genius to piety, the elevation of the Virgin, and the consequent change from an ideal type especially masculine to one especially feminine.

sunk into gross impurity. From the middle of the twelfth until the end of the fourteenth century, it had its Courts of Love, which, sanctioning much that the courts of law forbade, instituted obligations antagonistic to the duties of domestic life. Here love-verses were sung, love-causes were heard, and judgments rendered with formal citations of precedents. They had a code, said to have been established by the king of love, and found by a Breton cavalier and lover in Arthur's court, tied to the foot of a falcon. Its first rule was that marriage does not excuse from love, and the ladies' courts enacted that love and marriage are things wholly asunder. Thus, A seeks from a lady permission to love, and is told that she already has a lover, B, but willingly will take A when B is lost. She marries B, and immediately, in fulfilment of promise, A claims his right to be her lover. She wishes to withdraw, but is sued, and the court decides for the plaintiff, saying:

'We do not venture to contradict the decision of the Countess of Champagne, who, by a solemn judgment, has pronounced that true love cannot exist between those who are married to each other.'<sup>1</sup>

The central figures of romance were Arthur<sup>2</sup> and the Knights of the Round Table, Charlemagne and his Peers, the heroes<sup>3</sup> of the Crusades, and the Anglo-Danish Cycle, the most famous of which were, Havelock, King Horn, and Guy of Warwick.<sup>4</sup>

A series of fictions destined to operate powerfully on the general body of our old poetry, was a Latin compilation entitled *Gesta Romanorum*, or *Deeds of the Romans*, whose stories, saintly, chivalrous, or allegorical, of home-growth or transplanted from the East, were often used by the clergy to rouse the indifference and relieve the languor of their rude and simple hearers. It is a characteristic expression of the manners and sentiments of the time. Thus,—

'*Chap. LXIII.*—The garden of Vespasian's daughter. All her lovers are obliged to enter this garden before they can obtain her love, but none returns alive. The garden is haunted by a lion, and has only one entrance which divides into so many windings

<sup>1</sup> The Love-Courts, so far from being a jest or idle amusement, as Morley understands them, were one of the moral and social phenomena of the time, springing from the prolonged barbarity of the feudal marriage-tie. The lady-love, almost always of high rank, frequently an heiress in her own right, was sure to be disposed of for prudential or political reasons before she had any choice in the matter; and the sufferings to which women were exposed as wives, explain to a certain extent the adoration which they exacted and obtained as the ladies of the chevaliers.

<sup>2</sup> See Tennyson's *Idyls of the King*, in which these characters are splendidly portrayed.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Cœur de Lion, for example, one of the most celebrated.

<sup>4</sup> See Sir Walter Scott.



that it never can be found again. At length, she furnishes a knight with a ball or clue of thread, and teaches him how to foil the lion. Having achieved this adventure, he marries the lady.'

'*Chap. LXVI.*—A knight offers to recover a lady's inheritance, which had been seized by a tyrant, on condition, that if he is slain, she shall always keep his bloody armour hanging in her chamber. He regains her property, although he dies in the attempt; and as often as she was afterwards sued for in marriage, before she gave an answer, she returned to her chamber, and contemplating with tears her deliverer's bloody armour, resolutely rejected every solicitation.'

'*Chap. CIX.*—[Best illustrated by a like story of the Boy, in Boccaccio's *Decameron*.] A king had an only son. As soon as he was born, the physicians declared that if he was allowed to see the sun or any fire before he arrived at the age of twelve years, he would be blind. The king commanded an apartment to be hewed within a rock, into which no light could enter; and here he shut up the boy, totally in the dark, yet with proper attendants, for twelve years. At the end of which time, he brought him abroad from his gloomy chamber, and placed in his view men, women, gold, precious stones, rich garments, chariots of exquisite workmanship drawn by horses with golden bridles, heaps of purple tapestry, armed knights on horseback, oxen and sheep. These were all distinctly pointed out to the youth: but being most pleased with the women, he desired to know by what name they were called. An esquire of the king jocosely told him that they were devils who catch men. Being brought to the king, he was asked which he liked best of all the fine things he had seen. He replied, "The devils who catch men."'

'*Chap. CXX.*—King Darius's legacy to his three sons. To the eldest he bequeaths all his paternal inheritance: to the second, all that he had acquired by conquest: and to the third, a ring and necklace, both of gold, and a rich cloth. All the three last gifts were endued with magical virtues. Whoever wore the ring on his finger, gained the love or favor of all whom he desired to please. Whoever hung the necklace over his breast, obtained all his heart could desire. Whoever sate down on the cloth, could be instantly transported to any part of the world which he chose.'

Not unlike the lighter stories of the *Gesta* were the *fabliaux*, short familiar pictures of society, keyed to minor occasions, usually satirical, and levelling their wit most frequently at the ladies.

*Its form.*—The versification of Latin, it is well known, was based upon syllabic quantity, which acknowledged among verse-sounds but two possible time-values—the long and the short, of which the former was strictly to the latter as two to one. The ratio, moreover, was *fixed*, so that a long syllable was always long, and a short one always short. The bar or foot was signalized by the rhythmic accent; as—

'Arma virúmque canó, Trojáe qui prímus ab óris'

but this was scarcely the accentuation of prose or familiar utterance,—a difference which every one may see illustrated in Shakespeare, if first the passage be supposed to conform to the typic scheme. Thus—

'This my mean task  
Would be as heavy to me as odious; but  
The mistress which I serve quickens what's dead.'



Of course, it would be absurd to read, in the manner of current discourse: 'This mý mean task would be as heavy to me as odious; bût the mistress which I serve quickéns what's dead.' The distinction of 'longs' and 'shorts,' never attended to by the uninstructed, required study to attain it, even while Latin remained a living tongue. Just as the people corrupted and mutilated the classic speech founding a new upon the ruins of the old,—so, under the shadow of this cultured poesy, which moved with the regularity of changeless fate, there sprang up, away in the provinces and among the ignorant everywhere, an humble growth of popular song which knew nothing of artificial quantities and arbitrary cæsuras, but was simply—and often rudely—rhymed and accented more nearly after the style of actual speech; and when the foreign graces of Roman letters perished with the Empire, this lowly, indigenious poetry escaped by its insignificance, and began to increase. Related to the former, as a dialect to its parent, it imitated the ancient syllabic arrangement. Thus the spirited trochaic ( - ∪ ) and iambic ( ∪ - ) measures were common in the rhyming chants of the early Church. The *Song of Aldhelm* shows us an Anglo-Saxon poet, at the beginning of the eighth century, versifying Latin words in the metre of the *Raven*:

'Ónce upón a mídnight dréary  
Léctor cáste cátholíce

Whíle I póndered weák and wéary.'  
Atque óbses áthletíce.

'Léctor caste catholice  
Atque obses athleticæ  
Tuis pulsatus precibus  
Obnixæ flagitantibus

Usque diram Dornoniam  
Per carentum Cornubiam  
Florulentis cespitibus  
Et fœcundis graminibus.'

This, then, was the poetic form which began, in the eleventh century, to give expression to the romantic sentiments, the warlike genius of France,—a form in which the quantity of the verse-sounds was variable, the same word or syllable doing the duty of a 'long' or a 'short,' according to its position among neighboring sounds; a form, too, in which the bar or root was more especially signaled to the ear, as at present, by the stress of current utterance, coinciding with the rhythmic accent, and having its origin in the logical preëminence of the root-syllable over the other sounds in a word;—a form whose beat, revealing

the peculiar genius of those who adopted it, was less the pulse of march-time than the free and airy swing of a waltz. Themes were, indeed, supplied from all quarters; but the romance-setting which was common to them all, and which won the heart and imagination of Europe, was French. It was this that constituted for the French literature and language, at the height of the Middle Age, a clear predominance.

*Its poets.*—Of this literature there were two divisions, corresponding to the two dialects of France,—the *Langue D' Oc* and the *Langue D' Oyl*, so named from the words for *yes*, which were *oc* in the South and *oyl* in the North. The first, or Provençal, is irrecoverably dead; the second, or Norman, is unalterably established as the French tongue. The poets of the former were called *Troubadours*; of the latter, *Trouvères*, which are evidently dialectic forms of the same word, meaning *inventors*. From the middle of the twelfth century, the troubadours were numerous as the gay insects of spring, till the close of the thirteenth, when they came to an end,—a lispings, brilliant, short-lived school of song. Their poetry was chiefly lyric, and its chief inspiration was love. Each selects the fair object of his melodious homage, flings himself, body and soul, into love's thrall, exults or wails, mopes and dreams, sighs, faints, and falls, rises and sings, while the April air, the nightingale, and the dewy dawn dilate his joy by accord or intensify his agony by contrast:

'Such is now my glad elation,  
All things change their seeming;  
All with flowers, white, blue, carnation,  
Hoary frosts are teeming;  
Storm and flood but make occasion  
For my happy scheming;  
Welcome is my song's oblation,  
Praise outruns my dreaming.  
Oh, ay! this heart of mine  
Owns a rapture so divine,  
Winter doth in blossoms shine,  
Snow with verdure gleaming!

When my love was from me riven,  
Steadfast faith upbore me;  
She for whom I so have striven  
Seems to hover o'er me;  
All the joys that she hath given  
Memory can restore me;

All the days I saw her, even  
Gladden evermore me.  
Ah, yes! I love in bliss;  
All my being tends to this;  
Yea, although her sight I miss,  
And in France deplore me.

Yet if like a swallow flying  
I might come unto thee,  
Come by night where thou art lying,  
Verily I'd sue thee,  
Dear and happy lady, crying,  
I must die or woo thee,  
Though my soul dissolve in sighing  
And my fears undo me.  
Evermore thy grace of yore  
I with folded hands adore,  
On thy glorious colors pore,  
Till despair goes through me.'

This style early extended itself to the Northern dialect. Abelard, poet and philosopher, was the first of recorded name who taught the banks of the Seine to resound a tale of love. Says the gifted and noble Eloise, of whom he sung:

‘You composed many verses in amorous measure, so sweet both in their language and in their melody, that your name was incessantly in the mouths of all; and even the most illiterate could not be forgetful of you. This it was chiefly that made women admire you; and, as most of these songs were on me and my love, they made me known in many countries, and caused many women to envy me. Every tongue spoke of your Eloise; every street, every house, resounded with my name.’

The poetry of the North, however, was mostly epic, with historical and romantic themes; written for the luxurious few, ambitious and astir with action; expressing and circulating the chivalrous sentiments of life, of love, and of loyalty. The *trouvères*—minstrel-poets—were the idealizing spirits of the knight, who in hours of leisure and festivity rehearsed his exploits, in transfigured and poetic form, to his flattered and delighted senses, holding before him a magic mirror in which he saw with what nobleness and enchantment he was invested. No wonder that they were caressed and richly rewarded,—first in France, where they were native; then in England, where they were transplanted.

Such, then, was the literature at this time domiciled across the Channel,—a literature into which were gathered the delicate fancies of the Celtic poems, the grand ruins of the German epics, the marvellous splendors of the conquered East, with the whole medley of imaginary creatures;—a poetry of mailed knights and radiant ladies, of polite and witty love, of vague reveries and elegant visions;—a poetry whose facile ideas, expounded and repeated *ad infinitum*, flow through interminable and insipid rhymes with the careless grace of a clear and purling brook. Bent on pleasure, brilliant but shallow, it will die,—die for lack of depth and perspective. Society itself must purge or perish when it becomes operatic. But first it will become the leaven which throws into fermentation the now torpid elements of the Anglo-Saxon character, secretly and silently training and cos-tuming the *dramatis personæ* for a new and nobler entry upon the literary stage. Form will inherit its refinement, its grace, its music; thought, its piquancy, order, and transparency. Its heaped-up tales, incoherent and mutilated, which in the weak

hands of the trouvères lie like rubbish or rough-hewn stones, Chaucer and, above all, Spenser will build into a monument.

Meanwhile, ideas are imported. The Normans, incapable of great poetry, continue to copy, arrange, and develop, with their eyes glued to a series of exaggerated and colored images. Even the English become rhymesters in French. Several write the first half of the verse in English and the second in French,—as if French influence were at once moulding and oppressing them! A few employ the vernacular, garnish sermons or histories with rhymes, and call them poems. All are imitative and mediocre, repeating what they imitate, with fewer merits and greater faults. Translations, copies, imitations,—there is little or nothing else. First of the new singers is **Layamon**, a monk, who in 1205 translates into verse and amplifies the *Brut*, a subject supplied him from a four-fold source,—the supposed original Celtic poem, which is lost; the Latin chronicle of Geoffrey; the dull-rhymed rhapsody of Gaimar; and the duller paraphrase of Wace. Through its more than thirty-two thousand lines the babble goes on, in irregular verse, sometimes rhymed, oftener alliterative, mixing both systems, and employing either at convenience; in general adhering, by its rhythm and short quick phrases, to the fashion of the ancient Saxons, without their fire; never rising to interest but by virtue of the theme, as in the account of Arthur's nativity:

'The time cō the wes icoren,  
tha wes Arthur iboren.  
Sone swa he com an eorthe,  
aluen hine inengen.  
heo bigolen that child  
mid galdere swithe stronge;  
heo genē him mihte  
to beon bezst alre cnihten.  
heo geuen him an other thing,

that he scolde beon riche king.  
heo giuen hī that thridde,  
that he scolde longe libben.  
heo gifen him that kine-bern  
custen swithe gode,  
that he wes mete-custi  
of alle quikemonnen;  
this the alue him gef,  
and al swa that child ithæh.'<sup>1</sup>

Or, again, where Arthur, dying of fifteen 'dreadful wounds,' into the least of which 'one might thrust two gloves,' is transported after death in a boat, by fairy elves, to Avalon, the abode of their queen:

<sup>1</sup>The time came that was chosen, then was Arthur born. So soon as he came on earth, elves took him: they enchanted the child with magic most strong, they gave him might to be the best of all knights; they gave him another thing, that he should be a rich king; they gave him the third, that he should live long; they gave to him the prince virtues most good, so that he was most generous of all men alive. This the elves gave him, and thus the child thrived.

'Arthur was wounded wondrously much. There came to him a lad, who was of his kindred; he was Cador's son the earl of Cornwall; . . . Arthur looked on him, where he lay on the ground, and said these words, with sorrowful heart: "Constantine, thou art welcome; thou wert Cador's son. I give thee here my kingdom, and defend thou my Britons ever in thy life, and maintain them all the laws that have stood in my days, and all the good laws that in Uther's days stood. And I will fare to Avalun, to the fairest of all maidens, to Argante the queen, an elf most fair, and she shall make my wounds all sound; make me all whole with healing draughts. And afterwards I will come to my kingdom, and dwell with the Britons with mickle joy." Even with the words there approached from the sea that was a short boat, floating with the waves; and two women therein, wondrously formed; and they took Arthur anon, and bare him quickly, and laid him softly down, and forth they gan depart. Then was it accomplished that Merlin whilom said, that mickle care should be of Arthur's departure. The Britons believe yet that he is alive, and dwelleth in Avalun with the fairest of all elves; and the Britons ever yet expect when Arthur shall return. Was never the man born, of ever any lady chosen, that knoweth of the sooth, to say more of Arthur. But whilom was a sage hight Merlin; he said with words,—his sayings were sooth,—that an Arthur should yet come to help the English (Britons).'

Another poem, of later date, 1250, with no merit but that of just design and regular versification, is the *Ormulum*, by **Orm**, also a monk. Its plan is to explain to the people the spiritual import of the daily Service. A religious hand-book, simple and rustic, it marks the rise of English religious literature. The ideal monk is to be 'a very pure man, and altogether without property, except that he shall be found in simple meat and clothes.' He will have 'a hard and stiff and rough and heavy life to lead. All his heart and desire ought to be aye toward Heaven, and his Master well to serve.' This, as we have seen, was the popular religion. In pardonable vanity the author says:

'Thiss boc iss nemmedd Ormulum  
Forthi thatt Orm itt wrohhte.'

Another poem—for we must call it such, if phrases ending with the same sound are poetry—is the chronicle of **Robert of Gloucester**, written in Alexandrines<sup>1</sup> about the year 1300, and deserving notice chiefly as the most ancient professed history in the English language. Beginning with the siege of Troy, it ends with the death of Henry III, 1272. It conveys some information of value upon the social and physical condition of England in the thirteenth century, as the following lines suggest:

'From South to North he ys long eigte hondred myle:  
And foure hondred myle brod from Est to West to wende,  
A mydde tho lond as yt be, and nogt as by the on ende.  
Plente me may in Engeland of alle gode y se,

<sup>1</sup> Verses of twelve syllables, or six iambic feet. The *Alexandrine*, as the designation of a particular metre, took its name from its employment in the popular and widely circulated poems on Alexander the Great.



Bute folc yt for gulte other yeres the worse be.  
 For Engelond ys full ynow of fruyt and of tren,  
 Of wodes and of parkes, that ioye yt ys to sen.  
 Of foules and of bestes of wylde and tame al so,  
 Of salt fysch and eche fresch, and sayre ryneres ther to.  
 Of welles swete and colde ynow, of lesen and of mede. [pastures  
 Of seluer and of gold, of tyn and of lede.  
 Of stel, of yrn and of bras, of god corn gret won.  
 Of whyte and of wolle god, betere ne may be non.  
 Wateres he hath eke gode y now, ac at be fore alle other thre [but  
 Out of the lond in to the see, armes as thei be.  
 Ware by the schippes mowe come fro the se and wende,  
 And brynge on lond god y now, a boute in eche ende.'

But shall we look upon a desert of stumps, and exclaim, 'O my soul, what beauty!' What is here in these metrical Lives of Saints, rhymed dissertations and chronicles, which are so well prolonged and so void of pleasure? What but poverty of intellect and taste? Wholly destitute of poetical merit, unable to develop a continuous idea, they disregard historical truth without securing the graces of fable by the sacrifice. They are, it is true, of interest to the lover of antiquities, and of importance to the linguist, as are fossil remains to the geologist. They exhibit the physiology of the English speech in its transition or larva and chrysalis states. Thus the *Brut*, though rendered from the French, contains fewer than fifty Norman words. A remarkable peculiarity of its grammar is the use of the pronoun *his* as a sign of the possessive case, as when in more modern English it was not unusual to write *John his book*. The *Ormulum* differs from the Anglo-Saxon models in wanting alliteration, and from the Norman-French in wanting rhyme. It contains a few words from the ecclesiastical Latin, but scarcely a trace of Norman influence. It has a peculiar device of spelling, consistent and uniform,—the doubling of the consonant after every short vowel,—to indicate what, at a period of great confusion, the author deemed the standard pronunciation. Its immediate purpose, perhaps, was to guide the half-Normanized priests when the verses were read aloud for the good or pleasure of the people. On adherence to its orthography by readers and copyists, it lays great stress:

'And whase willen shall this booke  
 Eft other sithe writen,  
 Him bidde icc that he't write right  
 Swa sum this booke him teacheth.'

And whoso shall wish this book  
 After other time to write,  
 Him bid I that he it write right,  
 So as this book him teacheth.



In Robert's *Chronicle of England*, the infusion of Norman words is still not more than four or five per cent, while it represents the language in a decidedly more advanced stage. He distinctly states the prevalence of French in his own day:

'Vor bote a man couthe French, me tolth of him well lute  
*For unless a man know French, one talketh of him little;*  
 Ac lowe men holdeth to Englyss, and to her kunde speche zute  
*But low men hold to English, and to their natural speech yet.'*

Let us omit *The Lay of Havelok the Dane*, an orphan who marries an English princess; *King Horn*, who, thrown into a boat when a lad, is wrecked upon the coast of England, and, becoming a knight, reconquers the kingdom of his father; *Sir Guy*, who rescues enchanted knights, cuts down a giant, challenges and kills the Sultan in his tent; *Alexander*, the great hero of the heathen world, whose forgotten glory, after the downfall of the Empire, was revived on the Levantine shores of the Mediterranean, and then in Western Europe;—all which are of the thirteenth century, and restored or adapted from the French; all which, while they serve to illustrate the continuity of the English tongue, the growth of the French romantic manner of story-telling as the years grow nearer to 1300, and the demand of the Middle Age for glare and startling events, are utterly without power in delineating character or unity of conception in plan and execution.

In the midst of the story-tellers are satirists who, writing mostly in French or Latin, censure political abuses and Church corruptions, sometimes in a tone of mournful seriousness, as if the degradation to which the profession was reduced by the depravity of the higher clergy was deeply felt; sometimes with more force than respect or elegance. Thus an English poem of the *Land of Cockaigne*,—from *coquina*, a kitchen,—a form of satire current in many parts of Europe:

'List, for now my tale begins,	There the Pope for my offence,
How to rid me of my sins,	Bade me straight in penance, thence,
Once I journey'd far from home,	Wandering onward to attain
To the gate of holy Rome.	The wondrous land that hight Cockaigne.'

We are told of a region free from trouble, where the rivers run with oil, milk, wine, and honey; wherein the white and grey monks have an abbey of which the walls are built of pasties, which are paved with cakes, and have puddings for pinnacles.

Roasted geese fly about crying, 'Geese all hot'! This is the triumph of gluttony.

Here, also, like prophecies of the perfect bloom, are some bright lyrics,—religious, amatory, pastoral, warlike. The chivalric adoration of the sovereign Lady, the real deity of mediæval society, breathes in this pleasing hymn, which bears witness to its origin:

'Blessed beo thu, lavedi,	Al min hope is uppon the,
Ful of hovene blisse;	Bi day and bi nicht . . .
Sweet flur of parais,	Bricht and scene quen of storre,
Moder of milternisse . . .	So me liht and lere.
I-blessed beo thu, Lavedi,	In this false fikele world,
So fair and so briht;	So me led and steore.'

What could be farther from the Saxon sentiment? A poem of some interest as the earliest imaginative piece of native invention after the Conquest is *The Owl and the Nightingale*, in octosyllabic rhyme, composed in the reign of Henry III. It is a dispute between the two birds as to which has the finer voice. After much reciprocal abuse, the question of superiority is referred to the author.

Love of nature is deep and national. To the Frenchman it is a light gladness, soon gone, suggesting only a pleasing couplet as it passes,—'Now is winter gone, the hawthorn blossoms, the rose expands, the birds do voice their vows in melody.' To the Englishman, all sad and moral, the circling seasons suggest a spiritual lesson,—chiefly 'vanity of vanities.' So is the following, of the reign of Edward I, truly English in spirit:

'Wynter wakeneth al my care,  
 Nou this leves waxeth bare,  
 Ofte y sike ant mourne sare,  
 When hit cometh in my thoht  
 Of this worldes joie, hou hit goth al to noht.

Now hit is, and now hit nys,  
 Also hit nere y-wys,  
 That moni mon seith soth his ys,  
 Al goth bote Godes wille,  
 Alle we shule deye, thath us like ylle.

Al that gren me graueth grene,  
 Nou hit faleweth al by-dene;  
 Jhesu, help that hit be sene,  
 And shild us from helle,  
 For y not whider y shal, ne hou longe her duelle.'

Yeomen and harpers throw off some spirited products; but their songs, first ignored, then transformed, reach us only in a late

edition, as *Robin Hood*, *Chevy Chase*, and the *Nut-Brown Maid*.

Enough. The Saxon stock, stripped of its buds by the Norman axe, grows, though feebly. An occasional shoot displays genuine England to the light, as a vast rock crops up here and there from beneath the soil.

**Prose.**—When the preservation of literary compositions by writing has given opportunity for their patient study, the next step is possible,—the use of prose; and histories, rude and meagre, serving rather to fix a date than to illuminate it, are its principal products. Nature makes men poets,—art makes them philosophers and critics.

English prose looks fondly back to **Alfred**, in his translations of **Bede**, for its true parentage. As Whitby, in the person of Cædmon, is the cradle of English poetry, so Winchester is that of English prose. Failing soon after, it is revived in Ælfric, who, turning into English the first seven books and part of Job, becomes the first large translator of the Bible; repressed by the Danes, and again by the Normans, it dies in the death of the *Saxon Chronicle*, nor lives again in any extended form till the reign of Edward III.

There may be mentioned a curious work in the vernacular, belonging to the latter part of the twelfth century,—the *Ancren Riwe*, that is, the *Anchoresses' Rule*, a code of monastic precepts for the guidance of a small nunnery, or rather religious society of ladies:

'Ye ne schulen eten vleschs ne seim buten ine muchele secnesse; other hwoso is euer feble eteth potage blitheliche; and wunieth on to lutel drunch. . . . Ye, mine leone snstren, ne schulen babben no best, bute kat one. . . . Nexst fleshe ne schal mon werien no linene cloth, bute yif hit beo of herde and of greate heorden. Stamin habbe hwose wule; and hwose wille mei beon buten. Ye schulen ligen in on heater, and i-gurd. . . . Ower schone beon greate and warme. Ine sumer ye habbeth leane norto gon and sitten barnot. . . . Ye ne schulen senden lettres, ne underuon lettres, ne writen, buten leane. Ye schulen beon i-dodded four sithen ithe yere, norto lihten ower heaued; and ase ofte i-Ieten blod; and oftere yif need is; and hwoso mei beon ther withten, ich hit mei wel i-tholien.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ye shall not eat flesh nor lard but in much sickness; or whoso is ever feeble may eat potage blithely; and accustom yourselves to little drink. . . . Ye, my dear sisters, shall have but one cat. . . . Next the flesh ye shall wear no linen cloth, but if it be of hard and of coarse canvas. Whoso will may have a shirt of woollen and linen, and whoso will may be without. Ye shall lie in a garment and girt. . . . Let your shoes be large and warm. In summer ye are permitted to go and sit bare-foot. . . . Ye shall not send letters, nor receive letters, nor write without leave. Ye shall be cropped four times in the year, to lighten your head; and as often bled, oftener if need be; but whoso may dispense with this, well.

Again:

'The slowe lith and slepeth ithe deofles berme, ase his deore deorling; and te deouel leieth his tutel adun to his earen, and tnteleth him al thet he euer wule. . . . The giure glutun is thes fondes manciple. Uor he stiketh euer ithe celere, other ithe kuchene. His heorte is ithe disches; his thouht is al ithe neppe; his lif ithe tunne; his soule ithe crocke.'<sup>1</sup> . . .

**History.** — Between the beginning and the end of history are legendary traditions, credulous chronicles, barren annals, the glitter and clatter of kings and warriors, luxuriant, tangled, and fanciful narratives. When, as in the Middle Ages, credulity and looseness of thought are universal, it is impossible for men to engage in a philosophic study of the past, or even to record with accuracy what is taking place around them. So great is the general aptitude for the marvellous, that even the ablest writers are compelled to believe the most childish absurdities. Thus, it was well known that the city of Naples was founded on eggs; also, that the order of St. Michael was instituted in person by the archangel, who was himself the first knight. The Tartars, it was taught, proceeded from Tartarus, which some theologians said was an inferior kind of hell, but others declared to be hell itself. Hence, as the Turks were identical with the Tartars, it was only a proper and natural consequence that, since the Cross had fallen into Turkish hands, all Christian children had ten teeth less than formerly. Here is a story which **Anselm**, the Archbishop of Canterbury, one of the greatest and most vigorous minds in the twelfth century, tells of a certain St. Kieran. The saint, with thirty of his companions, has been executed in a wood by order of a Pagan prince, and their bodies are left lying there for the wolves and the wild birds. Note the fact, as the grave and good Anselm has really ascertained it:

'But now a miracle, such as was once heard of before in the Church in the person of the holy Denis, was again wrought by Divine Providence to preserve the bodies of these saints from profanation. The trunk of Kieran rose from the ground, and selecting first

<sup>1</sup> The sluggard lieth and sleepeth in the devil's bosom, as his dear darling; and the devil applieth his mouth to his ears, and tells him whatever he will. [For, this is certainly the case with every one who is not occupied in anything good: the devil assiduously talks, and the idle lovingly receive his lessons. He that is idle and careless is the devil's bosom-sleeper: but he shall on Doomsday be fearfully startled with the dreadful sound of the angels' trumpets, and shall awaken in terrible amazement in hell. "Arise, ye dead, who lie in graves: arise, and come to the Saviour's judgment."] . . . The greedy glutun is the devil's purveyor; for he always haunts the cellar or the kitchen. His heart is in the dishes; all his thought is of the table-cloth; his life is in the tun, his soul in the pitcher. [He cometh into the presence of his lord besmattered and besmeared, with a dish in one hand and a bowl in the other. He talks much incoherently, and staggereth like a drunken man who seemeth about to fall, looks at his great belly, and the devil laughs so that he bursteth.]

his own head, and carrying it to a stream, and there carefully washing it, and afterwards performing the same sacred office for each of his companions, giving each body its own head, he dug graves for them and buried them, and last of all buried himself.'

With the appetite for the fabulous and superhuman is coupled — as if the heart were searching for its dead kindred — the love of antiquity. Hence history, in its first efforts, usually begins at a very remote period, and traces events in an unbroken series, even from the moment when Adam passed the gates of Paradise.

Add to this, that the historians were essentially theological,—priests, who lived remote from public affairs, considered the civil transactions as entirely subordinate to the ecclesiastical, were strongly infected with the love of wonder, and conceived it their business to enforce belief rather than to encourage inquiry. Thus **Matthew Paris**, the most eminent historian of the thirteenth century, to explain why the Mahometans abominate pork, informs us that Mahomet, having on one occasion gorged himself with food and drink till he was in an insensible condition, fell asleep on a dunghill, and in this disgraceful state was attacked and suffocated by a litter of pigs; for which reason his followers have ever since refused to partake of their flesh. This celebrated writer tells us further, to account for the origin of the Mahometan sect, that Mahomet was originally a cardinal, and became a heretic only because he failed in his design of being elected pope.

Perhaps the most reliable standard of the knowledge and opinions of these Ages of Faith is **Geoffrey's** *History of the Britons* (1147). This Welsh monk ascertains that after the capture of Troy, Ascanius fled from the city, and begat a son, who became father to Brutus; that Brutus, having extirpated the race of giants, founded London, settled the affairs of the island, and called it, after himself, by the name of Britain. A long line of kings is then led from oblivion into day, most of whom are famous for their abilities, and some for the prodigies which occur in their time. Thus during the reign of Rivallo 'it rained blood three days together, and there fell vast swarms of flies.' When Morvidus, 'a most cruel tyrant,' was on the throne,—

'There came from the coasts of the Irish sea, a most cruel monster, that was continually devouring the people upon the sea-coasts. As soon as he heard of it, he ventured to go and encounter it alone; when he had in vain spent all his darts upon it, the monster rushed upon him, and with open jaws swallowed him up like a small fish.'



The dauntless Arthur kills a giant from the shores of Spain, against whom armies were able to do nothing,—

‘For whether they attacked him by sea or land, he either overturned their ships with vast rocks, or killed them with several sorts of darts, besides many of them that he took and devoured half alive.’

Pausing, in the historical account, to relate the prophecy of Merlin, he tells us how, by the prophet’s advice, a pond was drained, at whose bottom were two hollow stones, and in them two dragons asleep, which hindered the building of Vortigern’s tower; then,—

‘As Vortigern, king of the Britons, was sitting upon the bank of the drained pond, the two dragons, one of which was white, the other red, came forth, and, approaching one another, began a terrible fight, and cast forth fire with their breath. But the white dragon had the advantage, and made the other fly to the end of the lake. And he, for grief at his flight, renewed the assault upon his pursuer, and forced him to retire. After this battle of the dragons, the king commanded Ambrose Merlin to tell him what it portended. Upon which he, bursting into tears, delivered what his prophetic spirit suggested to him, as follows:

“Woe to the red dragon, for his banishment hasteneth on. His lurking holes shall be seized by the white dragon, which signifies the Saxons whom you invited over; but the red denotes the British nation, which shall be oppressed by the white. Therefore shall its mountains be levelled as the valleys, and the rivers of the valleys shall run with blood. The exercise of religion shall be destroyed, and churches be laid open to ruin.”’

The history is brought down to the close of the seventh century, when the Britons, sunk in barbarism and no longer worthy of their name, were known only as ‘Welshmen’:

‘But as for the kings that have succeeded among them in Wales, since that time, I leave the history of them to Caradoc of Lancarvan, my contemporary; as I do also the kings of the Saxons to William of Malmesbury, and Henry of Huntington. But I advise them to be silent concerning the kings of the Britons, since they have not that book written in the British tongue, which Walter, archdeacon of Oxford, brought out of Brittany, and which being a true history, published in honour of those princes, I have thus taken care to translate.’

It is here that we first read of Gorboduc, whose story will be the theme of the earliest English tragedy; of Lear and his daughters; and, above all, of King Arthur as the recognized hero of national story.

A hundred years after its first publication, this book was generally adopted by writers on English history; and, for its repudiation in the sixteenth century, Vergil was considered as a man almost deprived of reason. A book thus stamped with every mark of approbation is surely no bad measure of the ages in which it was accredited and admired.

Mere annalists abounded, who set down minutely, in chrono-



logical order, what their eyes have seen and their ears have heard, till the reader is overpowered with weariness; only the dross of history; facts, in particles, in mass, without the abstract truth which interpenetrates them, and lies latent among them, like gold in the ore; dreams, portents, warnings, and the whole progeny of superstition. Here is the style of the chronicler in the tenth century:

‘538. When he had reigned four years, the sun was eclipsed from the first hour of the day to the third.

540. Again, two years after, the sun was eclipsed for half an hour after the third hour, so that the stars were everywhere visible in the sky.

661. After three years, Kenwalk again fought a battle near the town of Pontesbury, and took prisoner Wulfhere, son of Penda, at Ashdown, when he had defeated his army.

671. After one year more, there was a great pestilence among the birds, so that there was an intolerable stench by sea and land, arising from the carcasses of birds, both small and great.

674. After one year, Wulfhere, son of Penda, and Kenwalk fought a battle among themselves in a place called Bedwin.

677. After three years a comet was seen.

729. At the end of one year a comet appeared, and the holy bishop Egbert died.

733. Two years after these things, king Ethelbald received under his dominion the royal vill which is called Somerton. The same year the sun was eclipsed.

734. After the lapse of one year, the moon appeared as if stained with spots of blood, and by the same omen Tatwine and Bede departed this life.’

That monument of English prose which is at once most venerable and most valuable is the *Saxon Chronicle*, compiled from the monastic annals by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 891, and carried forward in the monasteries by various hands until the accession of Henry II, in the year 1154. Of value as a statistic epitome of English history during that long period, its chief value, perhaps, consists in the bird’s-eye view which it gives of linguistic changes from year to year, from century to century, until, as the last records are by contemporary writers, old English almost melts into modern. At distant intervals, when inspired by the transitory, the sombre, and the mysterious, it rises to a pathos like this on William the Conqueror:

‘Sharp death, that passes neither by rich men nor poor, seized him also. Alas, how false and how uncertain is this world’s weal! He, that was before a rich king and lord of many lands, had not then of all his land more than a space of seven feet; and he, that was whilom enshrined in gold and gems, lay there covered with mould.’

But, in general, it is vapid, empty, and uncritical, noting in the same lifeless tone the important and the trivial, without the slightest tinge of dramatic color or of discrimination. Blood gushes out of the earth in Berkshire near the birthplace of

Alfred. In Peterborough, under a Norman abbot, horns are heard at dead of night, and spectral huntsmen are seen to ride through the woods. The following extracts are fair specimens:

‘449. In this year Martian and Valentinian succeeded to the empire and reigned seven winters. And in their days Hengest and Horsa, invited by Wyrtegeorn, king of the Britons, sought Britain, on the shore which is named Ypwines fleet; first in support of the Britons, but afterwards they fought against them.

463. In this year Hengest and Æsc fought against the Welsh and took countless booty; and the Welsh fled from the Angles as fire.

509. In this year St. Benedict the abbot, father of all monks, went to heaven.

661. In this year was the great destruction of birds.

792. Here Offa, king of Mercia, commanded that King Ethelbert should be beheaded; and Osred, who had been king of the Northumbrians, returning home after his exile, was apprehended and slain on the 18th day before the Calends of October. His body is deposited at Tinemouth. Ethelred this year, on the 3d day before the Calends of October, took unto himself a new wife whose name was Elfreda.

793. In this year dire forwarnings came over the land of the Northumbrians, and miserably terrified the people: there were excessive whirlwinds and lightnings, and fiery dragons were seen flying in the air. A great famine soon followed these tokens; and a little after that, in the same year, on the 6th of the Ides of January, the havoc of heathen men miserably destroyed God’s church at Lindisfarne, through rapine and slaughter. And Sigca died on the 8th of the Cal. of March.’

Centuries will pass before history, which thus begins in romance and babble, will end in essay; before this enfeebled intellect will be able to rise from particular facts to discover the laws by which those facts are governed, exhibiting by judicious selection, rejection, and arrangement, the orderly progress of society and the nature of man.

**Theology.**—It was a favorite saying among the ancients, that death is ‘a law and not a punishment.’ It was a root-doctrine of the early Christians that disobedience—the fruit of the forbidden tree—‘brought death into the world and all our woe.’

The first represented man as pure and innocent till his will has sinned; the second, as under sentence of condemnation at the moment of birth. Plutarch had said that no funeral sacrifices were offered for infants, ‘because it is irreligious to lament for those pure souls who have passed into a better life and a happier dwelling-place.’ ‘Be assured,’ writes a saint of the sixth century, ‘that not only men who have obtained the use of their reason, but children who have begun to live in their mother’s womb and have there died, or who, just born, have passed away without the sacrament of holy baptism administered in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, must be punished by eternal tor-

ture.' The opinion so graphically expressed by a theologian who said 'he doubted not that there were infants less than a span long crawling about the floor of hell,' was held with great confidence in the early Church. Some, indeed, imagined that a special place was assigned to them, where there was neither suffering nor enjoyment. This was emphatically denied by St. Augustine, who declared that they descended into 'everlasting fire.' According to a popular legend, the redbreast was commissioned by the Deity to carry a drop of water to them to relieve their consuming thirst, and its breast was singed in piercing the flames.

Belief in a personal devil, as we have seen, was profound and universal. Sometimes he is encountered as a grotesque and hideous animal, sometimes as a black man, sometimes as a fair woman, sometimes as a priest haranguing in the pulpit, sometimes as an angel of light. He hovers forever about the Christian; but the sign of the cross, a few drops of holy water, or the name of Mary, can put him to immediate and ignominious flight.

Doubt was branded as a sin. To cherish prejudice was better than to analyze it. Those who diverged from the orthodox belief were doomed. Avenues of inquiry were painted with images of appalling suffering and malicious demons. An age which believes that a man is intensely guilty who holds certain opinions, and will cause the damnation of his fellows if he propagates them, has no moral difficulty in concluding that the heretic should be damned. A law of the Saxons condemned to death any one who ate meat in Lent, unless the priest was satisfied that it was a matter of absolute necessity. Gregory of Tours, recording 'the virtues of saints and the disasters of nations,' draws the moral of the history thus:

'Arius,<sup>1</sup> the impious founder of the impious sect, his entrails having fallen out, passed into the flames of hell; but Hilary, the blessed defender of the undivided Trinity, though exiled on that account, found his country in Paradise. King Clovis, who confessed the Trinity, and by its assistance crushed the heretics, extended his dominions through all Gaul. Alaric, who denied the Trinity, was deprived of his kingdom and his subjects, and, what was far worse, was punished in the future world.'

At the close of the twelfth century, among the measures devised to suppress heresy, the principal was the Inquisition. The function of the civil government was to execute its sentence. Placed in the hands of Dominicans and Franciscans, it was centralized

<sup>1</sup> 'I am persecuted,' Arius plaintively said, 'because I have taught that the Son had a beginning and the Father had not.'

by the appointment of an Inquisitor-General at Rome, with whom all branches of the tribunal—wherever the new corporation was admitted—were to be in constant communication. Its bloody success might seem to fulfil the portent of Dominic's nativity. Legend relates that his mother, in the season of childbirth, dreamed that a dog was about to issue from her womb, bearing a lighted torch that would kindle the whole world. We shall see its officers branding the disbeliever with hot irons, wrenching fingers asunder, shattering bones,—doing it all in the name of the Teacher who had said, 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, that ye love one another,'—yet doing it perhaps in devotion to the truth as, in their human frailty, they conceive it.

The pagan philosopher fixed his eye upon virtue; the Christian, upon sin. The former sought to awaken the sentiment of admiration; the latter, that of remorse. The one, powerless to restrain vice, was fitted to dignify man; the other, to regenerate him. Those who are insensible to the nobleness of virtue, may be so convulsed by the fear of judgment as to renew the tenor of their lives.

The pagans asserted the immateriality of the soul, because they believed that the body must perish forever. The Fathers, with the exception of Augustine, maintained that the soul was simply a second body. The material view derived strength from the firm belief in punishment by fire. This was the central fact of religion. Its ghastly imagery left nature stricken and forlorn. The agitations of craters were ascribed to the great press of lost souls. In the hush of evening, when the peasant boy asked why the sinking sun, as it dipped beneath the horizon, kindled with such a glorious red, he was answered, in the words of an old Saxon catechism, 'because it is then looking into hell.' The pen of the poet, the pencil of the artist, the visions of the monk, sustained the maddening terror with appalling vividness and minuteness. Through the vast of hell rolled a seething stream of sulphur, to feed and intensify the waves of fire. In the centre was Satan, bound by red-hot chains, on a burning gridiron. But his hands are free, and he seizes the damned, crushes them like grapes against his teeth, then sucks them down the fiery cavern of his throat. Hideous beings, of dreadful aspect and fantastic

form, with hooks of red-hot iron, plunge the lost alternately into fire and ice. Some of the souls are hung up by their tongues, others are sawn asunder between flaming iron posts, others gnawed by serpents, others with hammer and anvil are welded into a mass, others boiled and then strained through a cloth. A narrow bridge spans the abyss, and from this the shrieking souls are plunged into the mounting flames below.

But in every age there are some who stand upon the heights, above the ideal of their generation, and forecast the realized conceptions of the distant future. One of the most rationalistic minds of the fourth century was **Pelagius**, a British prelate. His persecutors were wont to say, 'Speak not to Pelagius, or he will convert you.' His principal tenets may be thus epitomized:

1. Adam was created mortal, and would have died whether he had sinned or not.
2. Adam's transgression affected only himself, not his posterity.
3. Mankind neither perish through Adam, nor are raised from the dead through Christ.
4. The law, as well as the Gospel, leads men to heaven.
5. Divine grace is conditioned on human worthiness.
6. Infants are in the same state as Adam before his fall.

He would not, however, venture to deny the necessity of infant baptism. Severely pressed on this point by his opponents, he replied that baptism was necessary to wash away the guilt of the child's pettishness!<sup>1</sup> One striking example of a bold free spirit in the tenth century was the famed **Erigena**. Alone in the middle ages, he maintained the figurative interpretation of hell-fire.

In 1277, propositions like the following were professed by philosophers at Paris: God is not triune and one, for trinity is incompatible with simplicity; the world and humanity are eternal; the resurrection of the body must not be admitted by philosophers; the soul, when separated from the body, cannot suffer by fire; theological discourses are based on fables; a man who has in himself moral and intellectual virtues, has all that is necessary to happiness.

<sup>1</sup> It is gratifying to know that St. Augustine, in answering this argument, declared distinctly that the crying of a baby is not sinful, and therefore does not deserve eternal damnation.



It may be needless to add explicitly—what the theology of the past so plainly suggests in the changed atmosphere of the present—that every age creates its image of God; and the image, conforming to the conceptions of its creator, is the measure of its civilization. This child shall one day grow up to manhood, and sing lofty psalms with noble human voice.

**Ethics.**—A nation or an age may be without moral science, but never without moral distinctions. The languages and literature of the world indicate that at all times, among all peoples, the idea of right and wrong has been recognized and applied. We shall find ethical notions, ethical life, powerfully operative, in mediæval England, but no ethical *system*. When society is semi-barbarous, the inculcation of morality devolves avowedly and exclusively upon the priests. Motives of action require to be materialized. Theology is the groundwork of morality. The moral faculty, too weak of itself to be a guide of conduct, must be reënfined by the rewards and punishments of religion,—the hope of Heaven and the fear of Hell. The propensity to evil, in consequence of original sin, is itself sin. The foundation of the moral law is the Divine will. Thus **Scotus** asserted that the good is good, not by its own inherent nature, but *because* God commands it. But there appear from time to time men who, rising above surrounding circumstances, anticipate the moral standard of a later age, and inculcate principles before their appropriate civilization has dawned. Thus **Abelard**, emphasizing the subjective aspect of conscience, represents that moral good and evil reside not in the act but in the intention. It is only the consenting to evil which is sin. The pure hate sin from love of virtue, not from a slavish fear of pain inflicted. The good is good, not *because* God commands it; but *He commands it because it is good*. God is the absolutely highest good, and that, through virtue, should be the aim of human endeavor. The civilizations of the future may estimate their relative excellence by their nearness to this eminence of thought!

**Science.**—Before the Conquest, in the popular series of *Solomon and Saturn*, it was asked, as a question that engaged English curiosity, ‘What is the substance of which Adam, the first man, was made?’ and the answer was:



'I tell thee of eight pounds by weight.' 'Tell me what they are called.'—'I tell thee the first was a pound of earth, of which his flesh was made; the second was a pound of fire, whence his blood came, red and hot; the third was a pound of wind, and thence his breathing was given to him; the fourth was a pound of welkin, thence was his unsteadiness of mood given him; the fifth was a pound of grace, whence was given him his growth; the sixth was a pound of blossoms, whence was given him the variety of his eyes; and seventh was a pound of dew, whence he got his sweat; the eighth was a pound of salt, and thence were his tears salt.'

From this we may infer and estimate the rest. The same question and answer will be found in *The Maisters of Oxford's Catechism*, written in fifteenth-century English! What are the condition and hope of science, when inquisitive children, who delight in riddles and enigmas, reduce it to a religious catechism? The overwhelming importance attached to theology diverted to it all those intellects which in another condition of society would have been employed in the investigations of science. Everything was done to cultivate habits the opposite of scientific,—fear and faith. Innovation of every kind was regarded as a crime. Superior knowledge, shown in speculation, was called heresy; shown in the study of mathematics or of nature, it was called magic,—a proof that such pursuits were rare. In the thirteenth century, few students of geometry proceeded farther than the fifth proposition of the first book of Euclid,—the famous asses' bridge. What must be the state of the natural sciences, when the science of demonstration, which is their foundation, is neglected? Indeed, the name of the mathematics was given chiefly to astrology. Mathematicians were defined to be 'those who, from the position of the stars, the aspect of the firmament, and the motions of the planets, discover things that are to come.' It was universally believed that the whole destiny of man is determined by the star that presides over his nativity. Many could not, as they imagined, safely appear in public, or eat, or bathe, unless they had first carefully consulted the almanac, to ascertain the place and appearance of their particular planet. Comets and meteors foreshadowed the fate of empires; and the signs of the zodiac served only to predict the career of individuals and the development of communities. But as these constant observations, and the construction of instruments required for making them, led to astronomy; so alchemy, which aimed to transmute all metals into gold, or find the elixir of life, led to chemistry. An alchem-

ist records that in a secret chamber of the Tower of London, he performed in the royal presence the experiment of transmuting some crystal into diamond, of which Edward I, he says, caused some little pillars to be made for the tabernacle of God. The healing art, from being practised only by women, who employed charms and spells with their herbs and decoctions, gradually became the province of priests, who trusted to relics, holy water, and other superstitions. Medicine had in the thirteenth century been taken in a great measure out of the hands of the clergy, though it was still in the main a mixture of superstition and quackery. The distinction between the physician and the apothecary was understood, and surgery also began to be followed as a separate branch.

With Edward the Confessor, about the middle of the eleventh century, began the extraordinary usage of touching, to cure the disease called the 'King's Evil,'—a usage that continued for nearly seven hundred years. When Malcolm and Macduff have fled to England, it is in the palace of Edward the Confessor that Malcolm inquires of an English doctor,—

'Comes the king forth, I pray you?'

and the answer is,—

'Ay, sir: there are a crew of wretched souls  
That stay his cure: their malady conuiuces  
The great assay of art; but at his touch,  
Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand,  
They presently amend.'

When Macduff asks,—

'What's the disease he means?'

Malcolm answers,—

'Tis called the evil:  
A most miraculous work in this good king;  
Which often, since my here-remain in England,  
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,  
Himself best knows: but strangely-visited people,  
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,  
The mere despair of surgery, he cures;  
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,  
Put on with holy prayers: and 'tis spoken  
To the succeeding royalty he leaves  
The healing benediction.' . . .

All which proves, if anything, that in the treatment of disease faith is more potent than physic.

The supposed influence of the stars, with a crowd of superstitions, naturally followed from the geocentric theory of the

universe. When it is believed, as in the Middle Ages, that the earth is the great central object of the whole created world, around which the sun and moon alike revolve, and the stars are but inconsiderable lights destined to garnish its firmament,—man becomes the centre of all things, and every startling phenomenon has some bearing upon his acts; the eclipse, the comet, the meteor, the tempest, are all intended for him.

The existence of the antipodes, or persons inhabiting the opposite side of the globe, and consequently having the soles of their feet directly opposed to ours, was disproved by quoting St. Paul,—that all men are made to live upon the ‘*face* of the earth,’ from which it clearly follows that they do not live upon more faces than one, or upon the back. If we examine a little farther, we are told that the earth is fixed firmly upon its foundations, from which we may at least infer that it is not suspended in the air. In the sixteenth century, for asserting that the earth moves, Copernicus will be censured, and Galileo will be imprisoned.

It was taught as a firmly established principle that water has no gravity in or on water, since it is *in proprio loco*, in its own place;—that air has no gravity on water, since it is above water, which is its proper place;—that earth in water tends downward, since its place is below water;—that water rises in a pump or syphon, because nature abhors a vacuum.

Peter Lombard quotes our Anglo-Saxon Bede that the waters above the firmament are the solid crystalline heavens in which the stars are fixed, ‘for crystal, which is so hard and transparent, is made of water’; and mentions also the opinion of St. Augustine, that the waters above the heavens are in a state of vapor, in minute drops:

‘If, then, water can, as we see in clouds, be so minutely divided that it may be thus supported as vapor on air, which is naturally lighter than water; why may we not believe that it floats above that lighter celestial element in still minuter drops and still lighter vapors? But in whatever manner the waters are there, we do not doubt that they are there.’

**Philosophy.**—The long and barren period which intervened between Proclus of the fifth century, in whom the speculative activity of ancient Greece disappeared, and Bacon of the sixteenth, in whom it was reformed and fertilized, was characterized, as a whole, by indistinctness of ideas, bias to authority, and

impatience of dissent. Poverty of thought disposed men to lean upon an intellectual superior,—Plato, Aristotle, or the Fathers; to read nature through books; to talk of what great geniuses had said; to study the opinions of others as the only mode of forming their own; to criticise, to interpret, to imitate, to dispute. The subtlety which found in certain accredited writings all the truth it desired, forbade others to find, there or elsewhere, any other truths. The slave became a tyrant.

The Christian Fathers made philosophy the handmaid of religion. The whole philosophic effort was to mediate between the dogmas of faith and the demands of reason, with church doctrine as the criterion or standard. The method was three-fold: 1. That of the Fathers, built on Scripture, modified by the principles of the Grecian schools. 2. Conjointly with Scripture, the use of the Fathers themselves. 3. The application of the Aristotelian dialectics.<sup>1</sup> Philosophy thus subservient to the Christian articles of belief was called **Scholasticism**, a name derived from the cloister schools opened by Charlemagne for the pursuit of speculative studies, which in those days were prosecuted only by the clergy, they alone having leisure or inclination for such work. The teachers of the seven liberal arts, as afterwards all who occupied themselves with the sciences, and especially with philosophy, following the tradition and example of the schools, were called **Scholastics**. Scholasticism, therefore, may be defined as *the reproduction of ancient philosophy under the control of ecclesiastical doctrine, with an accommodation, in cases of discrepancy between them, of the former to the latter*. Its leading representatives till the fourteenth century are Erigena, with whom it begins, born and educated in Ireland; Roscelin and Abelard, of France; Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas, of Italy; Anselm, of Normandy; Alexander Hales, ‘the Irrefragable,’ and Duns Scotus, ‘the Subtle Doctor,’ of England.

The views of **Erigena**, (800–877) are decidedly Platonic. God, the creating and uncreated being, alone has essential subsistence. He is the essence of all things, the beginning and the end of all. Among created natures are some which themselves create,—*Ideas*, or the archetypes of things, the first causes of individual existences. These are contained in the Divine Wisdom, or Word

<sup>1</sup> That branch of logic which teaches the rules and modes of reasoning.

—the Son; and the influence of the Holy Ghost, or Divine Love, causes them to develop into the forms of the eternal world. More than a thousand years before, Plato had said:

‘Now, Idea is, as regards God, a mental operation by him (the notions of God, eternal and perfect in themselves); as regards us, the first things perceptible by mind; as regards Matter, a standard; but as regards the world, perceptible by sense, a pattern; but as considered with reference to itself, an existence.’

The creation from nothing is out of God’s own essence—an unfolding. Our life is His life in us. As the substance of all things in shape and time, He descends to us, not alone in the act of incarnation, but in all created existence. As out of Him all things are evolved, so into Him all things will ultimately return,—a conception not in harmony with the doctrinal system of the Church. True philosophy and true religion are one. But true religion is not identical with dogmatism. On the contrary, in case of a collision between authority and reason, let reason be given the preference.

Plato taught *Realism*, the doctrine that universals—species, genera, or types—have a real existence apart from individual objects. Aristotle, on the contrary, taught *Nominalism*, the doctrine that only individuals exist in reality,—that abstract ideas are nothing but abstractions, general *names*, not general *things*. Of the Scholastic Nominalists, **Roscelin**, a little before 1100, was the first distinguished advocate. It was soon evident that he was in antagonism with the dogma of the Trinity. If, said his opponents, only individuals really exist, then the three persons of the Trinity are three individuals, or three Gods,—that, or else they have no existence. He admits the fatal heresy, is summoned before a Council, and there forced publicly to recant; escapes to England, and perishes in exile; but the seed sown fructifies, and Nominalism afterwards becomes the reigning doctrine.

Roscelin was opposed by **Anselm** (1033–1109). His motto was, *Credo, ut intelligam*. Knowledge must rest on faith, and submission to the Church must be unconditional. Goodness, truth, virtue, etc., possess real existence, independent of individual beings, not merely immanent in them. On this realistic basis he founds a proof of the divine existence, with which his fame is chiefly connected. The argument is an attempt to prove the existence of God from the very idea which we have of Him—the



*summum bonum*, or greatest object that can be conceived. This conception exists in the intellect of all who have the idea of God, —in the intellect of the atheist as well. But the *greatest* cannot be in the mind only, for then something still greater would be conceivable which should exist not only in the mind but in external reality. Hence the greatest must exist at the same time, both subjectively and objectively. God, therefore, is not merely conceived by us,—He also really exists.

One of Roscelin's pupils was the youthful **Abelard** (1079–1142), whose unfortunate love-relations, more than his eloquence or subtlety, rendered his name immortal. Posterity feels interested in him because Eloise loved him; and when the gates of the convent close forever on her, the warm interest in him disappears. His position in dialectics, while intermediate between untenable extremes, is not far removed from strict Nominalism. His chief distinction is regular and systematic application of dialectics to theology. Without being the first to rationalize dogmatics, he went farther in a way which had already been opened up, and may thus be said to have given to Scholasticism its peculiar and permanent form. Asserting the supremacy of reason, he represents the insurgent spirit of those times. Writes St. Bernard to the pope: *Transgreditur fines quos posuerunt patres nostri*—‘he goes beyond the limits set by our ancestors!’—an offense in all ages, in all nations. The revolutionist further ‘transgresses’ by the composition of *Sic et Non*, in which he sets forth the contradictory statements of the Fathers, designed, as he distinctly informs us, to train the mind to vigorous and healthy doubt, in fulfilment of the injunction, ‘Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.’ Doubt begins. Disputation waxes stronger. In every city of Europe, logic plays around every subject, the most profound and sacred, like lambent flame. The struggle thus begun has not yet ended.

Abelard's pupil—**Peter Lombard**, who died in 1164—prepared a manual of theology called *The Book of Sentences*, which became, and for centuries continued, the basis of theological instruction and a guide for the dialectical treatment of theological problems.

**Thomas Aquinas** (1225–1274) brought Scholasticism to its highest stage of development, by the utmost accommodation of



the Aristotelian doctrines to those of ecclesiastical orthodoxy. With him, as with Aristotle, knowledge—and preëminently knowledge of God—is the supreme end of life. The Divine existence is demonstrable only *a posteriori*, namely, from the contemplation of the world as the work of God. The order of the world presupposes an Orderer. There must be a First Mover or a First Cause, since the chain of effects and causes cannot be infinite. God exists as a pure, immaterial form. Before His creative fiat, time was not. The soul of man is immortal, because it is immaterial. It is immaterial because it thinks the universal; whereas, if it were a form inseparable from matter, like the soul of a brute, it could think only the individual. Pure form can neither destroy itself, nor, through the destruction of a material substratum, be destroyed. Yet the human soul does not exist before the body. Nor is its knowledge the mere recollection of ideas beheld in a preëxistent state, as Plato assumed.

While the earlier scholastics had known only the *Logic* of Aristotle, **Alexander Hales** (died 1245) first used his entire philosophy, including the metaphysics, as the auxiliary of Christian theology.

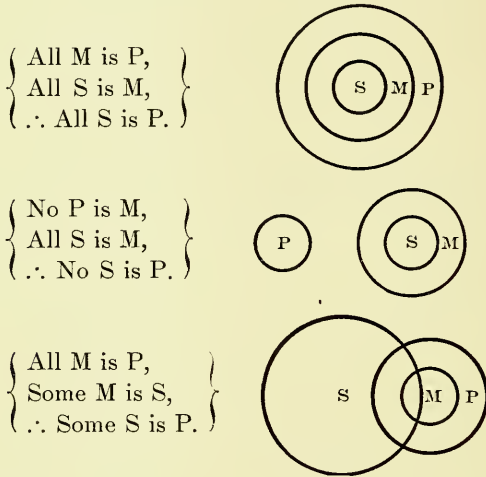
A distinguished opponent of Thomas Aquinas and his system was **Duns Scotus**, who in 1308 died at Cologne, whither he had been sent to take part in a debate. His strength, like that of Kant, lay in the acute and negative criticism of others rather than in the establishment of his own position. Trained in mathematical studies, he knew what was meant by proving, and could therefore recognize in most of the pretended proofs their invalidity. Without denying the truth of the theorems themselves, he rejects much of the reasoning employed to prove the being of God and the immortality of the soul, and bases the evidence on our moral nature. Revelation alone renders them certain. Arguments should be viewed with distrust. The domain of reason he would further contract; that of faith, still more extend. The world is but a mean, by the right use of which the only end of its existence—the salvation of mankind—is attained. This is practical,—at least in desire, as of one whose eyes are fixed on sin, black death, and the Judgment, not daring to embark on the great journey with unsafe guides.

The heavy instrument supplied to these disputants by Aris-

totle was the Syllogism, which, as every student of logic understands, contains:

1. *Three terms*, the extremes and the middle; or the major term (*P*)—predicate of the conclusion, the minor term (*S*)—subject of the conclusion, and the middle term (*M*)—medium of comparison.

2. *Three propositions*, the premises and the conclusion; or the major premise in which *M* and *P* are compared, the minor premise in which *S* and *M* are compared, and the conclusion in which the relation of *S* and *P* is inferred,—the proposition to be proved. Thus, symbolized:



Or, concretely:

Every responsible agent is a free agent,  
 Man is a responsible agent,  
 $\therefore$  Man is a free agent.

Plato, Aristotle, the Apostles, and the Fathers, gave the premises; ingenuity piled up cathedrals of conclusion. What more agreeable exercise to speculative minds than tracing the consequences of assumed principles? It is deductive, like geometry, self-satisfying and inexhaustible. As there could be no genuine progress, so there was no tendency to come to an end. A ceaseless grinding of the air in metaphysic mills:

‘They stand  
 Locked up together hand in hand;  
 Every one leads as he is led,  
 The same bare path they tread,  
 And dance like fairies a fantastic round,  
 But neither change their motion nor their ground.’

What does the reader think of the pregnant announcement that ‘an individual man is Peter, because his humanity is combined with *Petreity*’?—of the division of matter into firstly first, secondly first, and thirdly first?—of the chimerical questions, whether identity, similitude, and equality are real relations in God? whether, *the place and body being retained*, God can cause the body to have no position? whether the divine essence engendered the Son, or was engendered by the Father? why the three persons together are not greater than one alone? if God can know more things than He is aware of? whether Christ at the first instant of conception had the use of free judgment? whether He was slain by Himself or by another? whether the dove in which the Holy Spirit appeared was a real animal? whether two glorified bodies can occupy one and the same place at the same time? whether in the state of innocence all children were masculine?—of the puerile puzzles whether a person in the purchase of a whole cloak also buys the cowl? whether, when a hog is carried to market with a rope tied about its neck and held at the other end by a man, the hog is really carried to market by the man or by the rope?

What truth could issue thence? What wonder that Scholasticism is a vast cemetery of departed reputation? Yet underneath this word-quibbling are the deepest problems of Ontology; and the human hearts which throb to them are, as we shall see, prophetic of the English soul:

‘A great delight is granted  
 When in the spirit of the ages planted,  
 We mark how, ere our time, a sage has thought,  
 And then, how far his work, and grandly, we have brought.’

**Résumé.**—Gradually the past is explaining the present. Through anarchy, conflict, and constraint, the Witan and Great Council are transformed into the English Parliament, which continues to this day the same in all essential points. The House of Commons, archetype of representative assemblies, holds its first sittings. French connections are Sundered; Wales is annexed

forever to the English crown; Ireland is conquered, though not subdued; and the famous heroes, Wallace and Bruce, wrest from Edward I the liberties of Scotland.

The mass of the agricultural population is rising from the position of mere slaves to that of tenant-farmers; and the advance of society, as well as the natural increase of population, is freeing the laborer from local bondage. The government of the English towns passes from the hands of an oligarchy to those of the rising middle classes.

The space of about a thousand years, extending from the fall of the Western Empire, in the middle of the fifth century, to that of the Eastern, in the middle of the fifteenth, comprises two nearly equal periods,—the gradual decline and the gradual revival of letters. Convents, meanwhile, are the asylum of knowledge, and secure the thread which connects us with the literature of classic Greece and Rome. With few exceptions, the writers are priestly or monastic.

The Conquest, breaking the mental stagnation, introduces England into a free communion with the intellectual and artistic life of the Continent, and subjects it to the two ruling mediæval impulses,—Feudalism and the Church, the one producing the adventurous hero, the other the mystical monk; both working together for the amelioration of mankind, both running to excess, and degenerating by the violence of their own strength. Under the first, slavery is modified into serfdom; under the second, learning is preserved, and a sense of the unity of Christendom maintained; under both, springs up the idea of chivalry, moulding generous instincts into gallant institutions.

From the fifth to the thirteenth century, the Church elaborates the most splendid organization which the world has ever seen. During the last three centuries of the period, her destiny achieved, faith and reason begin to be sundered, and violence is used for the repression of inquiry. The spiritual power, grown corrupt by growing ambitious, is resisted by the temporal. Kings war with popes, and popes struggle to put their feet upon the necks of kings. Religion, from a ceremonial, is being converted into a reality. Hermit and friar carry spiritual life home to the heart of the nation.

First English poems are of war and religion,—never of love.

The greatest are *Beowulf*, an epic imported from the Continent, and re-written in parts by a Christian Englishman; and Cædmon's *Paraphrase of the Bible*, written about 670, and for us the beginning of English poetry. Of scattered pieces after Cædmon, all Christian in tone, the finest are *Judith*, *The Ruin*, and *The Grave*. The war poetry, sung from feast to feast and in the halls of kings, dies out after the English are trodden down by the Normans. English literature—in a state of languishing depression at the Conquest—is thereafter displaced by the romance, in which, as favorite heroes, Arthur, Alexander, and Charlemagne, dressed as feudal knights, slay dragons and giants, storm enchanted castles, set free beautiful ladies, and perform other wondrous deeds. Not, however, till nearly a century has passed away—when Norman noble and English yeoman, Norman abbot and English priest, are welded into one—is the rhyming romantic poetry of France naturalized. In its rise under Edward I, native genius, in the vernacular, is poetical. The poetry is religious, story-telling, and lyric, typified in the *Ormulum*, the *Brut*, the *Owl and Nightingale*. As a whole the literature is characterized by reality, directness, and truth to nature. Elevated in tone, eminently practical in aim,—owing in a considerable degree to its insular position, it contrasts strongly with much of the contemporaneous expression of Continental genius, which is less the reflection of earnest, active life, than a magic mirror showing forth the unsubstantial dreams of an idle, luxurious, and fantastic people.

Latin is the key to erudition,—the prevailing language of the learned professions, of law and physic, as well as of divinity, in all their grades. French, the language of romance, lives upon the lips of royalty, rank, and beauty. In the storm of national calamity English ceases to be generally either written or read; and when in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries it begins to raise its diminished head, it has been converted, substantially, from an inflectional to a non-inflectional tongue, a natural mutation accelerated by the Norman invasion. The *Chronicle*, the *Brut*, and the *Ormulum* prove its continuity and victory.

The enthusiasm of the Crusades is succeeded by an enthusiasm of study, imprisoned and limited by the scholastic logic and metaphysics, under whose ascendancy elegant literature pales.

Scholasticism reveals already the dominant tendencies of English thought,—subordination of theory to practice, in John of Salisbury; scepticism as to ultimate philosophical questions, in Scotus; devotion to physical science as a thing of demonstrative and practical utility, in Bacon.

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries are the seed-time of all modern language and literature. The former is the great turning point of the European intellect. Then it is that a general revival of Latin literature takes place; then—the first time for many centuries—the long slumber of untroubled orthodoxy is broken by hydra-headed heresies; then the standard of an impartial philosophy is first planted by Abelard; then the passion for astrology and its fatalism revives with the revival of pagan learning, and penetrates into the halls of nobles and the palaces of kings; men are learning to doubt, without learning that doubt is innocent, compelled, by the new mental activity, to a variety of opinions, while the old credulity persuades them that all opinions but one are suggestions of the devil. The latter is a decisive epoch, not more for the constitutional history of England than for its intellectual progress. Its general activity and ardor are shown by the great concourse of students to the universities, by the number and eminence of the schoolmen, by religious and political satires, by that flame of zeal which sweeps the masses from their native soil to hurl them upon Holy Land. Then the French romantic poetry with its craving for excitement, begins to be transfused into a medium intelligible throughout England; then, above all, a definite language is formed, and there is room for a great writer.

Slowly, step by step, the England of the Doomsday Book, the England of the Curfew, the England of crusaders, monks, astrologers, serfs, and outlaws, is becoming the England of liberty, knowledge, and trade,—the England that spreads her dominion over every quarter of the globe, and scatters the seeds of empires and republics in the jungles of India and the forests of America.



## CÆDMON.

The Milton of our Forefathers.—*D'Israeli.*

**Biography.**—His life lies buried in obscurity and fable. We obtain our first glimpses of him as a peasant, on some of the abbey lands of Whitby, who, though his sun was already declining, had never dreamed that he was a sublime poet. A marvellous incident—according to the taste and manner of the age—explains his literary history:

Once, sitting with his companions over the ale-cup, while they sang in turn the praises of war or beauty, when the circling 'Wood of Joy' passed to him, he rose and went out with a sad heart, for he alone—all unskilled—was unable to weave his thoughts into verse. Wearied and desponding, he lay down to rest in a stall of oxen, of which he was the appointed night-guard. As he slept, an angel appeared to him and said: 'Cædmon, sing some song to me!' The herdsman urged that he was mute and unmusical. 'Nevertheless, thou shalt sing!' retorted the benignant stranger. 'What shall I sing?' rejoined the minstrel who had never sung. 'Sing the origin of things!' His imprisoned intellect was unlocked, and he listened to the wonder of his own voice through eighteen lines of 'Let us praise God, maker of heaven and earth.' In the morning he remembered the lines, flew to the town-reeve<sup>1</sup> to announce his dream, told how, in one memorable night—incapable even of reading his own Saxon, after a whole life spent without ever surmising himself to be poetical—he had become a poet, and desired to use his gift for the instruction of the people in the Heavenly Word. Good Abbess Hilda in turn received him, heard him recite, was favorably impressed with his rare talents, gave him an exercise to test his new-found skill, then welcomed him, with all his goods, into the monastery; the brethren read to him, from Genesis to Revelations, wrote down his oracular sayings, and committed them to memory; so winsome, so divine, were his song and his verse. Day by day, piece by piece, the poem grew, till he had turned various parts of Sacred Writ into English poetry. Severed from the cares of

<sup>1</sup> *Reeve*, from Saxon *gerefa*, denotes a magistrate or officer; obsolete except in compounds, as *shire-reeve* (now written *sheriff*).

the active world, in the deep calm of monastic seclusion, he lived and wrought, living for the Unseen alone, and undisturbed by either anxiety or doubt. One of the aspects, is this, in which the monastic period of literature appears eminently beautiful,—freedom from the turmoil and impatience, the vanity and pride, of modern literary life. Slowly wasted by disease, he died in 680, near the hour of midnight, peacefully,—

‘Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.’

Here, to the inquisitive who would go on knocking, the door is closed. Over the outer history of the man, the accidental circumstances of his life, oblivion ‘blindly scattereth her poppy.’ Of more worth is the inner history of genius. The Dreamer lives in his dream.

**Writings.**—The *Paraphrase*, containing, besides other portions of the Bible, the story of the Creation, the Revolt, the Fall, the Flood, and the Exodus. The sole manuscript is of the tenth century; disappearing from visible existence, it was accidentally discovered in the seventeenth, and first published in 1655, a thousand years after its composition.

Filled with the grandeur of his subject, in words of such majesty as were never uttered of human heroes or Scandinavian gods, he sounds the key-note of a new poetic strain:

‘Most right is it that we, heaven’s Guard,  
Glory, King of hosts! with words should praise,  
With hearts should love. He is of powers the efficacy;  
Head of all high creations;  
Lord Almighty! In Him beginning never  
Or origin hath been; but He is aye supreme  
Over heaven-thrones, with high majesty  
Righteous and mighty!’

A concrete of exclamations from a strong, barbarous heart; a song of a servant of Odin, tonsured now, and clad in the habiliments of a monk. Then follow the rebellion of Satan, the expulsion of the angels, and their confinement in the fiery gulf. The Hebrew Tempter, transformed by the German sense of might of individual manhood, becomes a republican, disdainful of vassalage to God:

“Wherefore,” he said, “shall I toil?  
No need have I of master. I can work  
With my own hands great marvels, and have power  
To build a throne more worthy of a God,  
Higher in heaven! Why shall I, for His smile,

Serve Him, bend to Him thus in vassalage?  
 I may be God as He.  
 Stand by me, strong supporters, firm in strife.  
 Hard-mooded heroes, famous warriors,  
 Have chosen me for chief; one may take thought  
 With such for counsel, and with such secure  
 Large following. My friends in earnest they,  
 Faithful in all the shaping of their minds;  
 I am the master, and may rule this realm."<sup>1</sup>

The two religions, Christian and pagan, so like, mingle their incongruities, images, and legends. The patriarchs are earls; Abraham is 'a guardian of bracelets' (wealth); the sons of Reuben are vikings (sea-pirates); the Ethiopians are 'a people brown with the hot coals of heaven'; God is the 'Blithe-hearted King,' the Overlord, ruler of his thanes with an iron hand:

'Stern of mood He was; He gript them in His wrath; with hostile hands He gript them, and crushed them in His grasp.'

For *three nights and days*<sup>2</sup> the Fiend, with his comrades, fell headlong from the skies down to 'the swart hell,—a land void of light and full of flame.'<sup>3</sup>

'There they have at even, immeasurably long, each of all the fiends, a renewal of fire with sulphur charged; but cometh ere dawn the eastern wind-frost, bitter cold, ever fire or dart.'<sup>4</sup>

In the 'torture-house' lies the Apostate in chains, proud, fearless, self-conscious, and indomitable, like the Northern warriors; 'the haughty king, who of angels erst was brightest, fairest in heaven, beloved of his Master; so beauteous was his form, he was like to the light stars.'<sup>5</sup> Overcome, shall he be subdued?

'Within him boiled his thoughts about his heart;  
 Without, the wrathful fire pressed hot upon him.  
 He said: "This narrow place is most unlike  
 That other we once knew in heaven high,  
 And which my Lord gave me; though own it now

<sup>1</sup> See *Paradise Lost*, I and V, for remarkable resemblances.

<sup>2</sup> *Nine times the space that measures day and night  
 To mortal men.—Paradise Lost.*

<sup>3</sup> Yet from these flames  
 No light, but rather *darkness visible.—Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> The bitter change  
 Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce,  
 From beds of raging *fire* to starve in *ice.—Ibid.*

And,—  
 Eternal darkness for the dwellers in fierce *heat* and *ice.—Inferno.*

<sup>5</sup> His form had not yet lost  
 All her original brightness, nor appeared  
 Less than archangel ruined.—*Paradise Lost.*

And,—  
 His countenance as the morning star that guides  
 The starry flock, allured them.—*Ibid.*

We must not, but to Him must cede our realm.  
 Yet right He hath not done to strike us down  
 To hell's abyss,—of heaven's realm bereft,—  
 Which with mankind to people He hath planned.  
 Pain sorest this, that Adam, wrought of earth,  
 On my strong throne shall sit, enjoying bliss,  
 While we endure these pangs,—hell-torments dire.  
 Oh! woe is me! could I but use my hands  
 And might I be from here a little time,—  
 One winter's space,—then with this host would I,—  
 But press me hard these iron bands,—this coil  
 Of chain,—and powerless I am, so fast  
 I'm bound. Above is fire; below is fire;  
 A loathier landscape never have I seen;  
 Nor smolders aye the fire, but hot throughout.  
 In chains; my pathway barred; my feet tied down;  
 These hell-doors bolted all; I may not move  
 From out these limb-bands; binds me iron hard,—  
 Hot-forged great grindles! God has griped me tight  
 About the neck."<sup>1</sup>

But to him who has lost everything, vengeance is left. Indissolubly bound, he dispatches an associate to wreak his ire on the innocent pair in Eden. The emissary was 'prompt in arms; he had a crafty soul; this chief set his helmet on his head; he many speeches knew of guileful words; wheeled up from thence, he departed through the doors of hell,'<sup>2</sup> flinging aside the flames with the bravery of his sovereign. Adam is invincible, but Eve is ensnared; 'for to her,' we are assured, 'a weaker mind had the Creator assigned;' 'yet'—let us treat her tenderly—'did she it through faithful mind; she knew not that hence so many ills, sinful woes, must follow to mankind.' A theme fitter for the historian or translator; too domestic for the barbarian poet's vigor and sublimity. Tumult, murder, combat and death are needed to swell into flame the native instinct. When, later on, he describes the flight of the Israelites, the strong breast heaves, and he shouts, incapable of restraining his passion:

'They preferred their arms; the war advanced; bucklers glittered, trumpets blared, standards rattled; . . . around them screamed the fowls of war; the ravens sang, greedy of battle, dewy-feathered; over the bodies of the host—dark choosers of the slain—the wolves sang their horrid even-song.'

With full zest, while the blood mounts in blinding currents to his eyes, he recounts the destruction of Pharaoh and his host:

<sup>1</sup> See *Paradise Lost*, I and IV, for singular correspondences.

<sup>2</sup> Reminding us of—

The infernal doors that on their hinges grate  
 Harsh thunder.—*Paradise Lost*.

'The folk was affrighted, the flood-dread seized on their sad souls; ocean wailed with death, the mountain heights were with blood besteam'd, the sea foamed with gore, crying was in the waves, the water full of weapons, a death-mist rose; the Egyptians were turned back; trembling they fled, they felt fear; would that host gladly find their homes; their vaunt grew sadder; against them, as a cloud, rose the fell rolling of the waves; there came not any of that host to home, but from behind enclosed them fate with the wave. Where wave e'er lay, the sea raged. Their might was merged, the streams stood, the storm rose high to heaven; the loudest arm-cry the hostile uttered; the air above was thickened with dying voices. . . . Ocean raged, drew itself up on high, the storms rose, the corpses rolled.'

Verily, the heathen fire has not burned out, nor the heathen imagery dropped out of memory and power. The old faith and the new coëxist and combine. When the monks read to him the opening of Genesis—'And the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the spirit of God moved over the waters'—he is reminded of his ancestral cosmogony as preserved in the *Edda*, and the coloring of those ancient dreams clings to his description:

'There had not as yet, save cavern-shade, ought been; but this wide abyss stood deep and dim, strange to its Lord, idle and useless; on which looked with his eyes the king firm of mind, and beheld those places void of joys; saw the dark cloud lower in eternal night, swart under heaven, dark and waste, until this worldly creation, through the word, existed of the Glory-King. . . . The earth as yet was not green with grass; ocean cover'd, swart in eternal night, far and wide the dusky ways.'

The Cædmonian poem, it is probable, is one of the many attempts of the monkish recluse to familiarize the people with the miraculous and religious narratives of Scripture by a paraphrase in the vernacular idiom. Of the two books composing it, only the first is continuous; the second is fragmentary. Perhaps the discordances are no greater than we should expect in a manuscript text passing from generation to generation; perhaps they indicate that the paraphrase, interrupted at intervals, was resumed by some successor, as idling monks at a subsequent period were often the continuators of voluminous romances. Its new mythology will frame the miracle-play. Milton, finding his originals in the Puritans, as Cædmon in the Vikings, will adopt it in his epic, assisted in the development of his thought by all the resources of Latin culture and civilization.

**Style.**—Iterative, vivid, harsh, curt, emphatic, ejaculative; as in all true Saxon poetry, whose genuine type is the war-song, where the verses fall like sword-strokes in the thick of battle.

**Rank.**—Nature in her first poverty, displaying the primitive force of the self-taught. A type of the grandeur, depth, and



tragic tone which the German race was to give to the religion of the East. Never before had the English language clothed such sublime thoughts. Never had limitless desire so struggled, giant-like, with limited utterance. 'Others after him,' says Bede, 'attempted, in the English nation, to compose religious poems, but none could ever compare with him.' Above the din of war and bloodshed, amid the brutality and mental inaction of centuries, he raised his voice and sang the substance of which all the ancient myths were but the shadow; sang with such fervor and persuasion that 'many were often excited to despise the world, and to aspire to heaven.' The prototype of Milton, as the picture exists in the sketch: the one, the rough draft; the other, the finished intellectual ideal. To the one Satan is a Saxon convict, —fastened by the neck, his hands manacled, and his feet bound; to the other, the ideal being,—

'Whose stature reached the sky, and on whose crest  
Sat Horror plumed.'

The precursor of a new order of ideas, standing at the confluence of two civilizations; a monumental figure placed between two epochs and participating in their two characters, as a stream which, flowing between two different soils, is tinged by both their hues.

**Character.**—Cheerful and kind, able to obey or command; attentive and punctual in the performance of duty; serious, eminently religious, fond of prayer. 'He never,' writes Bede, 'could compose frivolous and useless poems, but those alone pertaining to religion became his religious tongue.' A rough, noble expression of the vague, vast mystery of the world and of man. A moment, as old age closes upon him, he lifts the veil, and we see, as we read, the charity, pathos, resignation, Northern melancholy, of the man:

'Soul-longings many in my day I've had.  
My life's hope now is that the Tree of Triumph  
Must seek I. Than all others oftener  
Did I alone extol its glories;  
Thereto my will is bent, and when I need  
A claim for shelter, to the Rood I'll go.  
Of mightiest friends, from me are many now  
Unclasped, and far away from our world's joys:  
They sought the Lord of Hosts, and now in heaven,  
With the High-Father, live in glee and glory;  
And for the day most longingly I wait,



When the Saviour's Rood that here I contemplate  
 From this frail life shall take me into bliss,—  
 The bliss of Heaven's wards: the Lord's folk there  
 Is seated at the feast; there's joy unending;  
 And He shall set me there in glory,  
 And with the saints their pleasures I shall share.'

**Influence.**—He draped the Oriental imagery of the Bible in the English fashion, and brought it within the comprehension of the humblest. His verses became part of the people's thinking, created for it a new groove, and the recollections of Valhalla paled before the more spiritual and real splendors of the New Elysium. He wrought no revolution in the form of English song, but introduced into it, through the faith of Christ, new realms of fancy.

In our rasping life of gain, we are apt to imagine that art is of little account, but when the years roll by, we learn well enough what the ages value. No doubt this Cædmon, in his ill-furnished room, seemed to the practical man of trade a pitiful cipher, quite out of the march of important affairs; but even their names are forgotten, and all their wealth would now be given for one of the songs of the Whitby shepherd.

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## BEDE.

The Father of English learning.—*Burke.*

**Biography.**—Born in the county of Durham, 673; at seven, placed in the newly-founded monastery of St. Peter, Wearmouth; at ten, transferred to the associated monastery of St. Paul, Jarrow, five miles distant. Here, during the remainder of his life, in retirement and prayer, he applied himself to the study of Scripture and the advancement of knowledge. In his nineteenth year, he received the orders of deacon; in his thirtieth, those of the priesthood. The dignity of abbot he declined; 'for,' said he, 'the office demands household care, and household care brings with it distraction of mind, which hinders the prosecution of learning.'

To the very last he worked hard, teaching his numerous disciples and compiling in Latin from the venerable Fathers. Death comes and finds him still at work. Under an attack of asthma,

which has long been sapping his strength, he is urging forward an English version of the Gospel of St. John. It is morning on the 27th of May. ‘Most dear master,’ says one of his pupils, ‘there is still one chapter wanting; do you think it troublesome to be asked any more questions?’—‘It is no trouble,’ he answers; ‘take thy pen, and write fast.’ At noon, he takes a solemn farewell of his friends, distributing among them treasured spices and other gifts. At sunset the boy says, ‘Dear master, there is yet one sentence unwritten.’—‘Write it quickly,’ bids the dying scholar. ‘It is finished now,’ says the scribe at last.—‘You have spoken truly,’ is the reply, ‘all is finished. Receive my head into your hands; for it is a great satisfaction to me to sit facing my holy place, where I was wont to pray.’ And there on the pavement of his little cell, in the year 735, he falls into his last sleep as his voice reaches the close of the solemn chant, ‘Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.’

A tranquil death becomes the man of science or the scholar. The coward dies panic-stricken; the superstitious with visions of terror floating before their fancy: he who has a good conscience and a well-balanced mind, meets death with calmness and hope. Heaven has but ‘recalled its own.’

**Writings.**—The work which immortalizes his name is the *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* (731), written—like nearly all his works—in Latin. A digest of ancient records, of tradition, and of observation. Though tinged with the credulity of his time, it is based upon inquiries made in the true spirit of a historian,—business-like, yet child-like, practical, and spiritual. It is virtually a history of England brought down to the date of its completion.

At the end of this book, he gives a list of his compositions,—hymns, commentaries, and homilies; text-books for his pupils, throwing together all that the world had then accumulated in astronomy, physics, philosophy, grammar, rhetoric, medicine, and music. Almost the last words that broke from his lips were some English rhymes upon the uncertainties of the grave:

‘Before the necessary journey  
no one is  
wiser of thought  
than he hath need,  
to consider

before his departure,  
what for his spirit  
of good or evil  
after the death-day  
shall be doomed.’

**Style.**—Artless, succinct, moral, and reflective; clear, and often warm with life.

**Rank.**—Accomplished in the classics—a rare accomplishment in the West, skilled in the ecclesiastical chant, and master of the whole range of the science of his day. First in the order of time, among English scholars, and first among English historians. The glory of the old English period. The living encyclopædia of his age; superior perhaps (so dark was the intellectual night in the East, as in the West) to any man whom the world then possessed. Yet, withal, a great man of talent, not a great man of genius; a prodigious worker rather than a discoverer; a translator, a commentator, who, amid growing anarchy and gross ignorance, digests and compacts, out of dull, voluminous, or almost inaccessible books, what seems good and useful,—doing for the rest what they are unable to do for themselves.

**Character.**—Gentle, pure, simple-minded, earnest, and devout. Learning but deepened the lustre of his piety. His soul was a sanctuary lighted up with the lamps of angels, and dedicated to the high service of man and his Maker. By nature a student, his paradise was introspective. ‘My constant pleasure,’ he says, ‘lay in learning, or teaching, or writing.’ In acquiring and communicating, his industry was marvellous. Besides the usual manual labors of the monastery, the duties of the priest, and the occupation of teacher, forty-five treatises remained after his death to attest his habitual activity. All this was done with small aid from others. ‘I am my own secretary,’ he writes; ‘I make my own notes; I am my own librarian.’

**Influence.**—From his *Ecclesiastical History* we learn nearly all that we know of the Anglo-Saxons and their Church. He is the first figure to which our English science looks back, and the father of English national education. Six hundred monks, besides the strangers that flocked hither for instruction, formed his school of Jarrow; and Northumbria became, for a period, the literary centre of Western Europe. Dissensions and confusion, attending the disintegration of the original political system, will bruise this humble plant, and the wars with the Danes will complete the blight of its promise. Yet will it have, silently, insensibly, a numerous and illustrious progeny. Centuries hence, his

theological and educational works will be held in esteem as authorities and text-books. The light that issues from Jarrow extends to York; Alcuin, by the invitation of Charlemagne, carries it thence to the Continent; French statesmanship and Saxon scholarship go hand in hand to diffuse mediæval civilization; and so, while the fields are wasted by violence, famine, and plague, the Venerable Bede is as a tree planted by the river's side; his branches shall spread, and his beauty be as the olive, and his smell as Lebanon; and what though he dare not speak, they that dwell under his shadow shall return,—they shall revive as the corn and grow as the vine.

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## ALFRED.

The most perfect character in history. He is a singular instance of a prince who has become a hero of romance, who, as such, has had countless imaginary exploits attributed to him, but to whose character romance has done no more than justice, and who appears in exactly the same light in history and in fable.—*Freeman*.

**Biography.**—Born at Wantage, 849. Sent to Rome at five, anointed by the Pope, and adopted as his spiritual son; again, two years later, travelling in the train of a king, now at the court of the grandson of Charlemagne, now at the castles of warrior nobles, now with the learned prelates—across the Alps—through the garden of the world—renewing the memories of his childhood amid the ruins, shrines, and palaces of the Eternal City,—what an episode in his young life for observation and thought! Returning, he learns, with the young nobles of Wessex, to run, leap, wrestle, and hunt; illiterate at twelve, and during the period of youth, though a lover of wisdom, without the advantages of special tuition. Marries at twenty, while England is growing dark under the shadow of a tremendous storm; within six weeks, is in arms; at twenty-three, ascends the tottering throne of his fathers, when nine pitched battles have been fought; reduces the pagan leaders to sue humbly for peace, and three months later, in January, is obliged to flee, with a scanty band of followers, into the forest of Selwood. Here, in disguise, in a herdman's hut, by the burning logs on the hearth,

he mends his bow and arrows. The good house-wife confides to his care her baking loaves: but his thought is elsewhere, and they are burning rapidly to cinders. The irate woman, running up to remove them, exclaims:

'Ca'sn thee mind the ke-aks, man, an' doossen zee 'em burn?  
I'm bound thee's eat 'em vast enough az zoon az 'tis the turn!'

Near Easter a gleam of good news from the west gladdens the hearts of the wanderers; and in the lengthening days of spring, strong men and true are rallied, for word is abroad that the heroking is alive; the spirit of the red-handed Dane is broken, and in the resulting fusion of elements are laid the foundations of a better England. The messengers of death are also the messengers of resurrection. There is leisure now for reform, and for upwards of four precious years King Alfred pushes forward the work of internal repair and improvement—material and educational. But in the middle of reforms, while the country is thrilling with awakening life, the war-cloud gathers again, and he prepares to meet another great wave of invasion. The final issue is tried between Christian and Pagan. In three years the Saxon prevails—'Thanks be to God,' says the Chronicle. Thenceforth his reign is devoted to raising the slothful and stolid nation out of the exhaustion in which the life-and-death struggle have left it. Worn out by the constant stress of government and a grievous but unknown complaint, which the physicians ascribed to the spite of the Devil, he died on the 26th of October, 901, in the fifty-second year of his age, closing his eyes on peace at home and abroad. The good die early; the world's hardest workers and noblest benefactors rarely burn to the socket.

**Writings.**—Chiefly translations into English of the popular manuals of the time, omitting here and expanding there, as might be needful for English use:

*Bede's Ecclesiastical History of England.* Perhaps reverence for the venerable author caused him to present it without change or addition. It seems likely that his rendering of this work gave the first impulse toward the compilation of the Saxon Chronicle.

*Orosius' Universal History*, whose scope is thus characteristically summed up by its author—a Spaniard of the fifth century:

'I have now set out by the help of Christ, and in obedience to your desire, O most blessed father Augustine, the lusts and punishments of **sinful men**, the conflicts of the



ages, and the judgments of God, from the beginning of the world to the present time; that is to say, for 5617 years.'

The text—dull enough, though probably the best account of human affairs available to Alfred—is enriched with the new geographical discoveries in the North, including reports of the Northern voyages made by two of his sea-captains. With gossip worthy of Herodotus, we are told:

'Eastland is very large, and there are in it many towns, and in every town a king; and there is also great abundance of honey and fish; and the king and the richest men drink mare's milk, and the poor and the slaves drink mead. They have many contests among themselves; and there is no ale brewed among the Esthonian, for there is mead enough.'

Funerals are postponed by the relatives as long as possible, according to the riches of the deceased; kings and the great lying in state for half a year: for—

'There is a tribe which can produce cold, and so the dead in whom they produce that cold lie very long there and do not putrefy; and if any one sets two vessels full of ale or water, they contrive that one shall be frozen, be it summer or be it winter.'

The living drink and sport, till the day of burial or burning:

'On that day they divide the dead man's property into five or six portions, according to value, and place it out, the largest portion about a mile from the dwelling where the dead man lies, then another, then a third, and so on till it is all laid within the mile. Then all the neighbors within five or six miles who have swift horses, meet and ride towards the property; and he who has the swiftest horse comes to the first and largest portion, and so each after other till the whole is taken; and he takes the least portion who takes that which is nearest the dwelling: and then every one rides away with the property, and they may have it all; and on this account swift horses are there excessively dear.'

*Boethius' Consolations of Philosophy*, the hand-book of the Middle Ages for the serious. 'A golden book,' says Gibbon, 'not unworthy the leisure of Plato or Tully.' Few books are more striking from the circumstances of their production. It was written in prison, in the dying-swan-like tones of Aurelius. The reflections that consoled the writer in bonds were soon required to support him in the hour of his execution. To him whose soul is his country, a dungeon is the vestibule of Heaven. The mind, shut out from this scene of sensible things, retires into its own infinite domain. In Milton and Bunyan we shall see how wide, when the outer world loses its charms, the inner opens its gates.

The burden of the work is, that a wise God rules the world; that man in his worst extremity possesses much, and ought to fix his thoughts on the imperishable; that God is the chief good,



and works no evil; that, as seen in Eternity, only the good are happy; that God's foreknowledge is reconcilable with the free-will of man. It is a work congenial to Alfred's thinking; for he, like Boethius, has known adversity. Moreover, he would give to his people a system of moral precepts. To do this, he must stoop as to a child; for his audience has never thought or known anything. In this style—asking his readers to pray for him and not to blame him for his imperfect attainments—he renders the refined sentiments and classical allusions of the grand Roman Senator:

‘It happened formerly that there was a harper in the country called Thrace, which was in Greece. The harper was inconceivably good. His name was Orpheus. He had a very excellent wife, called Eurydice. Then began men to say concerning the harper, that he could harp so that the wood moved, and the stones stirred themselves at the sound, and wild beasts would run thereto, and stand as if they were tame; so still, that though men or hounds pursued them, they shunned them not. Then said they that the harper's wife should die, and her soul should be led to hell. Then should the harper become so sorrowful that he could not remain among the men, but frequented the wood, and sat on the mountains, both day and night, weeping and harping, so that the woods shook, and the rivers stood still, and no hart shunned any lion, nor hare any hound; nor did cattle know any hatred, or any fear of others, for the pleasure of the sound. Then it seemed to the harper that nothing in this world pleased him. Then thought he that he would seek the gods of hell, and endeavour to allure them with his harp, and pray that they would give him back his wife. When he came thither, then should there come towards him the dog of hell, whose name was Cerberus,—he should have three heads,—and began to wag his tail, and play with him for his harping. Then was there also a very horrible gatekeeper, whose name should be Charon. He had also three heads, and he was very old. Then began the harper to beseech him that he would protect him while he was there, and bring him thence again safe. Then did he promise that to him, because he was desirous of the unaccustomed sound. Then went he further until he met the fierce goddesses, whom the common people call Parcæ, of whom they say that they know no respect for any man, but punish every man according to his deeds; and of whom they say that they control every man's fortune. Then began he to implore their mercy. Then began they to weep with him. Then went he farther, and all the inhabitants of hell ran towards him, and led him to their king; and all began to speak with him, and to pray that which he prayed. And the restless wheel which Ixion, the king of the Lapithæ, was bound to for his guilt, that stood still for his harping. And Tantalus the king, who in this world was immoderately greedy, and whom that same vice of greediness followed there, he became quiet. And the vulture should cease, so that he tore not the liver of Tityus the king, which before therewith tormented him. And all the punishments of the inhabitants of hell were suspended whilst he harped before the king. When he long and long had harped, then spoke the king of the inhabitants of hell, and said, “Let us give the man his wife, for he has earned her by his harping.” He then commanded him that he should well observe that he never looked backwards after he departed thence; and said if he looked backwards, that he should lose the woman. But men can with great difficulty, if at all, restrain love! Wellaway! What! Orpheus then led his wife with him till he came to the boundary of light and darkness. Then went his wife after him. When he came forth into the light, then looked he behind his back towards the woman. Then was she immediately lost to him. This fable teaches every man who desires to fly the darkness of hell, and to come to the light of true good, that he look not about him to his old vices, so that he practise them again as fully as he did before. For whosoever with full

will turns his mind to the vices which he had before forsaken, and practises them, and they then fully please him, and he never thinks of forsaking them; then loses he all his former good unless he again amend it.'

*Gregory, on the Care of the Soul*, which seemed to Alfred a most suitable manual for the clergy in their lethargic state. It is in the preface to this work that he tells us of the sad decay of learning in his kingdom, and of his desire for its true restoration:

'I wish you to know that it often occurs to my mind to consider what manner of wise men there were formerly in the English nation, both spiritual and temporal, and how happy the times then were among the English, and how well the kings behaved in their domestic government, and how they prospered in knowledge and wisdom. I considered also how earnest God's ministers then were, as well about preaching as about learning, and men came from foreign countries to seek wisdom and doctrine in this land, and how we, who live in these times, are obliged to go abroad to get them. To so low a depth has learning fallen among the English nation, that there have been very few on this side of the Humber, who were able to understand the English of their service, or to turn an epistle out of Latin into English; and I know there were not many beyond the Humber who could do it. There were so few, that I cannot think of one on the south side of the Thames when I first began to reign. God Almighty be thanked that we have always a teacher in the pulpit now. . . . When I thought of all this, I fancied also that I saw (before everything was ravaged and burned) how all the churches throughout the English nation stood full of books, though at that time they gathered very little fruit from their books, not being able to understand them, because they were not written in their own language. For which reason I think it best, if you too think so, that we should turn into the language, which we all of us know, some such books as are deemed most useful for all men to understand. . . . When I reflected how this learning of the Latin tongue had fallen throughout the English nation, though many knew how to read English writing, I then began in the midst of divers and manifold affairs of this kingdom, to turn into Anglo-Saxon this book, which in Latin is named *Pastoralis*, and in Anglo-Saxon the *Herdsmen's Book*; and I will send one of them to every bishop's see in my kingdom.'

*Proverbs*, compiled in the reign of Henry II, and hence in the broken dialect of the transition period. They mirror a wise and benevolent spirit. The scholar and the man outshine the king. We know him better and honor him more when we read from his own lips:

'The right nobility is in the mind, not in the flesh.'

'Power is never a good unless he be good that has it; and that is the good of the man, not of the power.'

'Learn therefore wisdom; and when you have learned it, do not neglect it. I tell you then, without any doubt, that by it you may come to power, though you should not desire the power.'

In almost the last of the series, he addresses his son:

'My dear son, set thee now beside me, and I will deliver thee true instructions. My son, I feel that my hour is coming. My countenance is wan. My days are almost done. We must now part. I shall go to another world, and thou shalt be left alone in all my wealth. I pray thee (for thou art my dear child), strive to be a father and a lord to thy people; be thou the children's father and the widow's friend; comfort thou the poor and shelter the weak; and with all thy might, right that which is wrong. And, son, govern thyself by law; then shall the Lord love thee, and God above all things shall be

thy reward. Call thou upon Him to advise thee in all thy need, and so He shall help thee the better to compass that which thou wishest.'

Some truths and precepts are like diamonds, which may be set a hundred times in as many generations without loss of beauty or of lustre.

**Style.**—Artless, earnest, but sober; abrupt, yet long drawn out; practical and moral, like the man; idiomatic in vocabulary and arrangement, showing a strong repugnance to the importation of foreign words, a quality certainly due in part to his object—the instruction of a barbarous audience.

**Character.**—Tradition tells of his genial good-nature, his love of song, his eager desire for knowledge and the improvement of society. His words, and the books selected as the objects of his chief efforts, indicate strongly the union of zeal with moderation, of practical judgment with serious and elevated sentiment, of untiring industry with eminent piety. How or when he learned to read or write, we know not. Asser, his contemporary, says:

'His noble nature implanted in him from his cradle a love of wisdom above all things; but, with shame be it spoken, by the unworthy neglect of his parents and nurses, he remained illiterate even till he was twelve years old or more; but he listened with serious attention to the Saxon poems which he often heard recited, and easily retained them in his docile memory.'

And again:

'This he confessed, with many lamentations and sighs, to have been one of his greatest difficulties and impediments in this life, namely, that when he was young and had the capacity for learning, he could not find teachers.'

Careful of detail and methodical, he carries in his bosom a notebook in which he jots down things as they strike him; now a prayer, now a story, now an event, now an image. Asser, instructed to write in it a passage which he has just read to the king, says:

'But I could not find any empty space in that book wherein to write the quotation, for it was already full of various matters.'

Four priests read to him whenever he has leisure, Asser among the number:

'I read to him whatever books he liked, and such as he had at hand; for this is his usual custom, both night and day, amid his many other occupations of mind and body, either himself to read books, or to listen whilst others read them.'

But there is a God in this universe, and a God's sanction, with which a nation may not dispense without peril, nor a man without

decay of the heart and dimming of the eye. Without a realized sense of the divine, the intellect can have no clear vision on moral mountains, nor the national character become great, firm and glorious. A lost faith or an indifferent faith is fatal to all high ideal. Alfred has neither. The strong moral bent of his mind is seen in some of the novelties of his legislation. He believes there is an order from everlasting, and declares it as he understands it, without balancing expediencies or plausibilities. His 'Dooms,' accordingly, are an almost literal transcript of the Decalogue, with selections from the Mosaic code; as,—

'These are the dooms that thou shalt set them:—If any one buy a Christian bondsman, be he bondsman to him six years, the seventh be he free unbought. With such clothes as he went in, with such go he out. If he himself have a wife, go she out with him. If, however, the lord gave him a wife, go she and her bairn the lord's. If then the bondsman say, I will not go from my lord, nor from my wife, nor from my bairn, nor from my goods, let then his lord bring him to the church door, and drill through his ear with an awl, to witness that he be ever thenceforth a bondsman.'<sup>1</sup>

Amid the cares of state, racked by almost ceaseless pain, he finds time for daily religious services:

'Because he feared the anger of God, if he should do anything contrary to his will, he used often to rise in the morning at the cock-crow, and go to pray in the churches and at the relics of the saints.'

He consecrates to God the half of his possible services, bodily and mental. To prove his sincerity, he contrives a time-piece for the more exact measurement of the hours, since at night on account of the darkness, and frequently at day on account of the clouds, he cannot always accurately estimate them. He has six candles made, of equal length, each with twelve divisions or rings. Lighted in succession, they burn a night and a day:

'But sometimes when they would not continue burning a whole day and night, till the same hour that they were lighted the preceding evening, from the violence of the wind, which blew day and night without intermission through the doors and windows of the churches, the fissures of the divisions, the plankings, or the wall, or the thin canvas of the tents, they then unavoidably burned out and finished their course before the appointed time; the king therefore considered by what means he might shut out the wind, and so by a useful and cunning invention, he ordered a lantern to be beautifully constructed of wood and white ox-horn, which when skilfully planed till it is thin, is no less transparent than a vessel of glass.'

Though simple and kindly in temper, he is a stern inquisitor in executing justice. He has twenty-four officers hung for corruption in the judgment-seat.

Affable and liberal, patient, brave, just, and temperate, with a

<sup>1</sup> See Exodus **xxi**, 1-6.

clear conscience he may testify: 'This I can now truly say, that so long as I have lived I have striven to live worthily, and after my death to leave my memory to my descendants in good works.'

**Rank.**—Without the genius to invent and originate, he had the talent to adapt means to ends, to develop and improve the old, to think what the many think and cannot yet say. A great gift, no doubt. It is men of great talent who occupy the headlands of society. In politics, in war, in letters, Alfred simply takes what is nearest and makes the best of it. As an author, he is like Bede, a teacher of semi-barbarians, who tries not to create but to compile, to pick out and explain from Greek and Latin stories something which may suit the people of his age; as a father who draws his little boy between his knees, and with much pains relates a fairy tale or makes an idea clear by visible and tangible things.

There is no evidence of the imaginative qualities which mark the higher statesman. His sphere of action, indeed, was too narrow to justify his comparison, politically or intellectually, with the immortal few. What really lifts him to their level is the moral grandeur of his life. Nay, his altitude is the greater in proportion as wisdom is above knowledge, and goodness above genius, or spiritual growth above mental culture. Among recorded rulers he is unique. What other has possessed so many virtues with so little alloy? A soldier, a statesman, a law-giver, a lover of learning, and an author of repute; a prince without personal ambition, all whose wars were fought in his country's defense, who bore adversity with noble fortitude and wore his laurels in noble simplicity, steering the ship of state, with a turbulent crew, through a stormy sea,—there is none like him. Of no other will it ever be said that he is 'England's darling.'

**Influence.**—Solicitous of his own enlightenment, he never forgot that his first duty was to his people. He educated himself (nearly forty before he acquired an imperfect acquaintance with Latin) that he might educate them. He rebuilt monasteries, and made them educational centres; superintended a school in his own palace, sent abroad for instructors, and desired that every free-born youth who possessed the means should 'abide at his book till he well understand English writing'; had skilled



mechanics brought from the Continent, who built houses, says Asser, 'majestic and good beyond all the precedents of his ancestors.' His legislation left imperishable traces upon England. In his court, at his impulse, perchance in his very words, English history begins.<sup>1</sup> True the light will wane and flicker. The flood of national calamity, rising ominously during his life, shall seem to sweep utterly away the ripening harvest of Saxon civilization; but force is indestructible; and that spirit of moral strength, felt afar off, lives still beneath the sun, as seed springs from seed. The oak dies, but the acorn lives. Each moral world is related to many others. The novels of Scott produce the historical works of Guizot and Thiers; the voice of Demosthenes, though it has long since died away over his native shores, heaves many a living breast; and the heart of Paul, whose head was claimed by Nero long ago, beats sacred music in a thousand pulpits.

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## ROGER BACON.

Χαίρετε Κήρυκες Διὸς ἄγγελοι ἠδὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν.

Hail, Heralds, messengers of God and men!—*Homer.*

**Biography.**—Born in the county of Somerset, 1214, of a wealthy family, which had been driven into exile and reduced to poverty by the civil wars. Studied at Oxford, then at Paris, as was at that time the custom of learned Englishmen, and there received the degree of Doctor of Divinity. His whole heritage was spent in costly studies and experiments. Soon after his return home, withdrawing from the civil strife fermenting between the baronage and the Crown, he became a mendicant friar of the order of St. Francis, and settled at Oxford, devoting himself to study with extraordinary fervor, notwithstanding the discipline of the Franciscans, who looked upon books and study as hinderances to their appointed mission of preaching among the masses of the poor. Physics seems to have been the chief object of his labors, and liberal friends of science supplied him with means for pursuing his researches. His spreading fame

<sup>1</sup> That is, English history expressed in the *vernacular*.



was mingled with suspicions of his dealings in magic; and the prejudice of the ignorant was encouraged by the jealousy of his superiors and brethren. An accusation was brought against him at the Papal court, and he was interdicted from teaching in the university. For ten years he was under constant supervision, forbidden to publish anything under pain of forfeiture of the book and penance of bread and water. The pope, who had heard of his rare acquirements, requested him to write. Friends raised the necessary money by pawning their goods, upon the understanding that their loan should be made known to the Holy See. Within fifteen months, despite all obstacles, three large treatises<sup>1</sup> were dispatched to Rome, 'on account of the danger of roads and the possible loss of the work,' by a youth who had been trained and educated with great care by Bacon himself. In 1278, a vehement reformer ere the current of opinion had turned against former establishments, he was thrown into prison, where he remained fourteen years. In 1294, when his life had almost covered the thirteenth century, the old man died, having endured the obloquy of all revolutionists who are not themselves creatures of the revolution.

**Writings.**—His monumental work is the *Opus Majus* (1267). It is divided into six parts:

*Part I* treats of the sources of error and causes of ignorance,—authority, custom, popular opinion, and ostentatious pride. Like a careful and ambitious builder, filled with a new grand idea of nature and life, he lays a sure foundation for the vast superstructure which his plan embraces. Without certain practical conditions, a speculative knowledge of the most perfect method of procedure remains barren and unapplied. Bacon the Friar proves his kinship with the great lights of the world by his precepts, similar to theirs, on the disposition proper to philosophy. Before him, Socrates had said: 'To attain to a knowledge of ourselves we must banish prejudice, passion and sloth.' Bacon the Chancellor was yet to say: 'If the human intellect hath once taken a liking to any doctrine, either because received and credited, or because otherwise pleasing,—it draws everything

<sup>1</sup> *Opus Majus*, *Opus Minus*, and *Opus Tertium*; or, *The Greater Work*, *The Less Work*, and *The Third Work*. The *Minus* is little more than a summary of the *Majus*, and the *Tertium* an appendix to it; both still exist unpublished in the Cottonian and other libraries.

else into harmony with that doctrine and to its support.' And Sir W. Raleigh: 'It is opinion, not truth, that travelleth the world without passport.' 'Opinion,' says the great Pascal, 'disposes of all things. It constitutes beauty, justice, happiness.' And the pious Charon: 'Almost every opinion we have, we have but by authority; we believe, judge, act, live, and die on trust; a common custom teaches us.' Vanity, self-love, traditionary habit, the prestige of a great name, are powerful impediments to a progress in knowledge. Unless we can cast off the prejudices of the man and become as little children, docile and unperturbed, we need never hope to enter the temple of science. Let us not follow the philosophers of antiquity with a too profound deference. They, and especially Aristotle, are not infallible. 'We find their books,' says Bacon, 'full of doubts, obscurities, and perplexities. They scarce agree with each other in one empty question or one worthless sophism, or one operation of science, as one man agrees with another in the practical operations of medicine, surgery, and the like arts of secular men.' 'Indeed,' he adds, 'not only the philosophers, but the saints have fallen into errors which they have afterwards retracted.'

*Part II* treats of the relation between philosophy and theology. All true wisdom is contained in the Scriptures; and the true end of philosophy is to rise from an imperfect knowledge of created things to a knowledge of the Creator. The brilliant results achieved by the ancients, who had not the Word, must have been inspired by a direct illumination from God.

*Part III* treats of the utility of Grammar. The necessity of a true linguistic science was strongly impressed upon him by the current translations of philosophical writings, which were very bad. This it was which moved him to say, somewhat impatiently:

'If I had power over the works of Aristotle, I would have them all burnt; for it is only a loss of time to study in them, and a course of error, and a multiplication of ignorance beyond expression.'

And again,—

'The common herd of students, with their heads, have no principle by which they can be excited to any worthy employment; and hence they mope and make asses of themselves over their bad translations, and lose their time, and trouble, and money.'

A good translator, he wisely insists, should know thoroughly (1) the language from which he is translating, (2) the language

into which he is translating, and (3) the subject of which the book treats.

*Part IV* treats of the utility of mathematics. All science, of things human and divine, rests ultimately on them. Here only can we entirely avoid doubt and error, and obtain certainty and truth:

‘Moreover, there have been found famous men, as Robert, bishop of Lincoln, and Brother Adam Marshman, and many others who by the power of mathematics have been able to explain the causes of things; as may be seen in the writings of these men, for instance, concerning the Rainbow and Comets, and the generation of heat and climates, and the celestial bodies.’

Mathematics is the ‘alphabet of philosophy,’ the door and key to all sciences:

‘The neglect of it for nearly thirty or forty years hath nearly destroyed the entire studies of Latin Christendom. For he who knows not mathematics cannot know any other sciences; and, what is more, he cannot discover his own ignorance or find its proper remedies.’

*Part V* treats of perspective. This is the part on which the author most prided himself. He opens with an able sketch of psychology, next describes the anatomy of the eye, touches upon other points of physiological optics,—in general erroneously, then discusses very fully the laws of reflection and refraction, and the construction of mirrors and lenses.

*Part VI*, the most remarkable portion of the *Opus Majus*, treats of experimental science. Real knowledge consists in the union of exact conceptions with certain facts. The foundation is experience; but experience is of two sorts,—external and internal. The first is usually called experiment, but it can give no complete knowledge even of matter, much less of spirit. The second is intuitive and divine. Of the supernatural enlightenment there are seven grades. Experimental science has three great *Prerogatives* over all the other sciences: 1. It verifies their conclusions; as in the Rainbow, whose colors are produced in the drops dashed from oars in the sunshine, in the spray thrown by a mill-wheel, in the dew of a summer morning, and in many other ways. 2. It discovers truths which they could never reach. Thus (1) the construction of an artificial sphere which shall move with the heavens by natural influences. Or (2) the art of prolonging life, which experiment may teach, though medicine can do little except by regimen. Of a preparation here mentioned,

one of the ingredients is the flesh of a dragon, used as food by the Ethiopians, we are told, and prepared as follows:

‘Where there are good flying dragons, by the art which they possess, they draw them out of their dens, and have bridles and saddles in readiness, and they ride upon them, and make them bound about in the air in a violent manner, that the hardness and toughness of the flesh may be reduced, as boars are hunted and bulls are baited before they are killed for eating.’

Or (3) the art of making gold finer than fine gold, which transcends the power of alchemy. 3. It investigates the secrets of nature. Here we find the suggestion that the fire-works made by children, of saltpetre, might lead to the invention of a formidable weapon of war; that character may be changed by changing the air. When Alexander applied to Aristotle to know whether he should exterminate certain tribes which he had discovered, as being irreclaimably barbarous, the philosopher replied: ‘If you can alter their air, permit them to live; if not, put them to death.’

Hence, it appears, the leading purpose of the *Opus Majus* is the progress of knowledge, and, to this end, the reform of scientific method. A wonderful work, if we but consider the circumstances of its origin, alike wonderful in plan and in detail,—the encyclopædia of the classic century of scholasticism.

**Style.**—Plain, methodical, clear, animated, energetic; as of a large, earnest soul profoundly penetrated with the vastness of its mission and the brevity of its opportunity.

**Rank.**—A giant among his contemporaries, standing out in picturesque and impressive contrast. To them he was a wonder, and they styled him, ‘*Doctor Mirabilis*.’ As a student at Paris, he mastered Latin, Greek, and Hebrew,—an accomplishment which not more than five men in England then possessed. The story was current that he had discovered a receipt for teaching any one ‘in a very few days Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Arabic.’ His works, full of sound and exact knowledge, cover the whole range of science and philosophy,—Mathematics, Mechanics, Optics, Astronomy, Geography, Chronology, Chemistry, Magic, Music, Medicine, Grammar, Logic, Metaphysics, Ethics, and Theology. He stood upon a lofty eminence, and looked forward three centuries when his dreams were to take substantial form. He gave a receipt for making gunpowder, learned perhaps from the Arabs,—saltpetre, charcoal, and sulphur. Afterwards it was

told how the fiend, to whom the heretical wizard sold himself, carried away his victim in a whirlwind of fire. He knew that there were different kinds of gas, or *air* as he calls it, and tells us that one of these puts out a flame. He invented the school-boy's favorite experiment of burning a candle under a bell-glass to prove that when the air is exhausted the candle goes out. He predicts that one day ships will go on the water without sails, and carriages run on the roads without horses, and that travellers will use flying machines. He constructed lenses, burning glasses, and knew the theory of the telescope if he did not make one. He says:

'We can place transparent bodies (that is, glasses) in such a form and position between our eyes and other objects that the rays shall be refracted and bent towards any place we please, so that we shall see the object near at hand, or at a distance, under any angle we please; and thus from an incredible distance we may read the smallest letter, and may number the smallest particles of sand, by reason of the greatness of the angle under which they appear.'

To-day, however high the philosopher may rise above the multitude, his elevation is seen to be the reward of energy and labor. But in Bacon's time, men's thoughts were less clear, they could catch no glimpse of the intervening path; and when they saw him above them, but knew not how he was raised and supported, he became to them an object of suspicion and terror—a magician,—and feelings of envy probably induced the few tacitly to sanction the opinion of the many. Thus, the *Famous History of Fryer Bacon*, compiled in the sixteenth century, represents him before the king and queen in the act of displaying his skill in the black art. He waves his wand, and entrancing music is heard; waves it once more, and five dancers enter, who dance, and vanish in the order of their coming; waves it again, and a table laden with choicest viands is spread before them; yet again, and again, while the room fills with richest perfumes and the liveries of sundry nations pass and fade. He makes a Brazen Head, by which, 'if he could make this head to speake (and heare it when it speakes), then might hee be able to wall all England about with brasse.' From a high hill, with his 'mathematical glasses' he fires the public buildings of a besieged town, and amid the uproar gives the signal for the king's assault:

'Thus through the art of this learned man the king got this strong towne, which hee could not doe with all his men without Fryer Bacon's helpe.'



A keen and systematic thinker who, without being completely dissevered from his national antecedents and surrounding, seeks to divert into other and profitable channels that subtlety of the schoolmen which was growing forests of erudition without fruit. In this he is an accurate representative of the English mind on one of its most striking sides, and the forerunner of his greater namesake, who will exhibit the same fondness for experiment, the same preference of inductive to abstract reasoning. The *Opus Majus* is the prototype, in spirit, of Lord Bacon's *Novum Organum*.

**Character.**—His keen thirst for knowledge, his patience, his energy, appear forcibly in words like these:

'From my youth up, I have labored at the sciences and tongues. I have sought the friendship of all men among the Latins who had any reputation for knowledge. I have caused youths to be instructed in languages, geometry, arithmetic, the construction of tables and instruments, and many needful things besides.'

Again:

'During the twenty years that I have especially labored in the attainment of wisdom, abandoning the path of common men, I have spent on these pursuits more than two thousand pounds, not to mention the cost of books, experiments, instruments, tables, the acquisition of languages, and the like. Add to all this the sacrifices I have made to procure the friendship of the wise, and to obtain well instructed assistants.'

Of the difficulties in the way of such studies as he had resolved to pursue:

'Without mathematical instruments no science can be mastered, and these instruments are not to be found among the Latins, and could not be made for two or three hundred pounds. Besides, better tables are indispensably necessary, tables on which the motions of the heavens are certified from the beginning to the end of the world without daily labor; but these tables are worth a king's ransom, and could not be made without a vast expense. I have often attempted the composition of such tables, but could not finish them through failure of means and the folly of those whom I had to employ.'

As a teacher, he was devoted to those whom he taught. Of the boy sent to Rome, he writes to the pope:

'When he came to me as a poor boy, I caused him to be nurtured and instructed for the love of God, especially since for aptitude and innocence I have never found so towardly a youth. Five or six years ago I caused him to be taught in languages, mathematics, and optics, and I have gratuitously instructed him with my own lips since the time that I received your mandate. There is no one at Paris who knows so much of the root of philosophy, though he has not produced the branches, flowers, and fruit because of his youth, and because he has had no experience in teaching. But he has the means of surpassing all the Latins if he live to grow old and goes on as he has begun.'

Neither his confidence in the power of the human intellect nor his devotion to physical studies materialized his faith or abated his humility. Wisely he says:

‘Man is incapable of perfect wisdom in this life; it is hard for him to ascend towards perfection, easy to glide downwards to falsehoods and vanities: let him then not boast of his wisdom-or extol his knowledge. What he knows is little and worthless, in respect of that which he believes without knowing; and still less, in respect of that which he is ignorant of. He is mad who thinks highly of his wisdom; he most mad, who exhibits it as something to be wondered at.’

Popular legend, which transforms him into a powerful conjurer, always represents him to have been a beneficent one, courageous and modest.

**Influence.**—Upon his own age not great. The seed he let drop, fell for the most part on a barren soil. The master-conception was itself drying up. Science was extinguished in idle raving and inanity. Bacon himself says:

‘Never was there so great an appearance of wisdom nor so much exercise of study in so many Faculties, in so many regions, as for this last forty years. Doctors are dispersed everywhere, in every castle, in every burgh, and especially by the students of two Orders, which has not happened except for about forty years. And yet there was never so much ignorance, so much error.’

He sought, in opposition to the spirit of his times, to divert the interest of his contemporaries from scholastic subtleties to the study of nature, and gained from his own Order a prison. To us he has left a treasure of the most solid knowledge of his century, of worthy and wise speculations. He is, moreover, an interesting and instructive example of real greatness born before its time, uttering its thoughts in Golgotha, standing alone on heights unknown, and by its very isolation forming no school and leaving no disciples.

# INITIATIVE PERIOD.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### FEATURES.

If there be any such thing as a philosophy of history, real or possible, it is in virtue of there being certain progressive organizing laws in which the fretful lives of each of us are gathered into and subordinated in some larger unity, through which age is linked to age, as we move forward, with an horizon expanding and advancing.—*Froude*.

**Politics.**—The chief object of the English was to establish, by force of arms, a continental empire. The greatest victories of the Middle Ages were gained at this time against great odds by the English armies. A French king was brought captive to London, an English one was crowned at Paris. But after a long and bloody struggle, with many bitter regrets the contest was abandoned, and from that hour no British government has seriously and steadily pursued the dream of great conquests on the Continent.

Confined within the limits of the island, the warlike people employed in civil strife those arms which had carried terror beyond the Pyrenees and the Alps. The barons, ceasing to plunder the French, were by the force of habit, eager to plunder one another. Ireland and Scotland, subjugated by the Plantagenets, were impatient under the yoke. The former had never, since the days of Henry II, been able to expel the foreign invaders. The latter, as we have seen, vindicated her independence under the wise and valiant Bruce. Both were far behind England in wealth and civilization.

Kings overstepped the constitutional line. They possessed many lucrative and formidable rights which enabled them to punish any who thwarted them, and to reward any who enjoyed their favor. Persons obnoxious to the government were frequently imprisoned merely by the mandate of the sovereign. Taxes were imposed without the assent of the estates of the

realm. Penalties fixed by statute were remitted. But these incursions were strenuously withstood. Three ancient and potent principles bounded persistently the royal prerogative and protected the liberties of the nation: 1. The king could not legislate without the consent of parliament. 2. Nor without this consent could he impose a tax. 3. He was bound to conduct the administration according to law, and if the law was infringed his advisers were answerable. These fundamental rules, by their natural development, will produce the order of things under which we now live.

Though the struggles with regard to the authority of the Great Charter were over, and the king was acknowledged to lie under some obligations; yet the government, on the whole, was only a barbarous monarchy, neither regulated by fixed maxims nor bounded by undisputed rights. It was a composite of opposite systems, each prevailing in its turn according to the favor of incidents,—royalty, aristocracy, priesthood, and comonalty.

The weakness of the second Edward gave reins to that licentiousness of the grandees which the vigor of his father had repressed; and the hopes that rose with his accession were blasted amid the traitorous conspiracies and public disorders that accomplished and attended his deposition. The reign of Edward III, as it was one of the longest in the annals of the nation, was also one of the most glorious,—if by glory are meant foreign victories, and comparative domestic peace in an age of violence and outrage. Parliament rose into greater consideration. The House of Commons, naturally depressed during factious periods by the greater power of the crown and barons, began to appear of some weight in the constitution. The reign of Richard II began in tranquillity and went out in furious convulsions,—less from neglect of national privileges than from want of power to overawe his barons.

**Society.**—The amalgamation of conquered and conquerors was complete. The original ground of quarrel was lost to view. The constitution of the House of Commons promoted a salutary intermixture of classes. Between the aristocracy and working people was springing up a middle class, agricultural and commercial. The knight was the connecting link between the baron

and the shopkeeper. No longer rich enough to assist at the royal assemblies, community of interests, similarity of manners, nearness of condition, lead him to coalesce with the yeomen, who take him for their representative, elect him. The laborious, courageous body that supplies the energy of the nation, they value themselves, equally with the grandee, as of a race born to victory and dominion.

The ordinary dwelling consisted of two rooms,—the *hall* for living and miscellaneous use, and the *bower*, or chamber, for sleeping and privacy. The use of chimneys is distinctly mentioned, though rarely. The fire was usually in the middle of the floor; and the smoke, if it pleased, took its course through a hole in the roof. Hence Chaucer of the ‘poure wydow’:

‘Ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hire halle,  
In which she eet ful many a slender meel.’

The house, as among the low Irish and Italians yet, was shared with the cattle and poultry. Thus of the rooster:

‘As Chauntecleer among his wyves alle  
Sat on his perche, that was in the halle.’

The walls, as well as the floor, were commonly bare, without even plaster. Plates there were none. *Trenchers*—large flat cakes of bread—were used instead. When the meat was eaten off them, they were given to the poor; for, being saturated with the gravy, they were too valuable to be thrown away. No morsel was held in dainty contemplation at a fork’s end. They helped themselves from the common dish, and ate with their fingers. One cup for drinking passed from guest to guest, and courtesy required to wipe the mouth on the sleeve before drinking, and not spit on the table. Pretty and agreeable were the accomplishments of the prioress:

‘At mete was she wel ytaughte withalle;  
She lette no morsel from hire lippes falle,  
Ne wette hire fingres in hire sauce depe.  
Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,  
Thatte no drope ne fell upon hire brest.’

The tournament, or mock-fighting, was the favorite sport, the highest enjoyment and the noblest accomplishment of all ranks. In horse-racing and bull-baiting, high and low took equal interest. The great pastime of the lower orders was archery, which they were bound by royal proclamation to practice on Sundays



and holidays after Divine service. Upon these occasions, other amusements, such as quoits, cock-fighting, foot-ball, hand-ball, were forbidden.

High life was a pageant, a brilliant and tumultuous kind of fête. Immediately after the Crusades we find nearly all Europe rushing with long-sustained violence into habits of luxury. In England, the gallantry of France, the gorgeousness of the East, contributed to the movement. One of its first signs was an extraordinary richness of dress. A parliament of Edward III passed no less than eight laws against French fashions. The king and the court set the example, and their splendor was as barbarous as their manners. Richard's dress was stiff with gold and gems. Cloaks of damask or satin trailed in the filth of the streets, and excited the rage of the satirists. Beards were long and curled, the hair was tied in a tail behind. Shoes were covered with designs borrowed from the stained glass windows of Westminster, and the long pointed toe, reaching to the knee, was there bound by a gold or silver clasp. Gay gowns of green were common, and an unknown author complains that the women could not be distinguished from the men. The most striking part of female attire was a towering head-dress like a mitre, some two feet high, from which floated a rainbow of ribbons. The extravagance was infectious, and the servant aped the manners of the aristocrat. The chief clauses of a statute of 1363 are intended to restrain 'the outrageous and excessive apparel of divers people against their estate and degree.'

But luxurious indulgence was not confined to apparel. It is displayed in the architecture of the period—the decorated Gothic,—of which pointed arches and profuse ornament are the distinctive features. 'Its whole aim was continually to climb higher, to clothe the sacred edifice with a gaudy bedizenment, as if it were a bride on the wedding morning.' At the marriage of Richard Plantagenet, thirty thousand dishes were provided. In 1399, the royal household comprised ten thousand persons, three hundred of whom were in the kitchen. Excess in eating and drinking is hereditary. It is in harmony with the genius of Germanic peoples to drink in doing everything.

They asked for adventure, adornment, pleasure. Edward III, in an expedition against the king of France, took with him thirty

falconers, and alternately hunted and fought. Knights carried a plaster over one eye, pledged not to remove it till they had performed an exploit worthy of their mistresses; for the sense of love—without depth and reality of nobleness—was not idle. Tournaments, introduced by Edward I, were plentiful, and the precepts of the love courts were punctiliously performed. In one of the London tournaments of Edward III, sixty ladies, seated on palfreys, led each her knight by a golden chain. Minstrelsy and tales of glee, the chase with hawks and hounds, brilliant charges, 'the love of ladies,' bestowal of the silken scarf by fair maiden upon brave victor, a racket of contests, a confusion of magnificence,—form the romance of this regal and noble life, the flower of the Romanesque civilization.

But under this bloom of chivalry are fierce and unbridled instincts: bleeding steeds and gasping knights, plunderings and death-wounds,—all the horrors expressed in 'burned'—'robbed'—'wasted'—'pillaged'—'slain'—'beheaded.' The Earl of Winchester, at ninety, without trial or accusation, is condemned to death by rebellious barons, gibbeted, his body cut in pieces and thrown to the dogs, and his head exposed on a pole to the insults of the populace. Edward II causes twenty-eight nobles to be disembowelled, and is himself dispatched by the insertion of a red-hot iron into his bowels. Men openly associate themselves, for mutual defense, under the patronage of nobles, wear public badges to distinguish their confederacy, meet in troops like armies, and support each other in every iniquity. On the coat of arms of one of these marauders was the inscription: 'I am Captain Warner, commander of a troop of robbers, an enemy to God, without pity and without mercy.' Two cardinals themselves, the pope's legates, are thus despoiled of their goods and equipage; the poet Chaucer is twice robbed; and the king of Cyprus on a visit to England is stripped, with his whole retinue. Highway robbery is a national crime; and capital punishment, though frequent, cannot restrain a bold and licentious crew, made tolerably secure by the general want of communication and the advantage of extensive forests. The outlaws of Sherwood—allowed to redeem a just ignominy by a few acts of generosity—are the heroes of vulgar applause. What shall be said of the female character or of the tyranny of husbands, when we find it to be no

uncommon circumstance that women are strangled by masked assassins, or, walking by the river-side, are plunged into it? Ran a popular proverb: 'It is nothing,—only a woman being drowned.'

A social chasm severed the rich from the poor. At first, as we have seen, the tiller of the soil was his lord's property. Custom gradually secured to each serf his little hut and garden-plot, and limited the amount of service he had to render. This done—personally or by deputy,—his remaining hours were free. If by additional labor he acquired cattle, he was permitted to pasture them upon the waste lands of his lord's estate. If unable to find employment in tillage, he was allowed to pay a money-rent. Manumissions were sold to refill the royal and baronial purse drained by incessant campaigns. Labor—no longer bound to one spot or one master—was free to hire itself where and to whom it would. A statute of the period complains that—

'Villains and tenants of lands in villainage withdrew their customs and services from their lords, having attached themselves to other persons who maintained and abetted them; and who, under color of exemptions from Domesday of the manors and villas where they dwelt, claimed to be quit of all manner of services, either of their body or of their lands, and would suffer no distress or other course of justice to be taken against them; the villains aiding their maintainers by threatening the officers of their lords with peril of life and limb, as well by open assemblies as by confederacies to support each other.'

Now for the first time is revealed the strife between capital and labor; and the struggle is now hushed, then intensified by that destroying blast which rising in the East, and sweeping across the shore of the Mediterranean and Baltic, swooped at the close of 1348 upon Britain.

Harvests rotted, lands were left untilled, cattle strayed through the fields and corn, or poisoned the air with their decaying carcasses, grass grew in towns, villages were left without a single inhabitant, half the population perished. Individuals thought only of their own safety, the rich were rendered more oppressive, the licentious more abandoned; the laborer and artisan—masters at last of the labor market—demanded exorbitant wages, and turned easily into the 'sturdy beggar' or the bandit of the woods. Ran a royal ordinance:

'Every man or woman of whatsoever condition, free or bond, able in body, and within the age of three-score years, . . . and not having of his own whereof he may live, nor land of his own about the tillage of which he may occupy himself, and not

servicing any other, shall be bound to serve the employer who shall require him to do so, and shall take only the wages which were accustomed to be taken in the neighborhood where he is bound to serve.'

Not only was the price of labor fixed by act of parliament, but the labor class was once more tied to the soil. The laborer was forbidden to quit his own parish, and a refusal to obey was punished by imprisonment. The process of emancipation was checked. The ingenuity of lawyers was shamelessly exercised in cancelling on grounds of informality manumissions and exemptions, to bring back into bondage the villains and serfs who had delighted in their freedom. Discontent smouldered and spread. A 'mad priest' gave terrible utterance to the tyranny of property and the defiance of socialism. Cried the preacher:

'Good people, things will never go well in England so long as goods be not in common, and so long as there be villains and gentlemen. By what right are they whom we call lords greater folk than we? Why do they hold us in serfage? They are clothed in velvet, and warm in their furs, while we are covered with rags. They have wine and spices and fair bread, and we oat-cake and straw, and water to drink. They have leisure and fine houses; we have pain and labor, the rain and the wind in the fields. And yet it is of us and our toil that these men hold their state. When Adam delved and Eve span, where was then the gentleman?'

The insolence of the tax-gatherers fanned the scattered sparks of sedition into flame from sea to sea. Quaint rhymes served as call to arms; as,—

'John Ball greeteth you all, and doth for to understand he hath rung your bell. Now right and might, will and skill, God speed every dele.'

And,—

'Falseness and guile have reigned too long, and truth hath been set under a lock, and falseness and guile reigneth in every stock.'

The revolt, indeed, was outwardly suppressed, and happily so; but Tyler the smith and Ball the priest had sounded the knell of feudalism and the declaration of the equal rights of men. 'We will that you free us forever,' shouted the insurgents to the youthful Richard.

The struggle went on. The terror of the land-owners expressed itself in legislation, to which the stubbornness of resistance shows the temper of the people. Says a statute of 1385:

'Divers villains and neifs, as well of great lords as of other people, spiritual and temporal, do flee unto cities, towns, and places enfranchised, as the city of London, and feign divers suits against their lords, to the intent to make them free by answer of their lords.'

Serfdom, by the operation of moral causes, is dying out. The word 'villen' gives place to the word 'servant.' In 1388, wages

are again regulated, because 'servant and laborers will not serve and labor without outrageous and excessive hire.' In the same year it is harshly enacted that no servant or laborer can depart, even at the expiration of his service, from the hundred in which he lives, without permission under the king's seal; nor may any who have been bred to husbandry till twelve years old exercise any other calling. Later, the Commons petition that villains may not put their children to school in order to advance them by the Church, and complain that villains fly to cities and boroughs, whence their masters cannot recover them, and, if they attempt it, are hindered by the people.

Closely connected with the progress of constitutional government was the social movement that was fast changing the face of the country. The force of the feudal system is dissolved, and in every attempt to maintain it we see only the shadow of a power once supreme, retreating and diminishing before an expanding and omnipotent reality,—the doctrine that men are equal before God.

**Religion.**—To the social revolution was added the fresh impulse of a religious one. The Church was in its noon of splendor, but the blaze was only a veil over the central darkness. Petrarch says the Papacy sat 'as a blight over peoples, and nations, and tongues, toying and confident in the abundance of earthly riches, and careless of the eternal.' Of Rome itself he says:

Once Rome! now, false and guilty Babylon!  
 Hive of deceits! Terrible prison  
 Where the good doth die, the bad is fed and fattened!  
 Hell of the living!  
 Sad world that doth endure it! Cast her out!

Foreign priests were still intruded into English livings and English sees, direct taxes were imposed on the clergy, first fruits were claimed from all ecclesiastical preferments. At the beginning of the century, the papal revenue was twelve times greater than the civil; at the end of the century, the Commons declared that the taxes paid to the Church were five times greater than the taxes paid to the crown.

While the exactions of Rome severed the priesthood, the greed and scandal of both provoked the sleepless hatred of the people. Half the soil was in the hands of the clergy, and with



all their wealth they bore as little as they could of the burdens of the State. Their courts mildly noticed the crimes and vices of their order. They worried the community by their insufferable claim to control wills, contracts, and divorces; by their endless dues and fees; by their countless legal citations of citizens, to extort costs and fines. They were rent by their own dissensions. Each order of friars hated the other; the monks hated them and the parish priests, or secular clergy, who were far better; and the last looked upon both as their natural enemies. The bishops, again, were estranged from the mass of the clergy by the shameful inequality between their respective revenues, and by their strife for political emoluments. There was a universal clamor against the mendicant orders, who, though rich, pretended to be poor; and, impure of life, pretended to be good.

There is a general desire to shake off the papal bondage, and an irrepressible cry for truth and purity in life and in the Church. In the reign of Edward III, every person is outlawed who carries any cause by appeal to the court of Rome. In the committee of eighteen to whom Richard's last parliament delegated their whole power, there is not the name of an ecclesiastic to be found. The barons are jealous of the prelates. The courtly Chaucer laughs at the jingling bells of the hunting abbots. Piers the Plowman, a man of the multitude and a victim, lifts his indignant voice. Robin Hood, the ballad hero, orders his folk to 'spare the yeomen, laborers, even knights, if they are good fellows,' but never to pardon abbots or bishops. Wycliffe protests against the cardinal beliefs of Catholicism, organizes the growing discontent, justifies and supports it with principles, tenets and reasonings. His disciples—'the Simple Priests,' or 'Lollards,' whose homely sermons and long russet dress move the ridicule of the regulars—diffuse his doctrines, which rapidly infect all classes, the baronage of the city, the peasantry of the country-side, even the monasticism of the cell. Women, as well as men, become preachers of the new sect, whose numbers increase till it seems to the panic-stricken churchmen that every third man in the street is a Lollard—a heretic. A more wholesome conception of existence is forming, from which will be finally educed—in the yet far-off national outbreak of the Reformation—a better civilization, founded on the respect for liberty and justice.

Yet we will not forget that in the two great deliverances from the tyranny of nation over nation and from the property of man in man, the chief agent was the Church of Rome. Distinctions of caste were to her peculiarly odious, because incompatible with other distinctions essential to her system. How great a part she had in the abolition of slavery we have elsewhere seen. Tenderly treating her own bondmen (whom she declined to enfranchise), we have seen her regularly adjuring the dying slaveholder, as he asked for the last sacraments, to emancipate his brethren for whom Christ had died. Corrupt as she was, there is reason to believe that had she been overthrown in the fourteenth century, the vacancy would have been occupied by a system more corrupt still. Her leading-strings, which will impede the full-grown man, are necessary to preserve and uphold the infant. She will be allowed a hundred and fifty years more in which to fill the measure of her offences, that she may fall only when time has laid bare the root of her degeneracy, when faith and manners, ideas and morals, may change together and subsist in harmony.

**Learning.**—In an age when every one, rich or poor, lives with his hand on his sword, it is not strange that general education should have been neglected. War and woodcraft were the pride of the great. Not one in five hundred could have stumbled through a psalm. If they read, they spelled the small words, and skipped the large ones. Information passed from mouth to mouth, not from eye to eye. Men were auditors, not readers. The populace had poets for themselves, whose looser carols were the joy of the streets or the fields,—songs that perished on the lips of the singers. Across the gulf of mystery, the opening line of some fugitive rehearsal falls upon the ear like the echo of a vanished world,—

‘Sitteth all stille, and harkeneth to me!’

The clergy alone were learned, and they only relatively. The pulpit was the chief means of instruction. In the little village church,—endeared to the peasant by the most touching incidents of his life, or in vast and spired cathedral, amid smoking censers, the blaze of lamps, the tinkling of silver bells, the play of jewelled vessels, and gorgeous dresses of violet, green, and gold,—listened the silent and unquestioning people.

Books—still in manuscripts, copied in the *Scriptorium* by the

patient monks—were few and costly. They had not always titles to denote their subjects, and are described by their outsides—often shining in extreme splendor. Froissart, the French historian, on a last visit to England in 1396, presented to Richard a book beautifully illuminated, engrossed with his own hand, bound in crimson velvet, and embellished with silver bosses, clasps, and golden roses. As much as forty pounds was paid for a copy of the Bible. Shelves were not required. At the beginning of the century, the Oxford library consisted of a few tracts kept in chests. A private collection—scant and phenomenal—consisted for the greater part of the romances of chivalry, so long the favorite literature of the noble, the dame, and the loungee of the baronial castle. Some monasteries had not more than twenty volumes. Latin versions of the Scriptures,—Greek or Hebrew never; a commentator, a father, a schoolman; the mediæval Christian poets who composed in Latin; a romance, an accidental classic, chronicles and legends,—such are the usual contents of a surviving catalogue—a sad contraction of human knowledge.

The glimmerings of the revival of the ancient classics, incipient in the twelfth century, fading in the thirteenth owing to the prevalence of scholasticism, are somewhat more distinct in the fourteenth. Petrarch and Boccaccio were the first to lead the way in disinterring them from the dungeon-darkness where they safely slept, undisturbed by the monks who were ignorant of their treasures or regarded them as the works of idolaters. The light of learning, having first made its entrance into France, now, in natural course of progress, found its way into England,—dimmed by distance from its Italian focus. The debt of England to Italy in the matter of our literature begins with Chaucer, but a hundred years will pass before the imagination of the North is inflamed by the sacred fires kindled at Florence and at Rome.

The common herd of students (through the medium of Latin translations) looked upon Aristotle as their infallible oracle and guide, though stripping him of all those excellences that really belonged to him, and incapable of entering into the true spirit of his writings. Oxford—and Cambridge as well—had received many noble foundations. She was the school of the island, the fount of the new heresies, the link of England to the learned of Europe. To her, during the English wars, was transferred the

intellectual supremacy of Paris. But of the vast multitude once composing its learned mob, there remained in 1367 less than a fifth. The master idea, running to excess, was languishing by expenditure of force.

**Language.**—For the scholastic uses of the learned, and for ecclesiastical purposes, Latin was still a living though a dying tongue. For the last fifty years of the century, French was to all classes of Englishmen a foreign language, and, even as taught, was a mere dialect of the Parisian. Chaucer, in the *Testament of Love* (attributed) says :

‘Certes there ben some that speke thyr poysy mater in Frenche, of whyche speche the Frenchemen have as good a fantaysie as we have in hearing of French mennes Englyshe.’

And adds:

‘Let, then, clerkes endyten in Latyn, for they have the propertye in science and the knowinge in that facultye, and lette Frenchmen in theyr Frenche also endyte theyr queynt termes, for it is kyndly to theyr mouthes; and let us shewe our fantasies in suche wordes as we learneden of our dames tonge.’

The Prioress in the *Tales*, though she speaks French neatly, speaks it only —

‘After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,  
For Frenche of Paris was to hire unknowe.’

[*her*

But the old Teutonic, assuming a new organization, recovered its ascendancy by the same circumstances which depressed its rival. Formal note of its triumph is found in a statute of 1362, which orders English to be used in courts of law, because ‘the French tongue is much unknown.’ Later it is observed of the grammar schools that ‘children leaveth Frensche and construeth and lerneth in Engliche.’ Chaucer, writing for the instruction of his little son, uses the vernacular, because ‘curious endityng and harde sentences are full hevy at once for such a childe to lerne,’ and, like a true patriot, bids the boy think of it as the *King’s English*.

The first revolution which English underwent, consisted, as formerly explained, in the conversion of it from an inflectional and synthetic into a non-inflected and analytic speech. Its state in this particular towards the close of the century may be not unfairly represented by the Lord’s Prayer:

‘Our Fadir that art in hevenys;  
Halewid be thi name.  
Thi kyngdom come to,

Be thi wil done in erthe as in hevene.  
 Give to us this day oure breed oure othir substaunce.  
 And forgive to us our dettis as we forgiven to our dettouris:  
 And lede us not into temptacioun:  
 But delyvere us from yvel. Amen.'

The second, which it was now undergoing, and which its adoption by the court and nobility made possible, was its intermixture with foreign elements. Translations and travel greatly enriched it by importations from the South. The new power of thinking, and the new words to embody its conceptions, came together, twin-born. The English language thus enlarging its domain by conquest and assimilation, yet retaining its essentially Germanic character, displays the same powers of acquisition as have distinguished the race.

Against this alien admixture the critics protested. 'I seke,' says one, 'no strange Inglyss, bot lightest (easiest) and comunest.' Thus early was our purity imperilled! As if new modes of expression were not the creatures of new modifications of thought. A national idiom is in perpetual movement, resembling, as it struggles into perfect existence, the lion of the bard of *Paradise*,—

'— pawing to get free  
 His hinder parts.'

What survives? Trevisa, translating a Latin treatise in 1387, tells us he avoids 'the old and ancient English.' In the next century, his printer will rewrite this translation, 'to change the rude and old English; that is, to wit, certain words which in these days be neither used nor understood!' Little did Caxton imagine that he himself would be to us what Trevisa was to him,—an archaism, covered with the rust of time. The cry of the purist is the pang of parturition. Styles are like shades melting into each other, passing with the generations that cast them. It is with words as with empires. We each in our day see only the beginnings of things.

**Poetry.**—Two notions rule the age: the one tending to a renovation of the heart; the other, to a prodigal satisfaction of the senses; the one disposing to righteousness, the other to excitement; the one planting the ideal amidst forms of force and joy; the other amidst sentiments of truth, law, duty; the one producing finical verses and diverting stories, the other the indig-



nant protest against hypocrisy and the impassioned prayer for salvation. For the omnipotent idea of justice will overflow, and conscience, like other things, will have its poem.

In the *Vision of Piers the Plowman*, by **William Langland** (1362), the sombre genius of the Saxon reappears, with its tragic pictures and emotions. The author—‘Long Will,’ they call him,—is a secular priest, who once earned a miserable livelihood by singing at the funerals of the rich. Silent, moody, and defiant, his world is the world of the poor. Far from sin and suffering his fancy flies to a May morning on the Malvern Hills, where he falls asleep and has a wonderful dream:

<p>I was weary for-wandered, And went me to rest Under a brood bank, By a burn's side; And as I lay and leaned, And looked on the waters, I slombered into a sleeping, It swayed so murry, Then gan I meten A marvellous sweven, That I was in a wilderness, Wist I never where; And, as I beheld into the east On high to the sun, I seigh a tower on a toft Frieliche ymaked, A deep dale beneath, A donjon therein, With deep ditches and darke, And dreadful of sight. A fair field full of folk</p>	<p>[with wandering [broad [stream's [pleasant [meet [dream [saw, hill [richly</p>	<p>Found I there between Of all manner of men, The mean and the rich, Werking and wandering As the world asketh. Some putten hem to the plough [them Playden full seld, In setting and sowing Swonken full hard, [labored And wonnen that wasters [produced With gluttony destroyeth. And some putten hem to pride, Apparelled him thereafter, In countenance of clothing Comen deguised, [came In prayers and penances Putten hem many, All for the love of our Lord Liveden full strait, In hope to have after Heaven-riche bliss.'</p>
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The canvas of the dreamer is crowded and astir with life, from the king to the bondman. Here are the minstrels, who ‘geten gold with their glee’; jesters and jugglers, ‘Judas’ children’; petitioners and beggars, who flatter ‘for hir food’ and fight ‘at the ale’; pilgrims, who seek the —

‘— saintes at Rome,  
They wenten forth in hir way  
With many wise tales,  
And hadden leave to lien [live  
All hir life after;’

the court-haunting bishop, pardoners, ‘parting the silver’ with the parish priest; friars,—

‘All the four orders,  
Preaching the people  
For profit of hem selve;’

lawyers, whom the people hate,—of whom the insurrectionists will shout, ‘Not till all these are killed will the land enjoy its old freedom again,’—whom Burns will style ‘hell-hounds preying in the kennels of justice,’—

‘Yet hoved ther an hundred In howves of selk, Sergeantz it bi-semed That serveden at the barre, Pleteden for penyes And poundes the lawe;	[waited [hoods	And noight for love of our Lord Unlose hire lippes ones. Thow myghtest bettre meete myst On Malverne hilles, Than gete a mom of hire mouth, Til moneie be shewed.’
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A heavenly messenger—Holy Church—appears to the dreamer, and shows him in this mortal assemblage a jewelled lady:

‘Hire robe was ful riche, Of reed scarlet engreyned, With ribanes of reed gold And of riche stones.	Hire array me ravysshed, Swich richesse saugh I never; I hadde wonder what she was, And whos wif she were.’
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This lady is Mede (Lucre), to whom high and low, lay and clergy, alike offer homage. She contracts a legal marriage with Falsehood, and the king would marry her to Conscience, but the latter replies:

‘Crist it me forbede!  
Er I wedde swiche a wif,  
Wo me betide!  
For she is frele of hire feith,  
Fikel of her speche,  
And maketh men mysdo  
Many score tymes.’

Reason preaches repentance to offenders. Many are converted, among whom are Proud Heart, who vows to wear hair-cloth; Envy, lean, cowering, biting his lips, and wearing the sleeves of a friar’s frock; and Covetousness, bony, beetle-browed, blear-eyed. The repentant hearers set out on a pilgrimage to Truth. They meet a far-travelling pilgrim, who proves a blind guide, for of such a saint he has never heard. The wanderers put themselves under the direction of a carter, Piers the Plowman. His is a gospel of works, and he puts them to toil in his vineyard. But they become seditious, and are at last reduced by the aid of Hunger, who subdues Waste, leader of the revolt, and humbles his followers. ‘Pardons,’ or ‘indulgences,’ are satirized, and with the anxiety of Luther to know what is righteousness the poet goes in search of Do-well. He asks each one to explain where he may be found, and finds him by the description of Wit, in the Castle of the Flesh built by Kind (Nature), who resides there with his bride Anima (Soul). Do-better is her

handmaid, and Do-best her spiritual guide. Thence, for further instruction he is taken to dine with Clergy, and while they refresh themselves with psalms and texts, which are the bill of fare, Clergy gives his pupil a dissertation, in the course of which he refers to one Piers Plowman who had made light of all knowledge but love, and says that Do-well and Do-better are finders of Do-best, who saves men's souls. The pilgrim exclaims,—

‘This is a long lesson,  
And litel am I the wiser,’

and receives a reproof for his indocile temper. Vain is the wisdom of man. Do-well, Do-better, and Do-best are at last identified with the Saviour, who is Love. Of low estate, come to direct the erring and redeem the lost, he appears in the garb of Piers the Plowman,—type of the poor and simple. The Immortal dies, descends into Hell, rescues the patriarchs and prophets, triumphs over Death and the Devil. The *righteous life* is found, and the dreamer wakes in a transport, with the Easter chimes pealing in his ears. Alas, only in a dream is mortal victory complete. Over the beatific vision roll the mists of earth again, and Antichrist—the Man of Sin—with raised banner appears. Bells are rung, and the monks in solemn procession go out to receive with congratulations their lord and father. With seven great giants—the seven Deadly Sins<sup>1</sup>—he besieges Conscience. Idleness leads the assault, and brings with him more than a thousand prelates. Nature sends up a host of plagues and diseases to punish the sacrilegious show:

‘Kynde Conscience tho herde,—and cam out of the planetes,  
And sente forth his forreyours—feveres and fluxes,  
Coughes and cardiacles,—crampes and tooth-aques,  
Reumes and radegundes,—and roynous scabbes,  
Biles and bocches,—and brennynge aques,  
Frenesies and foul yveles,—forageres of kynde. . . .  
There was “Harrow! and Help!—Here cometh Kynde!  
With Deeth that is dredful—to undo us alle!”  
The lord that lyved after lust—tho aloud cryde. . . .  
Deeth cam dryvyng after,—and alle to dust passhed  
Kynges and knyghtes,—kaysers and popes, . . .  
Manye a lovely lady—and lemmans of knyghtes,  
Swowned and sweltd for sorwe of hise dyntes.’

[*lovers*]

<sup>1</sup> *Pride, Luxury, Envy, Wrath*, a friar, whose aunt is a nun, and who is both cook and gardener to a convent; *Avarice*, who lies, cheats, lends money upon usury, and who, not understanding the French word *restitution*, thinks it another term for stealing; *Gluttony*, who, on his way to church, is tempted into a London ale-house; *Sloth*, a priest, who knows rhymes about Robin Hood better than his prayers, and who can find a hare in a field more readily than he can read the lives of the saints.

Contrition is implored for aid, but slumbers; and Conscience, hard pressed by Pride and Sloth, rouses himself with a final effort, and seizing his staff resumes his doubtful quest, praying for luck and health 'till he have Piers the Plowman'—till he find the Christ; no clear outlook, no sure hope; like the Wandering Jew, bowed beneath the burden of the curse, weary with unrelieved toil, worn with ceaseless trudging.

This serious poem, which makes Scripture and deed the test of creed—all outward observances but hollow shows—prepares the soil for the reception of that seed which Wycliffe and his associates are sowing. The imitations—the *Plowman's Creed*, by a nameless author, and the *Plowman's Tale*, attributed to Chaucer—bear witness to its popularity and fame. Its wide circulation among the commonalty of the realm is chiefly due to its moral and social bearings. Like the Declaration of Independence, it expresses the popular sentiment on the subjects it discusses,—the vices of Church, State, and Society. A spiritual picture which brings into distinct consciousness what many feel and but dimly apprehend,—the solitary advocate of the children of want and oppression.

A part of its interest, at least for posterity, is derived from its antiquated Saxon and its rustic pith. Without artifice of connection or involution of plot, it is an impulsive voice from the wilderness, in the language of the people; and, as such, returns to or continues the old alliterative metre and unrhymed verse—the recurrence at certain regular intervals of like beginnings, without, as Milton contemptuously calls it, the jingling sound of like endings. Thus:

'In a sômer sêson—whan sôft was the sônne,  
I shôpë me in shrôudës—as I a shëpë wërë,  
In hábite as an hêremite—unhóly of wórkës,  
Went wýde in this wórlde—wóndres to hérë.'

The fashionable machinery of talking abstractions gives evidence of French influence. The satirist, like Bunyan, veils his head in allegory. Perhaps the ideal company who flit along the dreamy scenes of his wild invention, have some distant relationship to the shadowy pilgrimage of that 'Immortal Dreamer' to the 'Celestial City.'

The second main stream of the poetical literature of the period is story-telling. **Robert Manning** garnishes with rhymes a history

of England beginning with the immemorial Brutus, and calls it a poem. Of a style easier than that of Robert of Gloucester and of diction more advanced, it discourses without developing, and sees moving spectacles without emotion:

‘Lordynges that be now here,  
 If ye wille listene and lere [learn  
 All the story of Inglande,  
 Als Robert Mannyng wryten it fand, [as, written  
 And on Inglysch has it schewed,  
 Not for the lered but for the lewed; [laity  
 For tho that on this land wonn [those, dwell  
 That the Latin ne the Frankys conn [know  
 For to hauf solace and gamen,  
 In felauschip when tha sitt samen; [together  
 And it is wisdom for to wyttten [know  
 The state of the Land, and hef it wryten,  
 What manere of folk first it wan,  
 And of what kynde it first began,  
 And gude it is for many thynges  
 For to here the dedis of kynges, [hear  
 Whilk were foles, and whilk were wyse [which  
 And whilk of tham couth most quantyse; [knew, artfulness  
 And whilk did wrong, and whilk ryght,  
 And whilk mayntened pes and fight.’ [peace

So forth and so forth. Loquacious, clear, and insipid, we imagine, as its French original.

But reverie and fantasy are needed to satisfy the pleasant indolence of the chivalric world and the courts that shine upon the heights. The tales that sufficed to allure the attention of a ruder ancestry, now demand more volume, more variety, more color; and all that history and imagination have gathered in the East, in France, in Wales, in Provence, in Italy, wrought and re-wrought by the minstrelsy of three centuries, heroics of the North that magnify the valor and daring of the cavalier, lyrics of the South that dwell on the devotion of the knight to his lady-love,—serve as the stuff for the looms of the mighty weavers of verse. Before the frivolous unreality of the new chivalry, songs of martial achievement predominated; but the intellectual palate of the gentry now prefers the later poetry of sensuous enjoyment,—the *trouvère*, with its amours and mysticism; or the troubadour, with its romantic follies. The passion of war has degenerated into a pageant, and *Romance*, from the light *fabliaux* to the entangling fiction of many thousand lines, tells of little but the ecstasies of love. Love is the essential theme,—love in its first emotions, love happy, jealous; the lover walking,



sitting, sleeping, sick, despairing, dead. In France they have Floral Games where the assembled poets are housed in artificial arbors dressed with flowers, and a violet of gold is awarded the best poem. The love-courts discuss — and decide affirmatively — whether each one who loves grows pale at the sight of her whom he loves; whether each action of the lover ends in the thought of her whom he loves; whether love can refuse anything to love. A company of enthusiasts, love-penitents, to prove the strength of their passion, dress in summer in furs and heavy garments, and in winter in light gauze. When Froissart presents to Richard his book bound in crimson velvet, guarded by clasps of silver, and studded with golden roses,—

‘Than the kyng demanded me whereof it treated, and I shewed hym how it treated maters of loue; wherof the kyng was gladd.’

While rowing on the Thames, **Gower** (1325–1408) meets the royal barge, and is called to the king’s side. ‘Book some new thing,’ says Richard, ‘in the way you are used, into which book I myself may often look’; and the request is the origin of *Confessio Amantis*—the *Confession of a Lover*. It is a dialogue between an unhappy lover and his confessor, the object of which is to explain and classify the impediments of love. Through thirty thousand weary lines, the lover, like a good Catholic, states his distress, and is edified, if not comforted, by expositions of hermetic science and Aristotelian philosophy, discourses on politics, litanies of ancient and modern legends, gleaned from the compilers for the morality they furnish. Thus a serpent, *Aspidis*, bears in his head the precious stone called the carbuncle, which enchanters strive to win from him by lulling him asleep with magic songs. The wise reptile, as soon as the charmer approaches, presses one ear flat upon the ground, and covers the other with his tail. *Ergo*, let us obstinately resist all temptations that assail us through the avenues of the bodily organs. Even as Ulysses stopped his companions’ ears with wax and lashed himself to the ship’s mast, to escape the enticement of the Sirens’ song. The confession terminates with some parting injunctions of the priest, the bitter judgment of Venus that he should remember his old age and leave off such fooleries, his cure from the wound of Cupid’s dart, and his absolution. He is dismissed with advice from the goddess to go ‘where moral virtue dwelleth.’

To the last, Gower is learned, dignified, didactic. He would be nothing, if he were not moral. His principal merit lies in the sententious passages which are here and there interspersed, and the narratives culled with dull prolixity from legendary lore, some of which—as the *Trumpet of Death*—deserve notice for their striking tone of reflection, and others for the charm of their details. Thus, it was a law in Hungary, that when a man was condemned to die, the sentence should be announced to him by the blast of a brazen trumpet before his house. At a magnificent court-festival, the monarch was plunged in deep melancholy, and his brother anxiously inquired the reason. No reply was made, but at break of morn the fatal trumpet sounded at the brother's gate. The doomed man came to the palace weeping and despairing. Then the king said solemnly, that if such grief were caused by the death of the body, how much profounder must be the sorrow awakened by the thought which afflicted him as he sat among his guests,—the thought of that eternal death of the spirit which Heaven has ordained as the wages of sin.

The tale of Florent is in Gower's happiest manner, and reveals, in the desert of platitudes, some of the brilliancy and grace of older models. A knight riding through a narrow pass in search of adventures, is attacked, taken, and led to a castle. There, at the peril of his life, he is required to state—

‘What alle women most desire.’

That he may have time for reflection and consideration, he is granted a leave of absence, on condition that at the expiration of his term he shall return with his answer. He tells all what has befallen him, and asks the opinion of the wisest, but—

‘Such a thing they cannot find  
By constellation ne kind,—’

that is, neither by the stars nor by the laws of nature. Our hero—still pondering what to say—sets out on his return. His troubled meditations are at length interrupted by the discovery of an old woman sitting under a large tree,—

‘That for to speak of flesh and bone  
So foul yet saw he never none.’

He fain would pass quickly on, but she calls him by name, and warns him that he is riding to his death, adding, however, that she can save him. He begs her advice, and she asks, ‘What

wilt thou give me?’ ‘Anything you may ask.’ ‘I want nothing more, therefore pledge me’—

“That you will be my housebande.”

“Nay,” said Florent, “that may not be.”

“Ride thenne forth thy way,” quod she.’

In vain he offers lands, parks, houses,—she must have a husband. He wisely concludes that it is—

‘Better to take her to his wife,  
Or elles for to lose his life.’

He also reflects that she probably will not live very long, and resolves to put her meanwhile—

‘Where that no man her shoulde know  
Till she with death were overthrow.’

Having signified his assent, she tells him, that when he reaches his destination, he is to reply—

‘That alle women lievest would  
Be sovereign of mannes love;’

for as *sovereign*, she will have *all her will*, which is the beatitude of her desire. With this answer, she says he shall save himself, and he rides sadly on, for he is under oath to return for his bride. At the castle, in the presence of the summoned inmates, he names several things of his own invention, but none will do; and finally he gives the answer the old woman directed, which is declared to be the true one. Retracing his steps, a free but wretched man, he finds the old woman in the identical spot,—

‘The loathliest wight  
That ever man cast on his eye,  
Her nose bas, her browes high,  
Her eyen small, and depe-set,  
Her chekes ben with teres wet,  
And rivelin as an empty skin,  
Hangende down unto her chin,  
Her lippes shrunken ben for age;  
There was no grace in her visage.’

[low, flat

[shrivelled  
[hanging

She insists, however, upon the agreement, and, sick at heart, almost preferring death,—

‘In ragges as she was to-tore  
He set her on his horse before.’

riding through all the lanes and by-ways that no one may see him. At home he explains that he is obliged—

‘This beste wedde to his wife,  
For elles he had lost his life.’

Maids of honor are sent in, who renew her attire, all except her

matted and unsightly hair, which she will not allow them to touch.

‘But when she was fully array’d,  
And her attire was all assay’d,  
Then was she fouler unto see.’

Poor Florent takes her less for better than for worse, and, the ceremony over, covers his head in grief:

‘His body mighte well be there;  
But as of thought and of *memoire*  
His hearte was in *Purgatoire*.’

She would ingratiate herself in his affections, and approaching him takes him softly by the hand. He turns suddenly and beholds a vision of sweet smiles and beautiful eyes. He would come nearer, is stopped, and told—

‘that for to win or lose  
He mote one of two thinges choose,  
Wher he will have her such o’ night  
Or elles upon daye’s light;  
For he shall not have bothe two.’

[*whether*

At loss, conscious only of his idolatry, he at last exclaims,—

“‘I n’ot what answer I shall give,  
But ever, while that I may live,  
I will that ye be my mistress,  
For I can naught myselve guess  
Which is the best unto my choice.  
Thus grant I you my whole voice.  
Choose for us bothen, I you pray,  
And, what as ever that ye say,  
Right as ye wille, so will I.”’

This is the point—the surrender of his will to hers. This is ‘What alle women most desire’—to be sovereign of man’s love—in short to have their own way. Foretaste of Paradise for the happy groom, whose cup is now filled to overflowing:

“‘My lord,” she saide, “grand-merci  
For of this word that ye now sayn  
That ye have made me sovereign,  
My destiny is overpassed;  
That n’er hereafter shall be lass’d  
My beauty, which that I now have,  
Till I betake unto my grave.  
Both night and day as I am now,  
I shall always be such to you.  
Thus, I am yours for evermo.”’

[*many thanks*

[*lessened*

As an artist, partly the reformer and partly the story-teller, Gower bridges the space between Langland and Chaucer. His English, too, in vocabulary and structure is later than the first

and earlier than the second. His metre is the octosyllabic, of four iambs. His rhythm is more smooth than melodious. He is touched only by French influence. There are extant about fifty French amatory sonnets composed by him in imitation of Provençal models. On the whole, like the dozen of translators who copy, compile, abridge, he constructs an encyclopædia, a text-book, in rhymed memoranda; but if excellence be comparative and all criticism relative to the age, we may hail this grave father of our poesy, whose verses, if destitute of creative touches, are stamped with the force of ethical reasoning. Amid triflers, he is earnest, with a deep-rooted idea that the minstrel should be a preacher. In his political admonitions, in his satire on the relaxed morals of the Pulpit, the Bench, the Bar, the Throne, and the Court, he sounds the deep tones of the patriot. He says:

‘I do not affect to touch the stars, or write the wonders of the poles; but rather, with the common human voice that is lamenting in this land, I write the ills I see. In the voice of my crying there will be nothing doubtful, for every man’s knowledge will be its best interpreter.’

Again:

‘Give me that there shall be less vice, and more virtue for my speaking.’

Only one of his three great works has been opened to the world, but the marble perpetuates what the press does not. In the Southwark Church of St. Saviour, his image lies extended on the tomb, with folded hands, in damask habit flowing to his feet; his head supported by three sculptured volumes<sup>1</sup> and decked with a garland of roses, while three visionary virgins, Charity, Mercy, and Pity, solicit the prayer of the passer-by for the soul of the dreamless sleeper.

The fashions of man have their date and their termination. The fourteenth century is memorable as the era in which the romance-poetry of France, displaced in form, declines in substance. Even comedy cannot thrive on trifles. The literature that has not truth or seriousness must die. Life does not move through a perpetual May-day, nor is it invigorated in gorgeous idleness. Nourished on this poetry, another taste is springing up, which is to seek its subjects, not in France, but in the chaster Roman and Grecian lore. A new spirit pierces through,—no longer the childish imitation of chivalrous life, but the crav-

<sup>1</sup> *Speculum Meditantis* (*Mirror of One Meditating*), in French; *Vox Clamantis* (*Voice of One Crying*), in Latin; *Confessio Amantis*, in English;—equally graced with Latin titles, though in three languages.



ing for deep truths. English poetry, as distinguished on the one hand from the pedantry and barrenness of the romancers, and on the other from the impulsive cries of *Beowulf*, begins with **Chaucer**, the first skilled and conscious workman; who, ceasing to repeat, observes; whose characters, no longer a phantom procession, are living and distinct persons,—individualized and typical; and who, seeking material in the common forest of the middle ages, replants it in his own soil, to send out new shoots and enduring bloom.

**Prose.**—Our early literature, as formerly observed, is almost exclusively one of poetry. Records, chronicles, books of instruction, of science, there are; but of prose, as the embodiment of high art, there is absolutely none. As we have cathedrals while the builders live in hovels, so, under the impulse of the imaginative sentiment, we have poetry before we have prose, which passes into pure literature only when the views of men have settled down to sober truth, and art is so diffused as to give grace and expression to things familiar and homely.

Divines and philosophers, mathematicians and scientists, write in Latin. The prose works in English have an archaic and moral rather than an artistic interest. **Mandeville** and **Wycliffe**—the one in his travels, the other in his translations of the Bible—are, in the mixed vernacular, the first reapers on the margin of the great future of English prose.

**History.**—In this mixed state of glory clouded with barbarism, there is, there can be, no annalist deserving the name of historian. The chroniclers have the usual aptitude for credence, unastonished at astonishing events, credulous and happy by constitution and contagion. They begin, as usual, *ab initio*, with the Conquest, and reach home, across chasms supplied by an ever-ready fancy. The narrative grows like a rolling snowball, gathering whatever lies in its path, fact or legend, appropriate or inappropriate. The readers or hearers are as well prepared to believe as the writers are prompt to collate. A hundred years hence the first peer<sup>1</sup> of the realm will be proud of deriving his pedigree from a fabulous knight in a romantic genealogy.

Of plumed knights and penitential saints, of warring kings

<sup>1</sup> Duke of Buckingham.

and feasting nobles, of furious and raving figures, we have a plenty; but of history that will trace the ideal tendencies of the age, that will exhibit the world of ideas, the life of the people as a drama in which good and evil fight their everlasting battle,—of history in which calmness of insight exists with intensity of feeling, there is yet no prophecy.

**Philosophy.**—This consists, for the most part, in ringing changes on the syllogism,—

‘Barbara, Celarent, Darii, Ferio,  
Cesare, Camestres, Festino, Baroko,’ etc.;

circulating in endless vortices; creating, swallowing,—itself. Inductions, corollaries, dilemmas, logical diagrams, cast wonderful horoscopes, but end—where perhaps all metaphysical speculation ends, as to the stolen jewel of our search—in nothingness.

The old dispute, long dormant, was now revived with a white-heat of disputation. The Realists maintained that universal ideas or essences belonged to the class of real *things*, either eternally impressed upon matter or eternally existent in the Divine Mind as the *models* of created objects; while the Nominalists held that these pretended universals had neither form nor essence, but were merely modes of conception, existing solely in and for the mind,—only individuals are real.

Of Nominalism, **Occam**<sup>1</sup> was now the eminent spokesman. The universal, he argues, exists in the mind, not substantially, but as a representation; while outwardly it is only a word, or in general a sign, of whatever kind, representing conventionally several objects. Only an *a posteriori* proof of the being of God, and that not a rigorous one, is possible. As for the rest, the ‘articles of faith’ have not even the advantage of probability for the wise, and especially for those who trust to the natural reason. Here only the authority of the Bible and Christian tradition should be accepted. Theological doctrines are not demonstrable, yet the will to believe the indemonstrable is meritorious. Thus reason and faith are antagonized, the critical method rises to an independent rank, and, with the coöperation of other influences tending in the same direction, the way is prepared for an inductive investigation of external nature and psychical phenomena.

<sup>1</sup>A Franciscan of the severe order, and a pupil of Duns Scotus; born in the county of Surrey, died April 7, 1347.

The bearings of the discussion upon vital theology explain the furious energy of the disputants. If, for example, the universal is a mere symbol, Christ—the Infinite—is not really present in the Eucharist. If Realism is false, the doctrine of the Trinity, according to which the one divine essence is entirely present in each of the three divine persons, is false. Distinctions of less moment might in the Ages of Faith shatter an empire. Hence it was that the University of Paris, by a public edict (1339) solemnly condemned and prohibited the philosophy of Occam, as prejudicial to the interests of the Church. His party in consequence, flourished the more. What is more natural than to love and pursue the forbidden?

**Science.**—When, as here, the measure of probability is essentially theological, if scientific theories are discussed, they will be colored with religious thought. The scientist,—

‘Transported  
And rapt in secret studies,—

is imagined to know more than the human faculties can acquire. The wise are magicians; and the enlightened, heretics.

Astrology—fortune-telling by the aspect of the heavens and the influence of the stars—was the favorite superstition of the East and West. Great circumspection was necessary; neglect of it was fatal. In 1327, Asculanus, having performed some experiments that seemed miraculous to the vulgar, and having also offended many by some predictions said to have been fulfilled, was supposed to deal with infernal spirits, and was committed to the flames by the inquisitors of Florence.

Alchemy was generally confined to the mystery which all sought to penetrate,—the transmutation of metals into gold. Edward III, not less credulous than his grandfather, issued an order in the following terms:

‘Know all men that we have been assured that John of Rous and Master William of Dalby know how to make silver by the art of alchemy; that they have made it in former times, and still continue to make it; and, considering that these men, by their art, and by making the precious metal, may be profitable to us and to our kingdom, we have commanded our well beloved Thomas Cary to apprehend the aforesaid John and William, wherever they can be found, within liberties or without, and bring them to us, together with all the instruments of their art, under safe and sure custody.’

The art of medicine was still in the greater part a compound of superstition and quackery. Relics, shrines, and miracle-cures were a source of boundless profit to ecclesiastics. It forms an

epoch, that in this century Mundinus publicly dissected two human bodies in Bologna. A French surgeon, writing in 1363, says:

‘The practitioners in surgery are divided into five sects. The first follow Roger and Roland, and the four masters, and apply poultices to all wounds and abscesses; the second follow Brunus and Theodoric, and in the same cases use wine only; the third follow Saliceto and Lanfranc, and treat wounds with ointments and soft plasters; the fourth are chiefly Germans, who attend the armies, and promiscuously use charms, potions, oil, and wool; the fifth are old women and ignorant people, who have recourse to the saints in all cases.’

One of Gower’s most graceful passages is that in which he pictures Medea going forth at midnight to gather herbs for the incantations of her witchcraft:

‘Thus it befell upon a night,  
Whann there was naught but sterre light,  
She was vanished right as hir list,  
That no wight but hirselfe wist:  
And that was at midnight tide;  
The world was still on every side.  
With open head, and foote all bare  
His heare to spread; she gan to fare:  
Upon the clothes gyрте she was,  
And specheles, upon the gras  
She glode forth, as an adder doth.’

**Theology.**—The central doctrine of the mediæval Church was the carnal nature of the sacraments—*Transubstantiation*.<sup>1</sup> Long ago, in the ninth century, it had been denied that the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper were transmuted into the body and blood of Christ. Two centuries later, the dispute was famous; and Berenger, who had the temerity to teach that they were but symbols, was terrified into publicly signing a confession of faith, which, among other tenets, declared:

‘The bread and wine, after consecration, are not only sacrament, but also the real body and blood of Jesus Christ; and this body and blood are handled by the priest and consumed by the faithful, not merely in a sacramental sense, but in reality and truth, as other sensible objects are.’

The controversy continued. Bread was deified, carried in solemn pomp through the public streets to be administered to the sick or dying. By his exclusive right to the performance of the miracle in the mass, the humblest priest was exalted above princes. Against this cardinal belief of the early Church, as of the Roman Catholics now,—that the material flesh and blood of the Saviour could be eaten as ordinary meat,—Wycliffe issued a formal pro-

<sup>1</sup> A word introduced and established by Innocent III, at the fourth Lateran Council, 1215.

test (1381), and with that memorable denial began the movement of revolt.

Under every creed, however monstrous, beneath every formula, however obsolete, is a philosophy. Wherever the importance of conduct has been felt, one question has been of chief concern,—‘Who shall deliver me from *the body of this death?*’ Jew and Persian had witnessed, with idolatrous Greece, that the especial strength of evil lay in *matter*. How came this substance to be tainted and infirm? Plato had left the question doubtful. The Jew found his solution in the fatal apple. The earth was a garden of delight, over whose hospitable surface no beast or bird of prey broke the changeless peace: but Adam, the first-born, sinned—no matter how, and all this fair scene dissolved in carnage. Creation groaned in ruins, and the human frame—hitherto pure as immortal seraph—was infected with disease and decay, unruly appetites, jealousies, rapines, and murders. Thenceforward every material organization contained in itself the elements of destruction. How shall the soul be saved, unless the body—its companion and antagonist, which bears it down—is purified? *The old substance must be transfigured*—leavened by the flesh of the Redeemer, which is free from the limitations of sin. So will the new creature, thus fed and sustained, go on from strength to strength, and at last, dropping in the gate of the grave the ‘muddy vesture’ which is death’s, stand robed in glorified form, like refined gold. Such, we doubt not, is the root-idea of the Eucharist. It was the conscious idea, not in metaphor, but in fact. As a symbolism, beautiful still. The weary fasts of the saints may be their glory or their reproach; but the same desire—however expressed—that set St. Simeon on his pillar, tunes the heart and forms the mind of the noblest of mankind,—similitude with the divine through victory, however wrought, over the fleshly lusts.

**Ethics.**—About this time, more writers than in any former century occupied themselves in collecting and solving what they styled *Cases of Conscience*. Their industry may have tended as freely to a wrangling spirit as to a suitable practice, but it indicates an advance along the line of moral consciousness. The moral law, in the view of Occam as in that of Scotus, is founded upon the will of God. The just and the unjust are what He has



declared to be such, by attaching to them the rewards and punishments of another life. Had His will been different, He would have sanctioned other principles than those which we are now taught to consider as the foundation of the good.

It is worthy of remark, also, that moral duties were explained, and moral precepts enforced by allegories of a new and whimsical kind, as the *Vision*, and by examples drawn from the qualities and habits of brutes. A thousand picturesque legends centre on the intimate connection of the hermit with the animal world in the lonely deserts of the East or in the vast forests of Europe.

Christianity, as the main source of the moral development of nations, has discharged its office less by the inculcation of a *system* of ethics than by the attractive influence of its perfect ideal,—the character of the Christian Founder.

**Résumé.**—Parliament grew steadily in power and importance. The popular element was beginning to manifest itself in government. Feudal bondage was relaxing. The spirit of freedom, which heretofore had animated only the noble and the high-born, was now inflaming the heart of the serf. There was an almost simultaneous movement of the lower orders in various countries, owing plainly to general causes affecting European society. Amalgamation of races and hard-won concessions from despotic kings were creating an independent body of freemen.

Laws were inadequately administered. Property was insecure. The dwelling of the peasant was open to plunder, without hope of redress. Poverty and ignorance hovered over the masses. Domestic virtues were but slightly felt. Ideas of feasting and defense were pushed into the foreground. Luxury was inelegant, pleasures indelicate, pomp cumbersome and unwieldy. War stood on the right, and riot on the left.

The angry, fretful spirit of the working classes was joined to a restless state on religious matters, issuing in satire and stern attack. The multiplied abuses in different branches of the Church, strongly supported indeed by the overshadowing superstition of the land, were yet at war with stubborn English instincts,—love of home, industry, and justice. Theory and practice were corrupt, and the corruption irritated the ethical sense of the few and the common sense of the many; the first result finding representation in Wycliffe, the second in Chaucer.

Every department of life was penetrated with the beliefs, or interwoven with the interests of theology. Astronomy was bewildered with astrology, chemistry ran into alchemy, philosophy traversed mechanically the region of arid abstractions, science — pursued in suspicious secrecy — wantoned in the grotesque chimeras of magical phantoms, and the physician's medicines were powerless unless the priests said prayers over them. Four chief causes were operating to emancipate the intellect from its servile submission and faith:

1. The rapid growth of the industrial classes,—at all times separated from theological tendencies.
2. The awakening of a spirit of bold inquiry.
3. The discredit fallen upon the Church on account of the rival popes.
4. The corruption of the monasteries.

Literature was affected and shaped by two generic forces,—foreign and indigenous:

1. *Classical*, wrought into Latin Christianity or translated into scholastic tomes, as a benefit of instruction, but shown chiefly and most directly in a trading-stock of semi-historical tales.

2. *Italian*, embodied in the sweet and stately measures of Dante or Petrarch and the studied prose or verse of Boccaccio, in which the spirit of the antique was seen as in a modern mirror.

3. *French*, steeped in the imagery of Southern beauty and closely connected with the over-strained sentiments of chivalry, rising to its height and dying in the translation of the *Romannt of the Rose*.

4. *Religious*, the atmosphere, the climate, under which the literary product springs, grows, and derives its vigor of life; a perpetual irritant, arousing, with individual energy, the Teutonic conscience and the English good sense.

5. *Social*, of half-barbaric cast, violent in pride, prodigal in splendor, extravagant in its fanciful virtues, gross in its real vices.

6. *Linguistic*, able—since now almost devoid of inflections—to receive all the words of other languages that any might bring to it; open for all uses, waiting for the hand of a master-builder to consolidate and temper it.

7. *Formal*, almost exclusively poetic, and dividing itself into two schools—romantic and religious; the one following Continental models, the other reviving the laws of Saxon verse.

An age of heightened life, of wider culture, or more harmonized society, into which are born a reformer, whose call awakes the spirit of national independence and moral earnestness, and a poet—not a rhymer, but a ‘maker,’ who has something new to say, and has found the art of saying it beautifully. Against the ruder, sadder lines of Langland, which paint with terrible fidelity the hunger, toil, and misery of the poor man’s life, are the fresh, glad notes of Chaucer, which breathe the perfumed elegance and luxury of the court.

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## MANDEVILLE.

Now I am comen hom to reste.

**Biography.**—Born at St. Albans, about twenty miles north of London, in the year 1300. He studied medicine, but the globe was his home; and, at a time when the Orient was but a Land of Fairy, impelled by an irresistible desire of change and a deep religious emotion, he set forth ‘on the day of St. Michael, in the year of our Lord 1322, passed the sea, and went the way to Hierusalem, to behold the mervayles of Inde.’ With no credentials but his honorable sword, and his medical science (which might sometimes prove as perilous), he penetrated into Turkey, Persia, Armenia, India, Ethiopia, China, spending three years at Pekin; joined a Mahometan army in Palestine, served under the Sultan of Egypt; and after an absence of more than thirty years, returned, as another Ulysses, to find himself forgotten save by a few thin and withered friends of his youth, who supposed him lost and dead.

Gout and the aching of his limbs had ‘defined the end of my labor against my will, God knoweth.’ He wrote for ‘solace in his wretched rest’; then, with his thoughts ever passing beyond the equator, he set off again on another roving expedition, and overtaken with illness died at Belgium in 1371.

**Writings.**—*Travels*, first composed in Latin, which was afterwards translated into French, and lastly out of French into English, that ‘every man of my nation may understand it.’ The book was submitted to the pope and to ‘his wise council,’ who after a critical review ‘ratified and confirmed my book in all points.’ In this ‘true’ book are many things very untrue, but the author himself designs no imposition. With the eyes and ears of a child, he has stood in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and says:

‘Zee schull undirstonde that whan men comen to Jerusalem her first pilgrymage is to the chirche of the Holy Sepulcr wher oure Lord was buryed, that is withoute the cytee on the north syde. But it is now enclosed in with the ton wall. And there is a full fair chirche all round, and open above, and covered with leed. And on the west syde is a fair tour and an high for belles strongly made. And in the myddes of the chirche is a tabernacle as it wer a lytyll hows, made with a low lityll dore; and that tabernacle is made in maner of a half a compas right curiously and richely made of gold and azure and othere riche coloures, full nobelyche made. And in the ryght side of that tabernacle is the sepulcre of oure Lord. And the tabernacle is viij fote long and v fote wide, and xj fote in heghte. And it is not longe sithe the sepulcre was all open, that men myghte kisse it and touche it. . . . And there is a lamp that hongeth befor the sepulcre that brenneth light, and on the Gode fryday it goth out be him self, at that hour that our Lord roos fro deth to lyve. Also within the chirche at the right side besyde the queer of the churche is the Mount of Calvarye, wher our Lord was don on the cros. And it is a roche of white coloure and a lytill medled with red. And the cros was set in a morteyns in the same roche, and on that roche dropped the woundes of our Lord, whan he was pyned on the cros, and that is cleped Golgatha. And men gon up to that Golgatha be degrees. And in the place of that morteyns was Adames hed found after Noes flode, in tokene that the synes of Adam scholde ben bought in that same place.’

With pious artlessness, in which the marvellous delights, he relates how St. John sleeps placid and uncorrupted in abysmal gloom,—

‘God-preserved, as though a treasure,  
Kept unto the waking day’:—

‘From Pathmos men gone unto Epheism, a fair citee and nyghe to the see. And there dyede Seynte Johne, and was buryed behynde the highe Awtiere, in a tounge. And there is a faire chirche. For Christene mene weren wont to holden that place alweyes. And in the tombe of Seynt John is noughte but manna, that is clept Aungeles mete. For his body was translated into Paradys. And Turkes holden now alle that place and the citee and the Chirche. And all Asie the lesse is yecept Turkye. And ye shalle undrestond, that Seynt Johne bid make his grave there in his Lyf, and leyd himself there-inne all quyke. And therefore somme men seyn, that he dyed noughte, but that he resteth there till the Day of Doom. And forsoothe there is a gret marveule: For men may see there the erthe of the tombe apertly many tymes steren and moven, as there weren quykke thinges undre.’

A suggestion of the picturesque myth of the Seven Sleepers. So Rip Van Winkle passed twenty years slumbering in the Catskill mountains. Even Napoleon is believed among some of the French peasantry to be sleeping on in like manner.

Who has not reverted, fondly, regretfully, to the spring-time of his being, with its simple pleasures and unconscious joys, as the Eden of his individual existence? It may not be precisely defined, but it is there—the same for all—somewhere beyond the storm-line of perils and pitfalls. Even so the generations, world-worn and foot-sore, look longingly back to the ‘shady bowers, the vernal airs, the roses without thorns,’ of Paradise. None has seen it, many have sought it in vain, but all concur in the *fact*. In the imagination of the ages it is *there*,—or *was*, somewhere in the dewy morn of mortal life before the immeasurable wreck. Thus our honest traveller’s description of the locality of this delectable spot is much the same as given by men of finer genius centuries afterwards. He fairly acknowledges that he cannot speak of it properly, ‘for I was not there.’ With charming simplicity he adds:

‘The earthly Paradise, or Garden of Eden, as wise men say, is the highest point of the earth, and it is so high that it nearly touches the circle of the earth there as the moon makes her turn. And it is so high that the flood of Noah might not come to it. And Paradise is enclosed all about with a wall, and men know not whereof it is, for the wall is all covered over with moss as it seems, and it seems not that this is natural stone. . . . And you shall understand that no man that is mortal shall approach to that Paradise, for by land may no man go, for wild beasts that are in the deserts, and for the high mountains and great huge rocks that no man may pass by for the dark places there; and by the rivers no man may go, for the water runs so roughly and sharply, because it comes down so outrageously from the high places above that it runs so in great waves that no ship may run or sail against it. Many lords in past time have attempted to pass by these rivers into Paradise, with full, great companies, but they might not speed in their voyage, and many died of weariness of rowing against the strong waves, and many of them became blind or deaf by the noise of the water, and many perished that were lost in the waves. So that no mortal man may approach that place without special grace of God, and of that place I can tell you no more.’

When he relates from his own personal observation, it is no longer with the prelude of ‘men seyn.’ Of Chinese royalty he says:

‘The gret Kyng hathe every day, 50 fair Damyseles, alle Maydenes, that serven him everemore at his Mete. And whan he is at the Table, thei bryngen him hys Mete at every tyme, 5 and 5 to gedre. And in bryngynge hire Serveyse, thei syngen a Song. And after that, thei kutten his Mete, and putten it in his Mouthe: for he touchethe no thing ne handlethe nought, but holdethe evere more his Hondes before him, upon the Table. For he hath so longe Nayles, that he may take no thing, ne handle no thing. For the Noblesse of that Contree is to have longe Nayles, and to make hem growen alle weys to ben as longe as men may. And there ben manye in that Contree, that han hyre Nayles so longe, that thei envyrnonne alle the Hond: and that is gret Noblesse. And the Noblesse of the Women, is for to have smale Feet and litille: and therefore anon as thei ben born, they leet bynde hire Feet so streyte, that thei may not growen half as nature wolde: And alle weys theise Damyseles, that I spak of befor, syngen alle the tyme that this riche man etethe: and when that he etethe no more of his firste Cours, thanne other 5 and 5 of faire Damyseles bryngen him his seconde Cours, alle weys syngynge, as thei



dide befor. And so thei don contynuelly, every day, to the ende of his Mete. And in this manere he ledethe his Lif. And so dide thei before him, that weren his Auncestres; and so shulle thei that comen aftr him, with outen doynge of ony Dedes of Armes: but lyven evere more thus in ese, as a Swyn, that is fedde in Sty, for to ben made fatte.'

He enters the Valley Perilous, of which he has heard with wondering awe; and what he does not see, his horrifying fancy supplies:

'Beside that isle of the Mistorak, upon the left side, nigh to the river Phison, is a marvelous thing. There is a vale between the mountains that dureth near a four mile. And some clepen it the vale enchanted, some clepen it the vale of devils, and some clepen it the vale perilous. . . . This vale is full of devils, and hath been always. And men say there that it is one of the entries of hell. In that vale is plenty of gold and silver; wherefore many misbelieving men, and many Christian men also, gon in oftentime, for to have of the treasure that there is, but few comen again; and namely of the misbelieving men, ne of the Christian men nouth: for they ben anon strangled of devils.'

Naturally,—

'I was more devout then than ever I was before or after, and all for the dread of fiends that I saw in divers figures.'

He believes the earth to be round, but marvels how the antipodes, whose feet are right upwards toward us, do not fall into the firmament. The more wonderful the narrative, the deeper it sinks into the softest and richest moulds of the most germinating mind. 'The trees of the sun and of the moon,' he observes, 'are well known to have spoken to King Alexander, and warned him of his death.' In the Island of Lango, not far from Crete, he forgets not the unfortunate Lady of the Land who remained a dragoness because no one had the hardihood to kiss her lips to disenchant her. Near Bethlehem, he assures us, is the field *Floridus*, in which a fair maiden was unjustly condemned to die:

'And as the fire began to burn about her she made her prayers to our Lord, that as truly as she was not guilty He would of His merciful grace help her and make it known to all men. And when she had thus said she entered into the fire and immediately it was extinguished, and the fagots that were burning became red rose trees, and those that were not kindled became white rose trees, full of roses. *And these were the first rose trees, red and white, that ever man saw.*'

**Style.**—Straightforward, unpoetical, unadorned, idiomatic, drawn-out, as if the idea, to be made plain, must be driven in and clinched. These several lines are representative:

'And zee schull vnderstonde Machamete [*Mahomet*] was born in Araybe, that was first a pore knaue that kept cameles that wenten with marchantes for marchandise, and so befell that he wente with the marchantes in to Egipt, and thei were thanne cristene in the parties. And at the desartes of Araybe he wente in to a chapell wher a Erenmyte ducte. And whan he entered in to the chapell, that was but a lytill and a low thing, and had but a lytill dore and a low, than the entree began to wexe so gret and so large, and so high, as though it had be of gret mynstr, or the zate of a paleys.'

**Rank.**—An ingenuous voyager; the first example of the liberal and independent gentleman journeying over the world in pursuit of knowledge, honored wherever he went for his talents and personal accomplishments. If he was gossipy and credulous, it was because his age was so. The critic who thus comprehends him, will neither calumniate nor ridicule him. A journey over the globe at that distant day was scarcely less solemn than a departure to the realm of spirits; and, considering the circumstances under which he travelled and wrote, he must be conceded to have been a remarkable man. If he related fables, he did it honestly, while other accounts, long resting on his single and unsupported authority, have been confirmed by later discoveries,—as the burning of widows on the funeral pile of their husbands—the artificial egg-hatching in Egypt—the spheroidal form of the earth—the crocodile—the hippopotamus—the Chinese predilection for small feet—the trees which bear wool of which clothing is made.

**Character.**—Studious from childhood, unconquerably curious to see the unknown, courageous to wander wherever the step of man could press; a knight of spotless honor, a man of unimpeached probity, and a Christian of devoted piety. Offered in marriage a Sultan's daughter and a province, he refused both when his faith was to be exchanged for Mahometanism. He who can mourn the wickedness of his country cannot be without a large measure of those moral, affectional, and religious faculties, whose fairest, sweetest blossom is goodness. On his return to Europe, he wrote:

'In our time it may be spoken more truly than of olde, that Vertue is gone, the Church is under foote, the Clergie is in errour, the Devill reigneth, and Simonie beareth the sway.'

**Influence.**—By the popularity of his book, he did more, probably, than any other writer of the century, to increase the proportion of Latin and Romance words in the English vocabulary. The following are illustrative: *assembly, inflame, moisten, nation, cruelty, corner, date, defend, idol, philosopher, plainly, promise, pronounce, reconcile, temporal, publish, monster, visit, environ, conquer, reverend, spiritual.*

We, from whom the ethereal hues of that glowing day have faded (alas!), may smile at his budget of wonders, but to the

spirit of such we owe perhaps the map of the world and the intercourse of nations. His *Travels* will always remain a deeply interesting monument of the thought of the period.

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## WYCLIFFE.

Honored of God to be the first Preacher of a general Reformation to all Europe.—*Milton.*

**Biography.**—Son of a country squire, born 1324, in the little village of Wycliffe—the *cliff by the water*. Entered Oxford at sixteen, where he distinguished himself in logic and theology. In 1361, he was elected Master of Balliol, and in that year was presented by his college to the rectory of Fylingham. Four years later, he was appointed Warden of Canterbury Hall, and, as the champion of the State, threw himself into the stormy disputes between Romanism and the government. Armed with the degree of Doctor of Divinity, he began in a wooden hall, roughly plastered and roofed with thatch, to lecture on divinity, boldly assailing the practices of the Church. His fame in 1374 led to his selection as one of an embassy to Bruges, to remonstrate against the tribute-claims of the papacy, whose demands, amid the social troubles from pestilence, from the cost of war, and from the strife between capital and labor, rose ever higher. Obtaining some concessions from the pope, he was rewarded with the rectorship of Lutterworth, which was afterwards his chief residence. Identity of political views had allied him with the powerful John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, who was eager to drive the prelates from office and to seize their wealth. He had said that church property, like other, might be employed for national purposes, and had exhorted the clergy to return to their original poverty. These offences were not to be forgiven. On the 19th of February, 1377, his grey beard sweeping to his breast, his belted robe flowing to his feet, his white staff firmly in his thin hand, he appeared before the Bishop of London, to answer for heresy. By his side were Lancaster and the Marshal of England. There was no trial. A howling mob, to whom the Duke as the leader of the baronage was

unpopular, dissolved the meeting. The hearts of the monks burned to smite him down; and again, at the close of the ensuing year, he was summoned to the Capitol. Supported by the Crown and the people, he bore himself defiantly and returned to Oxford in peace. 'It is not possible,' he asserted, 'that a man should be excommunicated to his damage, unless he were first and principally excommunicated by himself.' In his chamber, where he lay at the point of death, eight men urged him to recant. When they had done, he rose by help of his servant, and, 'holding them with his glittering eye,' cried: 'I shall not die, but live; and again declare the evil deeds of the friars!' In 1381, deserted and alone, he openly inveighed against the doctrine of transubstantiation. The university, panic-stricken, first condemned him, then tacitly adopted his cause. In the presence of his class, he had challenged a refutation of his conclusions, and was commanded by Lancaster to be silent, to which he replied: 'I believe that in the end the truth will conquer.' His courage had restored confidence: but turning from the rich and learned, he appealed to England at large, and, from being a schoolman, became a pamphleteer. His enemies were persistent. Of twenty-four propositions, carefully collated from his works, a council solemnly decreed ten to be heretical and the rest erroneous. Alarmed by the Peasant Revolt and the attitude of the barons, Richard II, to strengthen his position by an alliance with the Church, issued a royal order of expulsion from the university; and Wycliffe, silenced at Oxford, retired to the hovels of Lutterworth, where he forged the great weapon of future warfare against the triumphant hierarchy,—the *English Bible*. Summoned to appear at Rome, his failing strength inspired the sarcastic reply:

'I am always glad to explain my faith to any one, and above all to the Bishop of Rome; for I take it for granted that if it be orthodox he will confirm it; if it be erroneous, he will correct it. . . . Now Christ during his life upon earth was of all men the poorest, casting from Him all worldly authority. I deduce from these premises, as a simple counsel of my own, that the Pope should surrender all temporal authority to the civil power, and advise his clergy to do the same.'

The terrible strain on his energies enfeebled by age and study had induced paralysis, and a final stroke while he was hearing mass in his parish church was followed a day or two later by his quiet death, December 31, 1384. The lips of malice pursued him with redoubled fury; and, besides assuring the people of

his eternal damnation, took care to represent his malady as the visible judgment of Heaven for his heresies.<sup>1</sup>

**Writings.**—An incredible number of sermons, letters, tracts, and treatises, in Latin and English, asserting collectively and essentially:

1. All power is of God. Hence the royal is as sacred as the ecclesiastical. The king is as truly His vicar as is the Pope.

2. Each individual holds the dominion of his conscience, not of a mediating priesthood, but immediately of his Creator, who is the tribunal of personal appeal.

3. The bread in the Eucharist is not the real body of Christ, but only its sign.

4. The Roman Church has no true claim to headship over other churches.

5. Temporal privileges cannot be exacted or defended by spiritual censures.

6. Ecclesiastical courts should be subject to the civil.

7. The clergy ought not to possess temporal wealth; they should be maintained by the free alms of their flocks.

8. Pilgrimages and image-worship are akin to idolatry.

9. Priests have no power to absolve from sin.

10. The Bible is the one ground of faith, and it is the right of every man to examine it for himself.

What a result for the fourteenth century! What a promise for the renovated head and heart of the sixteenth! Religion must be secularized—no longer forestalled—and purged from indulgences and rosaries. Let each hear and read for himself. To this end, let God's word quit the learned schools and the dusty shelves of the monastery. To the mass it is a sealed book, locked up in a dead and foreign tongue, covered with a confusion of commentaries and Fathers. How far it is corrupted by the traditions and devices of men, we know not till we see it in the simple speech of the market and the fireside:

'Ech place of holy writ, both opyn and derk, techith mekenes and charite; and therefore he that kepith mekenes and charite hath the trewe undirstondyng and perfectioun of al holi writ. . . . Therefore no simple man of wit be aferd unmesurabli to studie in the text of holy writ.'

<sup>1</sup> The impartial historian of opinions must be early impressed with the mournful truth that all religions agree in forever rewarding the believer and forever damning the one who doubts or denies,—the heretic. Under the great laws of eternal development, are we not all heretics?



In this spirit, Protestant Wycliffe translates the Testament, Old and New, which men will consult, not for amusement, but to find in it their doom of life and death, and to learn a new worship, without the rites that smother a living piety beneath external forms.

**Style.**—Rugged, homely, sometimes slovenly; but always clear, terse, vehement, stinging, as if feeling ever the galling shackles of spiritual despotism. The mind intent upon the eternal tragedy of the conscience is disdainful of elegance.

**Rank.**—In the immense range of his intellectual power, he stood in Oxford without a rival. Like Bacon, Scotus, and Occam, an audacious partisan; unlike them, a dexterous politician. The organizer of a religious order, the founder of our later English prose; first of the great Reformers and last of the great Scholastics. The grandeur of his position is marked, as well by the reluctance to adopt extreme measures against him, as by the admission of a contemporary and opponent, who acknowledged him to be ‘the greatest theologian of the day, second to none as a philosopher, and incomparable as a schoolman.’ To be the first, amidst a host of prejudices and errors, to strike out into a new and untried way, indicates a genius above the common order.

**Character.**—Devout, benevolent, austere; a man of sterling sense, of amazing industry, of ardent zeal, with the stout-heartedness that dared be singular for God and the right. Altogether a brave and admirable spirit, open to the divine significance of life; seeing through the show of things, believing in the truth of things, and striking with the poets, in a troublous period, the first blow of demolition against an ancient thing grown false, preparatory afar off to a new thing.

**Influence.**—To Wycliffe is due the establishment of a sacred dialect, which, with slight variation, as will appear below in his version of the first chapter of the *Gospel of St. Mark*, has continued to be the language of devotion to the present day:

‘1. The bigynnyng of the gospel of Jhesu Crist, the sone of God.

2. As it is writun in Ysaie, the prophete, Lo! I send myn angel bifore thi face, that schal make thi weye redy before thee.

3. The voyee of oon cryyng in desert, Make ye redy the weye of the Lord, make ye his pathis rihtful.

4. John was in desert baptisyng, and preching the baptysm of penaunce, into remiscioun of synnes.

5. And alle men of Jersalem wenten out to him and al the cuntree of Judee; and weren baptisid of him in the flood of Jordan, knowleching her synnes.

6. And John was clothid with heeris of camelis, and a girdil of skyn abowte his leendis; and he oet locusts, and hony of the wode, and prechide, seyinge:

7. A strengere than I schal come aftir me, of whom I knelinge am not worthi for to vndo, *or vnynde*, the thwong of his schoon.

8. I have baptisid you in water: forsothe he shall baptise you in the Holy Goost.' . . .

He and his school introduced or popularized many Latin and Romance terms; and thus enriched literary diction by enriching that of familiar currency, from which the Shakespeares draw their stock of living and breathing words.

He accomplished a work which no ecclesiastical censure could set aside. The period was eminently favorable to a successful revolt through a general spirit of disaffection to the pope. Men of rank became his adherents. The learned of Oxford were his apostles. Wandering scholars carried his writing into Bohemia, and disseminated his principles. Lollardism spread through every class of society, a floating mass of religious and social discontent. The grave nor persecution could extinguish the new forces of thought and feeling which were breaking through the crust of feudalism. His Bible was proscribed; his votaries, as will presently appear, were imprisoned and burned; but the seed had been dropped, and was rooted in the soil. Thirty years hence the vultures of the law will ungrave him, and consuming to ashes what little they can find, will cast it into the brook that runs hard by, thinking thus to make away both with his bones and his doctrines; but —

'As thou these ashes, little brook, wilt bear  
 Into the Avon — Avon to the tide  
 Of Severn — Severn to the narrow seas —  
 Into main ocean they — this deed accurst  
 An emblem yields to friends and enemies,  
 How the bold teacher's doctrine, sanctified  
 By truth, shall spread throughout the world dispersed.'

When the 'simple preachers' have slumbered a century and a half, their day of triumph will be at hand. The age, though strongly disposed, is not yet ripe for revolution. Reforms ordained to be permanent are of slow growth.

## CHAUCER.

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath  
 Precluded those melodious bursts that fill  
 The spacious times of great Elizabeth  
 With sounds that echo still.—*Tennyson*.

**Biography.**—Born in London, 1328,—‘the city of London, that is to me so dear and sweet in which I was forth-grown’; studied at Cambridge, then at Oxford; acquired all branches of scholastic and elegant literature, Latin, Italian, English, and French; was page in the royal household; served in the army, was taken prisoner in France; again at the court of Edward III, the most splendid in Europe, surrounded by the wit, beauty, and gallantry of chivalry; marries the queen’s maid of honor, wondering that Heaven had fashioned such a being,—

‘And in so little space  
 Made such a body, and such face;  
 So great beauty and such features  
 More than be in other creatures!’

thus brother-in-law of the heir apparent to the throne, Duke of Lancaster, strengthening their political bond by a family alliance; an ambassador in open or secret missions to Florence, Genoa, Flanders; takes part in pomps of France and Milan; converses with Petrarch, perhaps with Boccaccio and Froissart; is high up and low down,—now a placeholder, now disgraced, now the admired of the Court, now an exile dreading to see the face of a stranger, now incarcerated in the Tower, and again basking in the sunshine of kingly favor; at one time occupied with ceremonies and processions, at another secluded in his lovely retreat at Woodstock; finally, weary of the hurry and turmoil of the varied and brilliant world, retiring to the country quiet of Donnington Castle; then, bowed beneath the weight of years, dying in Palace-yard on the 25th of October, 1400,—his earthly friendship dissolved,—himself the only withered leaf upon a stately branch. He was the first buried in what is now famous as the Poets’ Corner of Westminster Abbey.

What an education was that, with its splendor, varieties, contrasts! What a stage for the mind and eyes of an artist!

**Appearance.**—Of middle stature, late in life inclining to

corpulency,—a point upon which the Tabard host takes occasion to jest with him:

‘Now ware you, sirs, and let this man have place;  
He in the waist is shaped as well as I;  
This were a poppet in armes to embrace.’

Of full face, indicative of health and serenity; of fair complexion, verging towards paleness; of dusky yellow hair, short and thin, with small round-trimmed beard; of aquiline nose, of expansive marble-like forehead, and drooping eyes,—a peculiarity likewise noticed by the host:

“‘What man art thou,” quoth he,  
“That lookest as thou wouldest find a hare?  
Forever on the ground I see thee stare.”’

His ordinary dress consisted of a loose frock of camlet, reaching to the knee, with wide sleeves fastened at the wrist; a dark hood, with *tippet*, or tail, which indoors hung down his back, and outdoors was twisted round his head; bright-red stockings, and black, horned shoes.

**Diction.**—As to the ancient accentuation, we are much in the dark. Certainly it was not in all respects like that of our own day. It is slightly different even in Shakespeare and his contemporaries from what it now is. For example, *aspect*, which in their time was always accented on the last syllable, is now accented on the first. A short composition is now called an *essay*, but a century ago it was called an *essáy*. Thus Pope,—

‘And write next winter móre essáys on mán.’

At an earlier period, this change was much more active. There was no recognized standard of accidence, and the modes of spelling, as of emphasis, were extremely irregular. It will render the approach to Chaucer’s poetry easier, to remember:

1. That the Romance canons of verse, which were adopted as the laws of poetical composition, tended to throw the stress of voice upon the final syllable, contrary to the Saxon articulation, which inclined to emphasize the initial syllable. Hence the pronunciation would oscillate between the two systems. Thus Chaucer has *lángage* in one line, *langáge* in another, as the verse may require.

2. The *ed* at the end of verbs, and the *es*, when it is the plural or possessive termination of a noun, should generally be sounded as distinct syllables.

3. The presence of their Anglo-Saxon root is often denoted by an *n* at the end of words; as, 'Thou shalt *ben* quit' (be), '*withouten* doubt' (without), 'I shall you *tellen*' (tell).

4. Not infrequently two negatives are used; as, 'I *n*'ill *nat* go' (will not), 'I *n*'am *nat* sure' (am not), 'I *ne* owe hem *not* a word' (do not owe).

5. Forms of the personal pronouns are exhibited in the following declension:

<i>Sing.</i>	<i>1st person.</i>	<i>2d person.</i>	<i>3d person.</i>		
Nom.	I, Ic	thou	he	she	hit, it
Gen.	min, mi	thin, thi	his	hire, hir	his
Acc.	me	the, thee	him	hir, hire	hit, it
<i>Plural.</i>					
Nom.	we	ye	the, they		
Gen.	our, oure	youre, your	here		
Acc.	us	you	hem.		

6. Final *e* (with us totally inoperative upon the syllabication) is usually pronounced,—silent before *h* or a vowel; as *Aprillē*, *swootē*.

Chaucer's position, so far as we know, has no parallel in literary history. His poems are not in a foreign language—hardly in our own. They present to the eye terms that are familiar, and terms that are uncouth. The use of a glossary is wearisome; the intermingling of sunshine and shadow, in which the reader is uncertain how long the clearness will continue, and how soon the obscurity will recur, is vexatious. He is the star of a misty morning.

**Versification.**—Chaucer composed several pieces in octosyllabic metre—iambic tetrameter; but by far the most considerable part of his poetry was written in our present heroic measure—iambic pentameter in rhymed couplets or stanzas. In practice, spondees ( - - ), trochees ( - ∪ ), and anapæsts ( ∪ ∪ - ) are often introduced. To vary the *position* of the accents prevents monotony; to reduce their *number*, as from five to four, quickens the movement of the line. A line may be catalectic—wanting a syllable; or hypercatalectic—lengthened by a syllable or even two, which gives a lifting billowy rhythm. By a little attention to the law of the verse, the difficulties of pronunciation will greatly diminish, and the air of archaism will rather enhance the effect. Thus of the death of Arcite:



‘And with that wórd his spéeche faile gán;  
 For fró his feéte up toó his brést was cóme  
 The cöld of déth that hádde him óvernóme  
 And yét moreóver ín his ármes twoó  
 The vítal stréngth is lóst, and ál agoó.  
 Ónly the íntellect, withóuten móre,  
 That dwélléd ín his héрте sík and sóre,  
 Gan fáyle whén the héрте félte déth.’

[overtaken]

The poet himself seems anxious that transcribers and reciters should not violate his *metre*. Thus, gracefully bidding adieu to a finished poem, he adds:

‘And for there is so grete dyversite  
 In English and in writynge of our tonge,  
 So preye I God that non miswrite thee  
 Ne thee *mismetre* for defaute of tonge.’

His stanza—called *rhyme royal*, from the circumstance of its being used by a royal follower—was formed from the Italian octave rhyme by the omission of the fifth line. It thus consists of seven lines, three on each side of a middle one, which is the last of a quatrain of alternate rhymes, and first of a quatrain of couplets. Thus:

“‘Nay, God forbede a lover shulde change!’  
 The turtel seyde, and wex for shame al reed:  
 “Though that hys lady evermore be straunge,  
 Yet let hym serve hir ever, tyl he be deed.  
 Forsoth, I preyse nought the gooses reed;  
 For though she deyed, I wolde noon other make;  
 I wol ben hirs til that the deth me take.”’

It remained a favorite with English poets down to the reign of Elizabeth.

In rhythmic history, Langland terminates the ancient period; and Chaucer begins the modern. The first presents the Anglo-Saxon type  $\frac{3}{8}$  ♪ ♪ ♪, but with the accent at the second time-unit of the bar instead of the first. Thus:

$\frac{3}{8}$  ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ |  
 In a som - er se - son whan soft was the son - ne

♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ |  
 I shóp - e me in shroud - es as I a shep - e wer - e

The second presents the same, with the last two of the eighth-notes joined together into a quarter-note; as if in music we should write ♪ — ♪, where the slur — unites two sounds in one

precisely equivalent to  $\dot{\uparrow}$ . Hence for the predominant form  $\frac{3}{8}$   $\dot{\uparrow}$   $\dot{\uparrow}$   $\dot{\uparrow}$ , we have the predominant form  $\frac{3}{8}$   $\dot{\uparrow}$   $\dot{\uparrow}$ . Thus:

Whil-om | as old | - e sto | - ries tell | - en us |

There was | - a duc | that hight | - e The | - se - us |

**Writings.**—Like all the rest, Chaucer begins as a copyist, and, turning with greatest sympathy to those in whom the romantic element is strongest, translates the *Romaunt of the Rose*, an allegorical love poem, built up by the troubadours into colossal proportions, one of the most famous in the fashionable literature of the time. Under the figure of a rose in a delicious garden, it portrays the trials of a lover, who in the attainment of his desire, has to traverse vast ditches, scale lofty walls, and force the gates of castles. These enchanted fortresses are inhabited by visible divinities, some of whom assist and some oppose. The garden itself is enclosed with embattled masonry, whereon are the emblematic Hatred, Avarice, Envy, Sorrow, Old Age, and Hypocrisy. Within are the smiling dancers, and, by way of contrast, Danger, who starts suddenly from an ambushade, and sad Travail, who forever mingles with the merry company. All this, as usual, is seen in a dream, a dream of May, with its mantling green and gladsome melody of birds:

‘That it was May me thoughten tho,  
It is five year or more ago,  
That it was May thus dreamed me  
In time of love and jollity. . . .  
And then becometh the ground so proud  
That it woll have a newe shrowd,  
And make so quaint his robe and fair  
That it had hews an hundred pair,  
Of grass and floures Ind and Pers,  
And many hewes full diverse. . . .  
The birdes, that han left their song  
While they had suffered cold full strong  
In weathers gril, and derk to sight,  
Been in May for the sunne bright  
So glad, that they shew in singing  
That in their heart is such liking,  
That they mote singen and been light. . . .  
Then yunge folk intenden aye

[then

[Indian, Persian

[dreary

For to been gay and amorous,  
 The time is then so savourous.  
 Hard is his heart that loveth nought  
 In May, when all this mirth is wrought,  
 When he may on these branches hear  
 The smale birdes singen clear  
 Their blissful swete song pitous.'

Under the influence of the prevalent taste for novelty and splendor, he writes the *House of Fame*, known to modern readers chiefly through Pope's paraphrase, bearing the statelier title of the 'Temple of Fame.' Chaucer is transported in a dream to the Temple of Venus, which is of glass, in a wide waste of sand, and on whose walls are figured in gold all the legends of Virgil and Ovid. Dante's eagle, glittering like a carbuncle, looks on him from the sun:

'That faste by the sonne, as hye  
 As kenne myght I with myn eye,  
 Me thought I sawgh an egle sore,  
 But that hit semede moche more  
 Then I had any egle seyne. . . .  
 Hit was of golde and shone so bryght,  
 That never sawgh man such a syght.'

Suddenly the eagle descends with lightning wing, and, bearing him aloft in his talons above the stars, drops him at last before the House of Fame, built of polished beryl, and standing on a rock of almost inaccessible ice. All the southern side is covered with the names of famous men—perpetually melting away! The northern side is alike graven, but the names, here shaded, remain. All around, on the turrets, are the minstrels, with Orpheus, Arion, and the renowned harpers. Behind them are myriad musicians, then charmers, magicians, and prophets. He enters, and at the upper end of the hall, paved and roofed with gold, and embossed with gems, sees Fame seated on a throne of carbuncle, a 'gret and noble quene,' amidst an infinite number of heralds, robed nobles, and crowned heads. From her throne to the gate stretches a row of pillars, on which stand the great historians and poets. The palace rings with the sounds of instruments, and the celestial melody of Calliope and her seven sisters, in eternal praise of the goddess. People of every nation and condition crowd the hall to present their claims. Some ask fame for their good works, and are denied good or bad fame. Others who merit well, are trumpeted by Slander. A few obtain their just reward. Some, who have done nobly, desire their good works

to be hidden, and their request is granted. Others make request, and their deeds are trumpeted through clarion of gold. Chaucer himself refuses to be a petitioner. Enough that he best knows what he has suffered, and what thought. He is then carried by the eagle to the House of Rumor, sixty miles long and perpetually whirling. Made of twigs like a cage, it admits every sound. Its doors, more numerous than forest leaves, stand ever ajar. Thence issue tidings of every description, like fountains and rivers from the sea, flying first to Fame, who gives them name and duration. Would you know how the waves of air perambulate the oceans of space—how the lightest word speeds unerringly to its destination, and mayhap in the Hereafter will vibrate still in the speaker's ear—how the atmosphere we breathe may be the ever-living witness of the sentiments we have uttered? Listen:

‘Sound is naught but air that’s broken,  
And every speeche that is spoken,  
Whe’er loud or low, foul or fair,  
In his substance is but air:  
For as flame is but lighted smoke,  
Right so is sound but air that’s broke. . . .  
Now, henceforth, I will thee teach  
However, speeche, voice or sown,  
Through his multiplicion,  
Though it were piped of a mouse,  
Must needs come to Fame’s House.  
I prove it thus; taketh heed now  
By experience, for if that thou  
Throw in a water now a stone,  
Well wot’st thou it will make anon  
A little roundel as a circle,  
Par venture as broad as a covercle,  
And right anon thou shalt see well  
That circle cause another wheel,  
And that the third, and so forth, brother,  
Every circle causing other,  
Much broader than himselfen was:  
Right so of air, my leve brother,  
Ever each air another stirreth  
More and more, and speech upbeareth,  
Till it be at the House of Fame.’

The occupants of this house—chiefly sailors, pilgrims, and pardoners—are continually employed in hearing or telling news, inventing and circulating reports and lies. In one corner, the poet sees a throng of eager listeners around a narrator of love-stories. The uproar about this shadow of himself wakes him from his dream.

Grand suggestiveness here, true strokes of the Gothic imagi-

nation. Pass away the highest things! There are no eternal corner-stones. All things that have been in this place of hope, all that are or will be in it, earth's wonder and her pride, have to vanish,—rising only to melt in air and be no more!

Amid all this exuberancy, love is the sovereign passion. As we have seen, it has the force of law. It is inscribed in a code, combined with religion, confounding morality with pleasure, displaying the fatal excess and pedantry of the age. From his sojourn beneath Italian skies, Chaucer returns with his Northern brain powerfully stimulated, and, with close attention to his originals, writes the story of *Troilus and Creseide*, in which the well-loved visions wear a more tangible form, and mingle in a more consecutive history, than in the hazy distance of allegory. It is a tale of Troy told in the Middle Ages. A Trojan seer, warned by Apollo that Troy must fall, deserts to the Greeks, leaving behind him in the beleaguered city his beautiful daughter Creseide, overwhelmed with grief at her father's treachery. Troilus, valorous brother of Hector, sees her in the temple, clad in mourning, and loves:

'And when that he in chaumber was allon,  
He down upon his beddes feet him sette,  
And thought ay on hire so, withouten lette  
That as he satt and woke, his spirit mette  
That he hire saugh, and temple, and al the wyse  
Right of hire loke, and gan it new advise.'

[ceasing  
[fancied  
[manner  
[consider

Like Dante, he is reticent, would languish and die in silence but for Pandarus, her uncle, who persuades him to disclose the name of his love and promises to forward his suit. Troilus is born anew—an invincible knight, yet gentle, generous, and sincere; his cruelty, his levity, his haughty carriage, all gone; of so gentle manner,—

'That each him loved that looked in his face.'

Pandarus seeks his niece, with the comforting adieu,—

'Give me this labour and this business,  
And of my speed be thine all the sweetness.'

He prevails upon her to pity his friend, takes his leave 'glad and well begone.' As she sits alone in troubled meditation, a shout in the street proclaims the victorious advance of Troilus, who, omnipotent in hope, has put the Greeks to flight, and comes a conquering hero. She sees his triumph, marks his modest demeanor,—



‘And let it in her heart so softly sink  
That to herself she said, “Ho! give me drink.”’

She blushes, drops her head, thinks of his prowess, his estate, his fame,—above all, of his distress; almost decides that she will love, then thinks of the woes of love:

‘For love is yet the moste stormy life  
Right of himself that ever was begun,  
For ever some mistrust or nice strife [foolish  
There is in love some cloud over the sun;  
Thereto we wretched women nothing conne, [can do  
When us is woe, but weep, and sit, and think:  
Our wreek is this, our owne woe to drink.’ [revenge

Troilus, in wasting suspense, asks his friend, just returned, ‘Shall I weep or sing?’ Assured of her friendly regard, he fears his heart will leap forth, ‘it spreadeth so for joy’:

‘But, Lord, how shall I doen? how shall I liven?  
When shall I next my own dear heart ysee?  
How shall this longe time away be driven  
Till that thou be again at her from me?  
Thou may’st answer, “Abide, abide”; but he  
That hangeth by the neck, the soth to sain,  
In great disease abideth for the pain.’ [discomfort

In answer, Pandarus recommends him to write a letter, and furthermore, to ride, as it were accidentally, by her house, when he will take care that she shall be at the window engaged in conversation with himself,—the subject the man whom he desires to serve. When the letter is brought, she is ashamed to open it, and consents only when told the poor knight is about to die. When asked how she likes it, ‘all rosy hued then waxeth she’; refuses, however, to answer it, but yields at length to the importunities of her uncle, and writes that she will feel for him the affection of a sister:

‘She thanked him of all that he well meant  
Towardes her, but holden him in hand  
She woulde not, ne maken herself bond  
In love, but as his sister him to please,  
She would aye fain to do his heart an ease.’

When the messenger arrives, Troilus trembles, pales, doubts his happiness. All night long he ponders how he may best merit her favor. Slowly, after many heart-aches, and much stratagem on the part of Pandarus, he obtains her delicate confession:

‘And as the new abashed nightingale,  
That stinteth first, when she beginneth sing,  
When that she heareth any herdes tale, [shepherd’s call

Or in the hedges any wight stirring;  
 And after, siker doth her voice out ring;—  
 Right so Creseid', when that her dread stent,  
 Opened her heart, and told him her intent.'

[*more boldly*  
 [*ceased*]

Of their delight, judge 'ye that have been at the feast of such gladness!' They exchange rings, and part, vowing eternal constancy. As to him,—

'In alle nedes for the townes war  
 He was, and aye the first in armies dight,  
 And certainly, but if that bookes err,  
 Save Hector most idread of any wight;  
 And this encrease of hardiness and might  
 Come him of love his lady's thank to win,  
 That altered his spirit so within.'

[*clad*

[*reward*

All day long she sings:

'Whom should I thanken but you, god of love,  
 Of all this blisse, in which to bathe I ginne?  
 And thanked be ye, lorde, for that I love,  
 This is the right life that I am inne,  
 To flemen all maner vice and sinne:  
 This doth me so to vertue for to entende  
 That daie by daie I in my will amende.  
 And who that saieth that for to love is vice, . . .  
 He either is envious, or right nice,  
 Or is unmightie for his shrudnesse  
 To loven. . . .  
 But I with all mine herte and all my might,  
 As I have saied, woll love unto my last,  
 My owne dere herte, and all mine owne knight,  
 In whiche mine herte growen is so fast,  
 And his in me, that it shall ever last.'

[*banish*

'But all too little, welaway! lasteth such joy.' A truce between the two armies is struck. Her father Calchas reclaims her. Told that she is to be exchanged for a prisoner, she swoons, and Troilus, thinking her dead, cries:

'O cruel Jove! and thou Fortune adverse!  
 This all and some is, falsely have ye slain  
 Creseid', and sith ye may do me no worse,  
 Fie on your might and workes so diverse!  
 Thus cowardly ye shall me never win;  
 There shall no death me from my lady twin.'

[*separate*

Love sports with death when it makes the whole of life. With his sword unsheathed, he calls upon the loved and lost to receive his spirit:

'But as God would, of swoon she then abraid,  
 And gan to sigh, and "Troilus!" she cried;  
 And he answered; "Lady mine, Creseid'  
 Liven ye yet?" and let his sword down glide.  
 "Yea, hearte mine! that thanked be Cupid,"

[*awaked*



And yond so goodly 'gan she me behold  
That to the death my heart is to her hold:

And at the corner in the yonder house  
Heard I mine alderlevest lady dear  
So womanly with voice melodious  
Singen so well, so goodly and so clear,  
That in my soule yet me think'th I hear  
The blissful sound, and in that yonder place  
My lady first me took unto her grace.'

[*sweetest*]

She—with what words and what tears!—has prayed that body and soul might sink into the bottomless pit ere she prove false to Troilus, and has pledged that in ten days she will come back. But Fortune seems truest when she will beguile:

'From Troilus she 'gan her brighte face  
Away to writhe, and took of<sup>h</sup>im no heed,  
And cast him clean out of his lady's grace  
And on her wheel she set up Diomed.'

Creseide through sheer weakness yields to the pleading of Diomed. In vain Troilus appeals to her in the tenderest of letters, and bewails his woe in endless rhymes. He accepts the inevitable then, in a last piteous reproach:

'O lady mine, Creseid'  
Where is your faith, and where is your behest?  
Where is your love? where is your truth?'

There is nothing left. Light and life are stricken from the world:

'And certainly, withouten more speech,  
From hennes forth, as farforth as I may,  
Mine owne death in armes will I seech,  
I ne recke not how soone be the day;  
But truely, Creseide, sweete May!  
Whom I have aye with all my might iserved,  
That ye thus done I have it not deserved.'

Courting death, he throws himself upon the Greeks, thousands of whom perish; seeks Diomed everywhere, wounds him, but is himself slain by the spear of the invincible Achilles. Borne up to the seventh sphere, he looks compassionately down upon this little spot of earth, and esteems it vanity. Wherefore,—

'O young and freshe folkes, he or she!  
In which that love up groweth with your age,  
Repaireth home from worldly vanity,  
And of your hearts up casteth the visage  
To thilke God that after his image  
Yon made, and thinketh all n'is but a fair,  
This world that passeth soon, as flow'res fair.'

There is improvement here. The worldly view tempers the sentimental element. Chaucer, still in sympathy with the de-

mand of the age for excessive sensation, is growing into manhood, and winning liberty. His joy in the poetry of others gives way to his desire to render it purer, simpler, more beautiful, and more true. As knowledge and learning increase, these fantastic beings, these exquisite refinements, which make the evening hours of the lord flow sweetly, give way to real manners and living characters.

The popular excursion of the day is the pilgrimage, and the most famous is that to the shrine of the martyred Becket<sup>1</sup> at Canterbury. Persons of every condition meet in the month of April and travel together, starting from a London Inn. Social distinctions are for the time disregarded, partly from the religious sense, of which the occasion is suggestive, that all men are equal before God; but chiefly from the common disposition of chance companions to put off restraint, and relieve, by friendly interchange, the tediousness of solitary and dangerous travel. The occasion is not too solemn for mirth, even coarse and vigorous; for since the Devil is thwarted by the object of the mission, it is not at all necessary to maintain any strictness by the wayside. Chaucer seizes upon this custom as the frame in which to set his immortal pictures of life—the *Canterbury Tales*. Bound for the tomb of the illustrious saint, he joins at the ‘Tabard’ a troop of pilgrims, twenty-nine in number. They set out in early morning, accompanied by the merry host, who is the presiding spirit of the party. To beguile the plodding ride through the miry highways, it is agreed that each shall tell at least one story on the journey and another on the return,—

‘For trewely comfort ne mirthe is none  
To riden by the way domb as the stone.’

All the great classes of English humanity are represented,—a knight, a lawyer, a doctor, an Oxford student, a miller, a prioress, a monk, carpenters, farmers,—all in hearty human fellowship. The stories related are as various as the characters of the narrators, and comprehend the whole range of middle-age poetry,—chivalric, vulgar, grave, gay, pathetic, humorous, moral, and licentious.

The knight, bronzed by the Syrian sun, leads us among arms, palaces, temples, tournaments, and glittering barbaric kings.

<sup>1</sup> The Saxon archbishop, murdered, it will be remembered, by the minions of Henry II.



Palamon and Arcite, the heroes of the story, are lovers of the fair Emily, and in a forest solitude fight in deadly combat:

‘The brighte swordes wenten to and fro  
So hideously that with the leaste stroke  
It seemed that it woulde fell an oak.’

But the king, whose delight is the chase, accidentally discovers them,—

‘And at a start, he was betwixt them two,  
And pulled out a sword and cried,—“Ho!”’

He orders that fifty weeks hence each shall bring a hundred knights to contest his claim—Emily to wed the victor:

‘Who looketh lightly now but Palamon?  
Who springeth up for joye but Arcite?  
Who could it tell, or who could it indite,  
The joye that it maked in the place  
When Theseus hath done so fair a grace?’

He prepares at fabulous expense a magnificent theatre, a mile in circuit, walled with stone, graduated sixty paces high, adorned with altars and oratories of alabaster, gold, and coral. Wrought on the wall of the temple of Venus, ‘full piteous to behold,’ are—

‘The broken sleepes, and the sikes cold [sighs  
The sacred teares, and the waimentings, [lamentations  
The fiery strokes of the desirings,  
That Loves servants in this life enduren,  
The oathes that their covenants assuren.’

Within the fane of mighty Mars,—

‘First on the wall was painted a forest,  
In which there wonneth neither man nor beast, [dwelleth  
With knotty gnarry barren trees old  
Of stubbes sharp and hidous to behold,  
In which there ran a rumble and a swough, [swooning noise  
As though a storm should bursten every bough;  
And downward from a hill under a bent [declivity  
There stood the Templ’ of Mars Armipotent,  
Wrought all of burned steel, of which th’ entree [burnished  
Was long and strait, and ghastly for to see;  
And thereout came a rage and such a vise [rush  
That it made all the gates for to rise.  
The northern light in at the doore shone,  
For window on the wall ne was there none  
Through which men mighten any light discern:  
The door was all of adamant etern,  
Yelenched overthwart and endelong  
With iron tough, and for to make it strong,  
Every pillar the temple to sustain  
Was tonne-great, of iron bright and sheen.’ [shining

Within the gloomy sanctuary,—

‘There saw I first the dark imagining  
 Of Felony, and all the compassing;  
 The cruel ire, red as any glede, [burning coal  
 The pickpurse, and eke the pale drede [fear  
 The smiler with the knife under the cloak;  
 The shepen burning with the black smoke; [stable  
 The treason of the murdering in the bed;  
 The open war, with woundes all bebled;  
 Conteke with bloody knife and sharp menace: [strife  
 All full of chirking was that sorry place. [hateful sound  
 The slayer of himself yet saw I there,  
 His hearte’s blood hath bathed all his hair;  
 The nail ydriven in the shode on height; [hair on the head  
 The colde death, with mouth gaping npright.’

Here,—

‘The statue of Mars upon a carte stood  
 Armed, and looked grim as he were wood, . . . [mad  
 A wolf there stood before him at his feet  
 With eyen red, and of a man he eat.’

Now the train of combatants who come to joust in the tilting field:

‘There mayst thou see coming with Palamon  
 Licurge himself, the greate King of Thrace;  
 Black was his beard, and manly was his face  
 The circles of his eyen in his head  
 They gloweden betwixen yellow and red,  
 And like a griffon looked he about,  
 With combed haire on his browes stout;  
 His limbes great, his brawnes hard and strong,  
 His shoulders broad, his armes round and long;  
 And as the guise was in his countree,  
 Full high upon a car of gold stood he,  
 With foure white bulles in the trace. . . .  
 A hundred lordes had he in his rout  
 Armed full well, with heartes stern and stout.  
 With Arcita, in stories as men find,  
 The great Emetrius the King of Ind,  
 Upon a steede bay, trapped in steel,  
 Covered with cloth of gold diapred wele,  
 Came riding like the god of Armes, Mars;  
 His coat armour was of a cloth of Tars, [a silk  
 Couched with pearles white, and round, and great; [trimmed  
 His saddle was of burnt gold new ybeat; [beaten  
 A mantelct upon his shoulders hanging  
 Bret-ful of rubies red, as fire sparkling; [brimfull  
 His criske hair like ringes was yrun,  
 And that was yellow, and glittered as the sun; . . .  
 His voice was as a trumpe thundering;  
 Upon his head he wear’d of laurel green,  
 A garland fresh and lusty for to seen;  
 Upon his hand he bare for his deduit [pleasant  
 An eagle tame, as any lily white: [amusement  
 A hundred lordes had he with him there,  
 All armed, save their heads, in all their gear. . . .

About this king there ran on every part  
Full many a tame lion and leopart.'

Such is the gorgeous imagery, contrasted and varied, by which Chaucer belongs to the romantic age and school. He belongs to it as well by his amorous discussions, his broad jokes, his indelicate particulars. Alisoun, one of the pilgrims, a wife of Bath, has buried five husbands—saw the fifth at the burial of the fourth!—

'And Jankin oure clerk was on of tho:  
As helpe me God, whan that I saw him go  
Aftir the bere, me thought he had a paire  
Of legges and of feet, so clene and faire  
That all my herte I yave unto his hold.  
He was, I trow, a twenty winter old,  
And I was fourty, if I shal say soth . . .  
As helpe me God, I was a lusty on,  
And faire, and riche, and yonge, and well begon.'

She subdues her husband by the continuity of her tempest:

'And whan that I had gotten unto me  
By maistrie all the soverainetee,  
And that he sayd, min owen trewe wif,  
Do as the list, the terme of all thy lif,  
Kepe thin honour, and kepe eke min estat;  
After that day we never had debat.'

In acquiring the art of taming her husbands, she has learned the art of arguing, and can pile up reasons beyond a Lapland winter, to justify her practice:

'God bad us for to wex and multiplie;  
That gentil text can I wel understand;  
Eke wel I wot, he sayd, that min husbond  
Shuld leve fader and moder, and take to me;  
But of no noumbre mention made he,  
Of bigamie or of octogamie;  
Why shuld men than speke of it vilanie?  
Lo here the wise king Dan Solomon,  
I trow he hadde wives mo than on, . . .  
Which a gift of God had he for alle his wives? . . .  
Blessed be God that I have wedded five.  
Welcome the sixthe whan that ever he shall.'

The religious mendicant is a jolly hypocrite, 'a wanton and a merry':

'Full well beloved and familier was he  
With franklins over all, in his countree,  
And eke with worthy women of the town. . . .  
Full sweetely heard he confession,  
And pleasant was his absolution.  
He was an easy man to give pennance  
There as he wist to have a good pittance; . . .  
Therefore instead of weeping and prayers,  
Men must give silver to the poore friars. . . .

His tippet was ay farced full of knives [stuffed  
 And pins for to given faire wives:  
 And certainly he had a merry note;  
 Well could he sing and playen on a rote. . . .  
 And over all, there as profit should arise,  
 Courteous he was, and lowly of service:  
 There n'as no man no where so virtuous; [was not  
 He was the beste beggar in all his house. . . .  
 For though a widow hadde but a shoe,  
 (So pleasant was his "*In Principio*")  
 Yet would he have a farthing ere he went.'

Wallet in hand,—

'In every hous he gan to pore and prie,  
 And begged mele and chese, or elles corn. . . .  
 "Yeve us a bushel whete, or malt, or reye,  
 A Goddes kichel, or a trippe of chese,  
 Or elles what you list, we may not chese;  
 A Goddes halfpeny, or a masse peny;  
 Or yeve us of your braun, if ye have any,  
 A dagon of your blanket, leve dame,  
 Our suster dere, (lo here I write your name)." . . .  
 And whan that he was out at dore anon,  
 He planed away the names everich on.'

In the course of his tour, he finds one of his most liberal clients ill, in bed, who has given half his fortune, and still suffers; assures him that he has said 'many a precious orison' for his salvation, then inquires for the dame, who enters:

'This frere ariseth up ful curtisly,  
 And hire embraceth in his armes narwe,  
 And kisseth hire swete and chirketh as a sparwe.'

Then:

'Thanked be God that you yaf soule and lif,  
 Yet saw I not this day so faire a wif  
 In all the chirche, God so save me.'

Or again, the summoner, rallied by the friar, retorts in good humor:

'This Frere bosteth that he knoweth helle,  
 And, God it wot, that is but litel wonder,  
 Freres and fendes ben but litel asonder.  
 For parde, ye han often time herd telle  
 How that a Frere ravished was to helle  
 In spirit ones by a visioun,  
 And as an angel lad him up and down,  
 To shewen him the peines that ther were . . .  
 And er than half a furlong way of space,  
 Right so as bees out swarmen of an hive,  
 Out of the devils . . . ther gonnen to drive,  
 A twenty thousand Freres on a route,  
 And thurghout hell they swarmed al aboute,  
 And com agen, as fast as they may gon.'

If such characters and sentiments show that Chaucer, like every writer, bears on his forehead the traces of his origin, there

are others which carry him beyond it, and give him affinity with the latest and highest. There is the Oxford clerk, silent or sententious, poor, learned, and thin by dint of hard study, riding on a horse lean as a rake:

‘He rather have at his bed’s head  
 Twenty bookes clothed in black or red  
 Of Aristotle and his philosophy,  
 Than robes rich or fiddle or psaltry:  
 But all be that he was a philosopher  
 Yet hadde he but little gold in coffer,  
 But all that he might of his friendes hent,  
 On bookes and on learning he it spent, . . .  
 Of study took he moste cure and heed;  
 Not a word spoke he more than was need . . .  
 Sounding in moral virtue was his speech,  
 And gladly would he learn and gladly teach.’

[catch

Or the young squire:

‘With lockes curl’d as they were laid in press;  
 Of twenty years of age he was I guess. . . .  
 Embroider’d was he, as it were a mead  
 All full of freshe floweres white and red:  
 Singing he was or floyting all the day;  
 He was as fresh as is the month of May:  
 Short was his gown, with sleeves long and wide;  
 Well could he sit on horse, and faire ride:  
 He coulde songes make, and well endite,  
 Joust and eke dance, and well pourtray and write:  
 So hot he loved, that by nightertale  
 He slept no more than doth the nightingale:  
 Courteous he was, lowly and serviceable,  
 And carv’d before his father at the table.’

[whistling

[night-time

And his father the knight, brave but gentle:

‘That from the time that he first began  
 To riden out, he loved chivalry,  
 Truth and honour, freedom and courtesy,  
 Full worthy was he in his lordes war, . . .  
 And ever honour’d for his worthiness. . . .  
 And though that he was worthy he was wise,  
 And of his porte as meek as is a maid.  
 He never yet no villainy ne said  
 In all his life unto no manner wight:  
 He was a very perfect gentle knight.’

When Arcite, flushed with the victory that awards him Emily, is mortally hurt by a plunge of his steed, he calls to his bed-side the maiden and his rival ‘that was his cousin dear,’ bequeaths to her the service of his disrobed spirit, and asks her to forget not Palamon if ‘ever ye shall be a wife,’—all his resentment gone, only his idolatry left, which surges over him in one supreme consciousness ere the silence and eternity of the grave:



‘Alas the woe! alas the paines strong,  
 That I for you have suffered, and so long!  
 Alas the death! alas mine Emily!  
 Alas departing of our company!  
 Alas mine hearte’s queen! alas my wife!  
 Mine hearte’s lady, ender of my life!  
 What is this world?—what asken men to have?  
 Now with his love, now in his colde grave—  
 Alone,—withouten any company.  
 Farewell my sweet,—Farewell mine Emily!  
 And softe take me in your armes tway  
 For love of God, and hearkeneth what I say.’

Were ever the sighs and sobbings of a broken and ebbing spirit more pathetically related? Against the chattering wife of Bath, who stuns her listeners, is the demure prioress—‘Madame Eglantine,’ simple and pleasing, with nice and pretty ways, showing, as we have seen, signs of exquisite taste. As to her conscience,—

‘She was so charitable and so piteous,  
 She woulde weep if that she saw a mouse  
 Caught in a trap, if it were dead or bled.  
 Of smalle houndes had she that she fed  
 With roasted flesh, and milk, and wastel bread,  
 But sore wept she if one of them were dead,  
 Or if men smote it with a yarde smart:  
 And all was conscience and tender heart,’

As befits her, she tells the touching story of a Christian child, ‘the ruby bright,’ murdered in a Jewry, whose heart is so filled with divine grace that it breaks out continually in singing, ‘to schoolward and homeward,’ *O Alma Redemptoris!* Dying from the dreadful gash in his throat, he sings it still by the miracle of mercy; and dead,—

‘In a tomb of marble stones clear  
 Enclosen they his little body sweet:  
 There he is now God lene us for to meet.’

[*where, grant*

A like and stronger contrast is Griselda,<sup>1</sup> who softens the tyranny of her lord by patient submission and unconquerable affection. Her whole conduct is a fervid hymn in praise of forbearance. Smitten on the one cheek, she turns the other. Loving her husband, it is natural to her, in the true spirit of charity, to ‘suffer all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things.’ Altogether too passive, you will say. The objection is anticipated:

‘This story is said, not for that wives should  
 Follow Griselda as in humility,  
 For it were importable though they would;

<sup>1</sup> *Clerk’s Tale.*

But for that every wight in his degree  
 Should be constant in adversity  
 As was Griselda, therefore Petrarch writeth  
 This story, which with high style he enditeth.  
 For since a woman was so patient  
 Unto a mortal man, well more we ought  
 Receiven all in gree that God us sent. . . .  
 Let us then live in virtuous sufferance.'

[*kindness*]

There is need of a striking antithesis, in an age of brutality, when the only choice for woman lay between the violence of vituperation and the persuasion of meekness. Never to be forgotten is the secular priest, brother to the plowman:

'There was a poore *Parson* of a town,  
 But rich he was of holy thought and work;  
 His parishens devoutly would he teach;  
 Benign he was, and wonder diligent,  
 And in adversity full patient. . . .  
 Wide was his parish, and houses far asunder,  
 But he ne left naught for no rain nor thunder,  
 In sickness and in mischief, to visit  
 The farthest in his parish much and lite  
 Upon his feet, and in his hand a staff:  
 This noble 'nsample to his sheep he yaf,  
 That first he wrought, and afterward he taught,  
 Out of the gospel he the wordes caught,  
 And this figure he added yet thereto,  
 That if gold ruste what should iron do? . . .  
 He was a shepherd and no mercenary.'

[*little*][*gave*]

There is yet something good in Nazareth. Not all the ecclesiastics are venal and voluptuous. This one preaches a long and earnest sermon on the text:

'Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.'

The genius that in large measure is shaped by the books it has read and the times it has lived in, is itself a distinct element of growth. What could be more broad and catholic than these *Tales*, open alike to Briton and to man, shedding long beams of promise on the horizon?

**Periods.**—Chaucer was nourished on the French Romance poetry, which in his early life formed the chief reading of the court circles. After the date of his first visit to Italy, impressed with the ineffaceable charm of that land of loveliness and kindling life, his foreign models were less French than Italian. Here he imitated the lively Boccaccio rather than Dante, who was too severe, or Petrarch, who was too sentimental. From his favorite,

he freely translated his two longest, and, in a sense, two greatest poems,—*Troilus and Creseide* and the *Knight's Tale*. But while his riper genius is guided by the poets of Italy, he is still influenced by those of France,—the *troubadours* and *trouvères*. The comic stories in the *Canterbury Tales* are mostly based on the *fabliaux*. His indirect debt to the Italian stars, however, in all that concerns the elegant handling of material, and in the fusion of the romantic with the classic spirit, is more important. It is in the immortal group of pilgrims that he breaks away from the literary traditions and restricted tastes of ranks and classes, and becomes characteristically English, distinctly national. Even here extraneous influences may be detected, but original genius gives itself freely to the native force of its theme, and we have, for the most part, the pleasing conditions of daily life. The *predominant* influence, therefore, till 1372, is French; thence till 1384, Italian; from 1384 till 1400, English. This poetic development may be represented by the correspondent table of works:

First period.....	{	Romaunt of the Rose, Complaint to Pity, Book of the Duchess, The Dream, The Court of Love, The Flower and the Leaf,	} ( <i>attributed</i> ). <sup>1</sup>
Second period....	{	The Former Age, The Assembly of Fowls, The House of Fame, Troilus and Creseide, Knight's Tale.	
Third period.....	{	Legend of Good Women, Canterbury Tales ( <i>the majority</i> ), Astrolabie ( <i>prose</i> ), Testament of Love ( <i>attributed</i> ), Various Ballads.	

**Style.**—Refined, precise, perspicuous, employing figures less for ornament than lucidity; flexible and graceful, varying in subtle response to the subject and the mood; the living voice, as

<sup>1</sup> The genuineness of many works which till recently have passed as Chaucer's, has been questioned by the most advanced school of criticism. The dust of the controversy has not yet settled.

it were, of nature, carrying a tone as original and divine as the music of her purling brooks; sometimes tedious from too great minuteness, as in other writers from too frequent digression; if somewhat artificial and disjointed in the earlier workmanship, simple and well-ordered in the later. Do but consider, for instance, the 'linked sweetness' of the love-passages in *Troilus*, or the grand harmony of his tragic description, as of the temple of Mars,—

'First on the wal was peynted a forest,  
In which ther dwelleth neither man ne best,  
With knotty knarry bareyne trees olde  
Of stubbes scharpe and hidous to byholde  
In which ther ran a swymbel in a swough.'

Or the divine liquidness of diction and fluidity of movement in this stanza of the child-martyr:

'My throte is cut unto my nekke-bone,  
Saide this child, and as by way of kinde  
I shoulde have deyde, yea, longe time agone;  
But Jesu Christ, as ye in bookes finde,  
Will that His glory last and be in minde,  
And for the worship of His mother dere  
Yet may I sing *O Alma* loud and clere.'

Compare Wordsworth's modernization of the first three lines:

'My throat is cut unto the bone, I trow,  
Said this young child, and by the law of kind  
I should have died, yea, many hours ago.'

The flower must fade, though gathered by the most skilful hand, when severed from its root that lies imbedded in the soil.

**Rank.**—First modeller of the heroic couplet, first of the modern versifiers, whose melody and ease few, if any, have surpassed; whose variety and power of diction not ten of his successors have been able to rival; to Occleve, his pupil,—

'The firste fynder of our faire langage.'

The first artist of expression,—that is, the first to command or guide his impressions, to deliberate, sift, test, reject, and alter. Inventive, though a disciple; original, though a translator; and—like Shakespeare—a borrower, but lending to all that he borrows the gentle luxuriance of his own fancy, extracting from the old romances their sublime extravagances without their frivolous descriptions, re-creating the rude materials of the *trouvères* into

forms of elegance, retaining the gayety and critical coolness of the French without its wearisome idleness, and tempering the joyous carelessness of the Italian with the English seriousness.

Our first painter of Nature, who, haunting her solitudes, caught the glow of her skies and earth in his landscape. Without the gift to see the hidden wealth of meaning in the springing herbage, dew-drops, and rivulets glad, in the sighings among the reeds and the silent openings of the flowers, no great poet is possible. Chaucer has it conspicuously. His grass, soft as velvet, which he is never done praising, is 'so small, so thick, so fresh of hue!' The colors of petal and leaf, 'white, blue, yellow, and red,' he counts. The note of every song-bird he knows and loves. His scenery has the freshness of a perennial spring. Across five centuries its leaves are green, and its breezes fan our cheeks. The May-time is his favorite season. Before Burns or Wordsworth, he has loved and sung the daisy, the eye-of-day, and how tenderly!

'Then in my bed there daweth me no day  
That I n'am up and walking in the mead,  
To see this flower against the sunne spread,  
When it upriseth early in the morrow;  
That blissful sight softeneth all my sorrow.'

With the simple, pure delight of a child, he kneels to greet it when it first unfolds:

'And down on knees anon right I me set,  
And as I could this freshe flow'r I grette,  
Kneeling always till it unclosed was  
Upon the small, and soft, and sweete gras.'

The first clear-eyed and catholic observer of man, who, catching the living manners as they rise, fixes them in pictures that show the life of a hundred years as vivid and familiar as the figures in the streets of our cities. Think of the portraits of the knight, the squire, the prioress, the wife, the clerk, the parson, the monk,—

'And, for to fasten his hood under his chin,  
He had of gold ywrought a curious pin;  
A love-knot in the greater end there was:  
His head was bald, and shone as any glass,  
And eke his face, as it had been anoint;  
He was a lord full fat and in good point:  
His eyen steep, and rolling in his head,  
That steamed as a furnace of a lead.'



Of the friar,—

'Somewhat he *hisped* for his wantonness  
*To make his English sweet upon his tongue;*  
 And in his harping, when that he had sung,  
*His eyen twinkled in his head, aright*  
*As do the starres in a frosty night.'*

The lawyer,—

'No where so busy a man as he there n'as,  
 And yet he seemed busier than he was.' [was not

The franklin,—

'To liven in delight was ever his won,  
 For he was Epicurus' owen son, . . . [custom  
 It snowed in his house of meat and drink  
 Of alle dainties that men could of think.  
 After the sundry seasons of the year,  
 So changed he his meat and his soupere. . . .  
 His table dormant in his hall alway  
 Stood ready cover'd all the longe day.'

The doctor of physic,—

'In all this world ne was there none him like  
 To speak of physic and of surgery,  
 For he was grounded in astronomy.  
 He kept his patient a full great deal  
 In houres by his magic naturel:  
 Well could he fortunen the ascendant [make fortunate  
 Of his images for his patient. . . .  
 Of his diet measurable was he,  
 For it was of no superfluity,  
 But of great nourishing, and digestible.  
 His study was but little on the Bible.  
 For gold in physic is a cordial,  
 Therefore he loved gold in special.'

The miller,—

'He was short shouldered, broad, a thicke gnarre,  
 Ther n'as no door that he n'olde heave off bar, [knot  
 Or break it at a running with his head;  
 His beard as any sow or fox was red,  
 And thereto broad as though it were a spade.  
 Upon the cop right of his nose he had [top  
 A wert, and thereon stood a tuft of hairs  
 Red as the bristles of a sowes ears:  
 His nose-thirles blacke were and wide: [nostrils  
 A sword and buckler bare he by his side:  
 His mouth as wide was as a furnace:  
 He was a jangler and a Goliardeis, [reveller  
 And that was most of sin and harlotries:  
 Well could he stealen corn and tollen thrice.'

The reeve,—

'His beard was shorn as nigh as ever he can:  
 His hair was by his cares round yshorn:  
 His top was docked like a priest beforne:  
 Full longe were his legges and full lean,  
 Ylike a staff; there was no calf yseen.'



*O goode God! how gentle and how kind  
Ye seemed by your speech and your visage  
The day that maketh was our marriage!*

Find, who will, a finer burst of natural feeling than is expressed in the closing verses. When Troilus is bereft of Creseide by her departure for the Grecian camp, the universe is absorbed in the one idea of his love:

‘And every night, as was his wont to do,  
He stood, the bright moon shining to behold,  
And all his sorrow to the moon he told,  
And said—“Surely when thou art horned new,  
I shall be glad—if *all the world be true.*”’

Ah me, match it who can!

Yet Chaucer is not one of the great classics whose imaginations revel equally in regions of mirth, beauty, and grandeur. He wants their high seriousness, which detecting the divine significance of things, breathes the aspiration for something purer and lovelier, more thrilling and powerful, than real life affords, and with its prophetic vision helps faith to lay hold on the future life. He loves the fresh green of the panting spring, but has little sympathy with the sear and yellow of the mystical autumn. His love of nature is a simple, unreflective, childlike love:

‘He listeneth to the lark,  
Whose song comes with the sunshine through the dark  
Of painted glass, in leaden lattice bound,  
He listeneth and *he laugheth at the sound,*  
*Then writeth in a book like any clerk.*’

Nature is not to him, as it is to the highest, a symbol translucent with the light of the moral and spiritual world. He lacks the faculty of true naturalistic interpretation. He has never heard—

‘The voice mysterious, which whose hears  
Must think on what will be, and what has been.’

**Character.**—A man of letters and of action, trained in books, war, courts, business, travel. A poet and a logician, a student and an observer, a linguist and a politician, a courtier of opulent tastes and a philosopher who surveyed mankind in their widest sphere. He was a hard worker. By his own confession, reading was his chief delight. The eagle that carries him into the empyrean, says:

‘Thou goest home to thine house anone,  
And also dumb as a stone  
Thou sittest at another book  
Till fully dazed is thy look.’

Happy among books, he was happy among men. Scorning only hypocrisy, he loved many-colored life,—its weakness and its strength, its delicacy and its force, its laughter and its tears. Modest, glad, and tender. Never were lovers more genuine, untainted and adoring, than his. Troilus and Creseide speak with hearts of primeval innocence. He had indeed said, perhaps in a momentary scepticism or irritation, of the courtly class whose stability seemed to lie in perpetual change:

‘What man ymay the wind restrain,  
Or holden a snake by the tail?  
Who may a slipper eel restrain  
That it will void withouten fail?  
Or who can driven so a nail  
To make surc newfangleness, [inconstancy  
Save womer, that can gie their sail [guids  
To row their boat with doubleness?’

Yet for woman he had a true and chivalrous regard. It was with the avowed purpose of rendering homage to the beauty of pure womanhood that he wrote the legend—

‘Of goode women, maidenes, and wives,  
That weren true in loving all their lives.’

His emblem of womanly truth and purity was the daisy, with its head of gold and crown of white. And how he loves it!

‘So glad am I, when that I have presence  
Of it, to doon it alle reverence  
As she that is of alle floures flour,  
Fulfilled of all virtue and honour,  
And ever alike fair and fresh of hue,  
And I love it, and ever alike new,  
And ever shall, till that mine herte die.’

I know of nothing like it,—this man of the world, of ceremonies and cavalcades, conversant with high and low, with gallant knights and bedizened ladies, far-travelled, tempest-tossed, and time-worn, turning from the gorgeous imagery that filled his vision to find ‘revel and solace’ in the open-air world, and dwelling with the glad, sweet abandon of a child, on the springing flowers, the green fields, the budding woods, the singing of the little birds:

‘So loud they sang, that all the woodes rung  
Like as it should shiver in pieces small;  
And as methought that the Nightingale  
With so great might her voice out-wrest,  
Right as her heart for love would burst.’

Or the beauty of the morning. Were never sun-risings so exhilarating as his:

'The busy larke, messenger of day  
 Saluteth in her song the morwe gray;  
 And fyry Phebus riseth up so bright  
 That al the orient laugheth of the light,  
 And with his stremes dryeth in the greves  
 The silver dropes hongying on the leeves.'

Sensitive to every change of feeling in himself and others, his sympathies were as large as the nature of man. Bred among aristocrats, he thought that good desires and 'gentil dedes' were the only aristocracy.

Brave in misfortune. Troubled he was, but no trouble could extort from him a fretful note. He easily shirks the burden, and sings to his empty purse:

'To you my purse, and to none other wight,  
 Complain I, for ye be my lady dear;  
 I am sorry now that ye be so light,  
 For certes ye now make me heavy cheer:  
 Me were as lief be laid upon a bier,  
 For which unto your mercy thus I cry,  
 Be heavy again, or elles must I die.

Now vouchsafen this day ere it be night  
 That I of you the blissful sound may hear,  
 Or see your colour like the sunne bright,  
 That of yellowness ne had never peer;  
 Ye be my life, ye be my heartes steer;  
 Queen of comfort and of good company,  
 Be heavy again, or elles must I die.

[helm

Now purse, that art to me my lives light,  
 And saviour, as down in this world here,  
 Out of this towne help me by your might,  
 Sithen that you will not be my tresor,  
 For I am shave as nigh as any frere,  
 But I prayen unto your courtesy  
 Be heavy again, or elles must I die.'

The flying shadow of grief touches him, but does not rest there.

Less sportive, he would have been less vulgar. Some of his pages are stained, but the blemishes are not of evil intent, and are rather to be imputed to the age. Our minds are tinged with the color of custom. Refinement preserves public decency, want of it permits the grossest violations. Having fixed upon his personage, Chaucer, as he himself pleads, had to adjust the tale to the teller. However,—

'Who list not to hear,  
 Turn over the leaf, and choose another tale!'

His sympathies are with virtue. For subjects obscene and disgusting, as such, he has no taste. It is not the *filth* he enjoys, but



the *fun*. Of two unnatural selections by the 'moral Gower,' he cries:

'Of all such cursed stones I say, Fy!'

He is a moralist, but a happy and humorous one; of an ethical temper, too indolent to make a reformer in the sense in which the fiery Langland or the stern Wycliffe was one. He was progressive without being revolutionary.

**Influence.**—He rescued the native tongue from Babylonish confusion, and established a literary diction, banishing from Anglo-Saxon the superannuated and uncouth, and softening its churlish nature by the intermixture of words of Romance fancy.

He created, or introduced a new versification; exemplified the principle of syllabical regularity, which is now the law and the practice of our poetry; and by the superior correctness, grace, elevation, and harmony of his style, became the first model to succeeding writers.

He delineated English society with a pictorial force that makes us familiar with the domestic habits and modes of thinking of a most interesting and important period.

He is an unfailing fount of joy and strength, to revive the relish of simple pleasures, to bring back the freshness that warmed the springtime of our being, to refine youthful love, to make us esteem better the gentle and noble, and to feel more kindly towards the rude and base. Our market-places will be grass-grown, the hum of our industry will be stilled, but the ages will carry, as on the odoriferous wings of gentle gales, the sweet strains of —

'That noble Chaucer, in those former times,  
Who first enriched our English with his rhymes,  
And was the first of ours that ever broke  
Into the Muse's treasures, and first spoke  
In mighty numbers; delving in the mine  
Of perfect knowledge.'

## RETROGRESSIVE PERIOD.

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### CHAPTER V.

#### FEATURES.

A brilliant sun enlivens the face of nature with an unusual lustre; the sudden appearance of cloudless skies, and the unexpected warmth of a tepid atmosphere, after the gloom and inclemencies of a tedious winter, fill our hearts with the visionary prospects of a speedy summer; and we fondly anticipate a long continuance of gentle gales and vernal serenity. But winter returns with redoubled horrors; the clouds condense more formidably than before; and those tender buds, and early blossoms, which were called forth by the transient gleam of a temporary sunshine, are nipped by frost and torn by tempests.—*Warton*.

**Politics.**—After two and a half centuries of majestic rule, the dominion of the Plantagenets<sup>1</sup> proper passed away forever; and the House of Lancaster, in the person of Henry IV, was raised to the throne by a Parliamentary revolution. He bought the support of the Church by the promise of religious persecution, and that of the nobles by a renewal of the fatal French war. Henry V continued and almost realized the dream of an English empire in France, and his widow, contracting a second marriage with Owen Tudor, descendant of the Welsh princes, became the ancestress of another proud line of English sovereigns. The career of Henry VI was one of disaster in almost every variety,—factional strife at home, and calamity abroad. The Hundred Years' War ended, happily for mankind, with the expulsion of the English from French soil. Revolts of the populace were followed by a long and deadly struggle for supremacy between the parties of the red rose and the white, headed by two branches of the Plantagenet dynasty,—the Lancastrians and the Yorkists. After the violent crimes and excesses of Edward IV and Richard III, of the House of York—the one a despot and a sensualist, the other a usurper and a monster—when the illus-

<sup>1</sup>The heads of the line were Geoffrey of Anjou and Maud, daughter of Henry I of England. The name is derived from *Planta Genista*, Latin for the shrub which was worn as an emblem of humility by the first Earl of Anjou when a pilgrim of Holy Land. From this his successors took their crest and their surname.

trious barons were exterminated, or reduced to a shadow of their former greatness, the rival claims of the warring lines were united in the House of Tudor.

While the administration swerved continually into an irregular course, the restraint of Parliament grew more effectual, and notions of legal right acquired more precision, till the time of Henry VI, when the progress of constitutional liberty was arrested by the Wars of the Roses. To the restriction of suffrage succeeded the corruption of elections.<sup>1</sup> The baronage wrecked, the Crown towered into solitary greatness, and by its overpowering influence practically usurped the legislative functions of the two Houses. The interests of self-preservation led the churchman, the squire, and the burgess to lay freedom at the foot of the throne. Without a standing army, however, it is impossible to oppress, beyond a certain point, an armed people. Governors could safely be tyrants within the precinct of the court, but any general and long-continued despotism was prevented by the awe in which they stood of the temper and strength of the governed. From the accession of Henry VII is to be dated a new era, which, if less distinguished by the spirit of freedom, is more prosperous in the diffusion of opulence and the preservation of order.

**Society.**—Brutal as was the strife of the Roses, its effects were limited, in fact, to the great lords and their feudal retainers. The trading and industrial classes appear, for the most part, to have stood wholly aloof. It was of this period that Comines, an accomplished observer of his age, wrote:

‘In my opinion, of all the countries in Europe where I was ever acquainted, the government is nowhere so well managed, the people nowhere less obnoxious to violence and oppression, nor their houses less liable to the desolations of war, than in England, for there the calamities fall only upon their authors.’

Elsewhere:

‘England has this peculiar grace, that neither the country, nor the people, nor the houses are wasted, destroyed, or demolished; but the calamities and misfortunes of the war fall only upon the soldiers, and especially the nobility.’<sup>2</sup>

Orders were frequently issued, previous to a battle, to slay the

<sup>1</sup> The complaint of the men of Kent in Cade's revolt, 1450, alleges: ‘The people of the shire are not allowed to have their free election in the choosing of knights for the shire, but letters have been sent from divers estates to the great rulers of all the country, the which enforceth their tenants and other people by force to choose other persons than the common will is.’

<sup>2</sup> The actual warfare in England from 1455 to 1485 included an aggregate space of about two years.

nobles and spare the commoners. The civil war was the death-struggle of feudalism. The consequent depression of the aristocracy was the elevation of the people. The words *rent* and *wages*, in familiar use, indicate the relations of class to class. The rude fidelity of vassalage was exchanged for the hard bargaining of tenancy.

There were no factories. Every manufacture — cloth-making the most important — was carried on, in its several branches, at the homes of the workmen. The natural resources of the country were very imperfectly operated. A Venetian traveller, speaking of the general aspect of the country in the time of Henry VII, says:

‘England is all diversified by pleasant undulating hills and beautiful valleys, nothing being to be seen but agreeable woods, or extensive meadows, or lands in cultivation.’

But he adds:

‘Agriculture is not practised in this island beyond what is required for the consumption of the people; because, were they to plough and sow all the land that was capable of cultivation, they might sell a quantity of grain to the surrounding countries.’

Capital seems to have been more advantageously applied to the growth of sheep. By a statute of 1495, every laborer from mid March to mid September is to be at his work before five o’clock in the morning, nor leave it till between seven and eight in the evening, with a half hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner. Modern labor would not appear, in comparison, to be overtaken.

It was still a military community, with an excess of vigor and readiness to fight. The iron helmet hung upon the wall of the castle; and the long bows were at hand for the deadly flight of the arrow, or the practice of archery on Sundays and festival days. Parliaments, early in the century, were like armed camps. That of 1426 was called the ‘Club Parliament,’ from the circumstance that, when arms were prohibited, the retainers of the barons appeared with clubs on their shoulders. When clubs were forbidden, stones and balls of lead were concealed in the clothing. Later there is the story of a street-scuffle between two noblemen, in which several retainers were killed. A statute of restraint was enacted against Oxford scholars who hunted with dogs in parks and forests, threatened the lives of keepers, and liberated clerks convicted of felony. The harvest of highway robbery was abundant. ‘If God,’ said a French general, ‘had

been a captain now-a-days, he would have turned marauder.' Says Fortescue, Chancellor under Henry VI:

'It is cowardise and lack of hartes and corage that kepeth the Frenchmen from rysyng, and not povertye; which corage no Frenche man hath like to the English man. It hath been often seen in England that iij or iv thefes, for povertie, hath sett upon vij or viij true men, and robbyd them al. Bnt it hath not ben seen in Fraunce, that vij or viij thefes have ben hardy to robbe iij or iv true men. Wherefor it is right seld that Frenchmen be hangyd for robberye, for that they have no hertys to do so terryble an acte. There be therfor mo men hangid in England, in a yere, for robberye and manslaughter, than ther be hangid in Fraunce for such cause of crime in vij yers.'

It was natural that the discharged retainer of a decayed house should rather incline to take a purse than wield a spade. 'Ballad story relates how King Edward IV on a hunt meets a bold tanner, and inquires the 'readiest waye to Drayton Basset,—

'To Drayton Basset woldst thou goe,  
Fro the place where thou dost stand?  
*The next payre of gallowes* thou comest unto,  
Turne in upon thy right hand.'

Violence and cruelty went hand in hand. In the reign of Henry IV, it was made felony to cut out any person's tongue, or put out his eyes,—crimes which, the act says, were very frequent. The Earl of Rutland carrying on a pole the severed head of his brother-in-law, presented it to this monarch in testimony of his loyalty. Two princes were smothered in the tower. Men were beheaded without appeal to law or justice. The gory head of a Lollard was welcomed into London, with psalms of thanksgiving, by a procession of abbots and bishops, who went out to meet it. The head of a Royalist, crowned in mockery with a diadem of paper, was impaled on the walls of York.

Now that the battle-axe and sword had destroyed the petty royalty of the feudal baron, the lords quitted their sombre castles—strong fortresses, but dreary abodes—and flocked into others uniting convenience and beauty with some power of defence. Vaulted roofs and turrets, the decorated gable and the spacious window, superseded in most instances the protecting parapet and the frowning embrasure. The distinguishing feature of the domestic arrangement was still the great hall with its central fire. In towns the upper stories projected over the lower, so that in narrow streets the opposite fronts were only a few feet apart. A Paston letter gives a curious insight into the construction of the ordinary manor-house:



‘Patrick and his fellowship are sore afraid that ye would enter again upon them; and they have made great ordinance within the house; and it is told me they have made bars to bar the doors crosswise; and they have made wickets in every quarter of the house to shoot out at, both with bows and with hand-guns; and the holes that be made for hand-guns they be scarce knee-high from the plancher (floor); and of such holes be made five; there can no man shoot out at them with no hand-bows.’

Sleeping apartments were small. Mrs. Paston is puzzled to know how she can put her husband’s writing-board and his coffer beside the bed, so that he may have space to sit. Beds were rarely used except by the most wealthy. It is poetry and history combined that presents the affecting spectacle of a care-worn and sleepless king asking,—

‘Why, rather, Sleep, liest thou in *smoky cribs*,  
Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee,  
And hush’d with buzzing night-flies to thy slumber;  
Than in the *perfumed chambers* of the great,  
Under the canopies of costly state,  
And lull’d with sounds of sweetest melody?’<sup>1</sup>

Common utensils were transmitted in wills from generation to generation,—tongs, bellows, pans, pewter dishes, ‘a great earthen pot that was my mother’s.’

From the scarcity of books, reading could be no common acquirement. From the dearness of parchment and the slowness of scribes, manuscripts were things purchasable only by princely munificence. News travelled slowly, borne for the most part, by traders and pilgrims. The result of the great battle of Towton was six days in reaching London. Posts—horsemen placed twenty miles apart—were now first used on the road from London to Scotland. No modern net-work of wires and rails broke the narrow circle of local influence in which men usually abode from childhood to age.

Amid monotonous cares and the endless inconvenience of climate, while kings are dethroned and princes assassinated, the spirit of enjoyment abides, reflected in the perilous combats of the lists, the masks and disguisings of the palace, the antique pageantry of Christmas, the merriments of Easter and May-day. Wrestlers contended before the mayor and aldermen, as their fathers had done; and the archers went out, as of old, into Finsbury Fields. Vaulters came tumbling about, jugglers bewitched the eye, and the ambulatory minstrel with his harp borne before him by his smiling page, who—

<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare’s *Henry IV.*



‘Walken fer and wyde,  
Her and ther, in every syde,  
In many a diverse londe.’

From the days of Henry III, the burning crests of the marching watch<sup>1</sup> had sent up their triumphant fires. The twilight hours of June and July witnessed the simple hospitalities of primitive London:

‘On the vigils of festival days, and on the same festival days after the sun setting, there were usually made bonfires in the streets, every man bestowing wood and labor toward them; the wealthier sort also, before their doors near to the said bonfire, would set out tables on the vigils, furnished with sweet bread and good drink, and on the festival days with meats and drinks plentifully, whereunto they would invite their neighbors and passengers also to sit and be merry with them in great familiarity, praising God for the benefits bestowed on them.’

Most beautiful of all—in its original simplicity so associated with the love of nature—was the custom of rising at dawn in the month of May,<sup>2</sup> and going forth, rich and poor, with one impulse, to the woods for boughs of hawthorn and laurel to deck the doorways of the street, as a joyful welcoming, amid feasting and dancing, of the sweet spring-time. Spontaneous and unconscious acknowledgment of the beauty of the Universe, as by men reared in the pathless forests, knowing Nature as a household friend that has entwined itself with their first affections; a thing of the nerves and animal spirits, yet impossible, alas! to our present analytic and jaded civilization. We, all utilitarian and prosaic, mourn in vain the loss of that direct and unreflecting pleasure which the untutored imagination felt in habitual converse with earth and sky, talking to the wayside flowers of its love, and to the fading clouds of its ambition; or that earlier freshness of eye, which, in the first pencillings of dawn that struck some lonely peak or fell into some sequestered dell, saw the Fairies retiring from their moonlight dances into the green knolls where they made their homes.

**Religion.**—It may be doubtful whether the belief in fairies had passed away. At least they lurked in the by-corners of our poets, and existed elsewhere under a new character, degraded by the church into imps of darkness, to inspire no doubt a horror of relapse into heathenish rites. Superstition was wide and dense, and riveted with theology. Christianity in its struggle with the barbarian world had been profoundly modified. The tendency to

<sup>1</sup> The men of the watch were the voluntary police of the city.

<sup>2</sup> May began twelve days later than now, and ended in the midst of June.

a material, sensuous faith was fatally strengthened, first by the infusion of the pagan element, then by the debasement and avarice of the clergy. To the idols of Paganism succeeded shrines, relics, masses, holy wells, awful exorcisms, saintly vigils, festivals, images of miraculous power, pilgrimages afar and penances at home. At Canterbury were skulls, chins, teeth, hands, fingers, arms, feet, shoes, legs, hair, rags, splinters from the crown of thorns, *et cætera*, to be adored and kissed by the innumerable pilgrims—for money. Each shrine had certificates written by the Virgin or by angels, to support the lucrative impostures. Winking statues were rife; bleeding wafers were exhibited; boys wrapped in gold foil were introduced as heavenly visions. Says a contemporary:

‘The ignorant masses worship the images of stone, or of wood, or marble, or brass, or painted on the walls of churches,—not as statues or mere figures, but as if they were living, and trust more in them than in either Christ or the saints. Hence they offer them gold, silver, rings, and jewels of all kinds, and that the more may be wheedled into doing so, those who drive this trade hang medals from the neck or arms of the image, to sell, and gather the gifts they receive into heaps in conspicuous places, putting labels on them by which the names of the donors may be proclaimed. By all this a great part of the world is put past itself about these images, and led to make often distant pilgrimages, that they may visit some little figure and leave their gifts to it; and all piety, charity and duty is neglected to do this, in the belief that they have given and repented enough if they have put gold into the bag at the shrine.’

Charms and amulets were a sure guarantee against every form of disaster. The mystical virtues of the cross were the incessant theme of the monk. No happy issue of an adventure could be expected without its frequent sign. In peril or in pleasure, in sorrow and in sin, they diagrammed it by the motion of their hands. It stood as the hallowed witness which marked the boundaries between parishes. It stood at the beginning and at the end of private letters, as of public documents. It became the mark which served as the convenient signature of some unlettered baron. They knelt to it, kissed it—kissed it as a palpable and visible deity. Waxen images were potent to procure health and weal. An anxious wife writes to her husband, sick in London:

‘My mother vowed another image of wax of the weight of you, to our Lady of Walsingham; and she sent four nobles to the four orders of friars at Norwich to pray for you; and I have vowed to go on pilgrimage to Walsingham and St. Leonards.’

In the last human trial, these vain ceremonials were efficacious to comfort and to cheer. Testaments provided for requiems to be

said, in rich vestments especially furnished for the purpose; newly-painted images of 'our Lady' to be set up, with tapers ever burning; the chimes in the steeple to be repaired; the priest to have a yearly reward, or a residence, and at each meal to repeat the name of the testator, that they who hear may say, 'God have mercy on his soul'; a Latin sentence to be written 'on the fore part of the iron about my grave,' and therewith 'the pardon which I purchased'; ten pounds 'to a priest for to go to Rome, and I will that the said priest go to the stations and say masses as is according to a pilgrim.' Henry VII engaged two thousand masses, at sixpence (!) each, to be said for the repose of his soul.

It was universally taught that innumerable evil spirits were ranging over the world, seeking the present misery and future ruin of mankind,—fallen spirits that retained the angelic capacities, and directed against men the energies of superhuman malice. The brave yeomen, who fronted danger in the field, quailed before the gentle Maid as a sorceress. A proclamation was issued to the soldiery to reassure them against the *incantations* of the girl. The Duke of Bedford wrote to the king:

'All things here prospered for you till the time of the siege of Orleans, undertaken of whose advice God only knows. Since the death of my cousin of Salisbury, whom God absolve, who fell by the hand of God, as it seemeth, your people, who were assembled in great number at this siege, have received a terrible check. This has been caused in part, as we trow, by the confidence our enemies have in a disciple and limb of the Devil, called Pucelle, that used false enchantments and sorcery. The which stroke and discomfiture has not only lessened the number of your people here, but also sunk the courage of the remainder in a wonderful manner, and encouraged your enemies to assemble themselves forthwith in great numbers.'

The shrivelled arm of Richard III was attributed to witchcraft. A duchess, convicted of practicing magic against the king's life, was compelled to do penance in the streets, while two of her servants were executed. Satan with his feudatories and vassals—cast out from Olympus and Asgard, outlawed by the new dynasty—lurked in forest and mountain, and issuing forth only after night-fall, raised the desolating tempest, sent the pestilential blast, and kept body and soul together by an illicit traffic between this world and the other. The fancy that once lay warm about the heart, now sends a chill among the roots of the hair.

So flourished, outwardly, the empire of Rome, while ideas became the occasions of superstition, and forms of ritualism dis-

placed a living consciousness. Religious discourses, without judgment or spirit, were a motley mixture of gross fiction and extravagant invention. Practical religion was a very simple affair. The one thing needful for a sinner, however scandalous his moral life, was to confess regularly, to receive the sacrament, to be absolved. If sick, or ill at ease, he might be recommended to some wonder-working image, which would bow when it was pleased, and avert its head if the present was unsatisfactory. For every mass—usually bought by the dozen—so many years were struck off from the penal period. The rulers of the Church, who once tamed the fiery Northern warriors by the magic of their sanctity, were sunk into luxurious indolence and vice. The popes, who once lived to remind men of the eternal laws which they ought to obey, were, almost without exception, worldly, intriguing, and immoral. Several were murderers, most were plunderers, one was poisoned by his successor, another was elected by menaces and bribes, the last died by the poison he had mingled for others who stood in the way of his greed and ambition. Prelates, cardinals, and abbots were occupied chiefly in maintaining their splendor. The friars and the secular clergy who were to live for others, not for themselves, turned their spiritual powers to account to obtain from the laity the means for their self-indulgence. The monks, who once lived in an enchanted atmosphere of piety and beneficence, were so many herds of lazy, illiterate, and licentious Epicureans, dividing their hours between the chapel, the tavern, and the brothel,—all scheming or dreaming on the eve of the judgment day! The priesthood, amenable only to spiritual judges, extend the privileges of their order till *clerk* was construed to mean any one who could write his name or read a sentence. A robber or an assassin had only to show that he could do either, and he was allowed what was called the ‘benefit of clergy.’

Now consider that such men owned a third or a half of the land in every country of Europe, while they confined their views in life to opulence, idleness, and feasting. At the installation of the Archbishop of York, brother of the King-Maker, there were present 3,500 persons, who consumed, 104 oxen and 6 wild bulls, 1,000 sheep, 304 calves, as many hogs, 2,000 swine, 500 stags, bucks, and does, 204 kids, 22,802 wild or tame fowls, 300 quar-

ters of corn, 300 tuns of ale, 100 of wine, a pipe of hippocras, 12 porpoises and seals. The Commons declared that with the revenues of the English Church the king would be able to maintain 15 earls, 1,500 knights, 6,200 squires, and 100 hospitals; each earl receiving annually 300 marks, each knight 100 marks, and the produce of four ploughed lands; each squire 40 marks, and the produce of two ploughed lands.

Was not a reformation of some sort an overwhelming necessity? So felt the people, who, if unable to comprehend an argument, were anxious for a correction of abuses. So felt the higher natures who led them, believing in justice, in righteousness, above all in truth, and caring not to live unless they lived nobly. So felt the Church—which repressed them, by entreaty, by remonstrance, by bribery, by force. The king and the peers allied themselves with the ecclesiastics. In 1400 the Statute of Heretics was passed; and William Santre, a priest, became the first English martyr. A tailor, who denied transubstantiation—accused of having said that, if it were true, there were twenty thousand gods in every cornfield in England—was next committed to the flames. A nobleman, hung on the gallows with a fire blazing at his feet, suffered the double penalty for heresy and treason. Lollardism was crushed by the weight of the establishment above, but its principles, infecting all classes, from the lowest to the highest, were working a silent revolution. The soft spring green withered away, but its roots were quick in the soil. The clergy did not dream that the storm would gather again. For a moment they were startled by a statute of Henry VII ‘for the more sure and likely reformation of priests, clerks, and religious men’; but again the cloud disappeared, and again they forgot the warning. At this moment the Church, ever richer and more glittering, dazzled the eyes to the decay of its substance, like some majestic iceberg drifting southward out of the frozen North, seemingly stable as the eternal rocks, while down in the far deeps the base is dissolving and the centre of gravity is changing.

**Learning.**—Intellectual life disappeared with religious liberty. Learning declined, especially at Oxford. Her scholars became travelling mendicants, whose academical credentials were at times turned into ridicule and mockery by the insolence of



rank and wealth. The monasteries were no longer seats of culture. Twenty years after Chaucer's death, an Italian traveller said:

'I found in them men given up to sensuality in abundance, but very few lovers of learning, and those of a barbarous sort, skilled more in quibbles and sophisms than in literature.'

Knowledge was a stagnant morass or an impenetrable jungle. Literary production was nearly at an end. Puerile chroniclers, scribblers of prosaic commonplaces, translators from the worn-out field of French romance, give some distention to a period that would else collapse. An occasional gleam of genius faintly illuminates a date, like the last flicker of the dying day, or the pulse of the early dawn,—

'As if the morn had waked, and then  
Shut close her lids of light again.'

In the nobler elements of national life, a dreary one-hundred years, whose chief consolation is, that the downward touches the upward movement; that everywhere in the common soil—the unconsidered people, sustained by the surviving Saxon character—lay the forces of which fruit should come. The popular cast of authorship shows the stir of a new interest among the masses. With a paucity of writers, in no former age were so many books transcribed. It is proof of an increased demand, that the process of copying was transferred from the monastic to the secular class. And it was this transfer that led to the introduction of printing. At first a secret and occult art. The monopolizers dreaded discovery, and the workmen were bound to secrecy by the solemnity of an oath. After their operations, the four sides of their forms were cautiously unscrewed, and the scattered type thrown beneath, for 'when the component parts of the press are in pieces, no one will understand what they mean.' In a mystical style, they impressed upon the wondering reader that the volume he held was of supernatural origin, announcing merely that it was 'neither drawn, nor written with a pen and ink, as all books before had been.' But the freemasonry was lost, the printers were dispersed; and at Cologne a plain English trader—Caxton—was initiated into the 'noble mystery and craft.' Very proud of the marvellous freight with which he returns after an absence of five-and-thirty years; very eager in



his zeal when he remembers the tedious, weary method of the Scriptorium, hardly equal to the production of a hundred Bibles in seven thousand days; almost professing, in his first printed work, to have performed a miracle:

‘I have practiced and learned, at my great charge, to put in order this said book in print after the manner and form as ye may here see; and is not written with pen and ink as other books be, to the end that *every man may have them AT ONCE*: for all the books of this story, thus imprinted as ye see, were *begun in one day, and also finished in one day.*’

Not unwilling to keep up the wonder and mystery of the new implement which men did not yet comprehend.<sup>1</sup>

In 1453, the Crescent advanced upon the city of Constantine, the Greek Empire fell, Greek scholars were driven westward, Greek literature and art were forced into Italy; and Plato lived again, to join the ranks of the reformers. His mild and divine wisdom was at war with the sensuality that had become the scandal of the Church of Rome. ‘Beware of the Greek,’ ran the clerical proverb, ‘lest you be made a heretic.’ Italy that already, in the preceding age, had appropriated whatever Latin letters contained of strength or splendor to arouse the thought and fancy, became the school of Christendom. Thither repaired the men of taste or genius who desired to share the newly-discovered privileges of antiquity; and, quickened by the magnetic touch, returned with a generous ambition to vie with the noble ancients. Thence the stream of civilization was to flow as from its fount. With a fluctuating movement, the life current extended throughout Western Europe, England being among the latest to feel it. When gleams of the revival had long struggled with the scholastic cloud, the Greek language began to be taught at Oxford, and about 1490 they began to read the classics. Thence was to come every science and every elegance.

**Language.**—The emancipation of the national tongue was now confirmed by another monarch. Henry V, in a missive to the craft of brewers, declared:

‘The English tongue hath in modern days begun to be honorably enlarged and adorned; and for the better understanding of the people, the common idiom should be exercised in writing.’

<sup>1</sup> Who first taught to carve the letters on wooden blocks—who imagined to cast the metal with fusil types distinct one from the other,—*that is*, for Europe, a German romance with the opening pages forever wanting. Faust, Schöffer, Gutenberg, Costar, have their jealous votaries. The origin of some of the most interesting inventions is lost in obscure traditions. Perhaps the Chinese, who had practiced the art of block-printing for nearly two thousand years, suffered it to steal away over their ‘great wall.’ But the same extraordinary invention may occur at distinct periods. Friar Bacon indicated the ingredients of gunpowder a hundred years before the monk Schwartz, about 1330, actually struck out the fiery explosion.

We further learn that now ‘the Lords and the Commons began to have their proceedings noted down in the mother-tongue.’ Both this prince and his father left their wills in the native speech.

Religious diction, always in a more advanced stage of culture than was the secular, made, in the hands of Pecoock, considerable progress in vocabulary, and more especially in logical structure. In Fortescue and the *Nut-brown Maid*, there is not only a diminution of obsolete English, but a modern cast of phrase and arrangement which denotes the commencement of a new era. There was little occasion for decided improvement until new conditions of society should create a necessity for it.

**Poetry.**—In the mutability of taste, the ancient romances were turned from verse into prose. They had pleased as pictures of manners still existing, but the correspondence was fading, while there was yet no antiquarian interest to preserve their hold on the public mind that had outgrown them. Indeed, after this literature—prose or metrical—had entranced for three centuries the few who read and the many who listened, its enchantment was on the wane: another taste—where taste existed—was now on the ascendant.

Nevertheless, it was the impoverished romance, imitated the hundredth time, compiled, abridged, even modernized, that chiefly occupied the dull rhymesters of the fifteenth century. After the heavy platitudes of Gower came the didactic puerilities of **Occleve**, a lawyer, who says truly that Chaucer, whom he strove to copy, would willingly have taught him, ‘*but I was dull, and learned little or nothing.*’ When a man’s only merit is a fond idolatry of his master, let him be forgotten. Then **Lydgate**, a monk, a long-winded and third-rate poet, who manufactures verses to order, for the king and his subjects; paraphrases or translates, as others have done with more grace and power, *The Fall of Princes*, *The Destruction of Troy*, and *The Siege of Thebes*. Here and there is a sublime truth, strongly expressed, as in the remarkable lines:

‘God hath a thousande handes to chastyse,  
A thousande dartes of punicion,  
A thousande bowes made in dyuers wyse,  
A thousande arrowblastes bent in his dongeon.’

[castle

Or a descriptive gem, with much of the brilliancy of the Italian:

'Tyll at the last amonge the bowes glade  
Of aduenture I caught a plesaunt shade;  
Ful smothe and playn and lusty for to sene  
And soft as veluet was the yonge grene:  
Where fro my hors I did alight as fast,  
And on a bowe aloft his reyne cast.  
So faynte and mate of werynesse I was,  
That I me layde adowne upon the gras,  
Upon a bryncke, shortly for to tell,  
Besyde the ryner of a cristall welle;  
And the water, as I reherse can,  
Like quicke siluer in his streams ran  
Of whych the grauell and the bryght stone  
As any goide agayne the sonne shone.'

[*fatigued*]

Or a golden couplet, suggestive of the coloring and melody of later times:

'Serpentes and adders, scaled syluer-bright,  
Were ouer Rome sene flyeng all the nyght.'

There is an accent of originality in *The Dance of Death*, whose mocking and grotesque figures dance on their tomb to the sound of a fiddle played by a grinning skeleton; or a free vein of humor in *The Lack-penny*, which opens the street scenery of London:

'To London once my stepps 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 saint!  
Pity the poore that wold proceede";  
But for lack of mony I cold not spede.

Then unto London I dyd me hye,  
Of all the land it beareth the pryse.  
"Hot pescodes," one began to crye,  
"Strabery rype, and cheryes in the ryse";  
One bad me come nere and by some spyce,  
Peper and safforne gan me bedc,  
But for lack of mony I myght not spede.

[*began to offer me*]

Then to the Chepe I began me drawne,  
Where mutch people I saw for to stand;  
One ofred me velvct, sylke, and lawne,  
An other he taketh me by the hande,  
"Here is Parys thread, the fynest in the land";  
I never was used to such thyngs indede,  
And wanting mony, I might not spede.

Then went I forth by London stone,  
Throughout all Canwyke strecte;  
Drapers mutch cloth me offred anone;  
Then comes me onc, cryed "Hot shepes feete"  
One cryde "makerell," "ryshes," "grene." an other  
gan greete;

[*rushes*  
cry]

On bad me by a hood to cover my head,  
 But for want of mony I myght not be sped.  
 Then I hyed me into Est-Chepe;  
 One cryes rybbs of befe, and many a pye:  
 Pewter pottes they clattered on a heape;  
 There was harpe, pype, and mynstralsye.  
 "Yea, by cock! nay, by cock!" some began crye;  
 Some songe of Jenken and Julyan for there mede;  
 But for lack of mony I might not spede. . . .

The taverner tooke me by the sleve,  
 "Sir," sayth he, "wylly you our wyne assay?"  
 I answered, "That can not mutch me greve:  
 A peny can do no more harm than it may;"  
 I drank a pynt, and for it did paye,  
 Yet some a hungerd from thence I yede,  
 And wantyng money, I cold not spede.'

[went

As for the rest,— tedious, languid, halting, desolate. There are others. You may find them by the dozen in Warton or Ritson, a crowd of worthless and forgotten versifiers. We look patiently for something to exalt, to instruct, or to please; find at last in the royal James, of Scotland,—

'Be not our proude in thy prosperitie,  
 For as it cummis, sa will it pass away.'

and in Dunbar,—

'What is this life but ane straucht way to deid,  
 Whilk has a time to pass and nane to dwell?'

then we yawn, and go away, oppressed with the surfeit of dreams and abstractions, used up and barren.

As the romances declined, the lyric which sung of the outlaw and the forest, the joys and woes of love, and later of the wild border life, gradually took form. The ballad-singers outlived the troubadours, but their songs, long stored in the memories of the people, reach us only in a late edition of the fifteenth century. After the gloom of the castle and the conventionalism of the court, it is refreshing to find ourselves in the open air, under a blue sky, surrounded by persons who have human hearts in their bosoms. Listen. They are engaged in a battle of the sexes, in which attacks on the fair are parried by their eulogies. One of the heaviest charges is the imputed fickleness of woman,—

'How that it is  
 A labour spent in vayne,  
 To love them wele.'

As between libel and panegyric, you are requested to render a verdict in accordance with the evidence:

*'Now I begyn*

So that ye me answe're;  
Wherefore, all ye that present be,  
I pray you, *gyve an ere.*'

In order to try the maid's affection, the lover tells her that he is condemned to a shameful death, and must withdraw as an outlaw:

'Wherefore, adue, my owne hart true!  
None other rede I can;  
For I must to the grene wode go,  
Alone, a banyshed man.'

*She.*

'O Lord what is thys worldys blysse,  
That changeth as the mone!  
My somers day in lusty May  
Is derked before the none.  
I here you say, Farewell: Nay, nay,  
We depart nat so sone.  
Why say ye so? wheder wyll ye go?  
Alas! what have ye done?  
All my welfare to sorrowe and care  
Sholde change, yf ye were gone;  
For, in my mynde, of all mankynde  
I love but you alone.

*He.*

I can beleve, it shall you greve,  
And somewhat you dystayne;  
But aftyrwarde, your paynes harde  
Within a day or twayne  
Shall soon aslake; and ye shall take  
Comfort to you agayne.  
Why sholde ye ought? for, to make thought,  
Your labour were in vayne.  
And thus I do; and pray you to  
As hartely, as I can;  
For I must to the grene wode go,  
Alone, a banyshed man.

*She.*

Now, syth that ye have shewed to me  
The secret of your mynde,  
I shall be playne to you agayne,  
Lyke as ye shall me fynde.  
Syth it so, that ye wyll go,  
I wolle not leve behynde:  
Shall never be sayed, the Not-browne Mayd  
Was to her love unkynde:  
Make you redy, for so am I,  
Although it were anone;  
For, in my mynde, of all mankynde  
I love but you alone.

*He.*

I counceyle you, remember howe,  
It is no maydens lawe,  
Nothyng to dout, but to renne out  
To wode with an outlawe:  
For ye must there in your hand bere  
A bowe, redy to drawe;  
And, as a thefe, thus must you lyve  
Ever in drede and awe;  
Whereby to you grete harm myght growe;  
Yet had I lever than,  
That I had to the grene wode go,  
Alone, a banyshed man.

*She.*

I thinke nat nay, but as ye say,  
It is no maydens lore:  
But love may make me for your sake,  
As I have sayed before  
To come on fote, to hunt, and shote  
To gete us mete in store;  
For so that I your company  
May have, I ask no more;  
From which to part, it maketh my hart  
As colde as any stone:  
For, in my mynde, of all mankynde  
I love but you alone.

*He.*

Yet take good hede; for ever I drede  
That ye coude nat sustayne  
The thornie wayes, the depe valleies,  
The snowe, the frost, the rayne,  
The cold, the hete: for dry or wete,  
We must lodge on the playne;  
And, us above, none other rofe  
But a brake bush, or twayne:  
Which soon sholde greve you, I beleve;  
And ye wolde gladly than  
That I had to the grene wode go,  
Alone, a banyshed man.'

He urges that she will have no wine or ale, no shelter but the trees, no society but their enemies, finally that another already



awaits him in the forest whom he loves better; still her constancy is unshaken, and in noble admiration he confesses:

'Myne owne dere love, I se the prove  
That ye be kynde, and true:  
Of mayde, and wyfe, in all my lyfe,  
The best that ever I knewe. . . .  
Be nat dismayed: whatsoever I sayd  
To you, whan I began;  
I wyll nat to the grene wode go,  
I am no banyshed man.'

*She.*

'These tydings be more gladd to me  
Than to be made a quene,  
Yf I were sure they sholde endure:  
But it is often sene,  
Whan men wyll breke promyse, they speke  
The wordes on the splene.  
Ye shape some wyle me to begyle,  
And stele from me, I wene:  
Than were the case worse than it was,  
And I more wo-begone:  
For, in my mynde, of all mankynde  
I love but you alone.

*He.*

Ye shall not nede further to drede;  
I wyll not dysparage  
You (God defend!) syth ye descend  
Of so grete a lynage.  
Now undyrstande; to Westmarlande,  
Which is myne berytage,  
I wyll you brynge, and with a ryunge  
By way of maryage  
I wyll you take, and lady make,  
As shortely as I can:  
Thus have you now an erlys son  
And not a banyshed man.'

Wherefore pay your tribute to the beautiful, notwithstanding the free insinuations of the cynic, for,—

Here may ye se, that women be  
In love, meke, kynde, and stable:  
Late never man reprove them then,  
Or call them variable:  
But, rather, pray God, that we may  
To them be comfortable.'

We all need something to idealize. Science, literature, art, music, all work that way, this for one, that for another. In the popular ideal, you will discover the national character. Here it is *Robin Hood*, living in the green forest free and bold, ready to draw his bow in the sheriff's face; generous, compassionate, giving to the poor the spoils of the rich; religious, after the fashion,—

'A good maner then had Robyn  
In land where that he were,  
Every daye ere he wolde dine  
Three masses wolde he hear;'

chivalrous withal, for the worship of the Virgin softens the temper of the outlaw,—

'Robyn loved our dere lady;  
For doute of dedely synne,  
Would he never do company harme  
That any woman was ynne.'

Before all, fearless and valiant, and joyously so, the champion of the commons against oppression, civil and ecclesiastical. 'It is he,' says an old historian, 'whom the common people love so dearly to celebrate in games and comedies, and whose history, sung by fiddlers, interests them more than any other.' Robin dreams, 'in the greenwood where he lay,' that two yeomen are thrashing him, and he wants to go and find them, repulsing Little John, who offers to lead the way:

"Ah! John, by me thou settest noe store,  
And that I farley finde;  
How oft send I my men beffore,  
And tarry my selfe behinde?"

He goes alone, and meets the brave Guy of Gisborne:

"Good morrow, good fellow," said Robin so fair,  
"Good morrow, good fellow," quoth he,  
"Methinks by the bow thou bearest in thy hand,  
A good archer thou shouldst be."  
"I am wandering from my way," quoth the yeoman,  
"And of my morning tide."  
"I'll lead thee thro' the wood," said Robin,  
"Good fellow, I'll be thy guide."  
"I seek an outlaw," the stranger said,  
"Men call him Robin Hood,  
Rather I'd meet with that proud outlaw  
Than forty pound so good."  
"Now come with me, thou lusty yeoman,  
And Robin thou soon shall see;  
But first, let us some pastime find,  
Under the greenwood tree."  
"Now tell me thy name, good fellow," quoth he,  
"Under the leaves of lime."  
"Nay, by my faith," quoth bold Robin,  
"Till thou hast told me thine."  
"I dwell by dale and down," quoth he,  
"And Robin to take I'm sworn,  
And when I'm called by my right name,  
I'm Guy of good Gisborne."  
"My dwelling is in this wood," says Robin,  
"By thee I set right nought;  
I am Robin Hood of Barnesdale,  
Whom thou so long hast sought."  
He that to neither were kith or kin  
Might have seen a full fair sight,  
To see how together these yeomen went,  
With blades both brown and bright.  
To see how these yeomen together they fought,  
Two hours of a summer's day;  
Yet neither Sir Guy nor Robin Hood  
Them settled to fly away.'

These redoubtable archers fight very amicably, jovially, hating only traitors and tyrants. Bold Robin is the representative of a class who revel in fighting as a pastime. An honest exchange of blows, whoever is worsted, always prepares the way for fellowship and respect:

“I pass not for length,” bold Arthur reply’d,  
 “My staff is of oke so free;  
 Eight foot and a half, it will knock down a calf,  
 And I hope it will knock down thee.”

Then Robin could no longer forbear,  
 He gave him such a knock,  
 Quickly and soon the blood came down  
 Before it was ten a clock.

Then Arthur he soon recovered himself  
 And gave him such a knock on the crown,  
 That from every side of bold Robin Hood’s head  
 The blood came trickling down.

Then Robin raged like a wild boar,  
 As soon as he saw his own blood:  
 Then Bland was in hast, he laid on so fast,  
 As though he had been cleaving of wood.

And about and about and about they went,  
 Like two wild bores in a chase,  
 Striving to aim each other to maim,  
 Leg, arm, or any other place.

And knock for knock they lustily dealt,  
 Which held for two hours and more,  
 Till all the wood rang at every bang,  
 They plyed their work so sore.

“Hold thy hand, hold thy hand,” said Robin Hood,  
 “And let thy quarrel fall;  
 For here we may thrash our bones all to mesh,  
 And get no coyn at all.

And in the forest of merry Sherwood,  
 Hereafter thou shalt be free.”  
 “God a mercy for nought, my freedom I bought,  
 I may thank my staff, and not thee.”

When the bandit and his antagonists have fought to the defeat of one or the satisfaction of all, they embrace, or shake hands, then dance together on the green grass:

‘Then Robin took them both by the hands,  
 And danc’d round about the oke tree,  
 “For three merry men, and three merry men,  
 And three merry men we be.”’

Will the discontent of such men be overlooked? They conquer and maintain liberty by their native roughness. Upon the haughtiest prince they impose a restraint stronger than any which mere

laws can impose. He may overstep the constitutional line; but they will exercise the like privilege whenever his encroachments are so serious as to excite alarm.

**Prose.**—No expansion of prose is possible, until the realities of life, political, social, and ecclesiastical, can be safely discussed. Thought was restrained in too many ways to allow much range of exercise beyond the unsubstantial realm of poetry. Hence the prose writers of the period are not numerous, and, with few exceptions, are unimportant. It is worthy of remark, however, that they exhibit three new kinds of composition,—epistolary, political, and æsthetic.

The *Paston Letters*, written chiefly by persons of rank and condition, contain many curious specimens of correspondence belonging to this and the preceding century. They are unique, and give an interesting picture of social life. In one, for example, we have a glimpse of the state of the Norfolk coast:

‘On Saturday last past, Dravall, half-brother to Warren Harman, was taken with enemies walking by the sea-side; and they have him forth with them, and they took two pilgrims, a man and a woman. . . . God give grace that the sea may be better kept than it is now, or else it shall be a perilous dwelling by the seacoast.’

One of the remarkable features of the age was the incessant litigation. Agnes Paston writes to one of her sons:

‘I greet you well, and advise you to think once of the day of your father’s counsel to learn the law, for he said many times that whosoever should dwell at Paston should have need to con to defend himself.’

One of the Pastons is reprovèd for his extravagance in dress and servants:

‘It is the guise of your countrymen to spend all the goods they have on men and livery gowns, and horse and harness, and so bear it out for a while, and at the last they are but beggars.’

It would appear that in what least concerns others, others most assiduously, then as now, intermeddled,—

‘The queen came into this town on Tuesday last past, afternoon, and abode here till it was Thursday afternoon; and she sent after my cousin Elizabeth Clere, to come to her; and she durst not disobey her commandment, and came to her. And when she came in the queen’s presence, the queen made right much of her, and desired her to have an husband, the which ye shall know of hereafter. *But as for that he is never nearer than he was before.*’

It seems to have been dangerous to write freely; and an opinion upon passing events or the characters of men was usually supplemented by some such sentence as,—

‘After this is read and understood, I pray you burn or break it, for I am loth to write anything of any lord.’

The profuse liberality of parliament in voting supplies to Edward IV is rebuked,—

‘The king goeth so near us in this country, both to poor and rich, that I wot not how we shall live, unless the world amend.’

The first to weigh and explain the constitution of his country was **Fortescue**, who wrote, in exile, a discourse of real and lasting value on *The Difference between an Absolute and a Limited Monarchy*, in which the state of France under a despot is contrasted with that of England. He says to the young prince whom he is instructing:

‘The same Commons be so impoverished and destroyed, that they may unneth<sup>1</sup> lyve. They drink water, they eate apples, with bred right brown made of rye. They eate no fleshe, but if it be selden, a litill larde, or of the entrails or heds of bests sclayne for the nobles and merchants of the land. They weryn no wollyn, but if it be a pore cote under their uttermost garment, made of grete canvass, and cal it a frok. Their hosyn be of like canvas, and passen not their knee, wherfor they be gartrid and their thyghs bare. Their wifs and children gone bare fote. . . . For sum of them, that was wonte to pay to his lord for his tenement which he hyrith by the year a scute<sup>2</sup> payth now to the kyng, over that scute, fyve skuts. Wher through they be artyd<sup>3</sup> by necessity so to watch, labour and grub in the ground for their sustenance, that their nature is much wasted, and the kynd of them brought to nowght. They gone crokyd and ar feeble, not able to fight nor to defend the realm; nor they have wepon, nor monye to buy them wepon withal. . . . This is the frute first of hyre Jus regale. . . . But blessed be God, this land ys rulid under a better lawe, and therfor the people therof be not in such penurye, nor thereby hurt in their persons, but they be wealthie and have all things necessarie to the sustenance of nature. Wherefore they be myghty and able to resyste the adversaries of the realms that do or will do them wrong. Loo, this is the frut of Jus politicum et regale, under which we lyve.’

In the decline of romantic literature, one last and famous effort was made, about 1470, by **Sir Thomas Malory**, in that tessellated compilement of *Morte d'Arthur*, whose mottled pieces, struck from the vast quarry of the Round Table, are squared together by no unskilful hand. Its style, always animated and flowing, mounts occasionally into the region of eloquence:

‘Oh! ye mighty and pompous lords, winning in the glories 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; yea 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 dreaded, 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 foss, or pit, covered with clods of earth and clay! Behold also this mighty champion, Sir Lancelot, 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

<sup>1</sup> Scarcely.    <sup>2</sup> About three shillings and fourpence.    <sup>3</sup> Compelled.



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 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 ought ye to be, ever fearing the unstableness of this deceitful world.'

**History.**—The science of true history had yet no existence. All facts appeared of equal worth, for all alike cost the same toil; and, still dispersed in their insulated state, still refused combination. But the day had now arrived, in the progress of society, when chronicles were written by laymen. The first in our vernacular prose was the labor of a citizen and alderman, and sometime sheriff of London,—**Robert Fabyan**; and was designed for 'the unlettered who understand no Latin.' In the accustomed mode, he fixes the historic periods by dates from Adam or from Brut, and composing in the spirit of the day, mentions the revolutions of government with the same brevity as he speaks of the price of wheat and poultry; passes unnoticed his friend Caxton, to speak of 'a new weathercock placed on the cross of St. Paul's steeple'; tells us that of the French monarch's dress '*I might make a long rehearsal*'; finds the level of his faculties in recording 'flying dragons in the air,' or describing the two castles in space, whence issued two armies black and white, combating in the skies till the white vanished. Of Cabot's voyage of discovery, under the patronage of Henry VII, he says curiously:

'There were brought King Henry three men, taken in the new found island: they were clothed in beast's skins, and did eat raw flesh, and spake such speech as that no man could understand them: and in their demeanor were like brute beasts; whom the King kept a time after. Of the which about two years after, I saw two, apparelled after the manner of Englishmen, in Westminster palace, which at that time I could not discern from Englishmen, till I was learned what they were. But as for speech I heard none of them utter one word.'

Superstition has always attached to numbers. *Seven*, or the heptad, is very powerful for good or for evil, and belongs especially to sacred things. The good man's chronicle opens with an invocation for help, is in seven unequal divisions, and ends with seven cheering epilogues in unmetrical metre, entitled *The Seven Joys of the Virgin*.

**Theology.**—All knowledge was claimed as a part of theology, and all questions were decided by scholastic rules. What-

ever was old, was divine; whatever was new, was suspected. Never had the schools of divinity made a more miserable figure. Teachers and students loaded their memories with unintelligible distinctions and unmeaning sounds, that they might discourse and dispute, with the semblance of method, upon matters which they did not understand. They still discussed whether God could have taken any form but that of man,—as, for instance, that of a woman, of the devil, of an ass, of a cucumber, of a flint. If of a cucumber, how could He have preached, wrought miracles, or been crucified? Whether Christ could be called a man while on the cross; whether the pope shared both natures with Christ; whether the Father could in any case hate the Son; whether the pope was greater than Peter, and a thousand other niceties more subtle. There now remained few of those who proved and illustrated doctrine by the positive declarations of Scripture; but upon them as upon the pedants, the mechanical manner of arguing and replying imposes its servitude. The moment they begin to reflect, Aristotle and the army of the ancients, flanked by the definition and the syllogism, enter their brains, and construct monstrous, sleep-inspiring books. Hear the worthy **Pecock**, on whose unconscious shoulders had fallen the mantle of Wycliffe. Thirteen propositions are to be demonstrated in the approved style:

‘An argument if he be ful and foormal, which is clepid a sillogisme, is mad of twey proposicionis drynyng out of hem and bi strengthe of hem the thridde proposicion. Of the whiche thre proposicionis the ij. first ben clepid premissis, and the iij. folewing out of hem is clepid the conclusioun of hem. And the firste of tho ij. premissis is clepid the first premissis, and the ij. of hem is clepid the ij. premissis. And ech such argument is of this kinde, that if the bothe premissis ben trewe, the conclusioun concludid out and bi hem is also trewe; and but if enereither of tho premissis be trewe, the conclusioun is not trewe. Ensample her of is this. “Ech man is at Rome, the Pope is a man, eke the Pope is at Rome.” Lo here ben sett forth ij. proposicionis, which ben these, “Ech man is at Rome;” and “The Pope is a man:” and these ben the ij. premyssis in this argument, and thei dryuen out the iij. proposicion, which is this, “The Pope is at Rome,” and it is the conclusioun of the ij. premissis. Wherefore certis if eny man can be sikir for eny tyme that these ij. premyssis be trewe, he may be sikir that the conclusioun is trewe; though alle the aungelis in heuen wolden seie and holde that thilk conclusioun were not trewe. And this is a general reule, in euery good and foormal and ful argument, that if his premissis be knowe for trewe, the conclusioun oughte to be awoid for trewe, what euer creature wole seie the contrarie.

But as for now thus miche in this wise ther of here talkid, that y be the better vndirstonde in al what y schal argue thorough this present book, y wole come donn into the xij. conclusiouns, of whiche the firste is this: It longith not to Holi Scripture, neither it is his office into which God hath him ordeyned, neither it is his part forto grovnde eny gouernaunce or deede or service of God, or eny lawe of God, or eny trouthe

which mannis resoun bi nature may fynde, leerne, and knowe. That this conclusioun is trewe, y prouue thus: Whateuer thing is ordeyned, &c.'

Enough. You are spared the dreary length, the wandering mazes, of the remainder. With all this display of logical tools, he was unable to see in what direction he was marching; for while he assailed the heretical opinions of the Lollards, he admitted that general councils were not infallible, that the Bible was the true rule of faith, that religious dogmas were to be supported by argument, not by the bare decree of authority. His well-meant defence of the Church was, in reality, a formidable attack upon its foundations. His *Repressor* was burnt, he was degraded, compelled to recant, and confined for the rest of his life in a conventual prison.

As long as visible images form the channels of religious devotion, the true history of theology, or at least of its emotional and realizing parts, may be found in the history of art. The steady tendency of European art in the fifteenth century was to give an ever-increasing preëminence to the Father, to dilate upon the vengeance of the Day of Judgment, to present to the contemplation of the faithful, in new and horrible conceptions, the sufferings of the martyrs on earth or of the lost in hell.

**Ethics.**—As in the dearth of genius, there were no philosophers, so there were no philosophic expositions of duty, and hence no definite ethical system distinct from theological teaching. Moral culture was, of course, the main function of the clergy, from the state of whose discipline at this time we may fairly estimate the fidelity and efficiency of their instruction. The ideal of life and character was yet ecclesiastical. It was too early for a purely moral faith, appealing to a disinterested sense of virtue and perception of excellence, to be efficacious. Rites and ceremonies, an elaborate creed and a copious legendary, were the appointed means for developing the emotional side of human nature and securing a rectitude of conduct. The formation of a moral philosophy is usually the first step in the decadence of dogmatic religions.

**Science.**—Those who turned their attention to mathematics or physics, still pursued the bewildering dreams of astrology and alchemy. An Act of 1456, for example, in favor of three

alchemists, describes the object of these 'famous men' to be 'a certain most precious medicine, called by some the mother and queen of medicines; by some the inestimable glory; by others the quintessence; by others the philosopher's stone; by others the elixir of life; which cures all curable diseases with ease, prolongs human life in perfect health and vigor of faculty to its utmost term, heals all healable wounds, is a most sovereign antidote against all poisons, and is capable of preserving to us, and our kingdom, other great advantages, such as the transmutation of other metals into real and fine gold and silver.'

The art of medicine appears to have made little or no progress. It was still, to some extent, in the hands of the clergy. The priests, because they were able to read the Greek and Roman authors on medicine, had, all through the dark ages, been the principal physicians. They became intimate with the barbers by frequently employing them to shave their heads, according to the uniform of the clerical order. The barbers were also employed to shave the heads of patients, when washes were prescribed to cool the fevered brain, or blisters were applied to draw the peccant humors from the surface. Found expert and handy with edged tools, the priests taught them to bleed, and to perform such minor operations as they were competent to direct, as well as to make salves and poultices, and dress wounds and sores. Edward IV, in 1461, granted a charter of incorporation and privilege to barber-surgeons; nor, though the distinct nature of the two became gradually more apparent, was the tonsorial art severed completely from the surgical till nearly three centuries had elapsed. 'Would heart of man e'er think it, but you'll be silent.'

**Philosophy.**—The race of great Schoolmen had died out, and the schools only repeated and maintained, with ever-increasing emptiness, what their founders had taught. The whole science of dialectic was degraded into an elaborate and ingenious word-quibbling. Like religion, it had no other substance but one of words. Syllogisms were sold like fish, by the string, and descended, like silver shoe-buckles, from generation to generation. Scholasticism was self-extinguished in a period of barbarity into whose darkness the light of the Renaissance was destined soon to shine with regenerating effect. What had the

laborers accomplished? — If from heart or brain they educes no great original creed, they produced a ferment of intellectual activity such as Europe had never seen. Through the long, terrible night which threatened the extinction of scholarship, they kept alive the spirit of culture in the whirlwind of energy. Disputation, if it adds no single idea to the human mind, is better than indolence. In action, rather than in cognition, lie life and acquirement. The highest value of truth is less in the possession than in the pursuit of it. Could you ever establish a theory of the universe, that were entire and final, man were then spiritually defunct. The one justifying service of metaphysics, in whosoever hands, is subjective,—the upward aspirations it may kindle, and the habits of close, patient, vigorous thought it may form. As for its efforts to lift the veil from the mystery of being, they are the labor of the struggling and baffled Sisyphus, who rolls up the heavy stone which no sooner reaches a certain point than down it rolls to the bottom, and all the labor is to begin again. There is scarcely anything which modern philosophers have proudly brought forward as their own that may not be found in some one or other of the mighty tomes of the hooded Scholastics. Why not? Were they not the posterity of Plato and Aristotle, out of whom come all things yet debated among men of reflection?

‘In countless upward-striving waves  
The moon-drawn tide-wave strives:  
In thousand far-transplanted grafts  
The parent fruit survives.’

**Résumé.**—The throb of hope and glory which pulsed at the outset, died into inaction or despair. Disputed successions, cruel factions, family feuds, convulsed the land, till the political crisis was terminated by Henry VII, who, as the authority of the potent aristocracy declined, established that despotic regality which remained as the inheritance of the dynasty of the Tudors.

Commerce widened, material life went on, darkly, without the diviner elements of national progress. The intellect, unable to proceed in the path of creative literature, fell back into lethargy. Inquiry was repressed; originality was replaced by submission; the reformation was trodden out; in the clash of arms the voice of genius sank to feebleness or was hushed to silence; and the reactionary influence of vice, ignorance, and superstition, was in



the ascendant. The Church shrivelled into a self-seeking secular priesthood; practical religion was reduced to the accomplishment of ceremonies; and mankind, slothful and crouching, resigned their conscience and their conduct into the hands of the clergy, and they into the hands of the pope.

The century, however, was not lost. It was an age of accumulation and preparation, as indeed it was in every country of Europe. The commoners maintained their liberties, without going beyond, and waited for a better day. The Reformation, like a forest conflagration, smouldered. America was added to the map; and while thought was startled by the sudden rarity of a New World, with its fresh hopes and romantic realms, the Renaissance was restoring an old one, with its eternal promoters of freedom and beauty. In that twilight time was dawning the great Invention that should give to Letters and Science the precision and durability of the printed page. Nor was the press to be more fatal to the dominion of the priestly bigot than the bullet to the sway of the mailed knight. In the upheaval of the old feudal order, an arrogant nobility was sinking to a level more consistent with national unity. Separate centres of intrigue were breaking up, society was pulverizing afresh; poetry, like the ballad, was returning to the human interests of the present, and the night of mediævalism was drawing to a close amid the chaos which precedes the resurrection morn.

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### CAXTON.

O Albion! still thy gratitude confess  
 To Caxton, founder of the British Press:  
 Since first thy mountains rose, or rivers flow'd,  
 Who on thy isles so rich a boon bestow'd?—*M'Creery.*

**Biography.**—A native of Kent, born in 1412; apprenticed at an early day to a London silk dealer: after his master's death he lived—perhaps as consul or agent for the English merchants—in Holland and Flanders; while there, was appointed, by his sovereign, envoy to the court of Burgundy to negotiate a treaty of commerce; entered the service of an English princess as copy-



ist; threw aside the tedious process of the pen for the newly-discovered art, and became a printer, because —

‘My pen is worn, my hand weary and not steadfast, mine eyes dimmed with over-much looking on the white paper, and my courage not so prone and ready to labor as it hath been, and that age creepeth on me daily and feebleth all the body, and also because I have promised to divers gentlemen and to my friends to address to them as hastily as I might the said book.’

Absent more than thirty years, he returned to England with the precious freight of the printing-press; and at an age when other men seek ease and retirement, plunged with characteristic energy into his new occupation, until his decease in 1492.

**Writings.** — Sixty-five works, edited or translated, are assigned to the pen and the press of Caxton: in French, two; in Latin, seven; the remainder in English. He published all the native poetry of any moment then in existence,—the poems of Chaucer, Lydgate, and Gower; two chronicles, revising both, and continuing one up to his own time; a version of the *Æneid*, or a tract of Cicero, as the stray first-fruits of classic antiquity; and, with an eye to business, manuals for ecclesiastics, sermons or *Golden Legends*,—*Tales of Troy*, or *Morte d’Arthur*, for the baron and the knight,—*Æsop’s Fables* and *Reynard the Fox*, for the populace.

His *Game of Chess*, a translation from the French, ‘fynysshid the last day of Marche, 1474,’ is assumed to be the first book printed on English ground; and a second edition, the first illustrated with wood-cuts. As the aged Saxon expired dictating the last words of the *Gospel of St. John*,—

‘In the hour of death,  
The last dear service of his parting breath,’—

so did the old printer carry forward his last labor, on a volume of sacred lore, to the setting sun of a life that bore its burden of four-score. He dipped, ‘half desperate,’ into that vast and singular mythology which for fourteen centuries grew and shadowed over the religious mind of Christendom as its form of hero-worship, always simple, often childish, but always good, and therefore suited to the taste and information which it measured and to which it was addressed. In this manner was the unquiet world once charmed to rest, saintly emulation, and remembrance of God:

‘Francis, servant and friend of Almighty God, was born in the city of Assyse, and was made a merchant unto the twenty-fifth year of his age, and wasted his time by living

vainly, whom our Lord corrected by the scourge of sickness, and suddenly changed him into another man, so that he began to shine by the spirit of prophecy. On a time as this holy man was in prayer, the devil called him thrice by his own name. And when the holy man had answered him, he said: "None in this world is so great a sinner, but if he convert him, our Lord would pardon him; but who that sleeth himself with hard penance, shall never find mercy." And anon, this holy man knew by revelation the fallacy and deceit of the fiend, how he would have withdrawn him fro to do well. And when the devil saw that he might not prevail against him, he tempted him by grievous temptation of the flesh. And when this holy servant of God felt that, he despoiled his clothes, and beat himself right hard with an hard cord, saying: "Thus, brother ass, it behoveth thee to remain and to be beaten." And when the temptation departed not, he went out and plunged himself in the snow, all naked, and made seven great balls of snow, and purposed to have taken them into his body, and said: "This greatest is thy wife; and these four, two ben thy daughters, and two thy sons; and the other twain, that one thy chambrere, and that other thy varlet or yeman; haste and clothe them; for they all die for cold. And if thy business that thou hast about them, grieve ye sore, then serve our Lord perfectly." And anon, the devil departed from him all confused; and St. Francis returned again unto his cell glorifying God. . . . He was ennobled in his life by many miracles: and the very death, which is to all men horrible and hateful, he admonished them to praise it. And also he warned and admonished death to come to him, and said: "Death, my sister, welcome be you." And when he came at the last hour, he slept in our Lord; of whom a friar saw the soul, in manner of a star, like to the moon in quantity, and the sun in clearness.'

**Style.**—His diction, never the purest, could scarcely have been improved by absence. A man destitute of a literary education could hardly attain to any felicity or skill in an idiom to which he was almost a foreigner. Plain and verbose, his manner is that of one who with no brilliancy of talent, tries faithfully to make himself understood. It is full of Gallicisms, however, in vocabulary and phrase. We learn by the preface to his *Æneid* that there were 'gentlemen who of late have blamed me, that in my translations I had over-curious terms which could not be understood by common people.' Critics, no doubt, were abundant, when as yet there was no generally recognized standard; and he himself had neither the judgment nor the force to harmonize the heterogeneous elements. It is curious to see in his own words the unsettled state of the language, the affectation of some and the pedantry of others. 'Some honest and great clerks,' he tells us, 'have been with me, and desired me to write the most curious terms I could find.' Others, again, 'desired me to use old and homely terms in my translations.' But 'I took an old book and read therein, and certainly the English was so rude and broad I could not well understand it.' 'Fain would I please every man,' is his helpless but good-natured comment. Of the rapid flux of even common speech: 'Our language now used varieth far from that which was used and spoken when I was

born.' Not only so, but the tongue of each shire had marked peculiarities:

'In my days happened that certain marchauntes were in a shippe in Tamyse for to haue sayled over the see into Zelande, and fra lacke of wynde thei taryed at Forland, and went to lande for to refreshe them. And one of theym, named Sheffelde, a mercer, came into an hows and axyed for mete, and specyally he axyed after eggys; and the good wyf answerde that she coude speke no Frenshe, and the marchaunt was angry, for he also coude speke no Frenshe, but wolde have had eggys, and she understood hym not. And then, at laste, another sayd hat he would have eyren. Then the good wyf sayd that she understood hym wel. Loo, what sholde a man in theyse days now wryte, egges or *eyren!* Certaynly, it is hard to playse every man, because of diversite and change of langage.'

**Rank.**—That he was a man of some eminence is shown by his royal connections in service. To the historian of the human mind, he appears as an indifferent translator, and a printer without erudition. That he should have been acquainted with French and German was inevitable from his continental residence. That he was unacquainted with classic Latin is evident from a reference to Skelton, whom he mentions as 'one that had read Virgil, Ovid, Tully, and all the other noble poets and orators *to me unknown.*' With the industry to keep pace with his age, he had not the genius to create a national taste by his novel and mighty instrument of thought. At a loss what author to select, his choice might seem to have been frequently accidental. With simple-hearted enthusiasm, he says of his version of Virgil:

'Having no work in hand, I sitting in my study where as lay many divers pamphlets and books, happened that to my hand came a little book in French, which late was translated out of Latin by some noble clerk of France—which book is named "Eneydos," and made in Latin by the noble poet and great clerk Vergyl—in which book I had great pleasure by reason of the faire and honest termes and wordes in French which I never saw to-fore-like, none so pleasant nor so well ordered, which book as me seemed should be much requisite for noble men to see, as well for the eloquence as the histories; and when I had advised me to this said book I deliberated and concluded to translate it into English, and forthwith took a pen and ink and wrote a leaf or twain.'

His simplicity far exceeded his learning. He solemnly vouched for the verity of *Jason and the Golden Fleece*, *The Life of Hercules*, and all 'the Merveilles of Virgil's Necromancy'! For a moment, 'the noble history of King Arthur' puzzled him, because—

'Dyuers men holde opynyon, that there was no suche Arthur, and that alle suche bookes as been maad of hym, ben but fayned and fables, by cause that somme cronycles make of him no mencyon ne remembre hym noo thyng ne of his knyghtes.'

But his sudden scruples were relieved when assured—

'That in hym that shold say or thynke that there was neuer suche a kyng callyd Arthur, myght wel be aretted grete folye and blyndenes. . . Fyrst ye may sec his

sepulture in the monasterye of Glastyngburge. . . At Wynchester the rounde table, in other places Launcelottes swerde and many other thynges.'

**Character.**—Our central impression of him is that of an honest business man, resolved to get a living from his trade. His 'red pole' at the disused Scriptorium, where monks once distributed alms to the poor, modestly invited all who desired, to come and buy his wares or give orders for printing. Ran his advertisement:

'If it please any man, spiritual or temporal, to buy any pyes of two or three commemorations of Salisbury all empynted after the form of the present letter, which be well and truly correct, let him come to Westminster into the Almonry at the red pole and he shall have them good chepe.'

Styling himself 'simple William Caxton,' he united great modesty of character to indefatigable industry. Over four thousand printed pages are of his own rendering. He speaks as a devout man, careful of happiness as of fabrics, who, while he constructs a book, studies the art of constructing human blessedness. His introduction to *Morte d'Arthur* concludes:

'And for to passe the tyme this book shal be plesaunte to rede in, but for to giue fayth and byleue that al is trewe that is conteyned herin, ye be at your lyberte, but al is wryton for our doctryne, and for to beware that we falle not to vyce ne synne, but to excercyse and folowe vertu, by whyche we may come and atteyne to good fame and renomme in thys lyf, and after this shorte and trauyrtorye lyf to come vnto euerlastyng blysse in heuen, the whyche he graunt vs that reygneth in heuen the blessyd Trynyste. Amen.'

It is not the exceptional things in life which are the noblest,—not the high lift nor the sudden spring of rare and exceptional persons, but the faithful every-day march of men.

**Influence.**—The press unfolded its vast resources tardily. In all Europe, between 1470 and 1500, ten thousand books were printed, and of them a majority in Italy; only a hundred and forty-one in England. In the next fifty years, but seven works had been printed in Scotland, and among them not a single classic. A triumph, if we consider that formerly a hundred Bibles could not be procured under an expense of twenty years' labor; but an inglorious advancement, if we consider the stupendous results since attained. Very slowly was this new appliance for the dissemination of knowledge to change the condition of society, but *thenceforth we can never speak of that condition without regard to the printing-press*. No refined consideration, no expansive views of his art, seem to have inspired our primeval

printer; but of what momentous consequences was he the initial agent! Unconsciously, he came to form a new intellectual era, to scatter the messengers of reform, to render Bibles and other books the common property of the great and the mean, to create a democracy and make a grave for tyrants; to subordinate oral and scenic to written instruction, and thus to deprive the pulpit of that supremacy which was founded on the condition of a non-reading public; to make possible a direct communication between the government and the governed, without priestly mediation, which was the first step in the separation of Church and State. Patriarch of the English press! stranger to the powers that slumber in thy craft, insensible to those elevated conceptions that guide the world's helm, yet thy honest toil for the day and honest hope for the morrow shall accrue to the advantage of mankind continually, for ever. Lad—apprentice—mercantile—retainer—hoary learner—venerable printer—thou, simple man, by the accident of time and the grace of fortune, shalt live in immortal memory!



# FIRST CREATIVE PERIOD.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### FEATURES.

Under whatever point of view we consider this era, we find its political, ecclesiastical, and literary events more numerous, varied, and important than in any of the preceding ages.—*Guizot*.

To observe the connection between the successive stages of a progressive movement of the human spirit, and to recognize that the forces at work are still active, is the true philosophy of history.—*Symonds*.

**Politics.**—The sombre and sinister wisdom of Italian policy—a policy of refined stratagem—of ruthless but secret violence—achieved in this age the tranquillity of a settled state and the establishment of a civilized but imperious despotism. The title of Henry VIII was undisputed—the first such in a hundred years—his temper hot, his spirit high, and his will supreme. Every public officer was his crouching menial. Wolsey, his minister, devoted his learning and abilities to the personal pleasure of the master who might destroy him by a breath. Under the administration of Cromwell, an organized reign of terror held the nation panic-stricken at Henry's feet. Judges and juries were coerced. Parliament was degraded into the mere engine of absolutism. His faithful Commons, hesitating to pass the bill for the dissolution of the monasteries, were summoned into his presence. 'I hear,' said the magnificent despot, 'that my bill will not pass; but I will have it pass, or I will have some of your heads.' It passed! The imagination of his subjects—to whom his reign, on the whole, was decidedly beneficial—was overawed. To them he was something high above the laws which govern ordinary men. In the midst of his barbarous cruelties he appeared the avenging minister of heaven, who, in renouncing the papacy, had burst asunder the prison-gates of Rome.

The counsellors of Edward VI, with less of the sanguinary

spirit of his father, were as unscrupulous in bending the rules of law and justice to their purpose in cases of treason. They were a designing oligarchy, from whom no measure conducive to liberty and justice could be expected to spring. They had not, however, the sinews to wield the iron sceptre of Henry, and the increased weight of the Commons appears in the repeal of former statutes that had terrified and exasperated the people; in the rejection of bills sent down from the Upper House; in the anxiety of the court, by the creation of new boroughs,<sup>1</sup> to obtain favorable elections.

The reign of Mary is memorable as a period of bloody persecution. Popery was restored, Protestants were imprisoned and burned for no other crime than their religion; stretches of prerogative in matters temporal were more violent and alarming; torture was more frequent than in all former ages combined, and a commission issued in 1557 has the appearance of a preliminary step to the Inquisition. A proclamation, after denouncing the importation of books filled with heresy and treason, declared that whoever should be found to have such books in his possession, should be considered a rebel and executed according to martial law. Yet not even she could preserve the absolute dominion of her father Henry. While in his reign the Lower House only once rejected a measure recommended by the Crown, in hers the first two Parliaments were dissolved on this account, and the third, refusing to pass several of her favorite bills, was far from obsequious. Still less was the English spirit, which had controlled princes in the fulness of their pride, broken. The reproach of servility under usurped powers belongs less to the people than to their natural leaders—the compliant nobility. The reign of each of the Tudors was disturbed by formidable discontents. Each had the discretion never to carry oppression to a fatal point.

The tone and temper of Elizabeth's administration were displayed in a vigilant execution of severe statutes, especially upon the Romanists, and in occasional stretches of power beyond the law, while the superior wisdom of her counsellors led them generally to shun the more violent measures of the late reigns. To high assumptions of prerogative, the resistance of Parliament

<sup>1</sup> Twenty-two were created or restored in this short reign.

became insensibly more vigorous. If, in the House of Commons, many were creatures of the Royal Council, grasping at preferment, others with inflexible aim recurred in every session to an important guarantee of civil liberty,—the right to inquire into public grievances and obtain redress. Now it was, perhaps for the first time, that the Commons asserted the privilege of determining contested elections. The finger of this sovereign was ever on the public pulse, and she knew exactly when she could resist and when she must retreat.

The same jealousy of the aristocracy turned the genius of the maiden queen to a new source of influence, unknown to her ancestors,—the people, a people divided by creeds and dogmas, but made compliant and coherent by the firmness and the indulgence of the wisest policy. While she ruled them with a potent hand, she courted their eyes and hearts. She it was who, studying their wants and wishes, first gave the people a theatre ‘for the recreation of our loving subjects as for our solace and pleasure.’ She subdued by yielding. Her sex and graciousness inspired a reign of love, and her energies contributed to make it one of enterprise and emulation—a new era of adventure and glory. Elizabeth, living in the hearts of her people, survived in their memories. Her birthday was long observed as a festival day. Every sign of the growing prosperity told in her favor, and her worst acts failed to dim the lustre of the national ideal.

**Society.**—The monarchy established peace, and with peace came the useful arts and domestic comfort. The development of manufactures was gradually absorbing the unemployed. Under Elizabeth commerce began that rapid career which has made Englishmen the carriers of the world. The burst of national vigor found new outlets in the marts of the Mediterranean and Baltic. In 1553 was founded a company to trade with Russia. In 1578 Drake circumnavigated the globe. In 1600 the East India Company was founded. Henry VIII at the beginning of his reign had but one ship of war. Elizabeth sent out one hundred and fifty against the Armada. Agriculture was so improved that the produce of an acre was doubled. Dwellings of brick and stone were superseding the straw-thatched cottages, plastered with coarsest clay and often on fire. With open admiration,

Harrison notes, 1580, three important changes in the farm-houses of his time:

‘One is the multitude of chimnies lately erected, whereas in their yoong daies were not above two or three, if so manie, in most uplandishe townes of the realme. . . . The second is the great amendment of lodging, although not generall, for our fathers, (yea and we ourselves also) have lien full oft upon straw pallets, on rough mats covered onlie with a sheet, under coverlets made of dogswain, or hopharlots, and a good round log under their heads, instead of a bolster or pillow. If it were so that the good man of the house had within seven years after his marriage purchased a matteres or flockebed, and thereto a sacke of chaffe to rest his head upon, he thought himselfe to be as well lodged as the lord of the towne. . . . Pillowes (said they) were thought meet onelie for women in childbed. . . . The third thing is the exchange of vessell, as of treene platters into pewter, and wdden spoons into silver or tin; for so common was all sorts of treene stuff in olden time, that a man should hardlie find four peeces of pewter (of which one was peradventure a salt) in a good farmers house.’

Looking-glasses imported from France began to displace the small mirrors of polished steel. Carpets were used rather for covering tables than floors, which latter were generally strewn with rushes. Forks were as yet unheard of, but knives—first made in England in 1563—and spoons were ornamented with some care. Gloomy walls and serried battlements disappeared from the palaces of the noblesse, half Gothic, half Italian, covered with picturesque gables, fretted fronts, gilded turrets, and adorned with terraces and vast staircases, with gardens, fountains, vases, and statues. The prodigal use of glass was a marked feature—one whose sanitary value can hardly be overestimated. ‘You shall have,’ grumbles one, ‘your houses so full of glass that we can not tell where to come to be out of the sun or the cold.’ The master no longer rode at the head of his servants, but sat apart in his ‘coach.’ The first carriage, 1564, caused much astonishment; some calling it ‘a great sea-shell from China,’ others ‘a temple in which cannibals worshipped the devil.’ Gentlemen placed their glory less in the conquests of the battle-axe and sword than in the elegance and singularity of their dress. ‘Do not,’ says a bitter Puritan, ‘both men and women, for the most part, every one, in general, go attired in silks, velvets, damasks, satins, and what not, which are attire only for the nobility and gentry, and not for the others at any hand?’ They wore hats ‘perking up like the spear or shaft of a temple,’ or hats ‘flat and broad on the crown like the battlements of a house’; hats of silk, velvet, and of ‘fine hair, which they call beaver, fetched from beyond the seas, from whence a great sort of other vanities do come besides’; cloaks of sable, ornamented shirts; coats

diversified with oxen and goats; velvet shoes, covered with rosettes and ribbons; boots with falling tops, hung with lace, and embroidered with figures of birds, animals, flowers of silver and gold. When Elizabeth died, three thousand dresses were found in her wardrobe. Feasts were carnivals of splendor. Entertainments were like fairy scenes. Sober thrift was forgotten in the universal expanse. Gallants gambled a fortune at a sitting, then sailed for the New World, in quest of a fresh one. Dreams of El Dorados lured the imagination of the meanest seaman. The advance of corporal well-being disclosed itself in the manners and tastes of all ranks—at the base as well as on the summit. The growth of the humanities is seen in the establishment of hospitals or retreats for the infirm and needy, and houses of correction for the vagrant and vicious.

Not modern England yet. Herds of deer strayed in vast and trackless forests. Fens forty or fifty miles in length reeked with miasm and fever. The population—barely five millions—was perpetually thinned by pestilence and want, whose triumphs were numbered by the death-crier in the streets or the knell for the passing soul. The peasants shivered in their mud-built hovels, where chimneys still were rare. For the poor there was no physician; for the dying—till the monasteries were suppressed—the monk and his crucifix. For a hundred years, agrarian changes had been leading to the mergence of smaller holdings and the introduction of sheep-farming on an enormous scale. Merchants, too, were investing heavily in land, and these 'farming gentlemen' were under little restraint in the eviction of the smaller tenants. The farmers, according to More, were 'got rid of either by fraud or force, or tired out with repeated wrongs into parting with their property.' He adds:

'In this way it comes to pass that these poor wretches, men, women, husbands, orphans, widows, parents with little children, householders greater in number than in wealth (for arable farming requires many hands, while one shepherd and herdsman will suffice for a pasture farm), all these emigrate from their native fields without knowing where to go.'

Homeless wanderers, they joined the army of beggars, marauders, vagabonds,—a vast mass of disorder on which every rebellion might count for support. The poor man, if unemployed, preferring to be idle, might be demanded for service by any master of



his vocation, and compelled to work. If caught begging once, and neither aged nor infirm, he was whipped at the cart's tail. For a second offence, his ear was slit, or bored through with a hot iron. For a third,—proved thereby to be useless to himself and hurtful to others,—he suffered death as a felon. This law, enacted in 1536, and subsisting for sixty years, expressed the English conviction that it is better for a man not to live at all than to live a profitless and worthless life,—so reaching, perhaps, the heart of the whole matter. *Rogue, mendicant, thief*, were practically synonymous terms, embracing,—

'All persons calling themselves scholars, going about begging; all seafaring men pretending losses of their ships and goods on the sea; all idle persons going about either begging, or using any subtle craft or unlawful games and plays, or feigning to have knowledge in physiognomy, palmistry, or other like crafty science, or pretending that they can tell destinies, fortunes, or such other fastastical imaginations, all fencers, bear-wards, common players and minstrels; all jugglers.'

Travelling required strong nerves. Some one petitions that 'parties of horse be stationed all along the avenues of the city of London, so that if a coach or wagon wanted a convoy, two or three or more may be detached.' Sometimes, says More, you might see a score of thieves hung on the same gibbet. In the county of Somerset alone, we find the magistrates capturing a hundred at a stroke, hanging fifty at once, and impatient to swing the rest. On the byways, as on all the highways, stand the gallows. Beneath the idea of order is the idea of the scaffold. Savage energy remains. The living are cut down, disembowelled, quartered. 'When his heart was cut out, he uttered a deep groan.' London witnesses the fearful spectacle of a living human being—a poisoner—boiled to death, 'to the terrible example of all others.' Judge of the moral tone by the utter absence of personal feeling. With business-like brevity, as if the thing were perfectly natural, Cromwell ticks off human lives:

'Item, the Abbot of Reading to be sent down to be tried and executed at Reading.'  
'Item, when Master Fisher shall go to his execution, and the other.'

Honor, beauty, youth, and genius went quietly to the block, as if bloodshed were an accepted system. With the utmost equanimity, as if no murder could be extraordinary, Holinshed relates:

'The five and twentieth daie of Maie (1535) was in saint Paules church at London examined nineteen men and six women born in Holland, whose opinions were (heretical). Fourteene of them were condemned, a man and a woman of them were burned in Smithfield, the other twelve were sent to other townes, there to be burnt. On the nineteenth

of June were three moonkes of the Charterhouse hanged, drawne, and quartered at Tiburne, and their heads and quarters set up about London, for denieng the king to be supreme head of the church. Also the one and twentieth of the same moneth, and for the same cause, doctor John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, was beheaded for denieng of the supremacie, and his head set upon London bridge, but his bodie buried within Barking churchyard. The pope had elected him a cardinall, and sent his hat as far as Calais, but his head was off before his hat was on: so that they met not. On the sixth of Julie was Sir Thomas Moore beheaded for the like crime, that is to wit, for denieng the king to be supreme head.'

In such a state, man can be happy—like swine. He is still a primitive animal, too heavy for refined sensations, too vehement for restraint; a hive of violent and uncurbed instincts, seeking only expansion, and, to that end, ready to appeal at once to arms. Says a correspondent:

'On Thursday laste, as my Lorde Rytche was rydyng in the streates, there was one Wyndam that stode in a dore, and shotte a dagge at him, thynkyng to have slayne him. . . . The same daye, also, as Sir John Conway was goyng in the streetes, Mr. Lodovyke Grevell came sodenly upon him, and stroke him on the hedd with a sworde. . . . I am forced to trouble your Honors with thes tryflyng matters, for I know no greater.'

His enjoyment, if lacking decency, is heartfelt—the overflowing of a coarse animation. Bear and bull baitings are the delight of all classes, a 'charming entertainment' even to the queen. Cock-fighting and throwing at cocks are regularly introduced into the public schools. They feast copiously, furnishing their tables as if to revictual Noah's ark. They drink without ceasing, as when they crossed the sea in leather boats; as now in Germany, where to drink is to drink for ever. Their holidays, with which tradition had filled the year, are the incarnation of natural life. Stubbes, whose mind is burdened with the pitiless doctrines of Calvin, says, with morose impatience:

'First, all the wilde heades of the parishe, conventying together, chuse them a ground capitaine of mischeef, whan they innoble with the title of my Lorde of Misserule, and hym they crown with great solemnitie, and adopt for their kyng. This kyng anoynted, chuseth for the twentie, fourtie, three score or a hundred lustie guttes like to hymself to waite upon his lordely maiestie. . . . Then have they their hobbie horses, dragons, and other antiques together with their baudie pipers and thundering drommers, to strike up the devilles daunce withall: then marche these heathen companie towards the churche and churche-yarde, their pipers pipyng, their drommers thonderyng, their stumpes dauncyng, their belles rynglyng, their hankercheffes swyngyng about their heades like madmen, their hobbie horses and other monsters skirmishyng amongst the throg; and in this sorte they goe to the churche (though the minister bee at praier or preachyng), dauncyng and swingyng their hankercheefes over their heads, in the churche, like devilles incarnate, with such a confused noise, that no man can heare his owne voice. Then the foolishe people they looke, they stare, they laugh, they fleere, and mount upon formes and pewes, to see these goodly pageauntes, solemnized in this sort. Then after this, aboute the churche they goe againe and againe, and so forthe into the churche-yarde, where they have commonly their sommer haules, their bowers, arbors and banquettyng

houses set up, wherein they feaste, banquet, and daunce all that daie, and preadventure all that night too. And thus these terrestriall furies spend the Sabboath daie.'

And,—

'Against Maie, every parishe, towne and village assemble themselves together, bothe men, women, and children, olde and yong, even all indifferently; they goe to the woodes where they spende all the night in pleasant pastymes, and in the mornynge they returne, bringing with them birch, bowes, and branches of trees, to deck their assemblies withall. But their cheefest iewell they bringe from thence is their Maie poole, which they bring home with great veneration, as thus: They have twenty or fourtie yoke of oxen, every ox havng a sweete nosegaie of flowers tyed on the tippe of his hornes, and these oxen drawe home this Maie poole (this stinkyng idoll rather), . . . and thus beyng reared up, they strawe the grounde aboute, binde greene boughes about it, sett up sommer haules, bowers, and arbours hard by it; and then fall they to banquet and feast, to leape and dance aboute it, as the heathen people did at the dedication of their idolles.'

What literature will this life create? You will see it all there, reflected in the drama, reproduced on the stage,—free and liberal living, a masquerade of splendor, vice raging without shame, a prodigality of carnage,—a young world, natural, unshackled, and tragic.

**The Reformation.**—Society is not possible without religion, and neither society nor religion can be founded only on the pursuit of pleasure and of power. Recall the secular irritations whose momentum had long been gathering for the impending outbreak. Imagine, if you can, the secret anger which the custom of sanctuary alone must have excited. Says the Venetian ambassador at the English court in 1502:

'The clergy are they who have the supreme sway over the country, both in peace and war. Among other things, they have provided that a number of sacred places in the kingdom should serve for the refuge and escape of all delinquents; and no one, were he a traitor to the crown, or had he practised against the king's own person, can be taken out of these by force. And a villain of this kind, who, for some great excess that he has committed, has been obliged to take refuge in one of these sacred places, often goes out of it to brawl in the public streets, and then, returning to it, escapes with impunity for every fresh offence he may have been guilty of. This is no detriment to the purses of the priests, nor to the other perpetual sanctuaries; but every church is a sanctuary for forty days; and if a thief or murderer, who has taken refuge in one, cannot leave it in safety during those forty days, he gives notice that he wishes to leave England. In which case, being stripped to the shirt by the chief magistrate of the place, and a crucifix placed in his hand, he is conducted along the road to the sea, where, if he finds a passage, he may go with a "God speed you." But if he should not find one, he walks into the sea up to the throat, and three times asks for a passage; and this is repeated till a ship appears, which comes for him, and so he departs in safety. It is not unamusing to hear how the women and children lament over the misfortune of these exiles, asking "how they can live so destitute out of England"; adding, moreover, that "they had better have died than go out of the world," as if England were the whole world.'

Visible acts and invisible thoughts were environed and held down by an ecclesiastical code, which, only a vehicle for extor-

tion, changed the police into an inquisition. 'Heresy,' 'witchcraft,' 'impatient words,' 'absence from church,' an offence imputed or suspected, resulted in heavy fines, imprisonment, abjuration, public penance, and the menace or sentence of the torture and the stake. A Northman, a follower of Luther, an artist, grouped and portrayed the infamy and glory of his age, — Christ bleeding in the last throes of a dying life, angels full of anguish catching in their vessels the holy blood, the stars veiling their face, a heretic bound to a tree and torn with the iron-pointed lash of the executioner, another praying with clasped hands while an auger is screwed into his eye, men and women hurled at the lance's point from the crest of a hill into the abyss below. On the other hand, an atrocious crime, the mortal sin of a priest, could be expiated by an indifferent penance or the payment of a few shillings. But the crimes of the clergy were exceeded by their licentiousness. These are the most moderate lines in a satire of 1528: .

'What are the bishops divines? . . .  
 To forge excommunications,  
 For tythes and decimations  
 Is their continual exercise. . . .  
 Rather than to make a sermon.  
 To follow the chase of wild deer,  
 Passing the time with jolly cheer.  
 Among them all is common  
 To play at the cards and dice;  
 Some of them are nothing nice  
 Both at hazard and momchance;  
 They drink in golden bowls  
 The blood of poor simple souls  
 Perishing for lack of sustenance.  
 Their hungry cures they never teach,  
 Nor will suffer none other to preach.'<sup>1</sup>

In Latimer's opinion, only one bishop in all England was faithful:

'I would ask a strange question. Who is the most diligent bishop and prelate in all England, that passeth all the rest in doing of his office? I can tell, for I know him who it is; I know him well. But now I think I see you listening and hearkening that I should name him. There is one that passeth all the others, and is the most diligent prelate and preacher in all England. And will ye know who it is? I will tell you. It is the devil. Therefore, ye unpreaching prelates, learn of the devil to be diligent in your office. If ye will not learn of God, for shame learn of the devil.'

It was the frightful depravity of Rome that startled Luther into revolt. He went there an eager pilgrim, trudging penniless and barefoot across the Alps, as to the city of the saints, and

<sup>1</sup> Roy's *Burying of the Mass*.

the palace of the Pope, fragrant with the odors of Paradise. 'Blessed Rome,' he cried as he entered the gate,—'Blessed Rome sanctified with the blood of martyrs!' 'Adieu!' he cried as he fled, 'let all who would lead a holy life depart from Rome. Every thing is permitted in Rome except to be an honest man.' Romanism was turned into a carnival of vice in which all that is high and pure in man is smothered by corruption, and a circus of ostentation where the kingdom of heaven is bought and sold. In 1517 a new cathedral<sup>1</sup> was in progress, that should dwarf the proudest monuments of art. Agents were sent about Europe with sacks of indulgences and dispensations—letters of credit on heaven. Archbishops were promised half the spoil for their support. Streets were hung with flags to receive them, bells were rung to welcome them; nuns and monks walked in procession before and after, while the vender himself sat in a chariot, with the Papal Bull on a velvet cushion in front. The sale-rooms were the churches. Amid the blazing candles of the altar, the agent explained the efficacy of his medicines, declaring all sins blotted out 'as soon as the money chinks in the box.' Acolytes walked through the crowds, clinking the plates, and crying, 'Buy, buy!'

Now consider the national temper and inclinations, which long before the great outburst were muttering ominously. The words of the consecration, the most sacred of the old worship, *Hoc est corpus*, were travestied into a nickname for jugglery—*hocus pocus*. Priests were hooted or knocked down in their walks. Women refused the sacrament from their hands. An apparitor, sent by the church to secure her dues, was driven out with insults: 'Go thy way, thou stynkyng knave; ye are but knaves and brybours, everych one of you.' Another's head was broken. A waiter fell in trouble for saying that 'the sight of a priest did make him sick,' also, 'that he would go sixty miles to indict' one. In one diocese a woman was summoned and tried for turning her face from the cross; several for not saying their prayers in church, remaining seated 'dumb as beasts'; three for passing a night together reading a book of the Scriptures; a thresher for asserting, as he pointed to his work, that he was going to make God come out of his straw. Latimer announced

<sup>1</sup> St. Peter's, designed by Angelo.



one day that he would preach in a certain place. On the morrow, proceeding to his appointment, he found the doors closed, and waited more than an hour for the key. At last a man came, and said: 'Syr, thys ys a busye day with us; we cannot heare you: it is Robyn Hoodes Daye.' Straws on the stream. The thoughtful and the learned had come to smile at the extent of human credulity. Erasmus visits the shrine at Walsingham. An attendant, like a modern guide, shows him the wonders:

'The joint of a man's finger is exhibited to us, the largest of three. I kiss it; and I then ask, "Whose relics were these?" He says, "St. Peter's." "The apostle?" He said, "Yes." Then, observing the size of the joint, which might have been that of a giant, I remarked, "Peter must have been a man of very large size." At this one of my companions burst into a laugh, which I certainly took ill, for if he had been quiet the attendant would have shown us all the relics.'

His attention is called to the milk of the Virgin, 'what looked like ground chalk mixed with white of egg,' and he inquires as civilly as he may by what proofs he is assured of its genuineness:

'The canon, as if possessed by a fury, looking aghast upon us, and apparently horrified at the blasphemous inquiry, replied, "What need to ask such questions, when you have the authenticated inscription?"'

The contagion spreads, reaches even men in office. When the enormities of the English monks are read in Parliament, there is nothing but the cry of 'Down with them!' Henry permits the 'free and liberal use' of the Scriptures. Never were they so eagerly and artlessly scrutinized. Every impression made a furrow. Girls took them to church, and studied them ostentatiously during matins. Grave judges, charging the jury, prefaced their charges by a text. Every reader became an expounder, and the nation abounded with disputants. They reasoned about the sacred volume in taverns and alehouses. In vain the king, irritated at the universal distraction of opinion, orders them not to rely too much on their own ideas, and restricts the privilege to the nobility and gentry. In the solitude of the fields, in concealment, under their smoky lights, by their fires of turf, they spell out the Bible, discuss it, ponder it. One hides it in a hollow tree, another commits a chapter to memory, so as to be able to revolve it even in the presence of his accusers. They see a companion or relative bound amid the smoke, encourage him, cry out to him that his cause is just, hear his last appeals to God, and meditate on them darkly, passionately.

Twice had the storm gathered and passed. Twice had the

mind of Europe risen in vain against the domination of Rome; first in France, then in England and Bohemia. But now the invention of printing, which supplied her assailants with unwonted weapons, the study of the classics, the vices of the Roman clergy, —these things conspired to achieve in the sixteenth century what was impossible in the fourteenth or fifteenth. More powerful still, because more general: for five centuries the energies of the human spirit had been accumulating. Never had it greater activity, never so imperious a desire to advance. On the contrary, the Church, which governed the intellect and the heart, had fallen into a state of imbecility and remained stationary. Insurrection was the result. The forward impulse—ethical and intellectual—resisted by the moral inertness, but accumulated to excess, burst out, and produced the Reformation. The change was essentially moral. Its mainspring was the awakened conscience—not the revolutionary desire to experimentalize abstract truth, but the indignation of righteousness, the fundamental anxiety to seize upon truth and justice. It is the genius of the Germanic peoples—the idea of duty blooming afresh amid the mighty upgrowth of all human ideas, the sombre Semitic conception of the vast and solitary Being, whose commands, whose vengeance, whose promises and threats, fill, occupy, and direct their thoughts. They ask, with Luther, ‘What is righteousness, and how shall I obtain it?’ Troubled and anxious, their light failing, themselves groping, they cry from the abyss:

‘Almighty and most merciful Father; we have erred, and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own heart. We have offended against Thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; And we have done those things which we ought not to have done; And there is no health in us. But Thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare Thou them, O God, which confess their faults. Restore Thou them that are penitent: According to Thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for His sake; That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life.’

‘Almighty and everlasting God, who hast nothing that Thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of Thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness.’<sup>1</sup>

It is this conscience that made believers strong against all the revulsions of nature and all the trembling of the flesh. Many went to the stake cheerfully, and all bravely, deeming the ‘cross

<sup>1</sup>*Book of Common Prayer, 1548*; subsequently, at different periods, undergoing several changes.

of persecution' an 'inestimable jewel.' 'No one will be crowned,' said one of them, 'but they who fight like men, and he who endures to the end shall be saved.' Latimer at eighty, refusing to retract, after two years of prison and waiting, was burned. His companion, ready to be chained to the post, said aloud: 'O heavenly Father, I give thee most hearty thanks, for that thou hast called me to be a professor of thee, even unto death!' Latimer in his turn, when they brought the lighted fagots, uttered the thrilling words: 'Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man: we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out.' A youth, an apprentice to a silk-weaver, doomed to die if he does not recant, is exhorted by his parents to stand firm:

"Then William said to his mother, "For my little pain which I shall suffer, which is but a short braid, Christ hath promised me, mother (said he), a crown of joy: may you not be glad of that, mother?" With that his mother kneeled down on her knees, saying, "I pray God strengthen thee, my son, to the end; yea, I think thee as well-bested as any child that ever I bare." . . . Then William Hunter plucked up his gown, and stepped over the parlour groundsel, and went forward cheerfully; the sheriff's servant taking him by one arm, and I his brother by another. And thus going in the way, he met with his father according to his dream, and he spake to his son weeping, and saying, "God be with thee, son William"; and William said, "God be with you, good father, and be of good comfort; for I hope we shall meet again, when we shall be merry." His father said, "I hope so, William"; and so departed. So William went to the place where the stake stood, even according to his dream, where all things were very unready. Then William took a wet broom-faggot, and kneeled down thereon and read the fifty-first Psalm, till he came to these words, "The sacrifice of God is a contrite spirit; a contrite and a broken heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." . . . Then said the sheriff, "Here is a letter from the queen. If thou wilt recant thou shalt live; if not thou shalt be burned." "No," quoth William, "I will not recant, God willing." Then William rose and went to the stake, and stood upright to it. Then came one Richard Ponde, a bailiff, and made fast the chain about William. Then said master Brown, "Here is not wood enough to burn a leg of him." Then said William, "Good people! pray for me, and make speed and despatch quickly; and pray for me while you see me alive, good people! and I will pray for you likewise." "How?" quoth master Brown, "pray for thee! I will pray no more for thee than I will pray for a dog." . . . Then was there a gentleman which said, "I pray God have mercy upon his soul." The people said, "Amen, Amen." Immediately was fire made. Then William cast his psalter right into his brother's hand, who said, "William! think on the holy passion of Christ, and be not afraid of death." And William answered, "I am not afraid." Then lift he up his hands to heaven, and said, "Lord, Lord, Lord, receive my spirit"; and, casting down his head again into the smothering smoke, he yielded up his life for the truth, sealing it with his blood to the praise of God.<sup>1</sup>

The same sentiment, alas, made them tyrants after it had made them martyrs. While the Reformation was 'demanding freedom of thought for itself, it was violating that right towards others. Both Reformers and Papists held it right to inflict coercion and

<sup>1</sup> Fox's *Book of Martyrs*.

death upon those who denied what they regarded as the essential faith. The first never doubted that truth was on their side, the second were no less confident; and both required with equal ardor the princes of their party to wield the temporal sword against the other. The innovators were not emancipated from the corrupt principles of the age, and there is no little warrant for the taunt that they were against burning only when they were in fear of it themselves. Calvin burned Servetus for heresy. Speaking to the Earl of Somerset, he expressly says of the Papists and Dissenters, 'They ought to be repressed by the avenging sword which the Lord has put into your hands.' Cranmer caused a woman to be burned for some opinion about the Incarnation. In the reign of Henry VIII, the story of martyrdoms convulsed the Catholic world; in that of Mary, nearly three hundred Protestants let themselves be burned rather than abjure; in that of Elizabeth, a hundred and sixty Catholics were put to death. We shall do well, however, to bear in mind the temper of the men with whom the Reformers had to deal. They remembered that when their teaching began to spread in the Netherlands, an edict was issued, under which fifty thousand of them, first and last, were deliberately murdered.

About the year 1520, when Luther publicly burned at Wittenberg the bull of Leo X, containing his condemnation, the movement definitely began which was to raise the whole of Europe and change the spiritual history of mankind. Slowly, with mistrust, from self-interest, Henry VIII laid the axe to the tree. In 1534, Parliament enacted that the king—

'shall be taken, accepted, and reputed the only supreme Head in earth of the Church of England, and shall have and enjoy annexed and united to the Imperial Crown of this realm as well the title and style thereof as all the honors, jurisdictions, authorities, immunities, profits, and commodities to the said dignity belonging, with full power to visit, repress, redress, reform, and amend all such errors, heresies, abuses, contempts, and enormities, which by any manner of spiritual authority or jurisdiction might or may lawfully be reformed.'

Denial was treason, and treason death. A second blow was struck, and the monasteries were lopped off, their relics cast out, their shrines levelled, their estates appropriated by the court and nobility, the monks sent wandering into the world, and the bishops looked helplessly on while their dominion was trodden under foot. Henry VIII, by brute force, wrought out only a purified Catholicism differing in theory from the Roman Catholic faith on

the point of supremacy and on that point alone. Above the roar of controversy, he told the people, in six articles,<sup>1</sup> how to worship and what to believe. Assailed with equal fury by those who were zealous for either the new or the old, he burned as heretics such as avowed the tenets of Luther, and hanged as traitors such as owned the authority of the Pope. His system, too hazardous to maintain, died with him. Under the Regency of his infant son, the Six Articles were repealed; the prohibitions of Lollardy were removed; the churches were emptied of pictures and images; priests, descending from their stone altars to wooden tables, were once more equals, and married like the rest; the Book of Common Prayer was restored, to knock at the door of every soul with its imposing supplications; old customs were broken. Cranmer, who had been slowly drifting, set the example. 'This year,' says a contemporary, 'the Archbishop of Canterbury did eat meat openly in Lent in the hall of Lambeth, the like of which was never seen since England was a Christian country.'

Mary undid all that had been done by her father and brother. Not only were the old doctrines and ceremonies restored; the supremacy was resigned to the Pope. But the new worship became popular through the triumph of its martyrs, and became national on the accession of Elizabeth—national by the constraint of internal sentiment and the pressure of foreign hostility. England is henceforth Protestant; her faith, a part of the Constitution, an alliance of the worldly and religious enemies of popery, a union of the court and the cloister, of the State and the Church; linked to the throne by the two Acts of headship and uniformity; in its doctrinal structure, tolerant; in its political structure, persecuting. For a government whose organic principle is synthetic and monarchical will not patiently submit to dissension whose tendency is analytic and republican.

To this day, the Established Church bears the visible imprint of her origin. Like her imperial parent, she has her chief magistrate; she retains episcopacy, without declaring it to be essential; she copies the daily chant of the monk, though translating it into the vulgar tongue and inviting the multitude to join its voice to that of the minister; without asking for the intercession of the

<sup>1</sup> Transubstantiation, celibacy, vows, mass, confession, withholding the cup from the laity.



saints, she has her festival-days for her great benefactors; discarding a crowd of pantomimic gestures, she marks the sprinkled infant with the sign of the cross; condemning the idolatrous adoration of the bread and wine, she requires them to be received in a meekly kneeling posture; rejecting many rich vestments, she yet keeps the robe of white; without the gloomy monotony of the middle-age litany, the organ-led music now thunders forth glory to God, now whispers to the broken in spirit;—in short, a flourishing branch, shooting forth in the open air, amid satin doublets and stage attitudes, amid youthful bluster and fashionable prodigality; friendly to the beautiful, which it does not proscribe, and to fancy, which it does not attempt to fetter.

Only by a very slow process does the human mind emerge from a system of error. The excesses of vice had been repressed without attacking its source. Many persons, with a severer ideal, thought that the interests of pure religion required a reform far more searching and extensive. They would have a service without shred or fragment of Rome. One protests: 'I can't consent to wear the surplice, it is against my conscience; I trust by the help of God, I shall never put on that sleeve, which is a mark of the beast.' And another: 'God by Isaiah commandeth not to pollute ourselves with the garments of the image.' As they could not be convinced, they were persecuted — imprisoned, fined, pilloried, their noses slit, their ears cut off. From being a sect, they consequently became a faction. To hatred of the authorized church was added hatred of the royal authority. So, underneath the established Protestantism is propagated an interdicted Protestantism,—*Puritanism*, whose intermingled sentiments, each embittering the other, will produce the English Revolution.

If now we inquire what were the ultimate results of the Reformation, it can hardly escape observation:

1. That it banished, or nearly so, religion from politics, and secularized government.

2. That, leaving the mind subject to the variable influence of political institutions, it yet procured, by disarming the spiritual power, a great increase of liberty—a liberty which redounded to the advantage of morality and of science.

3. That rejecting much of the polity and ritual of the mystical Babylon, it rendered possible that steady movement by which theology has since been gravitating towards the moral faculty.

4. That it introduced religion into the midst of the laity, which till then had been the exclusive domain of the ecclesiastical order.

5. That, begetting a war of tracts and disputations, whether conqueror or conquered, it effected an immense progress in mental activity.

6. That, by arousing Rome to impose upon herself an instant counter-reform, it gave an improved tone to all ecclesiastical grades.

Inestimable as are these blessings, it were idle to deny that the Reformation aggravated, for a time, unavoidably, some of the evils it was intended to correct. It was the culminating fact in a train of circumstances that had diffused through Christendom an intense and vivid sense of Satanic agency. When the mind, without power of sound judgment, is fallen upon times in which tendencies and passions rage with tempestuous violence, it turns readily to the miraculous as the solution of all phenomena, and phantoms are transfigured into realities through the mists of hope and fear. Men, superstitious and terror-stricken, listen then with wide ears and fantastic foreshadowings, momentarily expecting the thunderbolts of God, and feeling upon them the claw of the devil. Cranmer, in one of his articles of visitation, directs his clergy to seek for 'any that use charms, sorcery, enchantments, witchcraft, soothsaying, or *any like craft invented by the Devil.*' Under Henry VIII, there were a few executions for supposed dealings with the Evil One; but the law on the subject in the following reign was repealed, nor again renewed till the accession of Elizabeth, when other laws were made, and executed with severity. A preacher before the queen, adverting to the increase of witches, expressed a hope that the penalties might be rigidly enforced:

'May it please your grace to understand that witches and sorcerers within these few years are marvellously increased within your grace's realm. Your grace's subjects pine away even unto the death; their color fadeth, their flesh rotteth, their speech is benumbed, their senses are bereft; . . . I pray God they never practice further than upon the subject.'

It must have made the teeth chatter with fright to hear the ministers assert:

‘That they have had in their parish at one instant, XVII or XVIII witches; meaning such as could worke miracles supernaturallie; . . . that instructed by the devil, they make ointments of the bowels and members of children, whereby they ride in the aire, and accomplish all their desires. When a child is not baptized, or defended by the sign of the cross, then the witches catch them from their mothers sides in the night . . . kill them . . . or after buriall steal them out of their graves, and seeth them in a caldron, untill their flesh be made potable. . . . It is an infallible rule, that everie fortnight, or at the least everie moneth, each witch must kill one child at the least for hir part.’

With signal success, the witch-finders pricked their victims all over to discover the insensible spot, threw them into the water to ascertain whether they would sink or swim, or deprived them of sleep during successive nights to compel confession. Under a milder judiciary than on the Continent, witches who had not destroyed others by their incantations, were, for the first conviction, punished only by the pillory and imprisonment, while those condemned to die, perished by the gallows instead of the stake. The cast of thought engendered by the Reformation is strikingly typified in Luther. Oppressed by a keen sense of unworthiness, distracted by intellectual doubt, Satan was the dominating conception of his life, the efficient cause in every critical event, in every mental perturbation. In the seclusion of his monastery at Wittenberg, he constantly heard the Devil making a noise in the cloisters, even cracking nuts on his bed-post. A stain on the wall of his chamber still marks the place where he flung an ink-bottle at the Devil. He became so accustomed to the presence that, awakened on one occasion by the sound, he perceived it to be *only* the Devil, and accordingly went to sleep. ‘Oh, what horrible spectres and figures I used to see!’ None of the infirmities to which he was liable were natural; but his ear-ache was peculiarly diabolical. Physicians who attempted to explain disease by natural causes, were ignorant men, who did not know all the power of Satan. Indeed suicides, commonly supposed to have destroyed themselves, had in reality been seized and strangled by the Devil. In strict accordance with the spirit of his age, he emphatically proclaimed the duty of burning the witches. ‘I would have no compassion on these witches,’ he exclaimed. ‘I would burn them all!’ The immense majority of the accused were women—a fact explained not by their nervous sensibility

and their consequent liability to religious epidemics, but by their inherent wickedness. As long as celibacy was esteemed the highest of virtues, divines exhausted all the resources of their eloquence in describing the iniquity of the fair. By a natural process, all the 'phenomena of love' came to be regarded as most especially under the influence of the Devil. The tragedy of *Macbeth* faithfully reflects the popular superstition touching the powers of darkness. The air is lurid and thick with things weird and fantastic. Three witches meet in dark communion — kinless — nameless — and fitly consult:

*First W.* When shall we three meet again  
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

*Second W.* When the hurlyburly's done,  
When the battle's lost and won.

*Third W.* That will be ere set of sun.

*First W.* Where the place?

*Second W.* Upon the heath;

*Third W.* There to meet with Macbeth.'

With wild utterance, all, of the moral confusion and murkiness of their demon's heart, they vanish:

'Fair is foul, and foul is fair:  
Hover through the fog and filthy air.'

Meeting again on the blasted heath, they recount to each other their exploits:

*First W.* Where hast thou been, sister?

*Second W.* Killing swine.

*Third W.* Sister, where thou?

*First W.* A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,  
And mounch'd, and mounch'd, and mounch'd:—  
"Give me," quoth I:  
"Aroint thee, witch!" the rump-fed ronyon cries.  
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' the Tiger:  
But in a sieve I'll thither sail,  
And, like a rat without a tail,  
I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.

*Second W.* I'll give thee a wind.

*First W.* Thou art kind.

*Third W.* And I another.

*First W.* I myself have all the other,  
And the very ports they blow,  
All the quarters that they know  
I' the shipman's card.  
I'll drain him dry as hay:  
Sleep shall neither night nor day  
Hang upon his pent-house lid;  
He shall live a man forbid:  
Weary sev'n-nights, nine times nine,  
Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine:  
Though his bark cannot be lost,

Yet it shall be tempest-tost.

Look what I have.—

*Second W.* Show me, show me.—

*First W.* Here I have a pilot's thumb,  
Wreck'd as homeward he did come.'

Distant and complex objects are rendered distorted and portentous in the morning mists which the rising sun has not yet dispelled.

**The Renaissance.**—In the moral, as in the physical world, every night brightens into a new day. Ages of sloth are succeeded by periods of energy. First the seed in the soil, then the harvest—in endless recurrence. Nature may sleep, but she will wake again—forever. It is with man as with the planet,—change is identified with existence, never by leaps, ever by steps; revolutionary, periodic; pulsating to the rhythmic law of the universe, that swings to and fro through the immeasurable agitations, like the shuttle of a loom, and weaves a definite and comprehensible pattern into the otherwise chaotic fabric of things. What the Reformation exhibits in the sphere of religion and politics, the Revival of Letters displays in the sphere of culture, art, and science,—the recovered energy and freedom of humanity. Both are effects or phases, each by reaction a stimulant and a cause; the first ethical, the second intellectual; the one Christian, the other classical—in contrasted language, pagan; either, the acme of a gradual and instinctive process of *becoming*; neither, as we have seen, without many anticipations and foreshadowings. The *Renaissance*, however, is commonly understood to be the renovation of the intellect only—that outburst of human intelligence which, abroad in the fifteenth century and at home in the sixteenth, marks an epoch in human growth. What was it in its elements and its origin?—An expansion of natural existence, and a zeal for the civilizations of Greece and Rome, that till the fulness of time had lain essentially inoperative on the Dead-Sea shore of the middle-age. It was the resuscitation of the taste, the eloquence, and the song of antiquity; of the gods and heroes of Olympus, of the eternal art and thought of Athens. It was, after a long oblivion, the reappearance, with others high and luminous, of the 'divine Plato,' who alone among books is entitled to Omar's fanatical compliment to the Koran,—'Burn the libraries, for their value is in this volume.' All who went before



were his teachers; all who came after were his debtors. Every thinker of grand proportions is *his*.<sup>1</sup> Whoever has given a spiritual expression to truth, has voiced him. Whoever has had vision of the realities of being, has stood in his hallowed light—the Elizabethans not less. But for the magnitude of his proper genius, Shakespeare would be the most eminent of Platonists. Would you understand the lofty insight, the celestial ardor of the *Fairy Queen*—first great ideal poem in the English tongue, you must reascend to the serene solitudes of Plato, and watch the lightnings of his imagination playing in the illimitable. His sentences are the corner-stone of speculative schools, the fountain-head of literatures, the culture of nations. ‘To his doctrines we may hardly allude—the acutest German, the fondest disciple, is at fault.’ What renders him immortally noble, and irresistibly attractive to the noble, is his moral aim, his sympathy with truth—truth arrayed in the unsullied white of heaven. The admirable earnest is the central sun:

‘I, therefore, Callicles, am persuaded by these accounts, and consider how I may exhibit my soul before the judge in a healthy condition. Wherefore disregarding the honors that most men value, and looking to the truth, I shall endeavor in reality to live as virtuously as I can; and, when I die, to die so. And I invite all other men, to the utmost of my power.’

Upon this dogma let the pillared firmament rest:

‘Let us declare the cause which led the Supreme Ordainer to produce and compose the universe. He was good; and he who is good has no kind of envy. Exempt from envy, he wished that all things should be as much as possible like himself. Whosoever, taught by wise men, shall admit this as the prime cause of the origin and foundation of the world, will be in the truth.’

And human faith cleave to this, and by it interpret the world:

‘All things are for the sake of the good, and it is the cause of everything beautiful.’

Impute no ill to the eternal Radiance, however dark the problem of human destiny:

‘That which is good is beneficial; is the cause of good. And, therefore, that which is good is not the cause of *all* which is and happens, but only of that which is as it should be. . . The good things we ascribe to God, whilst we must seek elsewhere, and not in him, the causes of evil things.’

Towards this superlative perfection, the holy, the beautiful, the true, let reason lift itself:

‘Marvellous beauty! eternal, uncreated, imperishable beauty, free from increase and diminution. . . beauty which has nothing sensible, nothing corporeal, as hands or face: which does not reside in any being different from itself, in the earth, or the

<sup>1</sup>Aristotle was his pupil, and the critic of his system.

heavens, or in any other thing, but which exists *eternally and absolutely in itself, and by itself*; beauty of which every other beauty partakes, without their birth or destruction bringing to it the least increase or diminution.'

Alas! when we would rise, we feel the weight of clay. Our life is double:

'The Deity himself *formed the divine*, and he delivered over to his celestial offspring the task of *forming the mortal*. These subordinate deities, copying the example of their parent, and receiving from his hands the *immortal principle* of the human soul, fashioned subsequently to this the mortal body, which they consigned to the soul as a vehicle, and in which they placed another kind of soul, mortal, the seat of violent and fatal affections.'

All the longing, all the vanity, all the doubt, the sorrow, the travail, of the world, this man felt; and said — what we are only now beginning to discover — that the soul had two motive powers. Two winged steeds, he calls them, one princely, the other plebeian; and a charioteer Reason, who endeavors to guide them to the realized vision of the ideal:

'Now the winged horses, and the charioteer of the gods are all of them noble, and of noble breed, while ours are mixed; and we have a charioteer who drives them in a pair, and one of them is noble and of noble origin, and the other is ignoble and of ignoble origin; and, as might be expected, there is a great deal of trouble in managing them. . . . The wing is intended to soar aloft and carry that which gravitates downwards into the upper region, which is the dwelling of the gods; and this is that element of the body which is most akin to the divine. Now the divine is beauty, wisdom, and goodness and the like; and by these the wing of the soul is nourished, and grows apace; but when fed upon evil and foulness, and the like, wastes and falls away. Zeus, the mighty lord holding the reins of a winged chariot, leads the way in heaven, ordering all and caring for all; and there follows him the heavenly array of gods and demigods, divided into eleven bands; for only Hestia is left at home in the house of heaven; but the rest of the twelve greater deities march in their appointed order. And they see in the interior of heaven many blessed sights; and there are ways to and fro, along which the happy gods are passing, each one fulfilling his own work; and any one may follow who pleases, for jealousy has no place in the heavenly choir. This is within the heaven. But when they go to feast and festival, then they move right up the steep ascent, and mount the top of the dome of heaven. Now the chariots of the gods, self-balanced, upward glide in obedience to the rein; but the others have a difficulty, for the steed who has evil in him, if he has not been properly trained by the charioteer, gravitates and inclines and sinks towards the earth: and this is the hour of agony and extremest conflict of the soul. . . . That which follows God best and is likeliest to him lifts the head of the charioteer into the outer world and is carried round in the revolution, troubled indeed by the steeds, and beholding true being, but hardly; another rises and falls, and sees, and again fails to see by reason of the unruliness of the steeds. The rest of the souls are also longing after the upper world and they all follow, but not being strong enough they sink into the gulf as they are carried round, plunging, treading on one another, striving to be first; and there is confusion and the extremity of effort, and many of them are lamed or have their wings broken by the ill driving of the charioteers; and all of them after a fruitless toil go away without being initiated into the mysteries of being, and are nursed with the food of opinion. *The reason of their great desire to behold the plain of truth is that the food which is suited to the highest part of the soul comes out of that meadow; and the wing on which the soul soars is nourished with this.*'

No wonder Platonism is immortal — immortal because its vitality is not that of one or another blood but of human nature.

But the recovered consciousness of Europe — signalized and quickened by the admiration for the antique — was especially marked by a general efflorescence of the beautiful. Among the Greeks, the central conception of art was the glory of the human body. As their mythology passed gradually into the realm of poetry, statues that once were objects of earnest prayer came to be viewed with the glance of the artist or the critic. Reverence was displaced by allegory and imagination; worship of the object, by the worship of form. It was Greece, arisen from the tomb, that in this unique era of human intelligence bequeathed those almost passionate models which have been the wonder and the delight of all succeeding ages. Man, long enveloped in a cowl, awoke to beauty. Painting and sculpture, from being a frigid reproduction of entranced eyes and sunken chests, became instinct with strong and happy life. The attenuated Christ was transformed into 'a crucified Jupiter,' the pale Virgin into a lovely girl, the dried-up saint into a ready athlete. Similar was the transition in architecture. The Gothic style, whose sombre and solemn images had awed barbarian energies to rest, was supplanted by the classic, more gorgeous, gay, and fair, fashioned from the temples of antiquity, and aspiring to an excellence purely æsthetic. With the erection of St. Peter's, the age of cathedrals was passed.

Luxurious Italy, as previously observed, led the way. The fourteenth century was her period of high and original invention — the age of the sombre Dante, the passionate Petrarch, and the joyous Boccaccio. The fifteenth was the age of rapturous devotion to classic antiquity, when the merchant bartered his rich freights for a few worm-eaten folios, and the gift of manuscripts healed the dissensions of rival states; an age as remarkable for the dispersion of learning as the other had been for the concentration of talent. The sixteenth was the exhilarating Augustan age of the Italian muse, when she had regained her freedom in the court of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and was pouring forth in spontaneous plenty everything brilliant, or fragrant, or nourishing; the age of the mighty Angelo — of the social Ariosto, whose stanzas were sung in the streets and fields — of the solitary Tasso,

whose *Jerusalem*, broken up into ballads and sung by the gondoliers in Venice, made the air vocal on a tranquil summer evening. It was also, as well as the preceding, an age of adolescence, when men were, and dared to be, *themselves* for good or for evil. There was no limit to the development of personality. In the midst of all the forms of loveliness was an unbridled laxity in literature and morals. 'We must enjoy,' sang Lorenzo: 'there is no certainty of to-morrow.' Fair Florence, in Carnival, rung to the thoughtless refrain of 'Naught ye know about to-morrow':

'Midas treads a wearier measure:  
All he touches turns to gold:  
If there be no taste of pleasure,  
What's the use of wealth untold? . . .

Listen well to what we're saying;  
Of to-morrow have no care!  
Young and old together playing  
Boys and girls be blithe as air!  
Every sorry thought forswear!  
Keep perpetual holiday.—  
Youths and maids, enjoy to-day;  
Naught ye know about to-morrow.'

'Some people,' said Pulci, glancing towards the dark Beyond, 'think they will there discover fig-peckers, plucked ortolans, excellent wine, good beds, and therefore they follow the monks, walking behind them. As for us, dear friend, we shall go into the black valley, where we shall hear no more alleluias.' Side by side with the infatuation for harmony and grace, flourished the passion for pleasure and voluptuousness; and the reproach even of indecency lies heavily, in all the nakedness of detail, upon most of the Italian novelists. To the poets, love furnishes the animating impulse; and amid the clouds of amorous incense we rarely discern, with a few honorable exceptions, an ennobling sentiment or a moral purpose. A mistress frowns, and the Florentine lover cries:

'Fire, fire! Ho, water! for my heart's afire!  
Ho, neighbors! help me, or by God I die!  
See, with his standard, that great lord, Desire!  
He sets my heart aflame: in vain I cry.  
Too late, alas! The flames mount high and higher.  
Alack, good friends! I faint, I fail, I die.  
Ho! water, neighbors mine! no more delay!  
My heart's a cinder if you do but stay.'

He is not elevated,—inflated only and conventional. He desires to give play to his imagination, and to please his facile fair one

with the fluency of his vows. You may see it in the levity of his love declarations:

‘Wherefore, O lady, break the ice at length;  
 Make, thou, too, trial of love’s fruits and flowers:  
 When in thine arms thou feelst thy lover’s strength,  
 Thou wilt repent of all these wasted hours:  
 Husbands, they know not love, its breadth and length,  
 Seeing their hearts are not on fire like ours:  
 Things longed for give most pleasure; this I tell thee;  
 If still thou doubttest let the proof compel thee.’

You may see it, best of all, in his fifteenth century code:

‘Honor, pure love, and perfect gentleness,  
 Weighed in the scales of equity refined,  
 Are but one thing: beauty is naught or less,  
 Placed in a dame of proud and scornful mind. . . .  
 I ask no pardon if I follow Love;  
 Since every gentle heart is thrall thereof.

Let him rebuke me whose hard heart of stone  
 Ne’er felt of Love the summer in his vein!  
 I pray to Love that who hath never known  
 Love’s power may ne’er be blessed with Love’s great gain;  
 But he who serves our lord with might and main  
*May dwell forever in the fire of Love!*

Three paganisms are thus imported from the South to contribute to the taste of the North,—Greek, Latin and Italian, the last circulating fresh sap through the other two. Between the ancient world and the modern stands the genius of Italy as interpreter. England, when most strenuous in severing her spiritual relations, cultivates most closely her intellectual. The new knowledge came like a fertilizing flood upon the ‘island of the silver sea.’ Dean Colet from his Greek studies at Florence returned with the key to unlock the New Testament, and to discover a rational and practical religion in the Gospels themselves. ‘I have given up my whole soul to Greek learning,’ says the young Erasmus, with chivalrous enthusiasm; ‘and as soon as I get any money, I shall buy Greek books, and then I shall buy some clothes.’ Formerly Italian scholars had been employed to compose the public orations, but now he could write: ‘I have found in Oxford so much polish and learning that now I hardly care about going to Italy at all, save for the sake of having been there. When I listen to my friend Colet, it seems like listening to Plato himself.’ Colet, beginning the work of educational reform, established a public school, in which the scholastic logic was displaced, the steady diffusion of the classics enjoined, and



the old methods abolished. The spirit of the founder might be seen in the image of the child Jesus over the gate, with the words graven beneath it, 'Hear ye Him.' 'Lift up your little white hands for me,' he wrote, 'which prayeth for you to God.' Vain was the cry of alarm. 'No wonder,' wrote More to the dean, 'your school raises a storm, for it is like the wooden horse in which armed Greeks were hidden for the ruin of barbarous Troy.' The example bred a crowd of imitators. More grammar schools were founded in the later years of Henry than in three hundred years before. Higher education passed from death to life. Of Cambridge, Erasmus, invited there as a teacher of Greek, says:

'Scarcely thirty years ago nothing was taught here but the *Parva Logicalia* of Alexander, antiquated exercises from Aristotle, and the *Questiones* of Scotus. As time went on better studies were added—mathematics, a new, or at any rate a renovated, Aristotle, and a knowledge of Greek literature. What has been the result? The university is now so flourishing that it can compete with the best university of the age.'

At Oxford, the fierceness of the opposition evinces the strength of the revival. The contest took the form of hostile division into Greeks and Trojans—the former the advocates of the New Learning, the latter its opponents. But even here the battle was soon over. 'The students,' said an eye-witness, 'rush to the Greek letters; they endure watching, fasting, toil, and hunger, in the pursuit of them.' The movement, however, suddenly received a temporary check. The impulse given by the reformers was primarily incidental, for to them the Greek Testament was the armory from which they drew their weapons of defence and of assault; while the immediate effects of the Reformation, both by revolutionizing the ecclesiastical system and by withdrawing academic abilities into the abyss of controversy, were depressing. Latimer calculated that the number of students at the two universities was fewer by ten thousand after the alienation of abbey and church lands had left no mercenary attractions in the sacred offices. Religion lost some of its charms when the golden prospect was gone. About the same time (1550), an observer says curiously:

'Formerly there were in houses belonging to the University of Cambridge, two hundred students of divinity, many very well learned, which be now all clean gone home; and many young toward scholars, and old fatherly doctors, not one of them left. One hundred also, of another sort, that, having rich friends, or being benefited men, did live of themselves in hotels and inns, be either gone away or else fain to

creep into colleges and put poor men from bare livings. These both be all gone, and a small number of poor, godly, diligent students, now remaining only in colleges, be not able to tarry and continue their studies for lack of exhibition and help.'

Of the poorer and more diligent students he adds the interesting picture:

'There be divers there which rise daily about four or five of the clock in the morning, and from five till six of the clock use common prayer, with an exhortation of God's word in a common chapel; and from six until ten of the clock use ever either private study or common lectures. At ten of the clock they go to dinner, whereas they be content with a penny piece of beef among four, having a few pottage made of the broth of the same beef, with salt and oatmeal, and nothing else. After this slender diet, they be either teaching or learning until five of the clock in the evening; whenas they have a supper not much better than their dinner. Immediately after which they go either to reasoning in problems, or to some other study, until it be nine or ten of the clock; and then, being without fires, are fain to walk or run up and down half an hour, to get a heat on their feet when they go to bed.'

In the adverse reign of Mary, Trinity College was endowed, more especially for the cultivation of classical scholarship. Its founder states in a letter:

'My Lord Cardinal's Grace has had the overseeing of my statutes. He much likes well that I have therein ordered the Latin tongue to be read to my scholars. But he advises me to order the Greek to be more taught there than I have provided. This purpose I well like; but I fear the times will not bear it now. I remember when I was a young scholar at Eton, the Greek tongue was growing apace; the study of which is now alate much decayed.'

The languishing culture revived towards the close of Elizabeth's reign, when the 'times' were far more propitious. Insensibly, through the shocks and convulsions of opinion, the influences of the Renaissance had been enriching the soil for the harvest. When the first fanaticisms of misguided zealots had subsided, the interest in letters recovered and spread with unwonted vigor. The tone of the universities wholly changed. Scholars like Hooker could now be found in the ranks of the priesthood—against whom it had been a common note in the official visitations, 'He knows a few Latin words, but no sentences.' The Court was distinguished for its elegance. Maids of honor were readers of Plato. The Queen could quote Pindar and Homer in the original, and read every morning a portion of Demosthenes. It was preëminently the age of learned ladies. Says Harrison:

'Truly it is a rare thing with us now to hear of a courtier which hath but his own language. And to say how many gentlewomen and ladies there are that, besides sound knowledge of the Greek and Latin tongues, are thereto no less skilful in Spanish, Italian, and French, or in some one of them, it resteth not in me.'

The abundance of printers and of printed books is evidence that the world of readers and writers had widened much beyond the

circle of courtiers and of prelates. Yet the light that shone remarkably upon the heights, was by no means generally dispersed. Many of the rank were illiterate, the majority of the middle-class were uneducated, while the lower orders were in comparative darkness. As late as Edward VI there were peers of Parliament unable to read. It is a question whether Shakespeare's father, an alderman of Stratford, could write his name. The educative theory was based upon the principle that varieties of inapplicable knowledge might be good where accessible, but were not essential. Two things were indispensable,—ability to labor and skill in arms. Every boy between seven and seventeen was required to be provided with a long-bow and two arrows; and every Englishman older, to provide himself with a bow and four arrows. It was the spirit of this law which Ascham, the schoolmaster of the period, is enforcing when he says of his own tutor:

'This worshipful man hath ever loved, and used to have many children brought up in learning in his house, amonges whom I myself was one, for whom at term times he would bring down from London both bow and shafts. And when they should play he would go with them himself into the field, see them shoot, and he that shot the fairest should have the best bow and shafts, and he that shot ill-favoredly should be mocked of his fellows till he shot better. Would to God all England had used or would use to lay the foundation of youth after the example of this worshipful man in bringing up children in the Book and the Bow; by which two things the whole commonwealth both in peace and war is chiefly valid and defended withal.'

Latimer, preaching before the king in 1549, draws the portrait of a yeoman:

'In my time my poor father was as diligent to teach me to shoot as to learn me any other thing; and so, I think, other men did their children. He taught me how to draw, how to lay my body in my bow, and not to draw with strength of arms, as other nations do, but with strength of the body. I had my bows bought me according to my age and strength; as I increased in them, so my bows were made bigger and bigger; for men shall never shoot well except they be brought up in it. It is a goodly art, a wholesome kind of exercise, and much commended in physic.'

But what is more to our present purpose is, that the true significance of the Renaissance consists, not in any accidental emigration of Greek scholars and importation of ancient manuscripts from Constantinople, nor chiefly in the passion for classical lore, but in that general ferment which produced, on the whole, marked effects upon all classes,—in that new life by which every province of human intelligence and action was refreshed. A far higher development, indeed, than the Greek or Latin mania, sprang from the nearer and more seductive paganism of Italy,

partly through travel, partly through her poetry and romance. A land of tropical gardens and splendid skies, of public pageants and secret tragedies, of brilliant fancies and gorgeous contrasts, she fascinated the Northern imagination with a strange wild glamour. 'An Italianate Englishman,' ran the Italian proverb, 'is an incarnate devil.' Our ancestral youth who repair to her for polish and inspiration or in quest of fanciful adventure, are warned of her alluring charms:

'And being now in Italy, that great limbique of working braines, he must be very circumspect in his carriage, for she is able to turne a Saint into a devil, and deprave the best natures, if one will abandon himselfe, and become a prey to dissolute courses and wantonnesse.'

Ascham writes with the alarm and severity of a rigorist:

'These bee the enchantementes of Circes, brought out of Italie to marre mens maners in England; much, by example of ill life, but more by preceptes of fonde bookes, of late translated out of Italian into English, sold in every shop in London. . . . There bee moe of these ungrations bookes set out in Printe wythin these fewe monethes, than have been sene in England many score yeares before. . . . Than they have in more reverence the triumphes of Petrarche: than the Genesis of Moses: They make more account of Tullies offices, than S. Paules epistles: of a tale in Bocace than a storie of the Bible.'

If the breath of the South was tainted, it was spirit-stirring; and the healthier constitution which inhaled it, purged off much of its mischief, while it assimilated the beneficial. The contemplative vein of the Briton was quickened by the brilliancy of the Italian. That which in the first became a superb corporeality, became in the second a vehement and unconventional spirituality. The debt of English to Italian literature consists,—in material of production—the impulse towards creation—a keener sense of the tragic—a livelier sense of the beautiful—a more copious diction—and a more finished style.

**Language.**—Of the monstrous anomalies of the current or colloquial speech, the following note from the Duchess of Norfolk to Cromwell is a curious instance:

'My ffary gode lord—her I sand you in tokyn hoff the neweyer a glasse hoff Setyl set in Sellfer gyld I pra you tak hit (in) wort An hy wer habel het showlde be bater I woll hit war wort a m crone.'

So unsettled was our orthography still, that writers, each in his peculiar mode of spelling, did not write the same words uniformly. Elizabeth, the royal mistress of eight languages, wrote *sovereign* seven different ways, while the name of *Villers*, in the

deeds of that family, has fourteen different forms. *Shakespeare* is found in the manuscripts of the period spelled in any manner that may express the sound or the semblance of it. Many of the learned engaged in the ambitious reform of teaching the nation how to spell and pronounce. But the pronunciation was so discordant in different shires, that the orthoepists are quite irreconcilable with each other or with themselves. Some may amuse. One would turn the language into a music-book. He says:

‘In true orthographie, both the *eye*, the *voice*, and the *ear* must consent perfectly, without any let, doubt, or maze.’

Another affords a quaint definition of *orthoepy* combined with *orthography*:

‘Orthographie, conteyning the due order and reason howe to write or painte thimage of manne’s voice, moste like to the life or nature.’

While Shakespeare sarcastically describes the whole race of philologists: ‘Now he is turned *orthographer*, his words are a very fantastical banquet; just so many strange dishes.’ The English Bible had been the strong breakwater against the tides of novelty and the vicissitudes of time; and Tyndale’s New Testament, executed in the traditional sacred dialect of Wycliffe, did more to fashion and fix our tongue than any other native work from Chaucer to Shakespeare. The Lord’s Prayer illustrates well its force and purity of expression:

‘Our Father, which arte in heven, halowed be thy name. Let thy kingdom come. Thy wyll be fulfilled, as well in erth as hit ys in heven. Geve vs this daye oure dayly breade, and forgeve vs oure treaspases, even as we forgeve them, which treaspas vs. Leede vs not into temptacion, but delyvre vs from yvell. Amen.’

In 1575, standard English had so progressed in simplicity and power, that Sidney could say, to his honor:

‘English is void of those cumbersome differences of cases, genders, moods, and tenses, which I think was a piece of the Tower of Babylon’s curse, that a man should be put to schoole to learn his mother tongue; but for the uttering sweetly and properly the conceit of the minde, which is the ende of speech, that it hath equally with any other tongue in the world.’

Travel and commerce, enlarging with the rapid progress of geographical discovery, made numerous and important accessions to the vocabulary. New wares were introduced, new stores of natural knowledge flowed in from regions hitherto unknown. For a single instance of the many terms which thus rose above the horizon, seldom more grateful if less material, *potato*<sup>1</sup> now

<sup>1</sup> From the Indian *batata*.



made its first appearance in Europe, imported from America. Of this esculent tuber, a voyager makes the following mention:

‘*Openark* are a kinde of roots of round forme, some farre greater, which are found in moist and marish grounds, growing many together, one by another in ropes, as though they were fastened by a string. Being boiled or sodden, they are very good meat.’

A more prolific origin of new words than the taste for sea roving was the intense thirst after religious discussion. The Reformation enriched our theological dialect by the translation of many moral and religious works from the Latin; and the very general study of theology rendered this dialect more familiar than that of any other branch of letters. Latin, moreover, was the great link between our Reformers and those of the Continent, and the new ideas taking root, brought in shoals of new terms. Finally, the versions of classical authors, after the brief reaction against classical learning, were an inexhaustible mine of linguistic wealth; and the ‘far-journeyed gentlemen’ returned not only in love with foreign fashions, but equally fond ‘to powder their talk with over-sea language.’ The influx of foreign neologisms alarmed the purists, who always deem that English corrupt which recedes from its Saxon character. Says Wilson in 1550:

‘Some seke so farre for outlandishe Englishe, that thei forgette altogether their mothers’ language, . . . He that commeth lately out of France, will talke Frenche-Englishe, and never blush at the matter. The unlearned or foolishe phantastical that the simple cannot but wonder at their talke and thinke surely thei speake by some revelacion. I know them that thinke Rhetorique to stand whollie upon darke woordes, and he that can catche an ynke horne terme by the taile, hym thei coumpt to be a fine Englishman and a good Rhetorician.’

Notwithstanding, in 1583 Mulcaster wrote: ‘The English tung cannot prove fairer than it is at this day.’ Querulous critic and rash soothsayer! The one did not reflect that an expansion of thought compels an expansion of its garniture, and could not know that even Chaucer’s ‘well of English undefiled’ was a well in which were deposited many waters; while the other could not foresee the luxuriant productiveness, the powerful stimulus, of the next thirty years. A single example may suggest something of that variety and affluence by which the speech, once so rude and impotent, was being made ready for the enlarged and diversified conceptions of the great masters: *wrath* and *ire*<sup>1</sup> came over with Hengist; the Danes brought *anger*; the French supplied

<sup>1</sup> From Saxon *yrre*.

*rage* and *fury*; the Latin *indignation*; the Greek *choler*; and we now, it may be added, confer this sense on *passion*. As a final illustration of the state of English orthography in its process of evolution, we extract the following from the address of Brutus to the people in the drama of *Julius Cæsar*, written in or before 1601, and printed in 1623:

'I have done no more to *Cæsar* than you shall do to *Brutus*. The Question of his death, is inroll'd in the Capitol: his Glory not extenuated, wherein he was worthy; nor his offences enforc'd, for which he suffered death.

Heere comes his Body, mourned by *Marke Antony*, who though he had no hand in his death, shall receive the benefit of his dying, a place in the Commonwealth, as which of you shall not. With this I depart, that as I slewe my best Louer for the good of Rome, I haue the same Dagger for my selfe, when it shall please my Country to need my death.

*All.* Live *Brutus*, live, live.

1. Bring him with Triumph home vnto his house.
2. Giue him a Statue with his Ancestors.
3. Let him be *Cæsar*.
4. *Cæsars* better parts

Shall be Crown'd in *Brutus*.

1. Wee'l bring him to his House, with Showts and Clamors.

*Bru.* My Country-men.

2. Peace, silence, *Brutus* speakes
1. Peace ho.

*Bru.* Good Countrymen, let me depart alone,

And (for my sake) stay heere with *Antony*:

Do grace to *Cæsars* Corps, and grace his Speech

Tending to *Cæsars* Glories, which *Marke Antony*

(By our permission) is allow'd to make.

I do intreat you not a man depart,

Saue I alone, till *Antony* have spoke.'

Here our survey is approximately complete. We have arrived at the stage where new capabilities are no longer imperiously demanded by the advancement of culture. The nursling has become a child, the child a man,—still, with proper training, to acquire additional flexibility and strength, yet to remain substantially the same. The closing century that witnessed the vast and varied revelation of man's moral nature, witnessed also the end of that organic action by which the English language was developed from its elements and constitutionally fixed, unfettered and many-voiced. Your daughter, O Thor and Odin, has indeed lost the likeness of her mother, but,—

'Not from one metal alone the perfectest mirror is shapen,  
Not from one color is built the rainbow's aerial bridge;  
Instruments blending together yield the divinest of music,  
Out of myriad of flowers sweetest of honey is drawn.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> W. W. Story.

**Poetry.**—Do but consider the life of man, that we are as a shadow and our days as a post, then think whether it were good to disinter the lifeless versifiers who fill up the spaces around and between the noticeable elevations of this age, with scarce a soul to a hundred, and of interest to poetical antiquarians only. Chaucer, it has been seen, left nothing to resemble him. Gower is a feeble spring, obstructed by scholastic rubbish. Occleve and Lydgate are as dead sea-moss on a barren shore. The Scotch poets, with more energy, are yet nebulae, which no telescope could resolve into individual stars. Where they mean to be serious, they are tedious; and where lofty, pedantic. Their compositions, with scattering remembrances of beauty or occasional throbs of true vitality, have the same vices of unreality and allegory which were the fashion of the day. Verse that makes us foreigners is no poetry.

One writer alone, in its early years, displays, like a feudal premonition, the two great destined features of the sixteenth century,—hatred of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, which is the Reformation; and the realism of the senses, which is the Renaissance. His rhyme,—

‘Tattered and jagged,  
Rudely rain-beaten,  
Rusty, moth-eaten,’

full of English and popular instincts, is a sort of literary mud with which he bespatters those who retain the privileges of saints:

<p>‘Thus I, Colin Clout, As I go about, And wondering as I walk, I hear the people talk: Men say for silver and gold Mitres are bought and sold: A straw for Goddys curse, What are they the worse? What care the clergy though Gill sweat, Or Jack of the Noke? The poor people they yoke With sumners and citations, And excommunications. About churches and markets The bishop on his carpets At home soft doth sit. This is a fearful fit. To hear the people jangle.</p>	<p>How wearily they wrangle! Doctor Daupatus And Bachelor Bacheleratus, Drunken as a mouse At the ale-house, Taket hys pillion and hys cap At the good ale-tap For lack of good wine. As wise as Robin Swine, Under a notary’s sign, Was made a divine; As wise as Waltham’s calf, Must preach in Goddys half; In the pulpit solemnly; More meet in a pillory; For by St. Hilary He can nothing smatter Of logic nor school matter.’</p>
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With almost brutal coarseness alternate gleams of the sprightly fancy. Called upon to praise the ladies of the court, he can give a portrait of the outside, clear, pretty, and full of detail. He compares one to —

'The fragrant camomile,  
The ruddy rosary,  
The sovereign rosemary

The pretty strawberry,  
The columbine, the nepte,  
The gillyflower well set,  
The proper violet.'

And adds:

'Your color  
Is like the daisy flower  
After an April shower,

Star of the morrow grey,  
The blossom of the spring,  
The freshest flower of May.'

By his hilarity and freedom only, does **Skelton** exhibit the new spirit. Rooted in the soil, he grovels there, with no aspiring instinct towards diviner air.

A brighter light in this rising dawn gives clearer promise of refulgent day. For **Howard**, Earl of Surrey, it was reserved to mark a transformation of the intellect, — to introduce a new and manly style, and to teach the English muse accents she had never tried before. Says Puttenham:

'In the latter end of the same king (Henry the eight) reigne, sprong up a new company of courtly makers, of whom Sir Thomas Wyat th' elder and Henry Earle of Surrey were the two chieftaines, who having travailed into Italie, and there tasted the sweete and stately measures and stile of the Italian Poesie, as novices newly crept out of the schooles of Dante, Arioste, and Petrarch, they greatly polished our rude and homely maner of vulgar Poesie, from that it had bene before, and for that cause may justly be sayd the first reformers of our English meetre and stile.'

The life of Surrey was a chivalric romance. An earl, a relative of the king, a satellite of the Court, brilliant in arms, magnificent, sumptuous, ambitious, four times imprisoned, then beheaded at twenty-seven; like Dante and Petrarch, a plaintive and platonic lover. More than all, his mystical love for the fair Geraldine, like Dante's for Beatrice and Petrarch's for Laura, invests his memory with a peculiar charm. She too is a child, seen only to be idealized; one of nature's sweet creatures that, like chastened colors, have always a holy reference beyond themselves; whose image, entering the poet-soul, is straightway enthroned in a region sublime, to shine as a light, a consolation, a hope, in a dark and troubled world. With the polish and disposition of his Italian model, he says of this being of the heart and mind:

'I could rehearse, if that I would,  
The whole effect of Nature's plaint,  
When she had lost the perfect mould,  
The like to whom she could not paint:  
With wringing hands, how she did cry,  
And what she said, I know it, I.

I know she swore with raging mind,  
Her kingdom only set apart,  
There was no loss by law of kind  
That could have gone so near her heart;  
And this was chiefly all her pain;  
She could not make the like again.'

The sad and sombre tint, seldom lacking in this race, is here, even in youth. Alone, a prisoner in Windsor, banishing the less by remembrance of a greater grief, he recalls with pathetic modulation, the joys and faces of the vanished days:

'With each sweet place returns a taste full sour,  
The large green courts, where we were wont to hove, . . . [*hover*  
With eyes cast up into the maiden's tower,  
And easy sighs such as folk draw in love,  
The stately seats, the ladies bright of hue,  
The dances short, long tales of great delight;  
With words and looks, that tigers could but rue;  
When each of us did plead the other's right, . . .

The secret groves, which oft me made resound  
Of pleasant plaint, and of our ladies' praise;  
Recording oft what grace each one had found,  
What hope of speed, what dread of long delays, . . .  
The secret thoughts imparted with such trust;  
The wanton talk, the divers change of play;  
The friendship sworn, each promise kept so just,  
Wherewith we passed the winter night away.  
And with this thought the blood forsakes the face;  
The tears berain my cheeks of deadly hue:  
The which, as soon as sobbing sighs, alas!  
Upsnipped have, thus I my plaint renew:  
"O place of bliss, renewer of my woes!  
Give me account, where is my noble fere, [*companion*  
Whom in thy walls thou dost each night enclose,  
To other lief, but unto me most dear." [*dear*  
Echo, alas! that doth my sorrow rue  
Returns thereat a hollow sound of plaint.'

Observe the new-born art. It is calculating and selective, contrasted and ornamented, eloquent and forceful; critical, exact, musical, and balanced; uniting symmetry of phrase to symmetry of idea, and delight of the ear to delight of the mind.

But the chief point in which the pupil imitates his master is in the use of the sonnet. This 'diamond of literature,' as practiced by Petrarch, is composed of fourteen lines, divided



into two quatrains and two tercets, the quatrains repeating one pair of rhymes and the tercets another. Thus:

‘The wrinkled sire with hair like winter snow  
 Leaves the beloved spot where he hath passed his years,  
 Leaves wife and children, dumb with bitter tears,  
 To see their father’s tottering steps and slow,  
 Dragging his aged limbs with weary woe,  
 In these last days of life he nothing fears,  
 But with stout heart his fainting spirit cheers,  
 And spent and wayworn forward still doth goe;  
 Then comes to Rome, following his heart’s desire,  
 To gaze upon the portraiture of Him  
 Whom yet he hopes in heaven above to see:  
 Thus I, alas! my seeking spirit tire,  
 Lady, to find in other features dim  
 The longed for, loved, true lineaments of thee.’

Surrey does not adhere to the strict Italian rule, and his most famous performance consists of three regular quatrains concluded with a couplet. Thus:

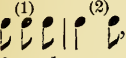
‘The soote season, that bud and blome forth brings, [sweet  
 With grene hath clad the hill, and eke the vale:  
 The nightingale with fethers new she sings:  
 The turtle to her mate hath told her tale:  
 Somer is come, for every spray now springs:  
 The hart hath hong his old hed on the pale;  
 The buck in brake his winter coate he flings:  
 The fishes flete with new repaired scale: [swim  
 The adder all her slough away she flings;  
 The swift swallow pursueth the flies smale;  
 The busy bee her hony now she mings: [mingles  
 Winter is worne, that was the flowers bale.  
 And thus I se among these pleasant things  
 Eche care decayes; and yet my sorrow springs.’


Besides the sonnet, Surrey borrows for English versification that decasyllable iambic rhythm—*blank verse*—in which our greatest poetical triumphs have been achieved. Almost verse for verse he translates parts of the *Æneid* into unrhymed pentameter. Thus, of the introduction of the wooden horse into Troy:

‘We cleft the walles, and closures of the towne,  
 Wherto all helpe, and underset the feht  
 With sliding rolles, and bound his neck with ropes.  
 This fatall gin thus overclambe our walles,  
 Stuft with armd men: about the which there ran  
 Children and maides, that holly carolles sang. . . .  
 Fowr times it stopt in theetrie of our gate,  
 Fowr times the harnesse clattered in the womb.’






Surely no ignoble effort to break the bondage of rhyme. Let it not be forgotten, however:—

1. That English verse was mainly blank for the first five hundred years of its existence.

2. That the typic scheme of our old 'heroic measure' was  $\frac{3}{8}$   in which (1) alternated with (2) in lines of two or four bars.

3. That the modern 'heroic' differs from the ancient in having for its prevalent bar  $\frac{3}{8}$  , with five bars to the line.

4. That Surrey merely disused rhyme in a rhythm which was established by Chaucer a hundred and fifty years gone by; as:

											
Whan	that	A-	prill	-	e	with	his	shour	-	es	swoot-e
											
The	droghte	of	March	hath	perc	-	ed	to	the	root-e	

Farther on, thirty years distant, beyond this budding spring which was nipped untimely, is the phenomenal **Sidney**, whose writings will exhibit the luxuriance and the irregularity of the prevailing manners and the public taste. Higher up, in that empyrean where the moral and sensuous are united, is the platonie **Spenser**, at once a pagan and a Christian, who will gather and arrange, with inimitable art, the loveliest flowers of both civilizations. About this exceptional bloom is an abundance of verse, beyond the drama, most of which is a dismal travesty upon the name of poetry. Undoubtedly, these poetasters, badly as they wrote, did not write in vain. By their very failures they helped to develop the powers of the language, and by patient labor on its sterile spots enriched the soil for such as should be born into the inheritance of 'fresh fields and pastures new.' It would be pleasant to be grateful to them for their poems,—verbose, generally stale, dull to the verge of stupidity. The titles set one yawning; as, *Five hundred Points of good Husbandry; A Dialogue containyng in effect the number of al the Proverbs in the English tongue, compact in a matter concerning two marriages; The whole Books of Psalmes collected into English metre by T. Sternhold, T. Hopkins, and others, conferred with the Ebrue, with apt Notes to sing them withall.* You will meet now and then, we dare say, with a brilliant picture, or a genuine

love-cry, or a profound truth, as in the two noble stanzas of Sternhold:

‘The Lord descended from above  
And bowed the heavens high,  
And underneath his feet he cast  
The darkness of the sky;  
  
On cherubs and on cherubims  
Full royally he rode,  
And on the wings of all the winds  
Came flying all abroad.’

Or the elaborate sonnet of the amiable Daniel to the object of his baffled affection:

‘Restore thy tresses to the golden ore;  
Yield Cytherea’s son those arcs of love;  
Bequeath the heavens the stars that I adore;  
And to the orient do thy pearls remove.  
Yield thy hand’s pride unto the ivory white;  
To Arabian odors give thy breathing sweet;  
Restore thy blush unto Aurora bright;  
To Thetis give the honor of thy feet.  
Let Venus have thy graces, her resigned;  
And thy sweet voice give back unto the spheres;  
But yet restore thy fierce and cruel mind  
To Hyrcan tigers and to ruthless bears;  
Yield to the marble thy hard heart again;  
So shalt thou cease to plague and I to pain.’

The grand dictum of Stoicism:

‘He that of such a height hath set his mind,  
And reared the dwelling of the thoughts so strong,  
As neither fear nor hope can shake the frame  
Of his resolved powers: nor all the wind  
Of vanity or malice pierce to wrong  
His settled peace, or to disturb the same;  
What a fair seat hath he from whence he may  
The boundless wastes and weals of man survey!’

And the famous sentiment:

*‘Unless above himself he can  
Erect himself, how poor a thing is man!’*

Or Drayton’s graceful compliment to Isabella’s hand:

‘She laid her fingers on his manly cheek,  
The god’s pure sceptres and the darts of love,  
That with their touch might make a tiger meek,  
Or might great Atlas from his seat remove,  
So white, so soft, so delicate, so sleek  
As she had worn a lily for a glove.’

And his description of the virgin morning of the infant year, when brooks sing carols and glees, and birds in silvery warblings tell their panting joy:

‘When Phœbus lifts his head out of the water’s wave,  
 No sooner doth the earth her flowery bosom brave,  
 At such time as the year brings on the pleasant spring,  
 But Hunt’s up to the morn the feathered sylvans sing;  
 And, in the lower grove as on the rising knowl,  
 Upon the highest spray of every mounting pole  
 These quiristers are perched, with many a speckled breast.  
 Then from her burnished gate the goodly glittering East  
 Gilds every mountain top, which late the humorous night  
 Bespangled had with pearl, to please the morning’s sight;  
 On which the mirthful quires, with their clear open throats,  
 Unto the joyful morn so strain their warbling notes  
 That hill and valleys ring, and even the echoing air  
 Seems all composed of sounds about them every where.’

But we shall no longer pause, if we know our opulence, and have learned to distinguish diamond from flint-sand, or gold from iron-glace; for be it clearly and constantly remembered, worthy art, that makes of all men a commonwealth, that is always new and incapable of growing old, must have that intensity of moral feeling or power of imagination by which noble emotions are excited, —Veneration, Love, Admiration, Joy, or their opposites—Hatred, Scorn, Horror, Grief. There were simple ballad-writers who could have given these scholars a lesson in rhetoric. For hear a lover deceived and repentant ‘of the true love which he bare her’:

‘Where I sought heaven there found I hap;  
 From danger unto death,  
 Much like the mouse that treads the trap  
 In hope to find her food,  
 And bites the bread that stops her breath,—  
 So in like case I stood.’

And another, ‘accusing his love for her unfaithfulness,’ and proposing ‘to live in liberty’:

‘But I am like the beaten fowl  
 That from the net escaped,  
 And thou art like the ravening owl  
 That all the night hath waked.’

Shall we make an old lava stream white-hot by covering it with hoar-frost? With these futile efforts to kindle one’s self with a painted flame, compare the wild vigor and fierce sincerity of the Scotch *Twa Corbies*:

‘As I was walking all alone  
 I heard twa corbies making a moan.  
 The one unto the other did say  
 Where shall we gang dine to-day?  
 In beyond that old turf dyke  
 I wot there lies a new-slain knight;

And naebody kens that he lies there  
 But his hawk and his hound and his lady fair.  
 His hound is to the hunting gone,  
 His hawk to fetch the wild fowl home,  
 His lady has ta'n another mate,  
 So we may make our dinner sweet.  
 O'er his white bones as they lie bare  
 The wind shall blow forevermair.'

But the chief excellence of poetry, as well as its most abundant and popular development, was dramatic. The most original product and expression of the English Renaissance is the drama. No form of art receives and preserves, like it, the exact imprint of the age and of the nation. None expresses so much, and that so deeply. None has expanded, in all its details, by gradations more insensible. None teaches more clearly that genius can not dispense with experience,—that the favored generation, and the great artists in it, flourish largely on a soil fertilized by the tentative efforts of generations which precede. Here, as in Greece and elsewhere, the drama began in religion. At a time when sermons were not intelligible if preached, and when none but the clergy could read the stories of the Christian faith, it was introduced by the Church, to instruct the illiterate in saintly or Scriptural history—the only history then known—and to extend her influence by engrossing the sources of popular recreation. Priests were the writers or inventors, and frequently the actors, of the plays, usually written in mixed prose and verse. As mysterious subjects were chosen—the lives and marvels of the saints, the Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Creation, Fall, or Conquests of Hell—these performances acquired the general name of *Mysteries*. The 'theatre' was the cathedral, a scaffold in the open air, or a movable stage on wheels, drawn from street to street, or from town to town. As the cart stopped at given points, the actors threw open the doors, and proceeded to perform the scenes allotted them. A graduated platform in three divisions, represented Heaven, Earth, and Hell. Above, the Deity and His angels, passive when not actually mingling in the action; in the centre moved the human world, the actors standing motionless at one side when they had nothing to say or do; and the yawning throat of an immeasurable dragon, emitting smoke and flames when required, showed the entrance to the bottomless pit, into which, through the expanded jaws, the



damned were dragged with shrieks of agony by demons. Trap-doors and like mechanical contrivances were not unknown. Closed structures were palaces, cottages, temples, according to the necessities of the piece, their destination being occasionally shown by written placards. A superb paradise was the glory of the manager. Silk hangings, flowers, and fruit-bearing trees adorned this favored spot. The costumes were as rich and imposing as the vestry or the purse could compass. Horned devils in skins of beasts, with tails and cloven hoofs, formed an exception to the usual inaccuracy of theatrical attire. These were the buffoons; and the poor yokels who shed tears at the torturous crucifixion, or were appalled at the flaming wings of the infernal monster, would listen with shouts of laughter to the reciprocal abuse voided by Satan and his minions, whose very names in solitude would have paralyzed them. The customary encomium was, 'To-day the mystery was very fine and devout, and the devils played most pleasantly.' The people were in the childhood of society, satisfied that they were good Christians, and so were innocently insensible to the blasphemy or indecency of their exhibitions. It accorded with the debased ideas of the times to make such entries as: 'paid for a pair of gloves for God;' 'paid for gilding God's coat;' 'dyvers necessaries for the trimmyng of the Father of Heaven;' 'payed to the players for rehearsal—to God, iis. viii*d.*; to Pilate his wife, iis.; for keeping fyer at hell's mouth, iii*d.*' The coarse humor which kept the audience awake, was not without a certain power of characterization. Thus Noah and his wife, in the *Deluge*, are close copies of contemporary life. Mrs. Noah, a shrew and a vixen, refuses to leave her gossips, swears she will not go into the Ark; scolds Noah, and is flogged; then wishes herself a widow, hopes all wives the same good luck, and thinks she but echoes their feelings in doing so; while Noah takes occasion to inform all husbands that their proper course is to break their wives after his fashion—with a stick not thicker than the thumb. At this point, the water is nearly up to her neck, and she is partly coaxed, partly forced, into the Ark by one of her sons.

A change of intellectual condition is marked by the decadence of the Mysteries after the fourteenth century. In the fifteenth, a new class of dramatic performances arose, in which

the personages were not concrete beings, but their shadowy reflections, the virtues and vices,—Pride, Gluttony, Temperance, Faith, and the like. To relieve their gravity, under which the audience were liable to yawn and sleep, the Devil was retained, and a more natural buffoon was introduced in the Vice, who acted the part of broad, rampant jester. These two were the darlings of the multitude. Full of pranks and swaggering fun, a part of Vice's ordinary business was to treat the Devil with ribald familiarity, to crack saucy jokes upon him, to bestride him and beat him till he roared, and in the end to be carried off to Hell on his back. Characteristic examples are *The Castle of Perseverance* and *Every Man*. The latter is opened in a monologue by the Messenger, who announces the subject. Then God appears, who, after some general complaints on the moral depravity of the human race, calls for Death, and orders him to bring before His tribunal Every-Man. Neither Fellowship nor Kindred nor Goods nor Riches will or can avail. Successively implored, they successively forsake the suppliant. Utterly disconsolate, Every-Man seeks Good-Deeds, and she, after upbraiding him with his long neglect of her, conducts him to her sister Knowledge, who in turn leads him to the 'holy man Confession.' Confession appoints him penance, which he inflicts upon himself, and then withdraws from the stage to receive the sacraments of the priest. On his return he waxes faint; and, as Strength, Beauty, Discretion and Five-Wits desert him, he expires, abandoned by all but Good-Deeds, who attends him to the last. An angel then descends to sing his requiem; and the epilogue is spoken by a Doctor, who, after recapitulation, delivers the moral:

'This memoriall men may have in mynde,  
Ye herers, take, if of worth old and yonge,  
And forsake Pryde, for he deceyveth you in thende,  
And remembre Beaute, Five Witts, Strength and Discretion,  
They all at last do Every Man forsake;  
Save his Good Deeds there dothe he take;  
But beware, for and they be small,  
Before God he hath no help at all.'

This drama came from the Romanists to recall the auditors back to the shaken creed of their fathers. As the earlier plays were professedly religious or theological, so the later were semi-religious or ethical, and hence were styled *Moralities*.

A further secularization of the drama occurred when, taking a more adventurous course, it accommodated itself to the fashions and factions of the day, not yet venturing into a wide field, but peeping, as it were, from a corner. It was nothing more than a farce in a single act, satirical and comic, sustained in dialogue by three or four professional characters of the times, and acted in the intervals of a banquet. From this last circumstance, it was called the *Interlude*. Thus Douglas, the Scotch bard:

‘Grete was the preis the feast royal to sene;  
At ease they eat, with *interludes* between.’

**Heywood**, jester of Henry VIII, was their most noted author. His *Four P's* is a curious illustration of the wit, manners, and opinions of the period. It turns upon a dispute between a Palmer, a Pardoner, a Poticary, and a Pedlar, as to who can practice the greatest frauds on credulity and ignorance. The contest ends in a wager who shall tell the greatest lie, when the Palmer says he never saw a woman out of temper. Thereupon the others declare him ‘a liar of the first magnitude.’ Heywood’s zeal for the Roman Catholic cause does not seem to have prevented him from lashing with the utmost freedom and severity the abuses of popery. The Pardoner says:

‘I say yet again, my pardons are such,  
That if there were a thousand souls on a heap,  
I would bring them all to heaven as good sheep, . . .  
With small cost 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.’

Like a regular graduate in the game of imposture, he recounts the virtues of his relics, to which he and the rest hood-wink their understandings:

‘Lo, here be pardons, half a dozen,  
For ghostly riches they have no cousin,  
And moreover, to me they bring  
Sufficient succour for my living. . . .  
Friends, here shall ye see, even anon,  
Of All-Hallows, the blessed jaw-bone.  
Mark well this, this relic here is a whipper;  
My friends unfeigned, here’s a slipper  
Of one of the seven sleepers, be sure.  
Here is an eye-tooth of the great Turk;  
Whose eyes be once set on this piece of work,

May happily lose part of his eye-sight,  
But not all till he be blind outright.  
Kiss it hardly, with good devotion.

*Pot.* This kiss shall bring us much promotion:  
Fogh! by St. Saviour, I never kissed a worse. . . .  
For, by All-Hallows, yet methinketh  
That All-Hallows' breath stinketh.

*Palm.* Ye judge All-Hallows' breath unknown;  
If any breath stink, it is your own.

*Pot.* I know my own breath from All-Hallows,  
Or else it were time to kiss the gallows.

*Pard.* Nay, sirs here may ye see  
The great toe of the Trinity:  
Who to this toe any money voweth,  
And once may roll it in his mouth,  
All his life after I undertake  
He shall never be vex'd with the tooth-ache.

*Pot.* I pray you turn that relic about;  
Either the Trinity had the gout,  
Or else, because it is three toes in one,  
God made it as much as three toes alone. . . .

*Pard.* Good friends, I have yet here in this glass,  
Which on the drink at the wedding was  
Of Adam and Eve undoubtedly:  
If ye honour this relic devoutly,  
Although ye thirst no whit the less,  
Yet shall ye drink the more, doubtless.  
After which drinking, ye shall be as meet  
To stand on your head as on your feet.'

The stage was becoming a living power. Mary hastened a proclamation against the interludes of the reformers, while Elizabeth, on her accession, as suddenly suppressed those of the papists.

Such were the steps by which the national genius was conducted to the verge of tragedy and comedy. As the Morality had superseded the Mystery, and the Interlude that, the older retaining its hold till the younger gained strength to assert its rights; so now, in the march of intellect, they were all to give way before the drama proper, which portrays the character and actions of man, to the exclusion or subordination of the supernatural. The first play which bears the distinctive marks of a legitimate *Comedy*, is commonly considered to be *Ralph Roister Doister*, by **Nicholas Udall** (1551). The plot, without involution, progresses through five acts in rhyme more racy than elegant. Ralph is a vain, blustering, amorous hair-brain :

'So fervent hot wooing, and so far from wiving,  
I trow, never was any creature living.'

His baffled pursuit of a gay and rich widow forms the action of the piece. A group of domestics, that might have formed a

study for Shakespeare in his happiest vein, opens up the domestic scenery of the metropolis, warm with reality. Its scholastic authorship, as well as its merry-making, is shown in a proposal of marriage sent by the conceited fop to the widow, which is read to her with its sense reversed by changing the true punctuation:

‘Now by these presents I do you advertise  
That I am minded to marry you in no wise.  
For your goods and substance I could be content  
To take you as ye are. If ye mind to be my wife,  
Ye shall be assured for the time of my life  
I will keep ye right well from good raiment and fare;  
Ye shall not be kept but in sorrow and care.  
Ye shall in no wise live at your own liberty;  
But when ye are merry, I will be all sad;  
When ye seek your heart's ease I will be unkind;  
At no time in me shall ye much gentleness find.’

The tragic muse was not far behind. The first English heroic tale divided into acts and scenes, and clothed in the formalities of a regular *Tragedy*, was *Gorboduc*, by **Thomas Sackville** (1562). *Gorboduc*, king of Britain about five hundred years before Christ, divides his kingdom between his two sons, Ferrex and Porrex. A quarrel between the princes results in civil war, and Ferrex is slain by his brother. The mother revenges his death by murdering Porrex in his sleep. The people, exasperated at the unnatural deed, rise in rebellion, and kill both her and the king. The nobility collect an army and destroy the rebels, but immediately fall to destroying one another. The lineal succession to the Crown is lost; and the country, without a head, is wasted by slaughter and famine. Like *Roister Doister*, *Gorboduc* is cast in the mould of classical antiquity; but instead of individual nature and real passion, it deals only in vague and labored declamations which never entered any head but the author's. Nothing is intricate, nothing unravelled, and little pathetic. It has the form of dialogue without the spirit. Singularly frigid and unimaginative, it is not without justness, weight, and fertility of thought. Its diction is transparent. It is celebrated, moreover, as being our first tragedy in blank verse. But the measure, though the embryo of Shakespeare's, conveys no notion of that elasticity and variety which it was destined shortly to attain. The following are the most animated lines in the whole play:



'O mother, thou to murder thus thy child!  
 Even Jove with justice must with lightning flames  
 From heaven send down some strange revenge on thee.  
 Ah, noble prince, how oft have I beheld  
 Thee mounted on thy fierce and trampling steed,  
 Shining in armor bright before the tilt,  
 And with thy mistress' sleeve tied on thy helm,  
 And charge thy staff—to please thy lady's eye—  
 That bowed the headpiece of thy friendly foe!'

In these exact lines, stealing on with care but with fear, we fail to discover the potent spirit who planned the *Mirror for Magistrates*,<sup>1</sup> and, resigning that noble scheme to inferior hands, left as its model the *Induction*. Tragical, like *Gorboduc*, in idea and plot, it has the vigor of creative imagination. It is the congenial offspring of a gloomy genius in a night of storm, which may be thought to receive a ghastly complexion from the lurid flames that wrap the victims of persecution. Amid the shadows of the darkening day, across the faded fields swept by the wintry wind, the poet, as he pursues his lonely way, marks the gray grass, the blasted flowers, the bare boughs, the wan clouds, and sees in them the type of the state of man; but suddenly as he redoubles his pace,—

'In black all clad there fell before my face  
 A piteous wight. . . .  
 Her body small, forwithered and forspent,  
 As is the stalk with summer's drouth opprest;  
 Her weaked face with woful tears besprent,  
 Her colour pale, and as it seemd her best,  
 In woe and plaint reposed was her rest;  
 And, as the stone that drops of water wears,  
 So dented were her cheeks with fall of tears.'

Sorrow guides him into the region of death, there to hear from the dead the stories of their woes. Here, among other dreadful and hideous shapes, is Old Age:

'Crooked-backed he was, tooth-shaken, and blear-eyed,  
 Went on three feet, and sometime crept on four;  
 With old lame bones, that rattled by his side;  
 His scalp all piled, and he with eld forelore;  
 His withered fist still knocking at death's door;  
 Fumbling and drivelling as he draws his breath;  
 For brief, the shape and messenger of Death.'

[bold

It is the recurrence of the deep poetic instinct, the feeling of misery and mortality, the sad sense of limitless darkness, the sombre conception of the world, which this race has manifested from its origin, which it will preserve to its end.

<sup>1</sup> A series of poetic narratives of the disasters of men eminent in English story.

Thenceforward the drama makes rapid progress, passing from youth to a splendid maturity with enormous strides, and extending in a single generation over all the provinces of history, imagination, and fancy, with that breadth of anticipation and intoxication of heart which the ardent soul may experience, when from being a child it has become a man and feels a new-glowing joy shoot through nerve and vein. Expanding with the growing taste, it quits the Palace, the Inns, the Universities, where it is compressed, and creates in 1576 a public theatre and a national audience. Before the end of the century, eleven theatres and nearly two hundred dramas attest the absorbing passion. Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish, are ransacked 'to furnish the play-house of London.' Listen to the groans of the Puritan:

'The daily abuse of stage plays is such an offense to the godly, and so great a hindrance to the Gospel, as the Papists do exceedingly rejoice at the blemish thereof, and not without cause; for every day in the week the player's bills are set up in sundry places of the city; . . . so that, when the bells toll to the lecturer, the trumpets sound to the stages. Whereat the wicked faction of Rome laugheth for joy, while the godly weep for sorrow. . . . It is a woful sight to see two hundred proud players jet in their silks, while five hundred poor people starve in the streets. . . . Woe is me! the play-houses are pestered when the churches are naked. At the one, it is not possible to get a place; at the other, void seats are plenty.'

Some of the theatres are used as cock-pits, some for bull-baiting and bear-baiting, all are poor and squalid. On the banks of the Thames rises the principal one, the Globe, a hexagonal tower, surrounded by a muddy ditch, surmounted by a red flag, and roofed by the sky, retaining in its form and arrangements traces of the old model—the inn-yard. Into the pit, the sun shines and the rain falls without let or hindrance; but their bodies are inured to exposure, and they don't trouble themselves about it. The poor are there, as well as the rich; for they have sixpenny, twopenny, and even penny seats. With the actors, on the rush-strewn stage, which is covered with thatch, are the elegant and the dainty, who pay a shilling for admittance. For an extra shilling, they can have a stool. If stools or benches are lacking, they stretch themselves on the floor. They smoke, drink, swear, insult the pit, who pay them back in kind, and fling apples at them in the bargain. Over them, in a lofty gallery are the musicians. Below, in the circle of the pit, while they wait for the piece, cards are shuffled, oaths resound, ale-pots clatter, blows are exchanged. When the beer takes effect, there is a receptacle

for general use. When the fumes rise, they cry, 'Burn the juniper!' They are amusing themselves after their fashion. At one o'clock — Sundays included — the flag is hoisted, to announce the hour of the performance. When the trumpet sounds, a figure in a long black velvet cloak comes forward to recite the prologue. Then the play begins, the players in masks and wigs, and attired in the richest dress of the day. If the *house* are not suited, they hiss, whistle, crow, yell, perhaps fall upon the actors and turn the theatre upside down. The appointments are barbarous, but imaginations are fervid and supply what is wanting. Wooden imitations of animals, towers, forests, etc., are the scenery. A bed suggests a bed-room. A rough table, with drinking vessels, replaces a dingy throne and turns a palace into a tavern. A young man, just shaven, stands for a queen. A scroll in big letters, hung out in view of the spectators, informs them that they are in London, Athens, or Paris. Three combatants on a side determine the fate of an empire. Says Sir Philip Sidney:

'You shall have Asia of the one side, and Africke of the other, and so many other under-kingdoms, that the Plaier when hee comes in must ever begin with telling where hee is, or else the tale will not be conceived. Now shall you have three Ladies walke to gather flowers, and then wee must beleieve the stage to be a garden. By and by wee heare newes of shipwracke in the same place, then wee are to blame if we accept it not for a rocke; . . . while in the meane time two armies flie in, represented with foure swordes and bucklers, and then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field?'

The actors — at first strolling companies under the patronage of some nobleman, as security against the laws which brand all strollers as vagabonds and rogues — are neglected or despised by those whom they entertain. Their social position is not far above that of the jester who shakes his cap and bells at the tables of the great. Nearly all are writers. Most are born of the people, yet educated. The majority are accomplished in the classics. The manager gives them work, advances them money, and receives their manuscripts or their wardrobes. For a play he allows them seven or eight pounds. Their trade of author scarcely brings bread. Rarely, like Shakespeare, they contrive, by a judicious investment of early gains to acquire a third and more fruitful source of income, — a theatre-share. Generally, they are wild Bohemians, improvident, poor, full of excess, and die untimely by exhaustion or violence.

Such are the externals. We have seen what the interior must

be; for the drama is but the moral, social, and physical expression of the age in which it lives; and the poets who establish it carry in themselves the intensified sentiments and passions of those around them. They will reproduce the entire man,—his finest aspirations and his savagest appetites, the low and the lofty, the ideal and the sensual. So does **Marlowe**, the true founder of the dramatic school, the mightiest of Shakespeare's pioneers. Born in 1564, son of a shoemaker, he was the proudest and fiercest of aristocrats. At seventeen he was in Cambridge. Studied theology, and became a sceptic. Returning to London, he turned actor, broke his leg in a scene of debauchery, and turned author. Rebellious in manners, he was rebellious in creed; declared Moses a juggler; was accused of saying that 'yf he wer to write a new religion, he wolde undertake both a more excellent and a more admirable methode'; was prosecuted for avowed infidelity, and, if time had not failed, would probably have been brought to the stake. In love with a harlot, he tried to stab his rival; his hand was turned, and the blade entered his own eye and brain, and he died, at thirty, cursing and blaspheming. A Puritan ballad, in which he is called *Wormall*, draws the moral:

'Take warning, ye that plays do make,  
And ye that them do act.  
Desist in time, for Wormall's sake,  
And think upon his fact.'

His first play, *Tamburlaine the Great*, is characteristic,—a picture of boundless ambition and murderous rage. The hero is a shepherd, who aspires to the throne of Persia, scornful of restraint, and ready to put men to the sword or to rail at the gods. He says, giant-like:

'For in a field, whose superficies  
Is cover'd with a liquid purple veil,  
And sprinkled with the brains of slaughtered men  
My royal chair of state shall be advanc'd;  
And he that means to place himself therein,  
Must armed wade up to the chin in blood, . . .  
And I would strive to swim through pools of blood,  
Or make a bridge of murder'd carcasses,  
Whose arches should be fram'd with bones of Turke,  
Ere I would lose the title of a king.'

Seated in a chariot, drawn by captive kings, he berates them for their slowness:

'Hallo! ye pampered jades of Asia!  
What, can ye draw but twenty miles a day?

And adds, with purest splendor, as with swaggering fustian:

'*The horse that guide the golden eye of heaven,  
And blow the morning from their nostrils,  
Making their fiery gait above the clouds,  
Are not so honored in their governor  
As you, ye slaves, in mighty Tamburlaine.*'

All the ferocities of the middle-age are in the *Jew of Malta*. If there is less bombast than in *Tamburlaine*, there is even more horror. Barabbas, the Jew, robbed by the Christians, has been maddened with hate till he is no longer human. He says to his servant:

'Hast thou no trade? then listen to my words,  
And I will teach thee that shall stick by thee:  
First, be thou void of these affections,  
Compassion, love, vain hope, and heartless fear;  
Be moved at nothing, see thou pity none,  
But to thyself smile when the Christians moan. . . .  
I walk abroad a-nights,  
And kill sick people groaning under walls:  
Sometimes I go about and poison wells. . . .  
Being young, I studied physic, and began  
To practice first upon the Italian;  
There I enriched the priests with burials,  
And always kept the sexton's arms in ure  
With digging graves and ringing dead men's knells. . . .  
I fill'd the jails with bankrouths in a year,  
And with young orphans planted hospitals.'

By forged letters he causes his daughter's lovers to slay each other. She leaves him, and he poisons her. A friar comes to convert him, and he strangles him, joking with his cut-throat slave, who rejoices in the neatness of the job:

'Pull amain,  
'Tis neatly done sir; here's no print at all:  
So, let him lean upon his staff; excellent!  
He stands as if he were begging of bacon.'

A true painting, conceived with an intensity and executed with a sweep of imagination unknown before. So in *Edward II*, all is impetuous, excessive, and abrupt. Furies and hatreds clash; helplessness and misery wait for their hour alike in the fortalices of strength and the high places of pleasure. He who has seen and felt with volcanic energy the heights and depths of imagination and license can paint, more powerfully than Shakespeare in *Richard II*, the heart-breaking distress of a dying king:



*Edward.* Weep'st thou already? List awhile to me,  
 And then thy heart, were it as Gurney's is,  
 Or as Matrevis, hewn from the Caucasus,  
 Yet will it melt ere I have done my tale.  
 This dungeon where they keep me, is the sink  
 Wherein the filth of all the castle falls.

*Lightborn.* Oh villains!

*Edward.* And here in mire and puddle have I stood  
 This ten days' space; and lest that I should sleep,  
 One plays continually upon a drum.  
 They give me bread and water, being a king;  
 So that, for want of sleep and sustenance,  
 My mind's distemper'd, and my body's numb'd;  
 And whether I have limbs or no, I know not.  
 Oh! would my blood drop out from every vein,  
 As doth this water from my tatter'd robes!  
 Tell Isabel, the Queen, I look'd not thus,  
 When for her sake I ran at tilt in France,  
 And there unhors'd the Duke of Cleremont.

What are we but sports of every pressure of the air? What is life but a crushing fatality? A wreck upon the shore of time. At most, a brief day of joy or victory, then the silence and gloom of the Illimitable. Mortimer, brought to the block, says, with the mournful heroism of the old sea-kings:

'Base Fortune, now I see, that in thy wheel  
 There is a point, to which when men aspire,  
 They tumble headlong down: that point I touched,  
 And, seeing there was no place to mount up higher,  
 Why should I grieve at my declining fall?—  
 Farewell, fair queen; weep not for Mortimer,  
 That scorns the world, and, as a traveller,  
 Goes to discover countries yet unknown.'

So in *Faustus*, which best reflects the genius and experience of Marlowe, the overshadowing thought is —

'Ay, we must die an everlasting death . . .  
 What will be, shall be; divinity, adieu!'

Therefore enjoy, at any cost, though you be swallowed up on the morrow; nor say to the passing moment, 'Stay, thou art so fair,' but seek forever the intoxicating whirl. Faustus, glutted with 'learning's golden gifts,' swells with desire for the magician's power:

'Emperors and kings  
 Are but obeyed in their several provinces;  
 But his dominion that exceeds in this,  
 Stretches as far as doth the mind of man.  
 A sound magician is a mighty god. . . .  
 How I am glutted with conceit of this! . . .  
 I'll have them fly to India for gold,  
 Ransack the ocean for orient pearl. . . .

I'll have them read me strange philosophy,  
 And tell the secrets of all foreign kings;  
 I'll have them wall all Germany with brass,  
 And make swift Rhine circle fair Wittenberg.'

To satisfy these vast desires, he summons, by his mystic art,  
 Mephistophilis from Hell:

- '*Faust.* And what are you that live with Lucifer?  
*Meph.* Unhappy spirits that fell with Lucifer,  
 Conspired against our God with Lucifer,  
 And are forever damned with Lucifer.  
*Faust.* How comes it then that thou art out of hell?  
*Meph.* Why this is hell, nor am I out of it;  
 Think'st thou that I, that saw the face of God  
 And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,  
 Am not tormented with ten thousand hells  
 In being deprived of everlasting bliss?  
 O Faustus, leave these frivolous demands  
 Which strike a terror to my fainting soul.  
*Faust.* What! Is great Mephistophilis so passionate  
 For being deprived of the joys of heaven?  
 Learn then of Faustus manly fortitude,  
 And scorn those joys thou never shalt possess.'

Boldly, to obtain four-and-twenty years of power, he sends an  
 offer of his soul to Lucifer:

'Had I as many souls as there be stars  
 I'd give them all for Mephistophilis.  
 By him I'll be great emperor of the world,  
 And make a bridge through the moving air. . . .  
 Why should'st thou not? Is not thy soul thy own?'

At midnight the answer comes, and the bond is signed with  
 blood. Pangs of conscience come. Good and evil angels plead,  
 and he cries:

'O Christ, my Saviour, my Saviour,  
 Help thou to save distressed Faustus' soul!'

Too late, says the demon. Plunge into the rushing of time, into  
 the rolling of accident, and deaden thought in the feast of the  
 senses:

'Oh, might I see hell, and return again,  
 How happy were I then!'

He is conducted invisible over the whole world, around the  
 whole circle of sensual pleasure and earthly glory, hurried and  
 devoured by desires and conceptions that burn within him like  
 a furnace with bickering flames. Ever and anon, in the midst  
 of his transports, he starts, falters, and struggles with the toils  
 of Destiny:

'I will renounce this magic and repent. . . .  
 My heart's so harden'd I cannot repent;  
 Scarce can I name salvation, faith, or heaven,  
 But fearful echoes thunder in mine ears,  
 "Faustus thou art damned!" the swords, and knives,  
 Poison, guns, halters, and envenom'd steel,  
 Are laid before me, to despatch myself,  
 Had not sweet pleasure conquer'd deep despair.  
 Have not I made blind Homer sing to me  
 Of Alexander's love and Enon's death?  
 And hath not he, that built the walls of Thebes  
 With ravishing sound of his melodious harp,  
 Made music with my Mephistophilis?  
 Why should I die, then, or basely despair?  
 I am resolved; Faustus shall ne'er repent.  
 Come Mephistophilis, let us dispute again,  
 And argue of divine astrology.'

The term expires, and the forfeit is exacted. Faustus has run the round of his brilliant dream, and stands on the brink of the Bottomless. Never was such an accumulation of horrors and anguish. Mephistophilis gives him a dagger. An old man enters, and with loving words warns him:

'Oh, stay, good Faustus, stay thy desperate steps!  
 I see an angel hover o'er thy head,  
 And with a vial full of precious grace  
 Offers to pour the same into thy soul:  
 Then call for mercy, and avoid despair.'

He would weep, but the devil draws in his tears; he would raise his hands, but he cannot. The lovely Helen is conjured up, between two Cupids, to prevent his relapse, and the wildfire kindles in his heart:

'Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships,  
 And burnt the topless tow'rs of Ilium?  
*Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.*  
 Her lips suck forth my soul! See where it flies.  
 Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.  
 Here will I dwell, for Heav'n is in these lips,  
*And all is dross that is not Helena.*  
 I will be Paris, and for love of thee,  
 Instead of Troy shall Wittenberg be sack'd;  
 And I will combat with weak Menelaus,  
 And wear thy colours on my plumed crest;  
 Yea I will wound Achilles in the heel,  
 And then return to Helen for a kiss.  
*Oh! thou art fairer than the evening air,  
 Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars.'*

The clock strikes eleven. He implores the mountains and hills to fall upon him, would rush headlong into the gaping earth, but it will not harbor him:

'Oh, Faustus!

Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,  
 And then thou must be damn'd perpetually!  
 Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of heaven,  
 That time may cease, and midnight never come! . . .  
 The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike,  
 The devil will come, and Faustus must be damn'd.  
 Oh, I'll leap up to my God!—Who pulls me down?—  
 See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!  
 One drop would save my soul, half a drop: ah, my Christ,  
 Ah, rend not my heart for naming of my Christ!  
 Yet will I call on him.'

The clock strikes the half hour:

'Ah, half the hour is past! 'twill all be past anon. . . .  
 Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years,  
 A hundred thousand, and at last be saved.'

The clock strikes twelve:

'It strikes! it strikes! Now body turn to air,  
 Or Lucifer will bear thee quick to hell.  
 Oh soul! be changed into small water-drops,  
 And fall into the ocean; ne'er be found.'

This tormented soul, who reels from desire to enjoyment, from the diabolical to the divine, is not the philosophic type of Goethe's *Faust*, the ferment of whose spirit impels him towards the 'far-away,' though both are equally lost in the end; but I find nothing in that tragedy equal, in power of delineation, to this closing scene of terror, despair, and remorse.

If ever there was poet born, Marlowe was one. His poetry is irregular, but the irregularity is that of the extreme flight of virgin nature, the inequality of the young, eager, bounding blood. His Faustus was his twin-spirit, the expression of the social life of the period,—restless, self-asserting, hot-headed, and omnivorous. Extremes meet, at such times, in such men. With capacity for Titanic conceptions, they render gentlest beauty into sweetest music. Capable of enamored hate and soundless sensuality, they are also capable of the most delicate tenderness and the purest dreams. Thus Marlowe could leave his powerful verse, his images of fury, and say to his lady-love, in strains like the breath of the morning which has swept over flowery meads:

'Come live with me and be my love,  
 And we will all the pleasures prove,  
 That hill and valley, grove and field,  
 And all the craggy mountains yield.  
 There will we sit upon the rocks,

And see the shepherds feed their flocks  
*By shallow rivers, to whose falls*  
*Melodious birds sing madrigals,*  
 There will I make thee beds of roses,  
 With a thousand fragrant posies;  
 A cap of flowers and a kirtle  
 Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle;  
 A gown made of the finest wool  
 Which from our pretty lambs we pull;  
 Slippers lin'd choicely for the cold,  
 With buckles of the purest gold;  
 A belt of straw, and ivy buds,  
 With coral clasps and amber studs.  
*The shepherd swains shall dance and sing*  
*For thy delight each May morning;*  
 And if these pleasures may thee move,  
*Then live with me and be my love.'*

What are the marked characteristics of this drama, now advanced to the point from which Shakespeare will rise to the supreme heights of poetry?—*Tamburlaine*, the first play in blank verse which was publicly acted, drove the rhymed couplet from the stage, and fixed forever the metre of English tragedy as blank. Not only did the author popularize the measure, but he perfected it: he created a new metre by the melody, variety, and force which he infused into the iambic; not a fixed, unalterable type, in which the verse moves to the common and despotic beat of time, but a Proteus, whose varying pauses, speed, and grouping of syllables make one measure represent a thousand. It flows impetuous and many-colored, like the spirit which feels it—not studies it—and revels in a stream of images. Consider the didactic dignity of the following:

'Our souls whose faculties can comprehend  
 The wondrous architecture of the world,  
 And measure every wandering planet's course,  
 Still climbing after knowledge infinite,  
 And always moving as the restless spheres,  
 Will us to wear ourselves, and never rest  
 Until we reach the ripest fruit of all,  
 That perfect bliss and sole felicity,  
 The sweet fruition of an earthly crown.'

Or the variable modulations of these lines—in particular, the daring but successful license of the first and third:

'Bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts,  
 Jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green emeralds,  
 Beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds,  
 And seld seen costly stones of so great price,  
 As one of them, indifferently rated,  
 May serve, in peril of calamity,  
 To ransom great kings from captivity.'



Or the changeful temper, the 'plastic stress' of these:

'Mortimer! who talks of Mortimer,  
Who wounds me with the name of Mortimer,  
That bloody man? Good father, on thy lap  
Lay I this head laden with mickle care.  
O, might I never ope these eyes again,  
Never again lift up this drooping head,  
O, never more lift up this dying heart!'

Single lines, struck in the heat of glowing passion or fancy, seem to leave a track of fire:

'Tyrants swim safest in a crimson flood.'  
'Adders and serpents, let me breathe awhile!'  
'And blow the morning from their nostrils.'  
'See, see, where Christ's blood *streams* in the firmament.'  
'Thence flew Love's arrow with the golden head.'  
'I know he is not dead; I know proud death  
Durst not behold such sacred majesty.'

Not inaptly has a living poet described Marlowe as singing —

'With mouth of gold, and morning in his eyes.'

For this is his contribution to the heroic style,—that he found it insipidly regular, and left it various, sometimes redundant, sometimes deficient, enriched with unexpected emphases and changes in the beat. Shakespeare will only refine it from wordiness, and use it with more than Marlowe's versatility and power.

Our first tragedy and comedy observed the classical or dramatic unities: *Unity of Action*, which required that the action represented should be *one, complete, and important*; *Unity of Time*, which required that the incidents of the play should naturally occur within one day; *Unity of Place*, which required that the entire action should naturally occur in the same locality. The Greek drama, relying thus upon form or proportion, owed its charm to a certain union and regularity of feeling. In its sphere, it spoke, felt, and acted *according to nature*—that is, nature under the given circumstances; but it was limited by the physical conditions of time and space, as well as bound to a certain dignity and attitude of expression, selection and grouping of figures, as in a statue. But this was too formal and stately to suit the tastes and wants of an age or people distinguished by its novelty, strangeness, and contrast. The whole framework of society—customs, manners, aspirations, religion—had changed.

Hence a sudden revolution in the dramatic art. Our poets, who felt the excitement of the new life, disdained paths previously made, scorned the thralldom of Greece, the servility of Rome. They had to address no scholastic critics, but the *people*. As one of them said,—

‘They would have *good plays*, and not produce  
Such musty fopperies of antiquity;  
Which do not suit the humorous age’s back  
With clothes in fashion.’

To win a mutable attention required a multiform shape. At once they clung to the human nature before them,—its appetites, passions, frailties, hopes, imaginations, heights of ecstasy and depths of depravity. The theatre, mingling the comic with the tragic, was to be a mirror of enchantment,—Gothic in the scope of its design and the boldness of its execution. While Italy and France were adhering to the contracted antique model, two nations—England and Spain—were thus spontaneously creating a national drama accordant with their own sympathies and experiences—a movable reflection of themselves.

**Prose.**—The poetry of the period, as the overflow of natural enthusiasm, has a decided ascendancy in quantity and quality; but the powerful vitality which impels it and makes it great, begins also the era of prose. The insatiable desire of the mind to beget its own image gives the primary impulse. The reformation of religion, the revival of antiquity, the influx of Italian letters, traditions of the past, speculations of the future, invention, travel, and discovery, give the materials. Philology begins, notably with Cheke and Mulcaster; artistic theory and criticism, with Sidney, Wilson, Ascham, and Puttenham, who explore the rules of style; narratives of adventure and observation, with Hakluyt<sup>1</sup>; history, with Holinshed, More, and Raleigh; the essay, with Lord Bacon; rational theology, with Hooker; romantic or fanciful fiction, with Lily. In physics, medicine, and law, curiosity is rife. Editions and revisals of the Scriptures increased. The roar and dash of opinions creates and multiplies pamphleteers, Anglican and Puritan, sectarian and secular,—Skelton a virulent one, Roy a merciless one, Fish a seditious one, Greene an incessant one, Nash a brilliant one. Men’s brains are busy, their

<sup>1</sup> *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, and Discoveries made by the English Nation.*

spirits stirring, their hearts full. With the new resources of thought and language, comes a new sense of literary beauty—a new-born pleasure in delicacy and grandeur of phrase, in the choice of words and the structure of sentences. We see it first in **Lily's** *Euphues*,<sup>1</sup> the story of a young Athenian who, after spending some time in Italy, visits England in 1579. Its form is Italian, and its style a skilful elaboration of the Italian taste for alliteration, verbal antithesis, far-fetched allusion. To ladies and lords, it was a novel enchantment to read:

'There is no *privilege* that needeth a *pardon*, neither is there any *remission* to be asked, where a *commission* is granted. I speake this, Gentlemen, not to excuse the *offence* which was *taken*, but to offer a *defence* where I was *mistaken*. A cleare conscience is a sure card, truth hath the *prerogative* to speake with plainnesse, and the modesty to heare with *patience*. It was reported of some, and beleued of many, that in the education of Ephoebus, where mention is made of Uniuersities, that Oxford was to much either *defaced* or *defamed*. I know not what the enuious have picked out by malice, or the curious by wit, or the guilty by their own galled consciences; but this I say, that I was as farre from thinking *ill* as I find them from iudging *well*. But if I should goe about to make *amends*, I were then faulty in somewhat *amisse*, and should shew my selfe like Apelles Prentice, who coueting to mend the nose marred the neck; and not vnlike the foolish Dier, who neuer thought his cloth black vntil it was *burned*. If any fault be committed, impute it to Euphues who knew you not, not to Lylie who hates you not.'

Once more in Athens, Euphues writes:

'Gentlemen, Euphues is musing in the bottom of the mountain Silixedra, Philautus is married in the Isle of England: two friends parted, the one living in the delights of his new wife, the other in contemplation of his old griefs.'

The new fashion, universally admired, ran into extravagance without elegance, overloaded, strained, and motley. Stanihurst in the dedication of a history of Ireland writes, quaintly and ludicrously:

'My verie good Lord, there have beene diuerse of late, that with no small toile, and great commendation, haue throughlie imploied themselues in culling and packing together the scrapings and fragments of the historie of Ireland. Among which crue, my fast friend, and inward companion, maister Edmund Campion did so learnedlie bequite himselfe, in the penning of certeine breefe notes, concerning that countrie, as certes it was greatlie to be lamented, that either his theame had not beene shorter, or else his leasure had not beene longer. For if Alexander were so rauisht with Homer his historie, that notwithstanding Thersites were a crabbed and a rugged dwarfe, being in outward feature so deformed, and inward conditions so crooked, as he seemed to stand to no better steed, than to lead apes in hell.'

There was just time for Gosson to have read *Euphues* before he wrote in *The School of Abuse*:

'The title of my book doth promise much, the volume you see is very little: and sithens I cannot bear out my folly by authority, like an emperor, I will crave

<sup>1</sup> From the Greek, meaning *well-grown*, *symmetrical*, hence *clever*, *witty*. It was really on the culmination of the growing influence of Italian conceits and quibbles.

pardon for my phrensy by submission, as your worship's to command. The school which I build is narrow, and at the first blush appeareth but a dog-hole; yet small clouds carry water; slender threads sew sure stitches; little hairs have their shadows; blunt stones whet knives; from hard rocks flow soft springs; the whole world is drawn in a map, Homer's "Iliad" in a nutshell, a king's picture in a penny.'

Comparisons mount one above another, sense disappears, attitudes are visible. But out of this youthful wantonness will spring complete art. Tinsel and pedantry will pass, beauty and merit will remain. Prose, born of thought rather than of feeling, does not reach literary excellence till the imagination is regulated, and the gaze is fixed, not to admire, but to understand.

**History.**—A whole class of industrious antiquaries collected the annals of the by-gone world, and embodied them in English shape, supplying materials for the historical dramatist and the future historian. Daniel gave to the chronicle a purer literary form, while **Raleigh's** *History of the World* showed the widening of historic interest beyond national bounds. If there was no rhyming, there was little accuracy, and no attempt at a minute tracing of cause and effect; that was to come. The compilers, following the beaten path, usually began at the Creation and continued to the date of publication. Credulity still darkened the field, and, surveying it complacently, they gathered contentedly, with both hands, seldom doubting the truth of what from childhood they had been taught to believe. Thus **Holinshed**, the most complete of our chroniclers, thinks it probable that Britain was peopled before the Deluge, and supposes these primitive Britons to have been drowned in the flood. He can vouch for the arrival of Ulysses, inclines to the derivation of *Albion* from a huge giant of that name, and relates the story of Brute, the great-grandson of Æneas, with unquestioning confidence. He inserts a one-line notice of 'Caxton as the first practicer of the art of printing,' but is more intent in the same paragraph to speak of 'a bloody rain, the red drops falling on the sheets which had been hanged to dry.' It was reserved for Raleigh, in his unfinished but ambitious work, to strike into a virgin vein, and make the ordinary events of history assume a new face by the noble speculations which he builds on them, often profound, oftener eloquent.

**Theology.**—A new era of creed-formations set in. The *Articles* of the Anglican Church, now in number thirty-nine,

were originally forty-two, drawn up under the supervision of Cranmer as the bonds of Christian union, the conditions of Christian fellowship. It is asserted, in this confession of faith,—

1. That there is an infinite Spirit, and ‘in the unity of this Godhead there be three persons of one substance, power, and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.’

2. That the fall of Adam ‘brought death into the world and all our woe.’

3. That, by Adam’s transgression, we are shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin.

4. That Christ, of the same substance with the Father, died for our original guilt and our actual sins.

5. That *none* can emerge from this state of pollution, and be saved, but by Christ.

6. That every person born into the world ‘deserveth God’s wrath and damnation.’

7. That ‘*predestination to life* is the everlasting purpose of God . . . to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind.’

The English Reformers can scarcely be said to have arrived at any definite conclusions. Luther and Calvin framed the speculative doctrines for Protestant Europe. Both declared the utter depravity of human nature, and ‘eternal fire’ the punishment of the lost. Calvin was an uncompromising predestinarian, who taught that the Fall with all its consequences was predetermined ages before the Creation; that the fate of each individual was thus irrevocably decided before he was called into existence; that out of the ruined race a few are selected for eternal bliss; that the rest are pre-ordained to ‘most grievous torments in soul and body without intermission in hell-fire for ever.’ Luther was only less explicit, hardly aware, perhaps, of the extreme to which his acrimonious zeal logically carried him. The mild and sagacious Erasmus had written a defence of free-will, to which Luther replies:

‘The human will is like a beast of burden. If God mounts it, it wishes and goes as God wills; if Satan mounts it, it wishes and goes as Satan wills. Nor can it choose the rider it would prefer, or betake itself to him, but it is the riders who contend for its possession.’

Again:

‘This is the acme of faith, to believe that He is merciful who saves so few and who condemns so many; that He is just who at His own pleasure has made us necessarily doomed to damnation.’



Thus the two great founders of Protestantism designed, it would appear, to construct a religious system which should be as distinct and exclusive as that which they assailed, but which should represent more faithfully the teachings of the first four centuries. The Puritans, simple and rigorous, preferred the grim and pitiless features of the Calvinistic system, whose spirit, however, has long been yielding to conciliation and charity. The Anglicans, practical, prudent, and more worldly, favored rather the less gloomy and more conservative system of Luther. Both found common ground in the idea of the inexorable Judge, the alarm of conscience, the impotence and inherited poison of nature, the necessity of grace, the rejection of rites and ceremonies. A period of passion and conflict throws men naturally upon dogmatic systems, nor is the mind easily extricated from old theological modes of thought. A century was required to develop fully the germ of rationalism that had been cast abroad. Still, the intellect was moving onward, the tenor of life was changing, and at the close of the century the disposition was perceptible to interpret the articles of special creeds, not by the precept and example of tradition, but by the light of reason and of conscience. A remarkable evidence of the transition is found in **Jewel's** *Apology*,<sup>1</sup> and, a generation later, in **Hooker's** *Ecclesiastical Polity*,—the two most important theological works which appeared in England during the reign of Elizabeth. Both wrote with the avowed object of defending the Established Church, but their methods are entirely different. The first inculcates the importance of faith, collects the decisions of antiquity, and regards the mere assertions of the Fathers, when uncontradicted by Scripture, as proofs positive. The second insists upon the exercise of reason, and lays little stress upon the ancients, evidently considering that his readers would be slightly impressed by their unsupported opinions. He says:

'For men to be tied and led by authority, as it were with a kind of captivity of judgment, and, though there be reason to the contrary, not to listen unto it, but to follow, like beasts, the first in the herd, they know not nor care not whither: this were brutish. Again, that authority of men should prevail with men, either against or above Reason, is no part of our belief. Companies of learned men, be they never so great and reverend, are to yield unto Reason.'

<sup>1</sup> Written in 1561 or 1562. This, the Bible, and Fox's *Martyrs* were ordered 'to be fixed in all parish churches, to be read by the people.'

When this could be said, the English intellect had made immense progress.

With the revolution in Church, preaching changed its object and character. It became more earnest, popular, and moral. The Age of Doctrines was to follow. In the pulpit, it was not yet sought to exhibit dialectics, but to recall men—sailors, soldiers, workmen, servants—to their duties. At least, this is what we see in the sermons of **Latimer** (1472–1555), a genuine Englishman, serious, courageous, and solid, sprung from the heart and sinews of the nation. He never speaks for the sake of speaking. With him, practice is before all; theology—the metaphysics of religion—secondary. To reprove the rich, who oppress the poor by enclosures, he details the needs of the peasant:

‘A plough land must have sheep; yea, they must have sheep to dung their ground for bearing of corn; for if they have no sheep to help to fat the ground, they shall have but bare corn and thin. They must have swine for their food, to make their veneries or bacon of: their bacon is their venison, for they shall now have *hangum tuum* if they get any other venison; so that bacon is their necessary meat to feed on, which they may not lack. They must have other cattle: as horses to draw their plough, and for carriage of things to the markets; and kine for their milk and cheese, which they must live upon and pay their rents. These cattle must have pasture, which pasture if they lack, the rest must needs fail them: and pasture they cannot have, if the land be taken in, and enclosed from them.’

Only the wish to convince, to denounce vice, and to do justice. No grand words, no show of style, no exaltation. Generally, it may be observed, the preachers of the earlier part of the sixteenth century were accustomed to take a wide range, to bring together into a miscellaneous assortment topics from every region of heaven and earth. Not more fastidious as to manner. Their style, like that of most contemporary prose, is simpler in construction, more familiar and homely, than that which came into fashion in the later years of the Elizabethan period. Their kind of writing, however, though indirectly interesting and historically valuable, can hardly be regarded as partaking the character of literary composition.

But that which penetrated the imagination and language of England more than any word, lay or ecclesiastic, was the Bible itself, wherein the simple folk, without other books and open to new emotions, pricked by the reproaches of conscience and the presentiment of the dark future, looked suddenly with awe and trembling upon the face of the eternal King, read or heard the

tables of his law, the archives of his vengeance, and with the whole attention of eyes and heart filled themselves with his promises and threats. Condemned, hunted, in concealment, **Tyndale** translated from the Greek, in the reign of Henry VIII, the New Testament and a portion of the Old. It was this Book which, revised by Coverdale, and edited in 1539, as *Cromwell's Bible*, again in 1540, as *Cranmer's Bible*, was set up in every English parish church by the very sovereign who had caused the translator to be strangled and burned. It was not only a discovery of salvation to the troubled conscience, but the revelation of a new literature—the only literature practically accessible to all, and comprising at once legends and annals, war-song and psalm, philosophy and vision. Imagine the effect upon minds essentially unoccupied by any history, romance, or poetry, and anxiously alive to the grandeurs and terrors which pass before their eyes as they gather in crowds Sunday after Sunday, day after day, to hear its marvellous accent:

‘Many well-disposed people used much to resort to the hearing thereof, especially when they could get any that had an audible voice to read to them. . . . One John Porter used sometimes to be occupied in that goodly exercise, to the edifying of himself as well as others. This Porter was a fresh young man and of a big stature; and great multitudes would resort thither to hear him, because he could read well and had an audible voice.’

The Koran alone can boast an equal share of reverence, spread far and wide; and as a mere literary monument, the English Bible is the noblest example of the English tongue. Of its 6,000 words, only 250 are not in common use, and nearly all of these last are readily understood.

**Ethics.**—Occam, the Nominalist, had taught that moral distinctions originate in the arbitrary appointment of God; that ‘no act is evil but as prohibited by Him, or which cannot be made good by His command.’

Catholics, who appealed to tradition, Protestants, who appealed only to Scripture,—confirmed the pernicious error. On none of these principles could there be a *science* of morality. *That* was possible only when men, seeking for just ideas of right and wrong, should begin to interrogate their moral sense more than the books of theologians, and make this faculty the supreme arbiter, moulding theology into conformity with its dictates. The moral was still subordinate to the dogmatic side of religion. It

needed the profound sagacity of **Hooker** to give anything like currency to the following principle, in which the rationalistic tendency to a philosophy of morals is first decidedly manifest:

‘Those precepts which learned men have committed to writing, transcribing them from the common reason and common feelings of human nature, are to be accounted not less divine than those contained in the tables given to Moses; nor was it God’s intention to supersede by a law graven on stone that which is written with His own finger on the table of the heart.’

Two years later, in 1596, appeared **Lord Bacon’s** *Essays*, which, if they offered nothing new to the English heart, revealed much to the English consciousness, and formed an emphatic agency in the history of English practical ethics.

In general, estimated by the standard of the present, moral perceptions were clouded, and moral sympathies were neither expansive nor acute. Add to this the reflexive influence of religious belief—in particular, the doctrine of exclusive salvation, and we have an adequate explanation of the burnings, tortures, imprisonments, animosities and wars which for so many centuries marked the conflicts of theological bodies. As long as it was believed that those who rejected certain opinions were excluded from eternal felicity, so long would scepticism be branded a sin, and credulity a virtue. As long as the Church, by a favorite image of the Fathers, was regarded as a solitary Ark floating on a boundless sea of ruin, the heretic, as an offender against the Almighty, was to be reclaimed or punished, and heresy was to be corrected or stifled—by persuasion if possible, by violence if necessary. While some of the persecutions, even some of the most atrocious, sprang from purely selfish motives, I doubt not that they were mainly due to the sincere conviction that the cause of truth (as apprehended) required the sacrifice of its foes. Men had yet to learn that mere acts of the understanding are neither right nor wrong; and that unbelief, whether good or bad, must receive its character from the dispositions or motives which produce or pervade it.

**Science.**—‘In Wonder,’ says Coleridge, ‘all Philosophy began; in Wonder it ends: and Admiration fills up the interspace.’ Better, it is suggested,—and Investigation fills up the interspace. In the first wonder and the last, the poet and the philosopher are akin; but the emotion tends to different results. The former wonders at the beauty in the face of Nature, but seeks

no explanation,—reads its inner meaning, and tries to utter it. The latter wonders at what he sees, but scrutinizes appearances to find the laws which regulate them. The two processes—imaginative intuition and painful analysis—are distinct, not to be combined in one intellectual act, nor scarcely to coëxist in one mind. The latter does not assert itself till objects pass from the poetic flush of emotion into the colder region of rational insight. Therefore, beyond a few exceptional and isolated facts, there was as yet no English science. But at the close of the sixteenth century the daylight of scientific speculation and experiment had already arisen on the Continent. Memorably, after twenty years' study of the heavens from the window of his garret, **Copernicus** the Pole founded modern astronomy. He came to the conclusion, as had Aristarchus in the third century before Christ, that the sun is immovable, while the earth and planets revolve around it. Afraid of public opinion, he refused to publish. Bruno the Italian espoused his theory with ardor, propagated it, as well as the plurality of worlds, with haughty defiance,—and was burned by the Inquisition. The fact survived, soon to effect an important revolution in our conceptions. As long as the globe was believed to be the central object of the universe, and the stars but inconsiderable lights to garnish its firmament, it was assigned a similar position in the moral scheme; and every phenomenon, human and divine, terrestrial and celestial, was supposed to have some bearing upon the acts and history of man. But when this 'goodly ball' was seen to be only a moving point in infinite space—a mere infinitesimal fraction in creation, human egotism was succeeded by a depressing sense of insignificance, and the way was open for the gradual substitution of the idea of law for that of supernatural intervention.

Every priest in the Cathedral of Pisa, every woman and child at Christmas, saw the great lamps which hung from the ceiling, some by a longer, some by a shorter chain,—saw them swing in the wind that came in with the crowd, as the Christmas-doors, storied all over with mediæval fictions, opened wide; but only **Galileo**, a student not yet twenty, saw that the motion of the swinging lamps was uniform, and proportional to the length of the chain—each a great clock whereof he alone had the dial. For five hundred years these lamps, swinging slowly to and fro,



had been virtually proclaiming the law of gravitation, but Galileo was the first who heard it. This was the great principle of the Pendulum. So does genius find general laws in facts which have been familiar to everybody since the world was.

In England, meanwhile, much of the progress abroad probably remained unknown. Various mathematical works were produced in the vernacular in the first half of the century, by William Record, a physician. Says a contemporary:

‘He was the first who wrote on arithmetic in English; the first who wrote on geometry in English; the first who introduced algebra into England; the first who wrote on astronomy and the doctrine of the sphere in English; and finally the first Englishman who adopted the system of Copernicus.’

He styled the first the *Ground of Arts*; the second, *Pathway to Knowledge*; the third, *Whetstone of Wit*; the fourth, the *Castle of Knowledge*. In 1599, Thomas Hill published *The School of Skill*, which is described as ‘an account of the heavens and the surface of the earth, replete with those notions on astrology and physics which are not very common in the works of Record.’ The author refers to the scheme of Pythagoras and Copernicus, by which, as he expresses it, ‘they took the earth from the middle of the world, and placed it in a peculiar orb.’ He adds:

‘But overpassing such reasons, lest by the newness of the arguments they may offend or trouble young students in the art, we therefore (by true knowledge of the wise) do attribute the middle seat of the world to the earth, and appoint it the centre of the whole.’

Gilbert’s book *On Magnetism* (1600) marks the origin of the modern science of electricity. Medicine was practiced and taught on the revised principles of the ancients. Henry VIII incorporated the College of Physicians in 1518. From the time of Edward the Confessor, the power of kings to touch for the King’s Evil seems never to have been doubted, and to have been extensively exercised. The *Breviary of Health*, by Andrew Borde (1547), is a curious suggestion of the state of medical science. It has a prologue addressed to physicians, beginning:

‘Egregious doctors, and masters of the eximious and arcane science of physick, of your urbanity exasperate not yourselves against me for making this little volume.’

The ‘volume’ treats not only of bodily disease, but of mental, as in ‘the 174 Chapter,’ which ‘doth shewe of an infirmitie named Hereos’:

‘Hereos is the Græke worde. In Latin, it is named *Amor*. In English it is named *Love-sick*, and women may haue this fickleness as well as men. Young persons be much troubled with this impediment.’

The following is the remedy prescribed:

'First I do advertize every person not to set to the heart what another doth set to the hele. Let no man set his love so far, but that he may withdraw it betime; and muse not, but use mirth and mery company and be wyse, and not foolish.'

**Philosophy.**—So far as it concerns the history of philosophy, the Renaissance meant the revival of Platonism and the insurgence against scholastic antiquity. Never had monarch been so nearly universal and absolute as Aristotle. For two thousand years he had dictated to the nations what to believe. Amid all the commotions of Empire and the war of words, he had kept his throne and state, unshaken and undisturbed. His autocratical edict was placed by the side of the Gospel. His ten categories, which pretend to classify every object of human apprehension, were held as another Revelation. Universities were his sentinels. Parliaments issued decrees banishing those who maintained theses against him. His name was a synonym for reason. To contradict him was to contradict the Church, whose integrity was based on the immovable conformity of all human opinions. In vain did Galileo try to convince the learned of Pisa that bodies of unequal weight, dropped from the same height, would reach the ground in equal times. They saw the weights fall from the top of the tower, saw them strike the ground simultaneously; but they would not believe, for Aristotle had said that a ten-pound weight would fall ten times as fast as a one-pound weight. A student, having detected spots in the sun, communicated his discovery to a worthy priest, who replied:

'My son, I have read Aristotle many times, and I assure you there is nothing of the kind mentioned by him. Go rest in peace; and be certain that the spots which you have seen are in your eyes, and not in the sun.'

But early in the sixteenth century revolt had broken forth, in Italy, in Spain, in France, in Germany, even in England. In 1535, a royal commission abolished from the two universities the works of the famous Duns Scotus. Said the report, in a tone of triumph: 'We have set *Dunce* in Bocardo,<sup>1</sup> and have utterly banished him from Oxford forever, with all his blind glosses.' In 1583, **Bruno**, a lionized foreigner, a knight-errant of truth, opened under the patronage of Elizabeth, a public disputation, in which he combated the Aristotelians with stirring eloquence.

<sup>1</sup> A figure of syllogism terminating in a negative conclusion, and implying therefore *annihilation*.

He styled the wise conclave of his opponents 'a constellation of pedants, whose ignorance, presumption, and rustic rudeness would have exhausted the patience of Job.' To all the reformers, however various their doctrines, one spirit seems to have been common,—unhesitating opposition to the dominant authority. Each in his own way, the new generation were emancipating themselves from the dogmas of the ancient dictator. Scholasticism, majestic in its decay, was fast losing its hold upon the mind of the age. As yet, however, there was nothing better to accept in its stead. Being the whole philosophy, mental and physical, then taught, its abolition from the academical course was tantamount to the ejection of philosophical studies entirely. So it happens that all departments—physics, metaphysics, and ethics—were alike barren. Materials were at hand, indeed, for the most successful research; but there was need of an instructor, an organizer, who should reduce to form and method the discordant elements, and cut, as it were, a new channel in which the philosophic spirit of the world should flow.

**Résumé.**—The feudal system, worn out and vicious, unable to give to a general society either security or progress, disappears; and European society passes from the dominion of spiritual to that of temporal governments, in which the essential fact is centralization of power. A new and remarkable species of politicians appears—the first generation of professional statesmen, all laymen, all cultured, all men of peace, who direct the politics of England dexterously, resolutely, gloriously. The nobles cease to be military chieftains, the priests cease to possess a monopoly of learning. Chivalry, no longer a controlling institution, has been refined of its grossness, and retaining only its beauty, gives color and flavor to society, and tinctures strongly poetic sentiment. Literature proper still belongs almost exclusively to the upper classes, but these are being greatly increased by additions of rich citizens, who are growing up to be the body of the nation. Vestiges of slavery still exist, yeomen lead a coarse and brutish life, vagrancy and crime are inadequately suppressed by severe laws unequally administered. Language reaches its full stature, strong, flexible, and copious; adequate to the needs of philosophic thought and of deep and varied feeling. The aroused spirit of travel and adventure brings races

face to face, widens the sphere of human interest, and by its revelations gives life and richness to the imagination. The Reformation, connected on the one side with scholarship, unlocks the sealed treasures of the Bible, and opens the path for modern biblical criticism; connected on the other with intolerance of mere authority, it leads to what has been termed rationalism—the attempt to define the laws which underlie the religious consciousness; connected with politics, it is linked historically with the approaching Revolution. The veil woven by human hands across the brightness of Christianity is rent asunder, and a new meaning is given to the words: ‘God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.’ The Renaissance achieves the discovery of the world and of man,—the first, the exploration of the globe and the exploration of the heavens; the second, the restoration of Pagan antiquity—man in his temporal relations, and the renovation of faith—man in his spiritual relations. Printing renders indestructible all knowledge, and disseminates all thought. Science, rescued from the hands of alchemy and astrology, takes her incipient steps. Philosophy, sundered from Scholasticism and Aristotle, awaits the principle of order—the law and the lawgiver. Prose, waking larger and richer from its sleep, passes from the elegant simplicity of More to the formal rhetoric of Ascham, and thence from the extravagance of Lily and the *Euphuists* to the decorated eloquence of Raleigh and Sidney, gaining, by the close of the period, much in copiousness, in sonorousness, in splendor. Poetry, in Skelton an instrument of reform, revives as an art in Surrey, who gives a sweeter movement to English verse, and extends its ‘lyrical range.’ In the poems of Spenser are reflected the roseate hues, the higher elements, of the English Renaissance; while its higher and lower alike are reflected in the drama, which is both indigenous and national. In it is directly imaged the whole of English life—character, class, condition, in all their varieties; and the poets who establish it carry in themselves the sentiments which it displays,—happy and abundant feeling, free and full desire, the overflowing of nature, the worship of beauty and of vigor, the energy of pride, the despair of destiny, the insurrection of reason, the turbulence of passion, the brutality of evil lusts, and the

divine innocence of love, all the luxuriance and irregularity of men who feel the sudden advance of corporal well-being, and are scarcely recovered from barbarism. A constellation of kindred spirits, with unequal success but with the same unconcerned profusion, express the new art, closing around Shakespeare, who expresses it fully, towering above his fellows 'in shape and gesture proudly eminent,'—all impelled by the same causes in their whirling and eccentric career; for the productive forces which culminate in the reign of Elizabeth, ripen some of their distinctive fruits in the times immediately subsequent. The last portion of the sixteenth century, with the earlier of the seventeenth, constitutes the great era of our literary history, and the first of its stages of consecutive progress, in which the warmth of soul, the love of truth, the passion for freedom, and the sense of human dignity, are the promise of eternal development. Consider the mass of knowledge we have since acquired—knowledge infinitely curious and infinitely useful, consider how much of this kind was acquired in the ten centuries which preceded—then you may estimate the expansive force generated in this notable epoch of human growth.

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## MORE.

Like Cato firm, like Aristides just,  
 Like rigid Cincinnatus nobly poor,—  
 A dauntless soul erect, who smiled on death.—*Thomson.*

**Biography.**—Born in London, in 1489, of noble parentage; at fifteen, a page in the household of Cardinal Morton, who said of him: 'Whoever may live to see it, this boy now waiting at table will turn out a marvellous man'; at seventeen, a law-student in Oxford University; championed the 'Greeks' against the 'Trojans'; practised his profession; lectured on divinity; entered Parliament at twenty-two; became Speaker of the Commons; defeated the royal demand for a heavy subsidy; withdrew from public life under the royal displeasure; rose into repute at the bar, wrote and published; was forced back into the political current by the accession of Henry VIII; was soon in the king's



favor as counsellor and diplomatist; succeeded Wolsey as Chancellor in 1529, the first layman appointed to that office; refused, as a zealous Catholic, to acknowledge the validity of Henry's marriage with Anne Boleyn, or his headship of the English Church, and the neck that oft had been familiarly encircled by the royal arm was in 1535 cleft by the headsman's axe. A striking illustration of the truth of Wolsey's words to Cromwell,—

‘How wretched  
Is that poor man who hangs on princes' favors!’

**Writings.**—He wrote numerous theological tracts, but of local or passing interest, and all inflamed by a passion which betrayed him—otherwise clear-headed—into violent expression and confusion of thought. Much of his fame as a writer rests upon his *Life of Richard III*, of doubtful historical value, but of great philological importance, as the best English secular prose which had yet been written. More is better known by his Latin work, *Utopia*,—a vision of the kingdom of ‘Nowhere,’ the leading design of which, under the veil of fanciful fiction, is to correct abuses and suggest reforms. A sailor who has voyaged into new and unknown worlds, gives him an account of an imaginary republic risen, as by enchantment, in the form of a crescent, out of the bosom of the watery waste. In its laws and institutions, in its moral and physical aspects, it realizes the author's ideal of a perfect society, and shows thus, by contrast, the defective one in which he lives. The principal city of the Utopians—

‘Is compassed about with a high and thick stone wall, full of tunnels and bulwarks. A dry ditch, but deep, goeth about three sides. On the fourth side the river serveth for a ditch. The streets be *twenty feet broad*. On the back side of the houses, through the whole length of the street, lay large gardens. The houses are curiously builded after a gorgeous and gallant sort, with three stories, one over the other, the outside being of hard plaster, or else of brick, and the inner side well strengthened with timber-work. . . . They keep the wind out of their windows with glass, for it is there much used, and also with fine linen cloth dipped in oil, for by this means more light cometh in and the wind is better kept out.’

In Utopia are no taverns, no fashions ever changing, few laws and no lawyers. All learn agriculture; and each, in addition, a trade. They labor six hours a day, and sleep eight. War is a brutal thing, hunting a degrading thing:

‘What pleasure, they ask, can one find in seeing dogs run after a hare? It ought rather to stir pity, when a weak, harmless, and timid hare is devoured by a strong, fierce, and cruel dog. Therefore, all this business of hunting is, among the Utopians, turned

over to their butchers; and they look on hunting as one of the basest parts of a butcher's work.'

Wisdom is preferred to riches, the formation of character to the accumulation of property. Virtue is nobility. Integrity is the marble statue which survives the sacking of cities and the downfall of empires:

'The Utopians wonder how any man should be so much taken with the glaring, doubtful lustre of a jewel or stone, that can look up to a star, or to the sun itself; or how any should value himself because his cloth is made of finer thread; for, how fine soever that thread may be, it was once no better than the fleece of a sheep, and that sheep was a sheep still for all its wearing it. They wonder much to hear that gold, which in itself is so useless a thing, should be everywhere so much esteemed, that even man, for whom it was made, and by whom it has its value, should yet be thought of less value than it is; so that a man of lead, who has no more sense than a log of wood, and is as bad as he is foolish, should have many wise and good men serving him, only because he had a great heap of that metal.'

To this day tolerance is far from being a general virtue. Persecution has indeed given up its halter and fagot, but it secretly blasts what it cannot openly destroy. In 'Nowhere,' however, it is lawful for every man to be of what faith he will. Each may propagate his creed by argument—never by violence or insult. Religion rests simply on nature and reason, finds its centre rather in the family than in the congregation, holds asceticism to be thanklessness, and bases its unity on the moral and spiritual cohesion of motives. If *Utopia* contains impracticable dreams of political organization, it also anticipates the views and improvements of the latest and wisest legislation. While in England half the population are unable to read, in 'Nowhere' every child is well taught. The aim of the laws is the comprehensive welfare of the labor-class as the true basis of a well-ordered commonwealth. Is it not true to-day that the civilized world, with its palaces, libraries, academies of science, and galleries of art, rests on the solid shoulders of farmers and mechanics? All the improvements in our criminal system are the *Utopian* conceptions of More, who insists, centrally, that the proper end of punishment is reformation, and that the most effective means of suppressing crime is prevention:

'If you allow your people to be badly taught, their morals to be corrupted from childhood, and then when they are men punish them for the very crimes to which they have been trained in childhood—what is this but first to make thieves, and then to punish them?'

**Style.**—Easy and flowing, without pedantry and without vulgarisms; rivalling in purity his great antagonist, Tyndale; so

graphic in description that many of the learned received the *Utopia* as a true history, and thought it expedient to send missionaries to that island for the conversion of so wise a people to Christianity; so buoyant in tone, that in the grave and sullen pages of polemics, it jests, smiles, rails, or drifts into ludicrous ribaldry; for, on questions of religious reform, More was a madman, and sarcasm was at any moment liable to pass into scurrility. Thus, of one Richard Mayfield, a monk and a priest, he says:

‘His holy life well declares his heresies, when, being both a priest and a monk, he went about two wives, one in Brabant, another in England. What he meant I cannot make you sure, whether he would be sure of the one if t’other should happen to refuse him; or that he would have them both, the one here, the other there; or else both in one place, the one because he was priest, the other because he was monk.’

Of a famous invective against the clergy, who, though only ‘a four hundredth part of the nation, held half the revenues,’ he writes:

‘And now we have this gosling with his “Supplication of Beggars.” He maketh his bill in the name of the beggars. The bill is couched as full of *lies* as the beggar swarmeth full of *lice*.’

He looked upon literature without humor, as a banquet without sauce; and, even in combating heresy, conceived it better ‘to tell his mind merrily than more solemnly to preach.’

**Rank.**—A scholar, a lawyer, a theologian, a wit, a politician without ambition, a lord-chancellor who entered and resigned his office poor, a sage whose wisdom lay concealed in his philosophical pleasantry, a theorist and a seer,—

‘Who could forerun his age and race, and let  
His feet millenniums hence be set  
In midst of knowledge dreamed not yet’;

a martyr who laid his head upon the block, to seal his conscience with his blood; the most illustrious figure—save Wolsey—in the reign of Henry VIII; an author who missed the full immortality of his genius by the infelicity of his subjects, but whose massive folio remains a monument of our language in its pristine vigor; memorable as the first in prose to gauge the means of striking the attention, to study the art of arrangement and effect; hence, in the order of time, the first of our great English prose writers. The following letter to his children—in itself an admirable picture—shows an intellect grown capable of self-criticism, possessed of ideas and expressing them by superior reflection:

'The merchant of Bristow brought unto me your letters, the next day after he had received them of you; with the which I was exceedingly delighted. For there can come nothing, yea, though it were never so rude, never so meanly polished, from this your shop, but it procureth me more delight than any others' works, be they never so eloquent: your writing doth so stir up my affection towards you. But, excluding this, your letters may also very well please me for their own worth, being full of fine wit and of a pure Latin phrase: therefore none of them all but joyed me exceedingly. Yet, to tell you ingenuously what I think, my son John's letter pleased me best; both because it was longer than the other, as also for that he seemeth to have taken more pains than the rest. For he not only painteth out the matter decently, and speaketh elegantly; but he playeth also pleasantly with me, and returneth my jests upon me again, very wittily. Hereafter I expect every day letters from every one of you: neither will I accept of such excuses as you complain of; that you have no leisure, or that the carrier went away suddenly, or that you have no matter to write: John is not wont to allege any such thing. And how can you want matter of writing unto me, who am delighted to hear either of your studies or of your play; whom you may even then please exceedingly, when, having nothing to write of, you write as largely as you can of that nothing, than which nothing is more easy for you to do.

But this I admonish you to do; that, whether you write of serious matters or of trifles, you write with diligence and consideration, premeditating of it before. Neither will it be amiss, if you first indite it in English; for then it may more easily be translated into Latin, whilst the mind, free from inventing, is attentive to find apt and eloquent words. And, although I put this to your choice, whether you will do so or no, yet I enjoin you, by all means, that you diligently examine what you have written before you write it over fair again; first considering attentively the whole sentence, and after examine every part thereof; by which means you may easily find out if any solecisms have escaped you; which being put out, and your letter written fair, yet then let it not also trouble you to examine it over again; for sometimes the same faults creep in at the second writing, which you before had blotted out. By this your diligence you will procure, that those your trifles will seem serious matters. For, as nothing is so pleasing but may be made unsavory by prating garrulity, so nothing is by nature so unpleasant, that by industry may not be made full of grace and pleasantness. Farewell, my sweetest children.'

**Character.**—Of keen irregular features, gray restless eye, tumbled brown hair, careless gait and dress,—the outer pictures the inner man, cheerful, witty even to recklessness, kindly, half-sadly humorous, throwing the veil of laughter and of tears over the tender reverence of the soul. He married his first wife out of pure benevolence, thinking how much it would grieve her to see her younger sister, whom he loved the better, preferred before her. As his wife, it was his delight to train her in his own taste for letters and for music. Among his children, he was a loving companion and a wise teacher, luring them to the deeper studies by relics and curiosities gathered in his cabinet. Fond of their pets and their games as they themselves. He would take scholars and statesmen into his garden to see his girls' rabbits or watch the gambols of their favorite monkey. 'I have given you kisses enough,' he wrote them, 'but stripes hardly ever.' In conversation and writing, humor was his constitutional temper. At the most solemn moments of his life, he was facetious. In the

Tower, denied pen and ink, he writes to his daughter Margaret, and tells her, 'This letter is written with a coal'; but that, to express his love, a peck of coals would not suffice. Climbing the crazy timbers where he was to die, he said gaily to the lieutenant, 'I pray you see me safe up; and for my coming down, let me shift for myself.' When life and death were within a second of each other, he bade the executioner to stay his hand till he had removed his beard, observing, 'Pity that should be cut, which has never committed treason.' His fatalistic maxim was:

'If evils come not, then our fears are vain;  
And if they do, fear but augments the pain.'

His character presents many opposite and, unhappily, some inconsistent qualities. Beneath his sunny nature lay a stern inflexibility of resolve. When he took office, it was with the open stipulation, 'first to look to God, and after God to the king.' He laughed at the superstition and asceticism of the day, yet every Friday scourged his body with whips of knotted cords, and by way of further penance wore his hair-shirt next to his lacerated skin. Once an opponent of abuses in the Church, when the Reformation was sprung, he went violently back to the extreme of maintaining the whole fabric of idolatry. Playful and affectionate in his own household, his abuses of power are a cloud on his memory. Free-thinker, as the bigots termed him, he appeals to miraculous relics as the evidences of his faith. In allusion to a napkin sent to King Abgarus, on which Jesus impressed the image of his own face, he says:

'And it hath been by like miracle in the thin corruptible cloth kept and preserved these 1500 years fresh and well preserved, to the inward comforts, spiritual rejoicing, and great increase of fervor, in the hearts of good Christian people.'

Theoretically opposed to sanguinary laws, he spared no pains to carry the most sanguinary into execution. He wished to have it engraved on his tombstone that he was '*Furibus, Homicidis, Hereticisque molestus*'—the scourge of Thieves, Murderers, and Heretics—the last being the greatest malefactors of the three.

**Influence.**—Viewed in active as in meditative life, in public as in private relations, the character, the events, and the works of this distinguished man will be always interesting and always instructive. Under his free and copious vein, the vernacular



idiom enlarged the compass of its expression. To him belongs the merit of having struck out, in advance of his age, and, as it afterward appeared, in advance of himself, a new path in literature,—that of political romances, wherein his successors—among them, Swift—were to be indebted largely to his reasoning and inventive talents. His antagonism to the Reformation could at most prove a transient evil, hardly appreciable, if so much as a retarding force. But the comprehensive dreams of the *Utopia* have haunted every nobler soul. Excellence is perpetual, and all of it exists in vision before it exists in fact. The *Utopia* has long afforded to conservatives a term of reproach applicable to all reformatory schemes and innovations. There is a large class of persons with whom the idea of making the world better and happier is ever regarded with distrust or contempt. He who entertains it is an unpractical dreamer. His project is straightway pronounced to be *Utopian*. Of which the moral, to the wise, is: Look kindly upon the ‘vagaries’ of the ‘dreamer’ and the ‘fanatic’; reflect that what was folly to our ancestors, is wisdom to us, and that another generation may successfully practice what we now reject as impossible or regard with an incredulous smile. The idealizing power of the race—I would have it engraved upon the living tablets of every human memory—is the most potent force of its development. A family of equals,—a community without want, without ignorance, without crime,—a church of righteousness,—a state where the intuitions of conscience have been codified into statutes,—are all possible, just as possible as cultivated America, jewelled all over with cities and fair towns, factories and schools, which no one would have dared to prophesy some hundred years ago. A steam-engine is only an opinion dressed in iron. A republic is but an idea worked out into men. The difference between a savage and an Angelo was once a power of progress. Desire only points to the reserve of power that one day shall satisfy it.

## SIDNEY.

Warbler of poetic prose.—*Cowper*.

**Biography.**—Of high birth, born in Kent, in 1554; at thirteen entered Oxford, where he won distinction as a scholar; at eighteen, without a degree, though trained in polite literature, began a tour of travel embracing France, Germany, and Italy; was in Paris during the massacre of St. Bartholomew; read Plato and Aristotle; studied Astronomy and Geometry at Venice; pondered over the Greek tragedies and the Italian sonnets; returned to England in his twenty-first year, a polished and accomplished man; instantly became a favorite of the Queen and the Court, where he shone as one of the most brilliant; at twenty-two, an ambassador for the promotion of a Protestant league among the princes of the Continent; at twenty-nine, married, and was knighted; two years later, was a candidate for the throne of Poland, but yielded to the remonstrance of Elizabeth, who feared to lose 'the jewel of her times'; shortly after, a cavalry officer fighting in the cause of the Netherlands; mortally wounded in battle, he died on the 17th of October, 1586, lamented abroad, honored at home with a public funeral in the cathedral of St. Paul's, while the whole nation went into mourning for their hero.

**Writings.**—Far from the glittering whirl of the Court, in the shelter of the forest oaks, Sidney wrote for his own and his sister's amusement the *Arcadia*, a romance of love and chivalry, narrated in prose mixed with verse, in imitation of Italian models, with pastoral episodes, in the manner of the Spanish. Two princes, cousins, in quest of adventure, attached to each other in chivalrous fashion, are wrecked on the coast of Sparta, wander providentially and mysteriously into the kingdom of Arcadia, fall in love with the king's two daughters, and, after passing through many severe trials, marry them, and are happy. You will find in it profusion of startling events and tragical or fantastic images,—shipwrecks, deliverances, surprises, abductions, pirates, wicked fairies, dancing shepherds, disguised princes, songs, allegories, sensuous beauties, tournaments of wit. It is less a monument than a relic, not more an image of the time than of the man, who had said: 'It is a trifle; my young head

must be delivered.' In works of courtly taste and impassioned youth, look for excessive sentiment. A lover sends a letter to his love, and says to the ink:

'Therefore mourne boldly, my inke; for while shee lookes upon you, your blacknesse will shine; cry out boldly my lamentation; for while shee reades you, your cries will be musicke.'

Two young princesses have retired:

'They impoverished their clothes to enrich their bed, which for that night might well scorne the shrine of Venus; and there cherishing one another with deare, though chaste embracements; with sweet, though cold kisses; it might seeme that love was come to play him there without dart, or that wearie of his owne fires, he was there to refreshe himselfe between their sweet breathing lippes.'

It is, in part, the knightly desire of effect; in part, the exaggeration of inventive fire, confusing the story by endless digressions, and marring now and then idea, as well as expression, by unnatural refinements. Hence, the *Arcadia* is above the prose-level by its poetic genius, absorbing reveries, and tumultuous thoughts. So, it was long, and may still remain, the haunt of poets. Stately periods, luxuriant imagery, graceful fancies, natural freshness, piercing through the outward crust of affectation, withstanding the revolutions of times and tastes. For example:

'In the time that the morning did strew roses and violets in the heavenly floore against the coming of the sun, the nightingales (striving one with the other which could in most dainty varieties recount their wronge-caused sorrow) made them put off their sleep.'

Or the scenery of *Arcadia*:

'There were hills which garnished their proud heights with stately trees; humble valleys, whose base estate seemed comforted with the refreshing of silver rivers; meadows, enamelled with all sorts of eye-pleasing flowers; thickets, which being lined with most pleasant shade, were witnessed so to, by the cheerful disposition of many well-tuned birds; each pasture stored with sheep, feeding with sober security; while the pretty lambs, with bleating oratory, craved the dam's comfort; here a shepherd's boy piping, as though he should never be old; there a young shepherdess knitting, and withal singing; and it seemed that her voice comforted her hands to work, and her hands kept time to her voice-music.'

Growing Puritanism disparaged poetry, calling the poets of the age 'caterpillars of the commonwealth.' Sidney, therefore, as a knight battling for his lady, wrote, in heroic and splendid style, *The Defence of Poesy*. The conception is noble, the argument profound, the tone vehement and commanding. No art or science, he reasons, produces such invigorating moral effects; and it possesses this excellence by its superior creative power to dress and embellish nature. He says:

'Now, therein, of all sciences—I speak still of human, and according to the human conceit—is our poet the monarch. For he doth not only shew 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 through a fair vineyard, at the very first give you a cluster of grapes; that, full of that taste, you may long to pass further. He beginneth not with obscure definitions; which must blur the margin with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulness; but he cometh to you with words set with delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well-enchancing skill of music; and with a tale, forsooth, he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney-corner; and pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue; even as the child is often brought to take most wholesome things, by hiding them in such other as have a pleasant taste. So is it in men,—most of whom are childish in the best things, till they be cradled in their graves. Glad they will be to hear the tales of Hercules, Achilles, Cyrus, Æneas; and hearing them, must needs hear the right description of wisdom, valour, and justice; which, if they had been barely—that is to say, philosophically—set out, they would swear they be brought to school again.'

It was natural that a spirit so ardent and aspiring should feel and paint the sentiment in which all dreams converge—love. More beautiful than anything in the world were the eyes, lovelier still the soul, of Stella (star) who inspired his adoration:

'Stella, sovereign of my joy, . . .  
 Stella, star of heavenly fire,  
 Stella, load-star of desire,  
 Stella, in whose shining eyes  
 Are the lights of Cupid's skies. . . .  
 Stella, whose voice when it speaks  
 Senses all asunder breaks;  
 Stella, whose voice when it singeth,  
 Angels to acquaintance bringeth.'

To her, he, as Astrophel (lover of the star), addressed one hundred and eight sonnets, besides a number of songs; and in addition to these, wrote sixteen others, chiefly amatory. Some are artificial and cold; others, artless and warm: some forced and painful; others, simple and sweet. There is nothing conventional here—only the troubled heart, and the adored image of the absent, seen through worshipful tears:

'When I was forced from Stella ever dear—  
 Stella, food of my thoughts, heart of my heart—  
 Stella, whose eyes make all my tempests clear—  
 By Stella's laws of duty to depart;  
 Alas, I found that she with me did smart;  
 I saw that tears did in her eyes appear;  
 I saw that sighs her sweetest lips did part,  
 And her sad words my sadded sense did hear.  
 For me, I wept to see pearls scattered so;  
 I sighed her sighs, and wailed for her woe;  
 Yet swam in joy, such love in her was seen.  
 Thus, while th' effect most bitter was to me,  
 And nothing than the cause more sweet could be,  
 I had been vexed, if vexed I had not been.'

And nothing gallant or far-fetched in this,—only real and noble feeling, told in changeful melody:

‘Stella, think not that I by verse seek fame,  
 Who seek, who hope, who love, who live but thee;  
 Thine eyes my pride, thy lips my history:  
 If thou praise not, all other praise is shame.  
 Nor so ambitious am I, as to frame  
 A nest for my young praise in laurel tree:  
 In truth, I swear I wish not there should be  
 Graved in my epitaph a Poet’s name.  
 Nor, if I would, could I just title make,  
 That any land thereof to me should grow,  
 Without my plumes from others’ wings I take:  
 For nothing from my wit or will doth flow,  
 Since all my words thy beauty doth endite,  
 And love doth hold my hand, and makes me write.’

What more genuine, free, and graceful than this invocation to exhausted nature’s ‘sweet restorer’?

‘Come, Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of peace,  
 The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,  
 The poor man’s wealth, the prisoner’s release,  
 Th’ indifferent judge between the high and low;  
 With shield of proof shield me from ont the press  
 Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw:  
 O make in me those civil wars to cease;  
 I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.  
 Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,  
 A chamber deaf to noise and blind to light,  
 A rosy garland and a weary head:  
 And if these things, as being thine in right,  
 Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,  
 Livelier than elsewhere, Stella’s image see.’

But there is a divine love which continues the earthly; a deathless beauty, a heavenly brightness, which fails not, and is the soul’s sovereign beatitude:

‘Leave me, O Love, which reachest but to dust;  
 And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things;  
 Grow rich in that which never taketh rust;  
 Whatever fades but fading pleasure brings.  
 Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might  
 To that sweet yoke where lasting freedoms be;  
 Which breaks the clouds, and opens forth the light,  
 That doth both shine, and give us sight to see.  
 O take fast hold; let that light be thy guide  
 In this small course which birth draws out to death,  
 And think how ill becometh him to slide,  
 Who seeketh heaven, and comes of heavenly breath.  
 Then farewell, world; thy uttermost I see:  
 Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me!’

**Style.**—Always flexible and harmonious, usually decorated and luminous, but ever liable to youth’s unripeness and unequal-



ity; commonly easy and vigorous; occasionally running into trivial conceits and remote comparisons; now, stately or animated; now cramped or irksome; here direct, here overloaded, as of a nimble wit that must regard an object under all its forms, delighting in endless excursions, and perhaps somewhat too studious of display. The demand for what is fine in diction may easily degenerate into admiration of what is superfine. Sidney's style is not a little affected by the prevalent taste for *Euphuism*, in the use of which, however, he is almost always labored and unnatural. The following passage exhibits the artifice to uncommon advantage:

'The messenger made speed and found Argalus at a castle of his own, sitting in a parlor with his fair Parthenia, he reading in a book the stories of Hercules, she sitting by him as to hear him read; but while his eyes looked on the book, she looked in his eyes, sometimes staying him with some pretty question, not so much to be resolved of her doubt, as to give him occasion to look upon her. A happy couple! he joying in her, she joying in herself, but in herself, because she joyed in him; both increased their riches by giving to each other, each making one life double because they made a double life one. Where desire never wanted satisfaction, nor satisfaction ever bred satiety; he ruling because she would obey, or rather because she would obey, she therein ruling.'

**Rank.**—Less potent and comprehensive than other spirits of his age, but more beautiful and engaging than any; a combination of the scholar, the poet, and the knight-errant; a courtier petted and praised; a patriot who failed in ambition, though educated a statesman, because too fine an ornament of the nation to be spared for its defence; a lover who failed in love, marrying the woman he respected, and losing the one he adored; a soldier, a gentleman, and a gifted writer, whose vigor, variety, and idiom in prose mark a decided advance. Largely conspicuous in life, his merits are apt to be lost on the modern reader in consequence of their bedizened dress; for, though his thoughts were noble and his feelings genuine, his fancy was artificial, and tended incessantly to lift his rhetoric on stilts. He will always maintain, however, a high place as an æsthetic critic, nor an inconsiderable one as a sonneteer. Into what final mould his powers would have run, to what heights they might have attained, had they not been cut off so prematurely, is matter for speculation.

**Character.**—So rare a union of attractions is difficult of definition. 'He hath had,' was the simple testimonial of a friend, 'as great love in this life, and as many tears for his death, as ever any had.' His conception of chivalry—'high-erected

thoughts seated in a heart of courtesy'—is the fitting description of his own manliness, and the charm that made him the idol of court and camp. Scholarly, aspiring, brilliant, ingenuous, brave, and gentle. With a keen sense of pleasure and a thirst for adventure, he possessed a gravity beyond his years. Like most men of high sensibility, he inclined to melancholy and solitude. His chief fault—which was the impassioned energy of the age—was an impetuosity of temper, a trait which appears in the following letter addressed to his father's secretary, and containing what proved to be a groundless accusation:

'Mr. Molyneux—Few words are best. My letters to my father have come to the eyes of some. Neither can I condemn any but you for it. If it be so, you have played the very knave with me; and so I will make you know, if I have good proof of it. But that for so much as is past. For that is to come, I assure you before God, that if ever I know you do so much as read any letter I write to my father, without his commandment, or my consent, I will thrust my dagger into you. And trust to it, for I speak it in earnest. In the meantime, farewell.'

The closing scenes of his life display the crowning qualities of his character,—magnanimity and seriousness. On the field of carnage, mortally wounded, and perishing of thirst, a cup of water is brought to him; but as it touches his fevered lips he sees by his side a soldier still more desperately hurt, who is looking at the water with anguish in his face; and he says, 'Give it to this man; his necessity is yet greater than mine.' In his last moments, his chaplain—

'proved to him out of the Scriptures, that though his understanding and senses should fail, yet that faith which he had now could not fail; he did, with a cheerful and smiling countenance put forth his hand and slapped me softly on the cheeks. Not long after, he lifted up his eyes and hands, uttering these words, "I would not change my joy for the empire of the world." . . . Having made a comparison of God's grace now in him, his former virtues seemed to be nothing; for he wholly condemned his former life. "All things in it," he said, "have been vain, vain, vain."'

**Influence.**—A work so extensively perused as was the *Arcadia* must have contributed not a little to liberalize and dignify English speech, and to create, among writers, a bold and imaginative use of words. From him, as from a fountain, the most vigorous shoots of the period drew something of their verdure and their strength. Shakespeare was his attentive reader, copied his diction, transferred his ideas—above all, his fine conceptions of female character. Thus, in poetic prose of Sidney:

'More sweet than a gentle south-west wind, which comes creeping over flowery fields and shadowed waters in the extreme heat of summer.'

Said Shakespeare, after him:

'Oh! it came o'er my ear like the sweet south,  
That breathes upon a bank of violets,  
Stealing and giving odor.'

And Coleridge:

'And sweeter than the gentle south-west wind,  
O'er willowy meads and shadowed waters creeping,  
And Ceres' golden fields.'

And Byron:

'Breathing all gently o'er his cheek and mouth,  
As o'er a bed of violets the sweet south.'

Nor is this all. The moral charm of his character wrought blessedly in life; and the noble feeling, the lofty aspiration, that lives in and exhales from the record of his heart and brain, is a part of the breath of human-kind, to nourish pastoral delight, pure friendship, and magnanimous thought.

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## HOOKER.

There is no learning that this man hath not searched into. . . . His books will get reverence from age.—*Pope Clement.*

**Biography.**—Born near Exeter, in 1553, of parents respectable, but neither noble nor rich, and abler to rejoice in his early piety than to appreciate his early intelligence. They designed him for a tailor, but to his humble schoolmaster he appeared 'to be blessed with an inward divine light,' and therefore at the age of fourteen, through the kindness of Bishop Jewel, was sent to Oxford, where he rose to eminence and preferment. After fourteen years of exhaustive study, he entered holy orders, was made deacon and priest, and married a scolding wife, whom he had allowed to be chosen for him by an ignorant low-minded matchmaker. In 1585, he was appointed Master of the Temple; but the situation neither accorded with his temper nor with his literary pursuits, and he petitioned his superior to remove him to 'some quiet parsonage.' The following is the appeal:

'My Lord,—When I lost the freedom of my cell, which was my college, yet I found some degree of it in my quiet country parsonage. But I am weary of the noise and oppositions of this place; and, indeed, God and nature did not intend me for contentions, but for study and quietness. And, my lord, my particular contests here with Mr. Travers have

proved the more unpleasant to me, because I believe him to be a good man; and that belief hath occasioned me to examine mine own conscience concerning his opinions. And to satisfy that I have consulted the holy Scripture, and other laws, both human and divine, whether the conscience of him and others of his judgment ought to be so far complied with by us as to alter our frame of church-government, our manner of God's worship, our praising and praying to Him, and our established ceremonies, as often as their tender consciences shall require us. And in this examination I have not only satisfied myself, but have begun a treatise in which I intend the satisfaction of others, by a demonstration of the reasonableness of our laws of ecclesiastical polity. But, my lord, I shall never be able to finish what I have begun, unless I be removed into some quiet parsonage, where I may see God's blessings spring out of my mother-earth, and eat my own bread in peace and privacy; a place where I may, without disturbance, meditate my approaching mortality, and that great account which all flesh must give at the last day to the God of all spirits.'

First appointed to a parish in Wiltshire, he was in the following year presented to a rectory in Kent, where the remainder of his life was spent in meditation and the faithful discharge of his duties. Never strong, he died in November, 1600, of pulmonic disease induced by a heavy cold.

**Writings.**—Against the non-conforming Puritans, Hooker, in *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, undertook to investigate and define the right of the Church to claim obedience from its members, and the duty of the members to render obedience to the Church. His opponents insisted that a definite scheme of church polity was revealed in the Bible, thus reducing the controversy to a mere anarchy of opinions about the meaning of certain texts. With that aching for order and that demand for fundamental ideas which characterize a tranquil spirit and a great mind, he founded his argument on general conceptions, and urged that the laws of nature, reason, and society, equally with those of Scripture, are of divine institution. Both are equally worthy of respect. It is the province of the 'natural light' to distinguish between what is variable and what is invariable in these laws, between what is *eternal* and what is *temporary* in Revelation itself. Hence the divinely constituted reason of man does not exceed its rights in establishing certain uniformities and ceremonials on which Scripture may be doubtful or silent. The English Church system may be conformable to the will of God, though not enjoined by any clear text of his revealed Word.

What was transitory or what was partial in the book may be subtracted without injury to its immortal excellence; for its foundations are laid deep in the eternal verities which are the basis of all duties and all rights, political as well as religious.

Its central idea is *law*, as apprehended by reason, which in its essential nature is one with the self-conscious infinite reason at the heart of things. 'May we,' he indignantly asks, 'cause our faith without Reason to appear reasonable in the eyes of men?' And of this uncreated Law which sustains the fabric of the universe, and weds obligation to ecstasy, he says in language touched by a consecrating radiance:

'Wherefore, that here we may briefly end: of law there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world: all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power; both angels and men and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and their joy.'

**Style.**—Methodical, correct, ample, massive, and grand; idiomatic without vulgarity, and learned without pedantry. The Latin order of arrangement was with Hooker, as with all the translators of the period, a favorite construction. For example: 'Brought already we are even to that estate'; 'able we are not to deny, but that we have deserved the hatred of the heathen.' Often it is used with powerful effect, giving to the capital images the emphatic positions; as, 'Dangerous it were for the feeble brain of man to wade far into the doings of the Most High.' Some of his periods are cumbrous and intricate, but in general they roll melodiously on, with the serene might of the soul that inspires and moves them, rich in imagery and noble in diction.

**Rank.**—By universal consent, one of the great in English letters. A learned divine without fanaticism. A persuasive logician, from the chain of whose reasoning it is hard to detach a link, without a fracture. A philosopher whose breadth and power of mind are shown not only in the conception and application of one majestic principle, but in the exhibition of many principles harmoniously related. None before him had his grasp and largeness; few after him have been so comprehensive. As he was one of the loftiest of thinkers, so he was one of the most practical. The idea that shone in the heaven of contemplation, radiated in a thousand directions on the earth. Worthy to be regarded not only as one of the fathers of the English Church, but as one of the chief founders of English prose. It was said by a contemporary Romanist that he had never read an English



book whose writer deserved the name of author till he read the first four books of 'a poor obscure English priest' on Laws and Church Polity; a judgment which points at least to the fact that the 'obscure priest' is the original of what deserves to be called English literature, in its theological and philosophical domain.

**Character.**—Grave, mild, modest, and devout; in youth ardently studious, and in manhood conspicuous equally for learning and for eloquence. As a schoolboy he was remarkable for his continual questioning, but his inquisitive intellect was accompanied with docility of disposition, and the happy teacher spared no efforts to advance the little wonder. His body was feeble, his soul capacious. He suffered much, yet was without fretful or morbid quality, resolved, like Socrates, to make a noble use of racking pains and sordid annoyances. It was in this enlightened and tolerant spirit that he bore the perpetual cross of union with a female of vulgar manners, of unprepossessing face, of snappish and tyrannizing temper. A London hostess, on the occasion of his appointment to preach a sermon at Paul's Cross, had opportunely cured him of a cold. He was easily persuaded that his constitutional delicacy required a perpetual nurse. Her benevolence not stopping here, she offered to provide such a one; and he, in an excess of gratitude, promised to marry her choice. On his next arrival, the artful woman presented her daughter, and the guileless Hooker, the thinker and scholar, the man of innocent wisdom, who would have a nurse-wife, got a shrew. She preferred the more natural office of vixen. When visited, about a year afterwards, by two of his former pupils, he was found tending a flock of sheep, with a copy of Horace in his hand. In the house, they received no entertainment but his conversation, which Mrs. Hooker interrupted by calling him sharply to come and rock the cradle; for she would have it understood that her husband was her servant, and that his friends were unwelcome guests. Cranmer, in taking leave, said:

'Good tutor, I am sorry that your lot is fallen in no better ground as to your parsonage; and more sorry that your wife proves not a more comfortable companion after you have wearied yourself in your restless studies.'

To which Hooker made the characteristic answer:

'My dear George, if saints have usually a double share in the miseries of this life, I, that am none, ought not to repine at what my wise Creator hath appointed for me, but labor—as indeed I do daily—to submit mine to His will, and possess my soul in patience and peace.'

His intelligence was essentially moral; and, by the alchemy of his rare spirit, all knowledge and experience were transmuted into celestialized reason.

**Influence.**—To Hooker belongs the merit of first fully developing the English language as a vehicle of refined and philosophic thought. His work is monumental. It is still referred to as a great authority upon the whole range of moral and political principles. The beauty of his daily life was an agency to create new beauty everywhere. We can believe that it left its impress even upon his wife. A man of noble piety is in a community like a flower that fills the whole house with its fragrance; and the children born there a hundred years later are better born than elsewhere, because that man spread the sweetness of his character there, and uplifted the vulgar when they knew it not.

Above all, Hooker introduced into polemics a new spirit and method—philosophical rather than theological. Against the dogmatism of creed he set the authority of reason, to which he gave so large a place that never, even to this day, has it made a similar advance. It is not difficult to see the immense importance of this change,—a change of which, indeed, he is the representative and reactionary rather than the initial and efficient cause. As long as an opinion was defended by the dogmatic method, whoever assailed it incurred the imputation of heresy, and it was easy to justify his persecution; but when it was chiefly defended by human reason, which leads the ablest minds to the most opposite conclusions, the element of uncertainty entered, and punishment was felt to be wrong when it was seen that the persecuted *might* be right.

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## RALEIGH.

A great but ill-regulated mind.—*Hume.*

**Biography.**—Born in Devonshire, in 1552, the younger son of a family richer in ancient lineage than in patrimony; entered Oxford, but quit it shortly for active life, with no resource but

his enterprise and his sword; at seventeen a valorous leader in the Protestant cause of France, subsequently in the Netherlands, then in Ireland; from the art of war, turned to the art of navigation, which had led Columbus to discovery and Pizarro to conquest; planned an expedition to North America; planted colonies in the wilds to which the royal maiden had eagerly given the name of *Virginia*, but failed, the colonists returning with tobacco and potatoes instead of diamonds and gold; rose to a favorite of the Queen, was knighted, was her chief adviser in the Spanish invasion of the Armada, was active in its destruction and serviceable in Parliament; a courtier commanding the Queen's guard, riding abroad with her in his suit of solid silver, or attending the Court in dress gorgeous with jewels, from the huge diamond which buttoned his feather to his shoes powdered with pearls; intrigued with a maid of honor, and lost the favor which had been the pride of his ambition; married the maid, and was imprisoned with his wife in the Tower; counterfeited the most romantic despair at the Queen's displeasure, and obtained his freedom, but was banished the presence; thought to dazzle her imagination, and went in quest of the El Dorado, fabled to be in the interior of South America, where the sands glistened, the rocks shone, and the houses were roofed, with the precious metal; returned, and wrote:

'Of the little remaining fortune I had, I have wasted in effect all herein. I have undergone many constructions, been accompanied with many sorrows, with labor, hunger, heat, sickness, and peril. From myself I have deserved no thanks; for I am returned a beggar, and withered.'

Restored to the favor of his mistress-sovereign by the brilliancy of his maritime enterprise, he was discountenanced by James I, whose mind had been poisoned by a malignant rival; was tried on a charge of treason, condemned, but reprieved, and instead of being executed was committed to the Tower, where he was confined for twelve years, during six of which his wife was permitted to bear him company; tempted the cupidity of the king by the vision of a gold-mine and a new empire in Guiana; offered to equip a fleet for the adventure, and was released but not pardoned; burned a Spanish town, got nothing of value, was forced to return a baffled dreamer, under the imputations of falsehood and treachery; and to satisfy the implacable Spaniards, was

executed, in 1618, on the old sentence, which had been suspended over his head like the pointed sword.

**Writings.**—His prison-hours were made memorable by the composition in his cell of the *History of the World*. He begins with the Creator and the creation; discusses fate, fore-knowledge, and free-will, the site of Paradise, the travels of Cain; the several floods, whose dates are pretty certain; Noah's Ark, which is proved, with prodigious labor, *not* to have rested on Ararat; descends, through sacred story, to the annals of Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome; closing with the fall of the Macedonian Empire, B.C. 170; and infusing into his voluminous scroll of four thousand years the foolish and the wise sayings of Pagan and Christian philosophers and poets, dissertations on the origin of law and government, digressions on slavery, on idolatry, on art, all the fables that were believed by the learned and the unlearned alike, all that his own eyes had observed in the old and the new worlds, and whatever the peculiar studies of each individual in his cultured circle could afford. Whoever can have patience to wade through the first half of the book, will find, when he reaches the second, that his pains are not unrewarded. In its versatile pages are eloquent and stirring passages, embodying the grave and grand idea of death as the issue throughout—oblivion, dust, and endless darkness. Thus:

'We have left Rome flourishing in the middle of the field, having rooted up or cut down all that kept it from the eyes and admiration of the world. But, after some continuance, it shall begin to lose the beauty it had; the storms of ambition shall beat her great boughs and branches one against another; her leaves shall fall off, her limbs wither, and a rabble of barbarous nations enter the field and cut her down.'

Again:

'If we seek a reason of the succession and continuance of this boundless ambition in mortal men, we may add to that which hath been already said, that the kings and princes of the world have always laid before them the actions but not the ends of those great ones which preceded them. They are always transported with the glory of the one, but they never mind the misery of the other, till they find the experience in themselves. They neglect the advice of God, while they enjoy life or hope it; but they follow the counsel of death upon his first approach. It is he that puts into man all the wisdom of the world, without speaking a word, which God, with all the words of His law, promises, or threats, doth not infuse. Death, which hateth and destroyeth man, is believed; God, which hath made him and loves him, is always deferred. . . . It is Death alone that can suddenly make man to know himself. He tells the proud and insolent that they are but abjects, and humbles them at the instant, makes them cry, complain, and repent, yea, even to hate their forepast happiness. He takes the account of the rich, and proves him a beggar, a naked beggar, which hath interest in nothing but the gravel that fills his mouth. He holds a glass before the eyes of the most beautiful, and makes them see therein their deformity and rottenness, and they acknowledge it.'

This was his great literary work; but his miscellaneous writings are so various that they have been classed under the heads of poetical, epistolary, military, maritime, geographical, political, philosophical, and historical. It was one of his intentions to write an English epic; but his busy life allowed him leisure only for some scattered and fragmentary efforts. These, however, are affluent of grace and tenderness, depth of sentiment and strength of imagination. Thus:

'Passions are likened best to floods and streams;  
The shallow murmur, but the deep are dumb;  
So, when affections yield discourse, it seems  
The bottom is but shallow whence they come.  
They that are rich in words, in words discover  
That they are poor in that which makes a lover.'

Or his reply to Marlowe's *Passionate Shepherd*:

'If all the world and love were young,  
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,  
These pretty pleasures might me move  
To live with thee and be thy love.

But time drives flocks from field to fold,  
When rivers rage and rocks grow cold;  
And Philomel becometh dumb;  
The rest complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields  
To wayward winter reckoning yields:  
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,  
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy bed of roses,  
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,  
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,—  
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,  
Thy coral clasps and amber studs,—  
All those in me no means can move  
To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last, and love still breed;  
Had joys no date, nor age no need;  
Then those delights my mind might move  
To live with thee and be thy love.'

Or the justness of moral perception in the couplet, profoundly true:

'Of death and judgment, heaven and hell,  
Who oft doth think, must needs die well.'

And the noble pathos of the *Soul's Errand*:

'Go, Soul, the body's guest,	Go, since I needs must die,
Upon a thankless errand:	And give the world the lie. . . .
Fear not to touch the best;	Tell zeal it wants devotion;
The truth shall be thy warrant:	Tell love it is but lust;



Tell time it is but motion;	Tell fortune of her blindness;
Tell flesh it is but dust; . . .	Tell nature of decay;
Tell age it daily wasteth;	Tell friendship of unkindness;
Tell honour how it alters;	Tell justice of delay:
Tell beauty how she blasteth;	And if they will reply,
Tell favour how it falters. . . .	Then give them all the lie.'

**Style.**—Easy, vigorous, elevated, as a whole; seldom low, never affected; often ornate, with an antique richness of imagery; showing, when most careful, the artificial structure of Sidney and Hooker. In poetry, simple, sweet, melodious and strong. Spenser called him 'the summer's nightingale.'

**Rank.**—In that brilliant constellation of the great which adorned his period, one of the most distinguished of those who added eminence in letters to eminence in action. Conspicuous in an era prodigal of genius, as a soldier, a statesman, a navigator, and a writer, a valorous knight, and the most splendid of adventurers. An orator whom the Queen, we are told, 'took for a kind of oracle.' An experimentalist in natural phenomena, seeking the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life. In political economy, he anticipated the modern doctrine of Free Trade; in metaphysics, Stewart's fundamental laws of human belief. He is the pioneer in the department of dignified historical writing, and, could he have tamed the wild fire of his erratic dreams, would have won a foremost place among the famous poets of his day.

**Character.**—A genius versatile as ambitious. What strikes us most forcibly is his restless and capacious intellect,—his various efficiency, and his prompt aptitude for whatever absorbed him at the moment; his superabundant physical and mental vitality, which displays itself equally in literature and in action. Haughty in prosperity, base in humiliation. With vision of the moral heights, he could creep in crooked politics, or intrigue in dark labyrinths, and was an adept in the arts of bribery and of flattery. It was thus, when a prisoner for his love-treason, that he gallantly raved of the Queen, aged sixty:

'I was wont to behold her riding like Alexander, hunting like Diana, walking like Venus; the gentle wind blowing her fair hair about her pure cheeks like a nymph; sometime sitting in the shade like a goddess, sometime singing like an angel.'

His principal defect, even when his ends were patriotic and noble, was unscrupulousness as to the means. But we will re-

member that, with boundless desires, he was thrown from the first upon his own resources. He was in a sense to be the architect of his own destinies, and was in a measure to be the creature of circumstances. It was his fate to make headway through subtle and plotting factions.

A courtier holding 'the glass of fashion,' a daring child of fortune, he was also a recluse thinker, equally renowned for his contemplative and his active powers. It was in misfortune, after all, that his noble self was asserted,—never more grandly than when, the night before he was beheaded, he wrote:

'Even such is time, that takes in trust  
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,  
And pays us but with earth and dust;  
Who, in the dark and silent grave,  
When we have wandered all our ways,  
Shuts up the story of our days;  
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,  
My God shall raise me up, I trust!'

His wits were, on all occasions, equal to his reputation. 'Traitor, monster, viper, spider of hell!' cried the Attorney-General, 'I want words to express thy viperous treasons.'—'True,' said Raleigh quietly, 'for you have spoken the same thing half a dozen times over already.' Dauntless in life, reflection had taught him how to die. On the scaffold, after vindicating his conduct in a manly speech to the spectators, he desired to see the axe. When the headsman hesitated, he said: 'I pray thee, let me see it; dost thou think that I am afraid of it?'—As he ran his fingers over its keen edge, he smilingly remarked: 'This is a sharp medicine, but it will cure all diseases.' When he had extended himself for the stroke, he was requested to turn his head. 'So the heart be right,' he replied, 'it is no matter which way the head lieth.' When he had forgiven the executioner and had prayed, the signal was made, which not being followed immediately by the stroke, he said: 'Why dost thou not strike? Strike, man!'

**Influence.**—He contributed to that passion for adventure and discovery which gave at this period an unusual impetus to the mind of man. His exploring captains discovered a virgin soil—Virginia. His attempts at colonization were indeed fruitless in their ostensible aim, but were instrumental to others more successful and permanent; just as this man plays with the light-

ning and brings nothing to pass, while his son after him flashes intelligence through the air. Through the gratitude of later times, less for what he did than for what he strove to do, Raleigh—the capital of North Carolina—preserves his romantic name. He formed the famous Mermaid Club—oldest of its kind—where Shakespeare brought to the feast of wit the brightness of his fancy, and Jonson his sarcastic humor. He projected an office of universal agency, and thus forecast that useful information which we now recognize by the term of advertisement. He joyed to pay the homage of his protection to Spenser, and the severe Milton carefully collected his maxims and his counsels. And so this restless spirit, who seemed, in his ceaseless occupations, to have lived only for his own age and his own pleasure, was the true servant of posterity, who hail him as also one of the founders of literature. Had his life been devoted to letters instead of a variety of pursuits, his success would have been brilliant and lasting; his writings, no longer now a living force, would have been a perennial power. A universal genius is not likely to reach eminent and enduring excellence in anything. The beams of a thousand suns will not fire the softest piece of timber when radiating freely. Unity of effort—a gathering of the soul's energies—a limitation of the field of exertion—is essential to glorious achievement. This shifting, various career suggests a second truth for the education of character,—that inattention to the outer world promotes attention to the inner; that the circumstance which sunders the mind from external things, impels it inward, from the life of sensation to the life of reflection. It was through the Traitor's Gate that our hero passed to a tranquillity and thoughtfulness impossible outside. Within the sombre walls of the Tower shone the celestial light. When the body is imprisoned, the soul may be most free.

'Then 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.'

## SPENSER.

Who, like a copious river, pour'd his song  
O'er all the mazes of enchanted ground.—*Thomson.*

We must not fear to assert, with the best judges of this and former ages, that Spenser is still the third name in the poetical literature of our country, and that he has not been surpassed, except by Dante, in any other.—*Hallam.*

**Biography.**—Born in London in 1552; his parents poor but of ancient fame; educated at Cambridge, where he imbued himself with the noblest philosophies; quit the university to live as a tutor in the North, where in obscure poverty he passed through a deep and unfortunate passion; driven again southward by the scorn of the fair 'Rosalind'; wanted to dream, and sought, with ceaseless importunity, the patronage of wealth, that he might live in the free indulgence of his tastes; was sent as an envoy to France; was a guest of the chivalrous Sidney, in the castle where the *Arcadia* was produced; gained the favor of the Queen, but obtained only inferior employment; went to Ireland as a private secretary; there remained, with appointments more honorable than lucrative, on a grant of forfeited estate, in a lonely castle, from which the view embraced a beautiful lake, an amphitheatre of mountains, and three thousand acres of barren solitude; received a visit from Raleigh, who—

'Gan to cast great liking to my lore,  
And great disliking to my luckless lot,  
That banished had myself, like wight forlorn,  
Into that waste where I was quite forgot';

was created poet laureate, and decreed a pension of fifty pounds; visited England at intervals to publish poems, or to find a situation in his native home, still the persistent court-suitor moving round the interminable circle of 'hope deferred'; tells us how on a summer's day,—

'I, whose sullen care,  
Through discontent of my long fruitless stay  
In princes' court, and expectation vain  
Of idle hopes which still do fly away,  
Like empty shadows, did afflict my brain,  
Walked forth, to ease my pain,  
Along the shore of silver-streaming Thames';

banished, as he said, to his undesired and savage locality as often as he sued to leave it, whence a rebellion expelled him, after his

house and youngest child had been burned by the insurgents; died three months later, in 1599, in obscure lodgings, of misery and a broken heart; buried, close by Chaucer, in Westminster Abbey. Poets held his pall, and cast their elegies into his grave.

**Appearance.**—Face long and somewhat spare, beard closely shaven, moustache full and arching, nose of the Grecian type, forehead well-formed, hair short and curling, eyebrows heavy, eyelids drooping, eyes thoughtful and dreamy, lips full enough to denote feeling, firm enough to prevent its riotous overflow. To the commonplace gossips, he was only ‘a little man who wore short hair, little bands, and little cuffs.’

**Writings.**—As on an inexhaustible, many-winding stream, whose end is never reached, Spenser floated, many a summer’s day, adown the gently-flowing vision of the *Fairy Queen*. To please the Court, the scene is laid in contemporary England, and includes all the leading personages of the day under the veil of knights and their squires and lady-loves:

‘Of Faery Land yet if he more inquire,  
By certain signs, here set in sundry places,  
He may it find; . . .  
And thou, O fairest princess under sky,  
In this fair mirror mayst behold thy face  
And thine own realms in land of Faery.’

To please posterity, to suit this wider and higher application of his plan, the characters double their parts, and appear as the impersonations of moral attributes. He says:

‘I have undertaken to represent all the moral virtues, assigning to every virtue a knight to be the patron and defender of the same; in whose actions and feats of arms the operations of that virtue whereof he is the protector are to be expressed, and the vices and unruly appetites that oppose themselves against the same, to be beaten down and overcome.’

To each of the twelve virtues, each embodied in a representative patron, was to be devoted a book of twelve cantos; this, if well received, to be followed by the exposition of twelve others, the guardians of public faith. In the dedication to Raleigh, he tells us that ‘the general end of the book is to fashion a gentleman . . . in virtuous and gentle discipline.’ And in the person of the Fairy herself, he informs us: ‘I mean *glory* in my general intention, but in my particular, I conceive the most excellent and



glorious person of our sovereign, the *queen*.' In the legendary Arthur, the sun of the whole knightly company, man was to be seen perfected, in his longing and progress toward the Fairy Queen, the divine excellence which is the true end of human effort. Thus the poem may be characterized, in its intent, as a dream of idealism, a poem of the human soul struggling towards the perfect love, which is God, and towards the perfect beauty, which consists not in harmony of color and form, but in the deathless idea which shines through them. Its true scene is not material but mental space, the world of picture and illusion, in which the actual is idealized and the ideal is real. In this enchanted region two worlds are harmonized—the beauty of energy and the beauty of happiness, Christian chivalry and pagan Olympus, mediæval romance and classical mythology; the second imaginary, the first shadowy, both poetic; each, in some sort, a mutilated copy or suggestion of invisible forces and ideas—the heaven of Plato. At this elevation, fancy loses itself, invention overflows, apparitions abound, phrases are expanded into periods, objects are traced with lingering, infinite detail. A wounded giant falls —

'As an aged tree,  
High growing on the top of rocky clift,  
Whose heart-strings with keen steel nigh hewen be,  
The mighty trunk half rent with ragged rift,  
Doth roll adown the rocks, and fall with fearful drift.  
Or as a castle, reared high and round,  
By subtile engines and malicious slight  
Is undermined from the lowest ground,  
And her foundation forced, and feebled quite,  
At last down falls; and, with her heaped height,  
Her hasty ruin does more heavy make,  
And yields itself unto the victor's might.'

All this, because the dream is pleasant, and the dreamer loves to see the living and changing figures rise and display themselves incessantly. Now consider the vastness of the design, which, when completed, was to comprise not less than a hundred thousand verses. What result? Only six books completed,—allegories of *Holiness*, *Temperance*, *Chastity*, *Friendship*, *Justice*, and *Courtesy*, which, however, form one of the longest poems in existence; no movement of the whole; like a train whose large-orbed wheels spin pleasantly without progress; fancy strays, the thread is lost in an ecstasy of adornment; features blend, positions and exploits reappear, imagery fails, and the first book sur-

passes all the others in consistency and splendor; in fact, six separate poems, in which the action diverges, then converges, becomes confused, then starts again; each combining the imaginings of antiquity and the middle age, fair, terrible, and fantastic; a series of airy shapes that waver and are gone; a phantasmagoria, one part allegory and nine parts beauty; while in, under, and over all is a sublime spirituality, the heaven without rent or seam, where no ache or sorrow of spirit can enter, the extreme verge where the realm of mind and the realm of sense unite,—the everlasting Ought and Possible of human life.

The reader will perceive the impossibility of giving the plot in full, if plot it may be called,—

‘That shape has none,  
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb.’

The true use of these magical pages is as of a noble gallery of art, which, without stopping long enough to cloy his perceptions, one visits to forget himself, for solace and delight, to wonder, to admire, to dream, to be happy, and by that experience, to refine and sweeten his tastes,—

‘Lifting himself out of the lowly dust  
On golden plumes up to the purest sky.’

Was never invention more prodigal and brilliant,—on earth a pilgrim, its home on the celestial mountains. Here, in a description of the House of Morpheus, is a suggestion of its endless grace, dreaming pleasure, and picturesque play:

‘*A little lowly hermitage it was  
Down in a dale, hard by a forest’s side,  
Far from resort of people that did pass  
In travel to and fro: a little wide  
There was a holy chapel edified,  
Wherein the hermit duly wont to say  
His holy things each morn and eventide;  
Thereby a crystal stream did gently play  
Which from a sacred fountain welled forth away.*

Arrived there the little house they fill,  
Nor look for entertainment where none was.  
Rest is their feast, and all things at their will.  
*The noblest mind the best contentment has.*  
With fair discourse the evening so they pass,  
For that old man of pleasing words had store,  
And well could file his tongue as smooth as glass:  
He told of saints and hopes, *and evermore  
He strew’d an Ave Mary, after and before.*

And drooping night thus creepeth on them fast;  
And the sad humour, *loading their eye-lids,*

As messenger of Morpheus, on them cast  
 Sweet slumbering dew; the which to sleep them bids;  
 Unto their lodgings then his guests he rids;  
 Where, when all drown'd in deadly sleep he finds,  
 He to his study goes, and there amidst  
 His magic books and arts of sundry kinds,  
*He seeks out mighty charms to trouble sleepy minds. . . .*

And forth he call'd out of deep darkness dread  
 Legions of sprites, the which, like little flies,  
*Fluttering about his ever damned head,*  
 Await whereto their service he applies,  
 To aid his friends, or fray his enemies;  
 Of those he chose out two, the falsest two  
 And fittest for to forge true seeming lies;  
 The one of them he gave a message to,  
 The other by himself staid other work to do.

He maketh speedy way through spersed air,  
*And through the world of waters wide and deep,*  
 To Morpheus' house doth hastily repair.  
 Amid the bowels of the earth full steep,  
 And low, where dawning day doth never peep,  
 His dwelling is; *there Tethys his wet bed*  
*Doth ever wash,* and Cynthia still doth steep  
 In silver dew his ever-drooping head,  
 While sad night over him her mantle black doth spread.

Whose double gates he findeth locked fast;  
 The one fair fram'd of burnished ivory,  
 The other all with silver overcast;  
 And wakeful dogs before them *far do lie,*  
 Watching to banish Care their enemy,  
 Who oft is wont to trouble gentle Sleep;  
 By them the sprite doth pass in quietly  
 And unto Morpheus comes, whom drowned deep  
 In drowsy fit he finds; of nothing he takes keep.

*And more to lull him in his slumber soft,*  
*A trickling stream, from high rock tumbling down,*  
*And ever drizzling rain upon the loft,*  
*Mix'd with a murmuring wind, much like the soun*  
*Of swarming bees, did cast him in a swoun:*  
*No other noise, nor people's troublous cries,*  
*As still are wont to annoy the walled town,*  
*Might there be heard; but careless Quiet lies,*  
*Wrapt in eternal silence, far from enemies.'*

In the paradise of devices, you are unconscious of the sentiment, and when reminded of it, prefer to forget it. You may be told that Archimago, a hypocritical magician (Hypocrisy) lures, because he cannot be detected, Una (Truth) and the Red-cross Knight (Holiness) into his abode; that, while they are asleep, he sends to Morpheus (the god Sleep) for a false dream to produce discord between them; but you are disenchanted, and choose rather the condition of reverie, the gentle sway of the

measure that floats you lullingly from scene to scene. The delight of the eyes is, for once, finer than the instruction of the understanding. The images, in their ideal life, are more potent as poetry, living beings and actions, than as symbols investing a theology.

With this ever-flowing fertility of inspiration, there is no perplexity, no haze. Every object is defined, complete, separate. If it moves a thousand leagues from the actual, so do we, and are not the less interested, because it is not flesh and blood. It is something better, something beyond the importunate trifles which we gravely call realities, something of that to-morrow, always coming and never come, where thought and fancy are free. We take pleasure in its brilliancy or its bravery, without regard to whether it be substantial. We are upborne by association, and grow credulous and happy by contagion. When Sir Guyon is led by the tempter Mammon in the subterranean realm, through caverns, unknown abysses, across wonderful gardens, by glittering palaces, trees laden with golden fruits, we follow, see behind us the ugly Fiend, with monstrous gait, ready to devour us on the least show of covetousness, and enter the infernal edifice, where hideous figures are outlined in the darksome depths, and the shining metal lights up the shadowy horror:

'That house's form within was rude and strong,  
 Like a huge cave hewn out of rocky clift,  
*From whose rough vault the ragged branches hung,  
 Embost with massy gold of glorious gift,  
 And with rich metal loaded every rift,  
 That heavy ruin they did seem to threat;  
 And over them Arachne high did lift  
 Her cunning web, and spread her subtle net,  
 Enwrapped in foul smoke, and clouds more black than jet.*

*Both roof and floor, and walls were all of gold,  
 But overgrown with dust and old decay  
 And hid in darkness, that none could behold  
 Th'hue thereof; for view of cheerful day,  
 Did never in that house itself display,  
 But a faint shadow of uncertain light;  
 Such as a lamp, whose life does fade away;  
 Or as the moon, clothed with cloudy night,  
 Does show to him that walks in fear and sad affright.*

In all that room was nothing to be seen,  
 But huge great iron chests and coffers strong,  
 All barr'd with double bands, that none could ween  
 Them to enforce by violence or wrong:  
 On every side they placed were along;

But all the ground with skulls was scattered,  
 And dead men's bones, which round about were flung,  
 Whose lives (it seemed) whilome there were shed,  
 And their vile carcasses now left unburied.'

The train of scenery never ends. Guyon (Temperance) after the test of gold, is tried by that of pleasure. Side by side with the gloomy vaults and the swarming fiends are the happy gardens:

'And in the midst of all a fountain stood  
 Of richest substance that on earth might be,  
 So pure and shiny that the crystal flood  
 Through every channel running one might see;  
 Most goodly it with curious imagery  
 Was overwrought, and shapes of naked boys,  
 Of which some seemed with lively jollity  
 To fly about, playing their wanton toys,  
 Whilst others did themselves embay in liquid joys.

And over all, of purest gold was spread  
 A trail of ivy in his native hue;  
 For the rich metal was so colored  
 That he who did not well advised it view  
 Would surely deem it to be ivy true;  
 Low his lascivious arms adown did creep  
 That themselves dipping in the silver dew  
 Their fleecy flowers they tenderly did steep,  
 Which drops of crystal seemed for wantonness to weep.

Infinite streams continually did well  
 Out of this fountain, sweet and fair to see,  
 The which into an ample laver fell,  
 And shortly grew to so great quantity  
 That like a little lake it seemed to be  
 Whose depth exceeded not three cubits' height,  
 That through the waves one might the bottom see  
 All paved beneath with jasper shining bright,  
 That seemed the fountain in that sea did sail upright. . .

Eftsoones they heard a most melodious sound,  
 Of all that mote delight a dainty ear,  
 Such as at once might not on living ground,  
 Save in this paradise, be heard elsewhere:  
 Right hard it was for wight which did it hear  
 To read what manner music that mote be;  
 For all that pleasing is to living ear  
 Was there consorted in one harmony:  
 Birds, voices, instruments, winds, waters, all agree.

The joyous birds, shrouded in cheerful shade,  
 Their notes unto the voice attempered sweet;  
 The angelical, soft, trembling voices made  
 To the instruments divine response mete;  
 The silver-sounding instruments did meet  
 With the base murmur of the water's fall;  
 The water's fall with difference discreet,  
 Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call;  
 The gentle, warbling wind low answered to all.'



Never was poetry more luxuriant and pictorial. Never was more of that subtler spirit of the art, which painting can not express—thoughts beyond the visible proof of the canvas. This man was a colorist and an architect, equally of the graceful and the terrible. Had he not been himself, he would have been a Rubens or a Raphael. Pride, in the throne chamber of her palace, built over human carcasses, is thus described:

‘So proud she shone in her princely state,  
Looking to heaven, for earth she did disdain,  
And sitting high, for lowly she did hate:  
Lo! underneath her scornful feet was lain  
A dreadful Dragon with an hideous train;  
And in her hand she held a mirror bright,  
Wherein her face she often viewed fain.’

Her chariot is driven by Satan, with a team of beasts ridden by the Mortal Sins, one of whom is Gluttony:

‘His belly was upblown with luxury,  
And eke with fatness swollen were his eyne,  
And like a crane his neck was long and fine,  
Wherewith he swallowed up excessive feast,  
For want whereof poor people oft did pine.’

And another Envy, than which nothing could be finer:

‘Malicious Envy rode  
Upon a ravenous wolf, and still did chaw  
Between his cankred teeth a venomous toad,  
That all the poison ran about his jaw.  
*All in a kirtle of discolored say*  
*He clothed was ypainted full of eyes,*  
And in his bosom secretly there lay  
An hateful snake, the which his tail upties  
In many folds, and mortal sting implies.’

Who has ever approached the horror and the truth of the following description of the Captain of the Lusts? Note the various images which set forth the wasting away of body and soul, the coldness of the heart, consumed by unholy fire, the kindling of dire impatience, and the implanting of thorny ineradicable griefs:

‘As pale and wan as ashes was his look;  
His body lean and meagre as a rake;  
And skin all withered like a dried rook;  
Thereto as cold and dreary as a snake;  
That seemed to tremble evermore, and quake:  
*All in a canvas thin he was bedight,*  
*And girded with a belt of twisted brake:*  
Upon his head he wore an helmet light  
Made of a dead man’s skull.’

He is mounted upon a tiger, and in his hand is a drawn bow:

‘And many arrows under his right side,  
Headed with flint, and feathers bloody-dyed.’

Beyond the wondrous fairy tale, far within it, often escaping the dazzled eye, is an inner life, steadily beaming there. Everything is referred to it, and, though still apprehensible,—

‘Suffers a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange.’

He is divine who instinctively, in Bacon’s phrase, subordinates ‘the shows of things to the desires of the mind.’ Here as in Plato, a sense of the presence of the Deity, as the vital principle in all things, great or small, runs in a solemn undercurrent beneath the stream of visions. If a nymph is beautiful, it is because she has been touched with this heavenly light, with these angels’ tints:

‘Her face so fair, as flesh it seemed not,  
But heavenly portrait of bright angels’ hue,  
Clear as the sky, withouten blame or blot,  
Through goodly mixture of complexion’s dew;  
And in her cheeks the vermell red did show  
Like roses in a bed of lilies shed,  
The which ambrosial odors from them throw,  
And gazers’ sense with double pleasure fed,  
Able to heal the sick and to revive the dead.

In her fair eyes two living lamps did flame,  
Kindled above at th’ Heavenly Maker’s light,  
And darted fire beams out of the same,  
So passing persant, and so wondrous bright,  
That quite bereav’d the rash beholder’s sight:  
In them the blinded god his lustful fire  
To kindle oft assayed, but had no might;  
For with dread majesty and awful ire,  
She broke his wanton darts, and quenched base desire.

Her ivory forehead, full of bounty brave,  
Like a broad table did itself dispread,  
For Love his lofty triumphs to engrave,  
And write the battles of his great godhead:  
All good and honour might therein be read;  
For there their dwelling was. And, when she spake,  
Sweet words, like dropping honey, she did shed;  
And ’twixt the pearls and rubies softly brake  
A silver sound, that heavenly music seemed to make.’

As Dante was drawn up from heaven to heaven by the eyes of Beatrice, through which he could look into the far Infinite, so was Spenser lifted away from the earthly by those of that

unique, imperishable Beauty which, above all created forms, a noble woman reveals. In holy rapture of Una, he exclaims,—

‘O happy earth,  
Whereon thy innocent feet do ever tread.’

Again:

‘As bright as doth the morning star appear  
Out of the East, with flaming locks bedight,  
To tell that dawning day is drawing near,  
And to the world does bring long-wished light:  
So fair and fresh that Lady show’d herself in sight.’

In wilderness and wasteful desert, she seeks her knight, who has been beguiled from her by the subtle art of the enchanter:

‘One day nigh weary of the irksome way,  
From her unhasty beast she did alight,  
And on the grass her dainty limbs did lay .  
In secret shadow far from all men’s sight:  
From her fair head her fillet she undight  
And laid her stole aside: *her angel’s face*  
*As the great eye of heaven shined bright,*  
*And made a sunshine in the shady place;*  
Did never mortal eye behold such heavenly grace.

It fortun’d out of the thickest wood  
A ramping lion rushed suddenly,  
Hunting full greedy after savage blood:  
Soon as the royal virgin he did spy,  
With gaping mouth at her ran greedily,  
To have at once devour’d her tender corse;  
But to the prey when as he drew more nigh,  
His bloody rage assuaged with remorse,  
And with the sight amaz’d, forgot his furious force.

Instead thereof he kiss’d her weary feet,  
And lick’d her lily hand with fawning tongue;  
As he her wronged innocence did meet.  
O how can beauty master the most strong,  
And simple truth subdue avenging wrong!’

The loftiest, deepest, most angelic element in this genius is reverence for woman—which is only a worship of the supernal charm and attraction rendered visible in her. All the wealth of his respect and tenderness is poured out at the feet of his heroines. In his adoration, he lifts them up to heights where no mortal fleck is visible. In this exalted mood he sings of his bride, in the *Epithalamion*, his marriage-song:

‘Behold, whiles she before the altar stands,  
Hearing the holy priest that to her speaks,  
And blesseth her with his two happy hands,  
How the red roses flush up in her cheeks,  
And the pure snow with goodly vermeil stain  
Like crimson dyed in grain:

That even the angels, which continually  
 About the sacred altar do remain,  
 Forget their service and about her fly,  
 Oft peeping in her face, that seems more fair  
 The more they on it stare.  
 But her sad eyes, still fastened on the ground,  
 Are governed with goodly modesty,  
 That suffers not one look to glance awry,  
 Which may let in a little thought unsonnd.  
 Why blush ye, Love, to give to me your hand,  
 The pledge of all our band?  
 Sing, ye sweet angels, Allelujah sing,  
 That all the woods may answer, and your echoes ring!

Spenser made many miscellaneous attempts in sonnets, pastorals, elegies, and hymns, all fairy-like or mystic, all stamped with the ruling idea, and all striving to express it,—moral sublimity and sensuous seduction.

**Versification.**—Spenser came to the *Fairy Queen* with his head full of Ariosto and the romantic poets of Italy. His exquisite ear had felt the melody of their heroic metre—the *ottava rima*, to which he added a grace of his own, the Alexandrine. The order of rhymes, it will be observed, is: 1, 3; 2, 4, 5, 7; 6, 8, 9. This gave to his stanza a fuller cadence, ‘the long, majestic march,’ well suited to the sober sublimity of his genius.

**Style.**—Luxuriant and spacious, yet simple and clear; seldom rivalled in the charm of its diffusion, the orient flush of its diction, and the music of its recurrent chimes. Many passages, it may be needless to observe, are beautifully harmonious, combining a subtle perfection of phrase with a happy coalescence of meaning and melody. The last, indeed, is often an essential part of the sentiment; and, with ‘many a bout of linked sweetness long drawn out,’ lures the thought along its pleasant paths. The modulation is made spirited and energetic by the variety of pauses. There is no slumberous monotony in these lines:

‘But he my lion, and my noble lord,  
 How does he find in cruel heart to hate  
 Her that him lov’d, and ever most ador’d  
 As the God of my life? Why hath he me abhorr’d?’

Nor any languor in this:

‘Come hither, come hither, oh, come hastily!’

Spenser’s language, of one substance with the splendor of his fancy, would seem to have been chosen rather for its richness of

tone than for its intensity of meaning. Like all masters of speech, he is fond of toying with it a little. Sometimes his alliteration is tempted to excess; as,—

‘Eftsoones her shallow ship away did slide,  
More swift than swallow shears the liquid sky.’

Generally, however, the initial assonances are scattered at adroit intervals, rarely obtrusive, but responsive to the idea. For instance:

‘In woods, in waves, in wars, she wents to dwell;  
And will be found with peril and with pain.’

Or,—

‘A world of waters,  
Horrible, hideous, roaring with hoarse cry.’

Or,—

‘All the day, before the sunny rays,  
He used to slug or sleep, in slothful shade.’

**Rank.**—There had been much poetry, and not a little poetical power, since Chaucer; but the *Fairy Queen* was the first production that might challenge comparison with the *Canterbury Tales*. It was received with a burst of general welcome. The ‘new poet’ became almost the recognized title of its author. It portrayed, indeed, the wonder and mystery of the new life, the incongruous life of the Renaissance, moulding into harmonious form its warring ideals and contrasted impulses. All the past, with its imagery, its illusion, its glory,—and the present, with its rough romantic beauties and gorgeous pageantry,—descended upon the Fairy of Spenser, and, in the mellow light of his imagination, lost the passion of conflict, the grossness of lust, and the tarnish of physical contact.

His invention was extraordinary, and its mode unique. Shape after shape, scene after scene, monstrous and anomalous, or impossible and beautiful, rose from the unfathomable depths, to embody some shade of emotion or an idea; while, in the midst of the rising and commingling visions, he was unperturbed and serene, never hurrying, rarely if ever passionate. Next to Dante among the Italians, next to Virgil among the ancients, Milton surpasses him in the severity of his greatness, Shakespeare in the sweep and condensation of his power. Daring elevations, when they occur, indicate the strength of his genius rather than the habit of his mind. He lacked executive efficiency,—the coördinating, centralizing quality of the highest



order of imagination. But grandeur, intensity, and reflection aside, he is the most purely poetical of our writers. In the union of musical expression, fanciful conception of thought, and the exquisite sense of beauty, he excels them all. Eminent in wisdom, like every other greatest poet, he is also the finest dreamer that ever lived, and, as such, is the inheritance of all future generations. He repels none but the anti-poetical. His 'better parts' will ever interest the lovers of the beautiful, unchangeable amid the changes of taste, as long as riches are sought in the regions of the unknown.

**Character.**—Magnificently imaginative. Captivated with beauty; above all, with beauty of soul, which is the source of all outward charms,—

'For of the soul the body form doth take;  
For soul is form, and doth the body make.'

The true glory of all material things is in the immortal idea which irradiates them; and they are lovable only as they are rendered thus nobly luminous:

'For that same goodly hue of white and red,  
With which the cheeks are sprinkled, shall decay;  
And those sweet rosy leaves, so fairly spread  
Upon the lips, shall fade and fall away  
To that they were, even to corrupted clay:  
That golden wire, those sparkling eyes so bright,  
Shall turn to dust and lose their goodly light.

But that fair lamp, from whose celestial ray  
That light proceeds, which kindleth lover's fire,  
Shall never be extinguished nor decay;  
But, when the vital spirits do expire,  
Upon her native planet shall retire;  
For it is heavenly born, and cannot die,  
Being a parcel of the purest sky.'

The seen is but the semblance; the unseen is the reality, ever fairer as you ascend the graduated scale. Ineffably fair is the spirit's dim but still enraptured vision of the absolute Beauty—God, who, in the objects of sense,—

'Daily doth display  
And shew Himself in th' *image* of His grace.  
As in a *looking-glass* through which He may  
Be seen of all His creatures vile and base,  
That are unable else to see His face.'

This is eminently Platonic. The bent of his mind was ever thus toward a supermundane sphere, in whose untrammelled ether it

might expatiate freely, joyously. To this sublime summit he carried everything, and thus subtleized everything at a touch. Where most men see only the perishable form and color of the thing, he saw the joy of it, the soul of eternal youth that is in it. Yet, with a purity like that of driven snow, he had no lack of warmth. He is, of all our poets, the most truly sensuous; but so chaste and ardent, that when he painted sentiment and passion, or material loveliness, he could not but make them 'of glorious feature.'

Such a one does not wait to get into the next stage of existence to begin to enter it. He sees that the Infinite Life is the world of essence; that it is the meaning which glows through all matter; that out of it flows all goodness, all truth, all enduring happiness on this side of the grave:

'And is there care in Heaven? and is there love  
 In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,  
 That may compassion of their evils move?  
 There is: else much more wretched were the case  
 Of men than beasts: but O, the exceeding grace  
 Of highest God, that loves His creatures so,  
 And all His works with mercy doth embrace,  
 That blessed angels He sends to and fro,  
 To serve to wicked man, to serve His wicked foe!

How oft do they their silver bowers leave,  
 To come to succor us that succor want!  
 How oft do they with golden pinions cleave  
 The fleeting skies like flying pursuivant,  
 Against foul fiends to aid us militant!  
 They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,  
 And their bright squadrons round about us plant;  
 And all for love and nothing for reward;  
 O, why should heavenly God to men have such regard?'

Thus it is that, while he himself was outwardly vexed with discontent, fretted with neglect, his poetry breathes the very soul of contentment and cheer. It is not the gladness of mirth, but the deep satisfaction of the seer; for to such as have gained the point of changeless being, beyond the changing and phenomenal,—

'Their joy, their comfort, their desire, their gain,  
 Is fixed all on that which now they see;  
 All other sights but fained shadows be.'

Sensitive, tender, grateful, devout, learned, wise, and introspective, with 'the vision and the faculty divine,' his own words are applicable to him:

'The noble heart that harbors virtuous thought  
And is with child of glorious-great intent,  
Can never rest until it forth have brought  
The eternal brood of glory excellent.'

**Influence.**—He threw into English verse the soul of harmony, and made it more expansive, more richly descriptive, than it ever was before. More than any other, by his ideal method of treatment, and the splendor of his fancy, he contributed to the transformation of style and language. One so largely and so ardently admired, must have had many imitators. Browne and the two Fletchers were his professed disciples. Cowley said that he became 'irrevocably a poet' by reading him when a boy. Gray was accustomed to open him when he would frame—

'Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.'

Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, and Keats show traces of him. Thomson wrote the most delightful of his own poems in his stanza. Dryden claimed him for a master. Milton called him 'our sage and serious poet, whom I dare be known to think *a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas.*' How so? Because he revealed, in lowly aspect, the ideal point of view; gave to souls a consciousness of their wings; sowed in them the seeds of a noble discontent with prosaic views of life; fastened the attention upon necessary uncreated natures—Ideas, into whose divine atmosphere no man can be lifted, without becoming, in some degree, himself divine. This is the inestimable value of such a character,—that he forms a standing protest against the tyranny of commonplace, against the limitary tone of English thought, enslaved to the five mechanic powers. He and his culture are needed to withstand the encroachments of artificial manners, to counteract the materializing tendencies of physical science, to sway and purify the energies that are too much confined to gain and pleasure and show. The end of a moral being is, not food or raiment or estate, but soul-expansion; and the parent of all noblest improvement is love,—the outflow of desire toward the true, beautiful, and good, which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own. Whoever acts admirably upon the imagination, administers to this effect. Whoever gives the world a pictorial air, contributes to our emancipation. Whoever makes us more intensely and comprehensively imaginative, exalts us into the possession of incorruptible goods. In vain will philosophy

and fashion and utilitarianism oppose such a one. They fare as servants; he is sought after, and entertained as an angel. The ages esteem visions more than bread. Centuries hence, men will be touched—the more powerfully, the more they are advanced—by this artist and his art. His is the ceaseless fertility of the great Mother, the universal Love which was the prayer of his life, of which all loves are but the frail and fleeting blossoms:

‘So all the world by thee at first was made,  
 And dayly yet thou doest the same repayre;  
 Ne ought on earth that merry is and glad,  
 Ne ought on earth that lovely is and fayre,  
 But thou the same for pleasure didst prepayre:  
 Thou art the root of all that joyous is:  
 Great God of men and women, queene of th’ ayre,  
 Mother of laughter, and welspring of blisse,  
 O graunt that of my love at last I may not misse!’

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## SHAKESPEARE.

Mellifluous Shakespeare.—*Heywood.*

The thousand-souled.—*Coleridge.*

His thoughts, passions, feelings, strains of fancy, all are of this day as they were of his own; and his genius may be contemporary with the mind of every generation for a thousand years to come.—*Prof. Wilson.*

**Biography.**—Born in Stratford, in 1564; removed from school at an early age by the reverses of his father, once a prosperous tradesman and official, now on the verge of ruin; applied himself, in a desultory manner, to business; to keep up the reputation of his little town, took part in scrapes and frolics; at eighteen, married a farmer’s daughter, Anne Hathaway, aged twenty-six, to whom he was to bequeath only his ‘second best bed with furniture’; quit home for London, fell into theatrical society, and became an actor and a playwright, serving an apprenticeship in the revision of dramas; six years later, was applauded by the gifted and the noble; added to the trades of player and author those of manager and director of a theatre; acquired shares in the Blackfriars and the Globe; invested in land, farmed tithes, bought the finest house in Stratford, where his wife and three children continued to live; finally retired to his native village,

like a country gentleman and a landlord with a good rent-roll; wrote for the stage, took an active interest in the public welfare, made an occasional visit to the metropolis, lent money, managed his fortune, lived like a cheerful shop-keeper, and, without the care or the time to collect and publish his works, died on the anniversary of his birth-day, April 23, 1616.

Meanwhile, he had projected himself into all the varieties of human character; had mingled with men of vigorous limbs, strong appetites, impetuous passions, and keen intellect; had felt the fascinations of the stormy and irregular Marlowe; in the company of fashionable young nobles, had fed his senses on examples of Italian pleasures and elegances; had tasted misery, felt the thorn of care and discredit; had seen himself undervalued, named, along with Burbage and Greene, as one of 'His Majesty's poor players'; had said in the bitterness of humiliation:

'Alas, 'tis true I have gone here and there,  
And made myself a motley to the view,  
Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear.'

And again:

'When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,  
I all alone bewep my outcast state,  
And trouble deaf Heaven with my bootless cries,  
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,  
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,  
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,  
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,  
With what I most enjoy contented least;  
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,  
Happily I think on thee,—and then my state  
(Like to the lark at break of day arising  
From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven's gate;  
For thy sweet love remembered, such wealth brings,  
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.'

One of his daughters married a physician, the other a wine merchant. The second could not write her name. His only son, Hamnet, died when eleven years of age. So few are the recorded incidents in the outward career of the best head in the universe. Like Plato, he drew up the ladder after him; and the new age has sought in vain for a history of his house-and-street life. His biography, like Plato's, is internal; and the psychologist sheds the light of which the antiquary despairs, which it most imports us to have.



**Writings.**—The poems of Shakespeare are *Venus and Adonis*, *Lucrece*, *The Passionate Pilgrim*, and *Sonnets*. His plays, to several of which his title is disputed, are in number thirty-seven, and, according to the sources from which the dramatist drew his materials, may be grouped as,—

### 1. *Historical.*

DRAMAS.		SOURCES.
HENRY VI, PART I,	<i>Tragedy,</i>	Denied; attributed to Marlowe.
HENRY VI, PART II,	“	Older play.
HENRY VI, PART III,	“	Older play.
RICHARD II,	“	Holinshed's <i>Chronicles</i> .
RICHARD III,	“	More's <i>History</i> .
KING JOHN,	“	Older play.
HENRY IV, PART I,	“	Older play.
HENRY IV, PART II,	“	Older play.
HENRY V,	“	Older play.
HENRY VIII,	“	Chronicles of Hall and Holinshed.

### 2. *Semi-historical.*

TITUS ANDRONICUS,	<i>Tragedy,</i>	Perhaps by Marlowe.
HAMLET,	“	Saxo's Chronicle of Scandinavia.
KING LEAR,	“	Holinshed.
MACBETH,	“	Holinshed's <i>Scotland</i> .
JULIUS CÆSAR,	“	Plutarch's <i>Lives</i> .
ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA,	“	Plutarch's <i>Lives</i> .
CORIOLANUS,	“	Plutarch's <i>Lives</i> .
CYMBELINE,	<i>Comedy</i> (?)	Holinshed and Boccaccio.

### 3. *Fictional.*

LOVE'S LABOR LOST,	<i>Comedy,</i>	Italian play.
COMEDY OF ERRORS,	“	Plautus.
TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA,	“	An old romance.
MIDSUMMER'S NIGHT'S DREAM,	“	Chaucer.
MERCHANT OF VENICE,	“	<i>Gesta Romanorum</i> .
ROMEO AND JULIET,	<i>Tragedy,</i>	Boccaccio.
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING,	<i>Comedy.</i>	Italian romance.
TWELFTH NIGHT,	“	Italian romance.
AS YOU LIKE IT,	“	Lodge's Romance.
TAMING OF THE SHREW,	“	Older play.
PERICLES,	“	Gower.
MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR,	“	“
MEASURE FOR MEASURE,	“	Old tale.
ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL,	“	Boccaccio.
TIMON OF ATHENS,	<i>Tragedy,</i>	Plutarch and others.
OTHELLO,	“	Old tale.
TROILUS AND CRESSIDA,	<i>Comedy,</i>	Chaucer.
WINTER'S TALE,	“	Greene.
TEMPEST,	“	Italian romance.

In these performances, he exhausts all human experience, and imagines more; searches the heart, lays bare its strength and

weakness, its excesses and its rages; divines the secret impulses of humanity; depicts all manners and conditions, high and low, such as the world will always find; shines, like the sun, on the evil and the good; runs without effort the round of human ideas, records his convictions on the questions that knock at the gate of every brain, on life, love, trial, death, immortality, freedom, fate,—the ends of existence and the means. In so vast a field, we must select. Nor, amid so many portraitures, in so great variety of moods, in such profusion of sentiments, can the critic choose more than fragments, entreating the reader to divine the rest. The importance of this wisdom and this beauty sinks form, chronology, analytic completeness, out of notice.

Nowhere is the wonderful range of power more visible than in the varied types of female characters. Some are but babblers,—each the representative of a species; vulgar minds that forget and spare nothing, ignorant that conversation is but a selection, that every story is subject to the laws of dramatic poetry,—*festinat ad eventum*. Thus Mrs. Quickly reminds Falstaff of his promise of marriage:

‘Thou didst swear to me upon a parcel-gilt goblet, sitting in my Dolphin-chamber, at the round table, by a sea-coal fire, upon Wednesday in Whitsun week, when the prince broke thy head for liking his father to a singing-man of Windsor, thou didst swear to me then, as I was washing thy wound, to marry me and make me my lady thy wife. Canst thou deny it? Did not goodwife Keech, the butcher’s wife, come in then and call me gossip Quickly? coming in to borrow a mess of vinegar; telling us she had a good dish of prawns; whereby thou didst desire to eat some.’<sup>1</sup>

She is held in thralldom to the order and circumstances in which her perceptions were originally acquired. Better still is the example of the nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, a never-ending gossip, smelling of the kitchen, impudent, immoral, but faithful and affectionate like a dog. The involuntary associations of her thoughts are imperative. She would advance, but repeats her steps; or, struck with an image, wanders from the point. She brings Juliet news of her lover:

- ‘*Nurse*. I am aweary, give me leave awhile:  
Fie, how my bones ache! what a jaunt have I had!
- Jul*. I would thou hadst my bones and I thy news.  
Nay, come, I pray thee, speak; good, good nurse, speak.
- Nurse*. Jesu, what haste? can you not stay awhile?  
Do you not see that I am out of breath?
- Jul*. How art thou out of breath when thou hast breath  
To say to me that thou art out of breath?

<sup>1</sup> *Henry IV, Part II.*

The excuse that thou dost make in this delay  
Is longer than the tale thou dost excuse.  
Is thy news good or bad? answer to that;  
Say either, and I'll stay the circumstance:  
Let me be satisfied, is't good or bad?

*Nurse.* Well, you have made a simple choice; you know not how to choose a man: Romeo! no, not he; though his face be better than any man's, yet his leg excels all men's; and for a hand, and a foot, and a body, though they be not to be talked on, yet they are past compare: he is not the flower of courtesy, but, I'll warrant him, as gentle as a lamb. Go thy ways, wench: serve God. What, have you dined at home?

*Jul.* No, no: but all this did I know before.

What says he of our marriage? what of that?

*Nurse.* Lord, how my head aches! what a head have I!  
It beats as it would fall in twenty pieces.  
My back o' t'other side,—O, my back!  
Beshrew your heart for sending me about,  
To catch my death with jaunting up and down!

*Jul.* I'faith, I am sorry that thou art not well.

Sweet, sweet, sweet nurse, tell me, what says my love?

*Nurse.* Your love says, like an honest gentleman, and a courteous, and a kind, and a handsome, and, I warrant, a virtuous,—Where is your mother?

*Jul.* Where is my mother! why, she is within;

Where should she be? How oddly thou repliest!

“Your love says, like an honest gentleman,  
Where is your mother?”’

But his heroines are of finer mould. They are the possible of the female mind, seen, for the first time, as in a dream, yet—unlike Spenser's—warm breathing realities. They are all charming or fascinating. Rosalind, sprightly but modest, coquettish and voluble, like a warbling and pretty bird, her tongue running

‘With wanton heed and giddy cunning.’

When Orlando promises to love her ‘for ever and a day,’ she says, with pretended cruelty:

‘Say a day without the ever; no, no, Orlando, men are April when they woo, December when they wed; maids are May when they are maids, but the sky changes when they are wives: I will be more jealous of thee than a Barbary cock-pigeon over his hen; more clamorous than a parrot against rain; more new-fangled than an ape; more giddy in my desires than a monkey; I will weep for nothing, like Diana in the fountain, and I will do that when you are disposed to be merry; I will laugh like a hyen, and that when you are inclined to sleep.’

‘But will my Rosalind do so?’—‘By my life, she will do as I do.’ Or, ‘What would you say to me now, an I were your very, very Rosalind?’ Miranda, whose soul shines upon Ferdinand through her innocent eyes, and he asks in a rapture of wonder:

‘I do beseech you

(Chiefly that I might set it in my prayers)

What is your name?’<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Tempest.*

Imogen, the most artless of all,—

'So tender of rebukes that words are strokes,  
And strokes death to her.'

Accused of inconstancy by her husband, and discarded, she disguises herself in order to be near him; finds, as she thinks, his dead body, and refuses to quit the spot till —

'With wild-wood leaves and weeds, I ha' strew'd his grave,  
And on it said a century of prayers.'<sup>1</sup>

Jachimo, dared by her husband to make trial of her fidelity, hides in her chamber in order to bring away pretended proofs against it. He notes the furniture, removes her bracelet, soliloquizing:

'Fresh lily,  
And whiter than the sheets! that I might touch!  
But kiss; one kiss! . . .

*'Tis her breathing that  
Perfumes the chamber thus:—the flame o' the taper  
Bows towards her; and would under-peep her lids,  
To see the enclosed lights, now canopied  
Under those windows, white and azure, lac'd  
With blue of heaven's own tint.'*

Desdemona, guileless victim of a foul conspiracy,—

'A maiden never bold;  
Of spirit so still and quiet that her motion  
Blushed at itself.'<sup>2</sup>

Cleopatra, voluptuous, ostentatious, haughty, dazzling, child of air and fire:

'The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne,  
Burnt on the water; the poop was beaten gold,  
Purple the sails, and so perfumed, that  
The winds were love-sick.'<sup>3</sup>

What a picture! —

'Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale  
Her infinite variety. Other women cloy  
The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry  
Where most she satisfies.'

Cordelia, whose hallowed tears are —

'The holy water from her heavenly eyes.'<sup>4</sup>

When her father, aged, irritable, half insane, asks her how she loves him, she cannot protest, is ashamed to parade her tenderness, as her sisters have done, in order to buy a dowry by it; is disinherited, expelled; afterwards, when she finds him forsaken

<sup>1</sup> *Cymbeline*.

<sup>2</sup> *Othello*.

<sup>3</sup> *Antony and Cleopatra*.

<sup>4</sup> *Lear*.

and mad, goes on her knees before him, caresses him, weeps over him, prays for him:

‘O you kind gods,  
Cure this great breach in his abused nature!  
The untuned and jarring senses. O, wind up  
Of this child-changed father! . . .  
O my dear father! Restoration, hang  
Thy medicine on my lips; and let this kiss  
Repair those violent harms that my two sisters  
Have in thy reverence made! . . . Was this a face  
To be opposed against the warring winds? . . .  
Mine enemy’s dog,  
Though he had bit me, should have stood that night  
Against my fire. . . .  
How does my royal lord? How fares your majesty?’

Ophelia, sincere and constant, feeling deeply but saying little, and that quietly; delighted when she discovers that her love is reciprocated, yet chary of her words; separated from her lover, yet bearing her cruel fortune patiently; singing herself to rest, when reason is dethroned. What can be more beautiful than the words of the Queen on throwing flowers into her grave?—

‘Sweets to the sweet, farewell.’<sup>1</sup>

A true Northerner. Juliet, deep though easily moved, constant though ecstatic, pure though impulsive, uniting sweetness and dignity of manners with passionate violence. When Romeo first sees her, in the midst of elegance and splendor, he inquires:

‘What lady’s that which doth enrich the hand  
Of yonder knight? . . .  
O she doth teach the torches to burn bright,  
Her beauty hangs upon the cheek of night,  
Like a rich jewel in an Æthiop’s ear.’

She is overcome by the pressure at her heart, and apologizes thus for her maiden boldness:

‘O gentle Romeo,  
If thou dost love pronounce it faithfully;  
Or if thou think I am too quickly won  
I’ll frown and be perverse, and say thee nay,  
So thou wilt woo: but else not for the world.  
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond;  
And therefore thou may’st think my ’havior light;  
But trust me, gentleman, I’ll prove more true  
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.  
I should have been more strange, I must confess,  
But that thou over-heard’st, ere I was ware,  
My true love’s passion; therefore, pardon me,  
And not impute this yielding to light love,  
Which the dark night hath so discovered.’

<sup>1</sup> *Hamlet*.



Of the same sort—heart fluttering ever between pleasure, hope, and fear—is the soliloquy after marriage:

'Come, Romeo! come, thou day in night;  
For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night  
Whiter than new snow on a raven's back. . . .  
Come, gentle night; come, loving, black-brow'd night,  
Give me my Romeo: and when he shall die,  
Take him and cut him out in little stars,  
And he will make the face of heaven so fine,  
That all the world shall be in love with night,  
And pay no worship to the garish sun.'

This is the true Southerner. Lady Macbeth, finally, than whom nothing could be more fearful and appalling; ambitious, commanding, inexorable, never to be diverted from a wicked purpose, when once formed. One obstacle stands between her family and a throne—Duncan; and on hearing of his fatal entrance under her battlements, she exclaims:

'Come, you spirits  
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here:  
And fill me, from the crown to th' toe, top-full  
Of direst cruelty; make thick my blood,  
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,  
That no compunctious visitings of nature  
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between  
The effect and it. Come to my woman's breasts,  
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,  
Whenever in your sightless substances  
You wait on nature's mischief. Come, thick night!  
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,  
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,  
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,  
To cry, hold, hold!'

If you seek the passions of an animal and the imagination of a man of wit, you will find them exemplified in Falstaff, profane, dissolute, corpulent, voluble, and jolly; a jester, a drunkard, and a glutton, who sleeps among tavern jugs, and wakes to brag, lie, and steal. Yet he does not offend you, he delights you. He is himself openly, without malice or hypocrisy. He says to the prince, who berates him:

'Dost thou hear, Hal? thou knowest in the state of innocency Adam fell; and what should poor Jack Falstaff do in the days of villainy? Thou seest I have more flesh than another man, and therefore more frailty.'

He is an Epicurean systematically, and, though a coward, pulls out his bottle on the field of battle to show his contempt for glory and danger. He is never at a loss, and devises a shift on

every occasion, at a moment's warning, with monumental impudence. Arrested for an old debt by Mrs. Quickly, he persuades her to pawn her plate to lend him ten pounds more. Insults, oaths, and boastings flow from him naturally, unceasingly, in geometrical progression. He pretends to have encountered two robbers,—has fought them alone; and presently, as the imagination of his own valor increases with the narrative, the number is four, then eleven, then fourteen. He is always good-natured, unconquerably self-possessed. Exposed or insulted, he laughs, retorts in coarse words, but owes no grudge. 'Gallants, lads, boys, hearts of gold.' 'What, shall we be merry?' A frank, embossed rascal, without thought of being just or unjust. If his vices gratify himself, they amuse others, without infecting them. Here he is, embodied and palpable:

*Fal.* Bardolph, am I not fallen away vilely since this last action? do I not bate? do I not dwindle? Why, my skin hangs about me like an old lady's loose gown; I am withered like an old apple-john. Well, I'll repent, and that suddenly, while I am in some liking; I shall be out of heart shortly, and then I shall have no strength to repent. An I have not forgotten what the inside of a church is made of, I am a peppercorn, a brewer's horse: the inside of a church! Company, villanous company, hath been the spoil of me.

*Bard.* Sir John, you are so fretful, you cannot live long.

*Fal.* Why, there is it: come sing me a bawdy song; make me merry. I was as virtuously given as a gentleman need to be; virtuous enough; swore little; diced not above seven times a week; went to a bawdy-house not above once in a quarter—of an hour; paid money that I borrowed, three or four times; lived well and in good compass: and now I live out of all order, out of all compass.

*Bard.* Why, you are so fat, Sir John, that you must needs be out of all compass, out of all reasonable compass, Sir John.

*Fal.* Do thou amend thy face, and I'll amend my life: thou art our admiral, thou bearest the lantern in the poop, but 'tis in the nose of thee: thou art the Knight of the Burning Lamp.

*Bard.* Why, Sir John, my face does you no harm.

*Fal.* No, I'll be sworn; I make as good use of it as many a man doth of Death's-head or a memento mori: I never see thy face but I think upon hell-fire and Dives that lived in purple; for there he is in his robes, burning, burniug. If thou wert any way given to virtue, I would swear by thy face; my oath should be "By this fire, that's God's angel:" but thou art altogether given over; and wert indeed, but for the light in thy face, the son of utter darkness. When thou rannest up Gad's-hill in the night to catch my horse, if I did not think thou hadst been an ignis fatuus or a ball of wildfire, there's no purchase in money. O, thou art a perpetual triumph, an everlasting bonfire-light! Thou hast saved me a thousand marks in links and torches, walking with thee in the night betwixt tavern and tavern. . . .

*Bard.* 'Sblood, I would my face were in your belly!

*Fal.* God-a-mercy! so should I be sure to be heart-burned.'

An acute head and a calloused heart, with a deliberate and absorbing preference of evil, constitute the perfect villain. Iago is a demon in human form; a trooper and a hypocrite, with the philosophy of a cynic, the maxims of a detective, and the spirit

of an assassin. 'O my reputation, my reputation!' cries the disgraced Cassio. 'As I am an honest man,' says Iago, 'I thought you had received some bodily wound; there is more sense in that than in reputation.'<sup>1</sup> 'What wouldst thou write of me, if thou shouldst praise me?' says Desdemona:

'O gentle lady, do not put me to't;  
For I am nothing, if not critical.'

She insists, and bids him draw the portrait of a perfect woman. He does it characteristically:

*Iago.* She that was ever fair and never proud,  
Had tongue at will and yet was never loud,  
Never lack'd gold and yet went never gay,  
Fled from her wish and yet said "Now I may,"  
She that being anger'd, her revenge being nigh,  
Bade her wrong stay and her displeasure fly,  
She that in wisdom never was so frail  
To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail,  
She that could think and ne'er disclose her mind,  
See suitors following and not look behind,  
She was a wight, if ever such wight were,—

*Des.* To do what?

*Iago.* To suckle fools and chronicle small beer.'

To this impotent and sinister conclusion, all optimism is reduced. He speaks only in sarcasms. He is an inveterate misanthrope, and has a rancorous delight in the worst side of everything. His coolness, dexterity, and profound dissimulation appear admirably where he first enters upon the execution of his design to set Othello and Desdemona at fatal issue:

*Iago.* My noble lord.

*Othello.* What dost thou say, Iago?

*Iago.* Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady,  
Know of your love?

*Othello.* He did, from first to last.

Why dost thou ask?

*Iago.* But for a satisfaction of my thought,  
No further harm.

*Othello.* Why of thy thought, Iago?

*Iago.* I did not think he had been acquainted with her.

*Othello.* O yes, and went between us very oft.

*Iago.* Indeed? Indeed?

*Othello.* Indeed! ay, indeed. Discern'st thou ought in that?  
Is he not honest?

*Iago.* Honest, my lord?

*Othello.* Ay, honest?

*Iago.* My lord, for aught I know.

*Othello.* What dost thou think?

*Iago.* Think, my lord?

*Othello.* Think, my lord? By heaven, he echoes me,  
*As if there was some monster in his thought  
Too hideous to be shown.'*

<sup>1</sup> *Othello.*

Like Mephistopheles, he can justify himself by cogent reasoning. When he gives the advice which is to be the ruin of the innocent and trusting, he likens the atrocious crime to virtue:

'And what's he then that says I play the villain?  
 When this advice is free I give and honest,  
 Probal to thinking and indeed the course  
 To win the Moor again? For 'tis most easy  
 The inclining Desdemona to subdue  
 In any honest suit: she's framed as fruitful  
 As the free elements. And then for her  
 To win the Moor,—were't to renounce his baptism,  
 All seals and symbols of redeemed sin,—  
 His soul is so enfetter'd to her love,  
 That she may make, unmake, do what she list,  
 Even as her appetite shall play the god  
 With his weak function. How am I then a villain?'

His ease arises from the torture he inflicts; his joy, from the success of his treacherous plots. When Othello swoons for grief, he rubs his hands for bliss: 'Work on, my medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught.' When Othello recovers, he inquires, with diabolical but natural indifference: 'How is it, General? Have you not hurt your head?'

In Lear, passion, unrestrained and terrible, rises into colossal proportions. The poor old king, to whom patience is unknown, is the subject of prolonged and vast agony. His daughters, who turn against his age and weakness, are the one rooted idea in the desert of his mind; and their incredible treacheries gradually, through transports of fury and convulsions of misery ever deepening and growing, drive him mad. Nothing can exceed the awful beauty of the meeting between him and Cordelia, when, through her tender care, he revives and recollects her:

'*Cor.* How does my royal lord? How fares your majesty!

*Lear.* You do me wrong, to take me out of the grave:  
 Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound  
 Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears  
 Do scald like molten lead.

*Cor.* Sir, do you know me?

*Lear.* You are a spirit I know: when did you die?

*Cor.* Still, still far wide!

*Physician.* He's scarce awake; let him alone awhile.

*Lear.* Where have I been? Where am I? Fair daylight?  
 I am mightily abused. I should even die with pity,  
 To see another thus. I know not what to say.  
 I will not swear these are my hands:—let's see;  
 I feel this pin prick. Would I were assur'd  
 Of my condition.

*Cor.* O, look upon me, sir,

And hold your hands in benediction o'er me: . . .  
No, sir, you must not kneel.

*Lear.* Pray do not mock me:  
I am a very foolish fond old man,  
Fourscore and upward;  
Not an hour more, nor less: and to deal plainly,  
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.  
Methinks I should know you, and know this man;  
Yet I am doubtful; for I am mainly ignorant  
What place this is; and all the skill I have  
Remembers not these garments; nor I know not  
Where I did lodge last night: do not laugh at me;  
For, as I am a man, I think this lady  
To be my child Cordelia.

*Cor.* And so I am, I am!'

Lear, who thought himself omnipotent, finds himself helpless; and, once pleased with false professions of love, now clings to that which is tranquil because of its depth and fulness. Thus they console each other when, after the triumph of their enemies, they are led to prison:

*'Cor.* We are not the first,  
Who, with best meaning, have incurr'd the worst.  
For thee, oppressed king, am I cast down;  
Myself could else out-frown false fortune's frown.—  
Shall we not see these daughters, and these sisters?  
*Lear.* No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to prison:  
We too alone will sing like birds i' the cage:  
When thou dost ask my blessing, I'll kneel down,  
And ask of thee forgiveness: so we'll live,  
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh  
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues  
Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too—  
Who loses, and who wins; who's in, who's out;—  
And take upon us the mystery of things,  
As if we were God's spies: and we'll wear out,  
In a wall'd prison, packs, and sects of great ones,  
That ebb and flow by the moon.'

The history of Macbeth is the story of a moral poisoning. Frank, sociable, and generous, though tainted from the first by base and ambitious thoughts, he is urged on to his ruin by the prophetic warnings of the witches, by golden opportunity, and the instigations of his wife. He has physical but lacks moral courage. The suggestion of a possible crown haunts him. He struggles, but he is a lion in the toils. He feels the resistless traction of fate, sees himself on the verge of an abyss, and his brain is filled with phantoms:

'Why do I yield to that suggestion  
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair  
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,



Against the use of nature? Present fears  
 Are less than horrible imaginings:  
 My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,  
 Shakes so my single state of man that function  
 Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is  
 But what is not.'

To act, he must be sudden and desperate. When the deed is done, he is horrified, shudders to think of it, starts at every sound, is disturbed by a supposed word from the sleepers in an adjoining room:

'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!" . . .  
 But wherefore could I not pronounce "Amen"?  
 I had most need of blessing, and "Amen"  
 Stuck in my throat.'

Having murdered one, he must murder others, in order to preserve the fruits of his crime:

'I am in blood  
 Steep'd in so far that, should I wade no more,  
 Returning were as tedious as go o'er.'

He has Banquo murdered, and thereafter is in continual deadly terror of the ghost that 'will not down':

'Prithee, see there! Behold! look! lo! how say you?  
 Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.  
 If charnel-houses and our graves must send  
 Those that we bury back, our monuments  
 Shall be the maws of kites. . . .  
 The times have been  
 That, when the brains were out, the man would die,  
 And there an end; but now they rise again,  
 With twenty mortal murders on their crowns,  
 And push us from our stools: . . .  
 Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee!  
 Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;  
 Thou hast no speculation in those eyes  
 Which thou dost glare with!'

A habit of slaughter, mechanical smiles, and a fixed belief in destiny are all that remain:

'Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
 And then is heard no more: it is a tale  
 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
 Signifying nothing.'

Yet we sympathize with him in that fine close of thoughtful melancholy:

‘My way of life  
Is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf;  
And that which should accompany old age,  
As honor, love, obedience, troops of friends,  
I must not look to have; but in their stead,  
Curses not loud but deep, month-honor, breath  
Which the poor heart would fain deny, but dare not.’

Hamlet is a metaphysician and a psychologist; a soul of sensibility, hope, refinement, and thought, with every kind of culture except the culture of active life, forced from its natural bias by extreme misfortune. He has seen only the beauty of humanity, and at once sees all its vileness in his *mother*:

‘O that this too, too solid flesh would melt,  
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!  
Or that the Everlasting had not fix’d  
His canon ‘gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!  
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,  
Seem to me all the uses of this world!  
Fie on’t! ah fie! ‘tis an unweeded garden,  
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature  
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!  
But two months dead: nay, not so much, not two:  
So excellent a king, . . . so loving to my mother,  
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven  
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth! . . .  
And yet, within a month,—  
Let me not think on’t,—Frailty, thy name is woman!—  
A little month, or ere those shoes were old  
With which she follow’d my poor father’s body, . . .  
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears  
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,  
She married.’

Then appears the ghost in the night, to inform him of the fratricide, and enjoin him to avenge the crime:

‘Hold, hold, my heart,  
And you my sinews, grow not instant old,  
But bear me stiffly up! Remember thee!  
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat  
In this distracted globe. Remember thee!  
Yea, from the table of my memory  
I’ll wipe away all trivial fond records,  
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past, . . .  
And thy commandment all alone shall live.’

Henceforth he is a sceptic. His distress is transferred to the general account. The universe is tinged with the color of his own ideas. Sadness clings to him like a malady:

‘I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, foregone all custom of exercises, and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o’erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. What

a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me: no, nor woman neither.'

He doubts everything, doubts immortality, even doubts Ophelia, asks her, 'Are you honest?' Doubts himself, says to her: 'We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us.' To a hopeless philosophy, the world is a dull blank, and man a grinning skull. In this mood, the unconscious Hamlet stumbles on the destined grave of Ophelia, and pauses to muse on death and decay. He comments on the skulls which the grave-digger throws up. This may be the 'pate of a politician, one that would circumvent God'; or of a courtier, 'which could say, "Good morrow, sweet lord!"' This may be a lawyer's:

'Where be his quiddities now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery?'

Here is another. It is Yorick's:

'A fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chap-fallen? *Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor she must come; make her laugh at that.*

The base affinities of the body are irresistibly attractive to his curiosity. Did Alexander look like this? Even so. The highest are but animate clay, and return to basest uses. 'Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, *till he find it stopping a bung-hole?*' This surplus of imagination disqualifies Hamlet for action. He is forever analyzing his own emotions and motives, and does nothing because he sees two ways of doing it. He is continually diverted from his purpose by his scruples. He spares his uncle because he finds him praying, and waits for some more fatal opportunity, 'that has no relish of salvation in it.' He is conscious of his defect, reproves himself for it, tries to reason himself out of it:

'How all occasions do inform against me,  
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,  
If his chief good and market of his time  
Be but to sleep and feed? . . .

I do not know

Why yet I live to say, this thing's to do; . . .

O, from this time forth,

My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth.'

He only alternates between enthusiasm and inactivity. His triumphs in words are rocket-bursts of momentary splendor. Of deliberate energy he is not capable. If he plunges a sword into a breast, he does it in a fit of excitement, on a sudden impulse from without. So his strength, in the moment of its final extinction, leaps up to accomplish the punishment of the malefactor. It was thus that he had killed Polonius, his brooding bitterness leaving him without remorse:

*King.* Now Hamlet, where's Polonius?

*Hamlet.* At supper.

*King.* At supper! where?

*Hamlet.* Not where he eats, but where he is eaten: a certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him.'

*Hamlet* is an enigma, never wholly explicable and forever suggestive.

The real is one great field of Shakespeare's power; the fantastical is another,—the supernatural world, the world of apparitions. We have elsewhere seen a variety of this life in the witches of *Macbeth*. Never were so exquisitely imagined, sustained, or expressed, the nimble genii, the bodiless sylphs, the dreamy population of the moonlit forests. Prospero's enchanted isle is full of—

'Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.  
Sometimes a thousand twanging instruments  
Will hum about mine ears, and sometimes voices,  
That if I then had waked after long sleep,  
Would make me sleep again; and then in dreaming,  
The clouds methought would open, and show riches  
Ready to drop upon me: when I wak'd  
I cried to dream again.'<sup>1</sup>

Ariel, delicate as an abstraction of the dawn and vesper sunlights, flies around shipwrecked men to console them, spreads glowing visions before lovers, and executes his mission with the swiftness of thought:

'Where the bee sucks, there suck I:  
In a cowslip's bell I lie. . . .  
Merrily, merrily shall I live now  
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough. . . .  
I drink the air before me, and return  
Or e'er your pulse twice beat.'<sup>2</sup>

When Titania, Queen of the Fairies, contends with Oberon, her husband, for the retention of her favorite page, of whom he

<sup>1</sup> *Tempest.*      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

seeks to deprive her, the frightened elves hide in the acorn cups. Oberon comes off second best, and, by way of retaliation, drops upon Titania's sleeping eyes the juice of a magic flower, which changes her heart:

'What thou seest when thou dost wake  
Do it for thy true love take;  
Love and languish for his sake:  
Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,  
Pard, or boar with bristled hair,  
In thy eye that shall appear  
When thou wak'st, it is thy dear;  
Wake, when some vile thing is near.'<sup>1</sup>

The result is, that she finds herself enamored of Bottom, a stupid fellow with an ass's head:

'Out of this wood do not desire to go:  
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no. . . .  
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee;  
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,  
And sing, while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep,  
And I will purge thy mortal grossness so,  
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.'

She calls her fairy attendants:

'Be kind and courteous to this gentleman,  
Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes;  
Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,  
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries:  
The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,  
And for night tapers crop their waxen thighs,  
And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,  
To have my love to bed, and to arise;  
And pluck the wings from painted butterflies,  
To fan the moon-beams from his sleeping eyes.' . . .

Then:

'Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,  
While I thy *amiable cheeks* do coy  
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,  
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.'

To all this divine tenderness, her love makes characteristic reply:

'*Bot.* Where's Peas-blossom?

*Peas.* Ready.

'*Bot.* *Scratch my head*, Peas-blossom. Where's Monsieur Cobweb?

*Cob.* Ready.

'*Bot.* Monsieur Cobweb, good monsieur, get up your weapons in your hand, and kill me a *red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle*; and, good monsieur, bring me the honey-bag. *Do not fret yourself too much with the action, monsieur*; and, good monsieur, have a care the honey-bag break not; *I would be loth to have you overflown with a honey-bag*, signior. Where's Monsieur Mustard-seed?

*Must.* Ready.

'*Bot.* Give me your fist, Monsieur Mustard-seed. Pray you, leave your courtesy, good monsieur.

*Must.* What's your will?

<sup>1</sup> *Midsummer Night's Dream.*



*Bot.* Nothing, good monsieur, but to help Cavaliero Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, monsieur; for *methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face*; and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me I must scratch.

*Tit.* What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?

*Bot.* I have a reasonable ear in music: let us have *the tongs and the bones*.

*Tit.* Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

*Bot.* Truly a peck of provender. I could munch your *good dry oats*. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle of hay. Good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow.

*Tit.* I have a venturous fairy, that shall seek

The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new nuts.

*Bot.* *I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas*:—but, I pray you, let none of your people stir me; I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

*Tit.* Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.

Fairies, begone, and be all ways away.

So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle

Gently entwist;—the female ivy so

Enrings *the barky fingers* of the elm.

O, how I love thee! How I dote on thee!

Was ever such extent of action? such diverse creation? such mastery of situation and form?

It is this poet's prerogative to have *thought* more finely and more extensively than all other poets combined. Not the least of the emblazonries upon his shield is his teeming fertility of fine ideas and sentiments, universally intelligible, and applicable to the circumstances of every human being. For instance, as merest suggestions of the golden bead-roll that might be gathered from his works:

'Tis the mind that makes the body rich.'

'How ill white hairs become a fool and jester!'

'Death lies on her, like an untimely frost  
Upon the sweetest flower of all the field.'

'Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny.'

'Violent delights have violent ends,  
And in their triumph die.'

'Our doubts are traitors,  
And make us lose the good we oft might win,  
By fearing to attempt.'

'Good name, in man and woman, dear my lord,  
Is the immediate jewel of their souls.'

'For aught that ever I could read,  
Could ever hear by tale or history,  
The course of true love never did run smooth.'

'The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together: our virtues would be proud if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair if they were not cherished by our virtues.'

'Never durst poet touch a pen to write  
Until his ink were temper'd with love's sighs;

O, then his lines would ravage savage ears,  
And plant in tyrants mild humility.'

'Tis better to be lowly born,  
And range with humble livers in content,  
Than to be perk'd up in glistening grief,  
And wear a golden sorrow.'

'There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st,  
But in his motion like an angel sings,  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;  
Such harmony is in immortal souls;  
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.'

'The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temple, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit shall dissolve;  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind.'

'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 imprisoned in the viewless winds,  
And blown with restless violence about  
The pendent world; or to be worse than worst  
Of those, that lawless and uncertain thoughts  
Imagine howling!—'tis too horrible!'

Perhaps there is a mood in the life of every thoughtful person when he feels, and in a sense truly, that human existence is a little tract of feverish vigils, islanded by a shoreless ocean of oblivion:

'We are such stuff  
As dreams are made of, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.'

Still, in his higher, serener altitudes, he will bid us do our dream duties:

'To thine own self be true;  
And it must follow as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.'

And still he believes in the immortal essence of the dreamer; and will say with Hamlet, of the ghost, though his teeth chatter:

'I do not set my life at a *pin's* fee;  
And for my *soul*, what can it do to *that*,  
Being a thing immortal as itself?'

When, too, a man has tried wearily but vainly to adjust the infinite part of him to the finite, or, in learning to prescribe a narrower boundary for the things he expected to obtain, has felt

stealing upon him an unwelcome conviction of the vanity of human hopes, he may think,—

'There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will.'<sup>1</sup>

Or this?—

'That we would do,  
We should do when we would; for this *would* changes,  
And hath abatements, and delays as many  
As there are tongues, are hands, are instruments.'

But, with a truer insight, he will confess this to be but a fragment, a partial account, of our complex nature:

'Our remedies oft in *ourselves* do lie,  
Which we ascribe to *heaven; the fated sky*  
Gives us *free scope*, only doth backward push  
Our slow designs when we ourselves are dull.'<sup>2</sup>

Lately Tyndall, of the advanced materialists, declared at Birmingham that 'the robber, the ravisher, and the murderer offend because they can not help offending.' But three hundred years before, at Stratford-on-Avon, a far greater than Tyndall proclaimed in words that will never die:

'This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune,—often the surfeit of our own behavior,—we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars: *as if we were villains by necessity*; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, *by a divine thrusting on*: an admirable evasion of abominable man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! . . . Tut, I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my birth.'<sup>3</sup>

Lord Bacon wished that a science of the human passions might be elaborated. He could have found it in Shakespeare. The parts are there, needing only to be combined into a consistent whole. Underlying and penetrating them is the Moral Law. They disclose a constantly recurring emphasis, a pervading agency, of the two grand factors in moral being,—the motive

<sup>1</sup> *Hamlet*. M. Taine, intent upon the confirmation of a theory, would have Shakespeare define man as a 'nervous machine' led at random by determinate and complex circumstances. But the eminent Frenchman, more brilliant than profound, has, in the passages he cites, not only generalized from inadequate data, but has failed to discriminate between dramatic and philosophical or theological significance. It is when we have divested ourselves of our proper humanity that life becomes a walking shadow—an automaton. Did M. Taine note this?—

'Refrain to-night,  
And that shall lend a kind of easiness  
To the next abstinence: the next more easy;  
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,  
And either curb the devil, or throw him out,  
With wondrous potency.'

<sup>2</sup> *All's Well that Ends Well*.      <sup>3</sup> *King Lear*.

force and the perceptive faculty,—*Free-Will* and *Conscience*. Let us hear a few of the observations which this anatomist of the heart, by the simple exposition of human conduct, has made in the sphere of the latter. For example, of the monitory function of conscience, the collision and struggle of opposite impulses:

‘Conscience is a thousand swords.’<sup>1</sup>

Or,—

*First Murd.* How dost thou feel thyself now?

*Second Murd.* ‘Faith, some certain dregs of conscience are yet within me.

*First Murd.* Remember our reward, when the deed is done.

*Second Murd.* ‘Zounds, he dies: I had forgot the reward.

*First Murd.* Where is thy conscience now?

*Second Murd.* In the Duke of Gloucester’s purse.

*First Murd.* So when he opens his purse to give us our reward, thy conscience flies out.

*Second Murd.* ‘Tis no matter. Let it go; there’s few or none will entertain it.

*First Murd.* *How if it come to thee again?*

*Second Murd.* I’ll not meddle with it: it is a dangerous thing: it makes a man a coward: a man cannot steal, but it accuseth him; a man cannot swear, but it check him; . . . ‘tis a blushing shamefaced spirit that mutinies in a man’s bosom; it fills one full of obstacles: it made me once restore a purse of gold that by chance I found; it beggars any man that keeps it: it is turned out of all towns and cities for a dangerous thing. . . .

*First Murd.* ‘Zounds, it is even now at my elbow, persuading me not to kill the duke.’<sup>2</sup>

Or,—

*Macb.* If it were done *when* ‘tis done, then ‘twere well  
It were done quickly: if the assassination  
Could trammel up the *consequence*, and catch  
With his surcease success; that but this blow  
Might be the be-all and the end-all *here*,  
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,  
We’d jump the *life to come*. But in these cases  
We still have judgment here; that we but teach  
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return  
To plague the inventor: . . .

This Duncan

Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been  
So clear in his great office, that his virtues  
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against  
The deep damnation of his taking-off;  
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,  
Striding the blast, or heaven’s cherubim, horse  
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,  
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye  
That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur  
To prick the sides of my intent, but only  
Vaulting ambition, which o’erleaps itself.’<sup>3</sup>

More powerful still,—

‘Since Cassius first did whet me against Cæsar,  
I have not slept.

Between the acting of a dreadful thing

<sup>1</sup> *Richard III.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Macbeth.*

And the first motion, all the interim is  
 Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream:  
 The *genius* and the *mortal instruments*  
 Are then in council; and the state of man,  
 Like to a little kingdom, suffers then  
 The nature of an *insurrection*.<sup>1</sup>

The timidity of guilt, its mental and physical effects,—the soul accusing itself:

'Suspicion always haunts the guilty mind.'<sup>2</sup>  
 'How is't with me when every noise appals me?'<sup>3</sup>  
 'Guiltiness will *speak*, though tongues were out of use?'<sup>4</sup>  
 'Methought I heard a voice cry, "*Sleep no more!*  
 Macbeth does murder sleep;" . . .  
 Still it cried, "*Sleep no more!*" to all the house:  
 "Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor  
 Shall sleep no more; Macbeth shall sleep no more."<sup>5</sup>

And so Lady Macbeth, at whose heart, when royalty crowns her and royal robes enfold her, gnaws the undying worm:

'*Naught's had — all's spent*  
 Where our desire is had without content.  
 'Tis safer to be that which we destroy  
 Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.'

The boldness of innocence:

'What stronger *breastplate* than a heart *untainted*?  
 Thrice is he *armed* that hath his quarrel *just*,  
 And he but *naked*, though locked up in *steel*,  
 Whose conscience with injustice is *corrupted*.'<sup>6</sup>

Its peaceful, cheering, commanding effect:

'I feel within me  
 A peace above all earthly dignities—  
 A still and quiet conscience.'<sup>6</sup>

To sum up all:

'Mark but my fall, and that that ruin'd me.  
 Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition:  
 By that sin fell the angels; how can man, then,  
 The image of his Maker, hope to win by it?  
 Love thyself last; cherish those hearts that hate thee;  
 Corruption wins not more than honesty.  
 Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace,  
 To silence envious tongues. Be just, and fear not:  
 Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's,  
 Thy God's and truth's.'<sup>7</sup>

What altitudes did this man not reach? What depths did not his plummet sound? What domain of consciousness did he not extend?

<sup>1</sup> *Cæsar*. <sup>2</sup> *Henry IV*. <sup>3</sup> *Macbeth*. <sup>4</sup> *Ibid*. <sup>5</sup> *Henry VI*. <sup>6</sup> *Henry VIII*. <sup>7</sup> *Ibid*.



**Originality.**—A few years ago the most eminent living writer<sup>1</sup> of Holland said to a congress of authors and publishers at Brussels: ‘For nearly forty years I have lived principally by robbery and theft.’ He justified his practice by the example of Virgil, Dante, Tasso, Milton, Voltaire, Schiller, and others. Every man is receptive. The greatest are the most indebted. Chaucer’s opulence has fed many pensioners, but he was himself a huge borrower, using Gower and the Italians like stone-quarries. Shakespeare, like every master, is at once heir and dispenser. He has no credit of design. His materials, as the table shows, were already prepared. He absorbed all the light anywhere radiating. He borrowed not only the plot, but often and extensively the very terms. Read Plutarch’s *Lives* for the originals of *Julius Cæsar*. Out of 6,043 lines in *Henry VI*, 1,771 were written by some antecedent author; 2,373 by Shakespeare on the foundation laid by his predecessors; and only 1,899 by himself alone!<sup>2</sup> Ready-made plots, solitary thoughts, fortunate expressions were at hand, but he organized, enriched, and vivified them. Of little value where he found them, they were priceless where he left them. ‘Thought,’ says Emerson, ‘is the property of him who can entertain it; and of him who can adequately place it.’

**Versification.**—He had no system, no mannerism, but the true secret of blank verse—the adaptation of words and rhythms to the sense contained in them. Thought runs before expression and moulds it to its own peculiar uses. Hence the defective and redundant lines, and other rhythmic variations, as the various distribution of the time-values within a bar, by which Shakespeare out of the bare type of blank verse has brought such marvellous and subtle music.

**Style.**—His versification is powerful, sweet and varied, naturally and enduringly musical. It was the sweetness of his utterance that gave to his first readers their chief delight. To them, he was the ‘honey-tongued.’ His diction is appropriate to the persons who use it, and to the idea or sentiment it conveys.

The dominant feature of his style is impassioned luxuriance. It is the translation of abstract thoughts into visible images,—

<sup>1</sup> Van Lennep.<sup>2</sup> Malone’s computation.

thoughts that come of themselves, thrown out from the furnace of invention by the seething, whirling energies of passion, crowded and contorted; images that unfold like a series of paintings, involuntarily, in mingled contrasts, copious, jumbled, flaming. Thus Hamlet to the queen's question, 'What have I done?' answers as if his brain were on fire:

'Such an act  
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,  
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose  
From the fair forehead of an innocent love,  
And sets a blister there, makes marriage-vows  
As false as dicers' oaths: O, such a deed  
As from the body of contraction plucks  
The very soul, and sweet religion makes  
A rhapsody of words; heaven's face doth glow:  
Yea, this solidity and compound mass,  
With tristful visage, as against the doom,  
Is thought-sick at the act.'

Whatever the situation, he is exuberant because he is buried and absorbed in it. All objects shrink and expand to serve him, are transfigured by his rapture. Thus,—

'The morning steals upon the night,  
Melting the darkness.'

Or,—

'How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!'

And,—

'The strong based promontory  
Have I made shake, and by the spurs plucked up  
The pine and cedar.'

To the excited soul, metaphor is a necessity. It thinks of no rules, and requires none. It studies not to be just or clear, but attains life. It seizes ideas and figures without a consciousness of its movements, and hurls them with an energy like to the supernatural. Its condensation and confusion abide no criticism, and heed none. As the result of inspiration, they mark the suddenness and the breaks of the inner and divine afflatus.

**Rank.**—To excel in pathos, in wit, or in humor; in sublimity, as Milton; in intensity, as Chaucer; or in remoteness, as Spenser,—would form a great poet; but to unite all, as Shakespeare has done, is—

*'To get the start of the majestic world,  
And bear the palm alone!'*

Others have equalled or surpassed him in some particular excellence, but no man ever had at once such strength and variety of

imagination. He has grasped all the diversities of rank, sex, and age. His imperial muse has swept the poles of existence—the human and the superhuman. His characters are legion; but—whether sage or idiot, king or beggar, queen or nurse, hero or clown, plotting villain or sportive fairy—all are distinct, all speak and act with equal truth, all are inspired by the artist's animation. No other ever saw the world of nature and of mind from so many points of view. He *is* all that he imaginatively *sees*. Thus his figures acquire a relief and color which create illusion. They are so consistent and vital that we seem to know them, not by description, but by intercourse.

If we seek to refer this preëminence to the possession of any peculiar quality, we think it may be found in the superior power of grouping men in natural classes by an insight of general laws. His penetrative genius discerns the common attributes of individuals; his dramatic genius gathers them up into one conception, and embodies that in a type; his poetic genius lifts it into an ideal region, where, under circumstances more propitious, it may find a free and full development. Each character is thus the ideal head of a family. Each is rooted in humanity. Each is an impassioned *representative*. Each, therefore, is a species individualized. You will find many that resemble it, but none *identical* with it. In actual existence, there is no Falstaff, though there be multitudes *like* him. *Vital generalization* is thus the secret of Shakespeare's transcendent superiority over all other writers. His personages are of no locality, no sect. They belong to all regions, and to all ages. This is the essential principle of highest literature,—that it is addressed to man as man, not to men as they are parted into trades and professions. Its audience-chamber is the globe. Its touches of nature make the whole world kin.

We are not, however, to think of Shakespeare as having achieved his work by the power of his single genius. *He was fortunately born*. The tide of thoughts and events was at its flood. Contemporary ideas and necessities forced him on. He stood, like every greatest man, where all hands pointed in the direction in which he should go. Generations pioneered his road. Noble conceptions and a noble school of execution awaited him. Filled with the power of that spirit which prevailed widely

around him and formed his environment, he carried them to the summit of excellence. The topstone of Bunker Hill Monument is highest only because it rests on every block underneath; the lowest and smallest helps to hold it there.

**Character.**—Norman by the father, Saxon by the mother, Shakespeare had the English duality. He combined the Oriental soaring of the first with the grip and exactitude of the second. Imperfectly educated, he had as much culture as he wanted, and of whatever kind he wanted. All the classicism then attainable he got cheap—ready-made. Like Goethe, he set little store by useless learning. Yet who can reckon all that he knew of man and of history? Such minds have no need to be taught; they are full, and overflow, by the revelations of their seer's madness.

A nature affectionate and kind,<sup>1</sup> witty in conversation, brilliantly gay; extreme in joy and pain; so exquisitely sensitive, that, like a perfect harp, it vibrated at the slightest touch; with an imagination so broad, that it grasped all the complexity of human lot, its laughter and its tears; so copious, that he never erased what he had written; so glowing, that it set at defiance the Unities which imprisoned it, and produced in their stead a fantastic pageant,—a medley of forms, colors, and sentiments; with sympathies so embracing, so urgent, that he became transfused into all that he conceived, and gave to a multitude of diverse individualities each a separate soul.

Without doubt, in his youth, he was not a pattern of propriety. His *Venus and Adonis* is little else than a debauch. As a dramatist he is certainly neither a professed religionist, nor a pronounced reformer. He copies at random the high and the low. He holds the mirror up to all that is—the whole reality. While the lower half of the far-spread glass is therefore blotched, we believe that the upper half is his ultimate and essential self. With advancing years, he evidently dwells more upon the great characters of his tragedies, and gives increased light to moral issues. More and more, as he grows older, he tightens the strands in the colossal harp of his nature and strikes the resonant wires with a firmer plectrum. Deeper and deeper sink the pangs of affection misplaced, the memory of hours misspent. Conscience is ill at ease with the world. Thus again and

<sup>1</sup> 'My darling Shakespeare,' 'Sweet swan of Avon.'—*Ben Jonson*.

again he alludes to the infamy of his marriage. If the fact, without the form, exists before—

'All sanctimonious ceremonies may  
With full and holy rite be ministered,  
No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall  
To make this contract grow; but barren hate,  
Sour-eyed disdain and discord, shall bestrew  
The union of your bed with weeds so loathly  
That you shall hate it both; therefore take heed  
As Hymen's lamps shall light you.'

Joy alternates with sadness, transports with melancholies:

'That time of year thou mayst in me behold  
When yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang  
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,  
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.  
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day,  
As after sun-set fadeth in the west,  
Which by and by black night doth take away,  
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.  
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,  
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,  
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,  
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.  
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,  
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.'

Here are the last notes struck within the hearing of this world:

'I commend my soul into the hands of God, my Creator, hoping and assuredly believing, through the only merits of Jesus Christ, my Savior; to be made partaker of life everlasting.'<sup>1</sup>

**Influence.**—Upon universal sympathy, upon historical inquiry, upon linguistic development, he has left a potent and enduring impress. His works and the Bible, both models of Teutonic simplicity, are the great conservators of English speech.

He infused into the early drama a spirit of high art; gave it order, symmetry, elevation; informed it with true airy wit and rich but subtle humor; made it an opulent and unfailing fount of entertainment and instruction.

He has revealed, in fresh, familiar, significant, and precise details, the complete condition of civilization: and thus to attain nature truthfully in the balance of motives and the issues of action, is in the most vital of all ways to be moral; to be a propagator, though by indirection, of the morality that governs and illuminates the world; else is nature immoral and in fellowship with impurity.

<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare's will.



Consider the mental activity of which he is the occasion; how far, and for how many, he has enlarged the circle of study and reflection; the fund of maxims, observations, and sentiments, that relate to whatever is interesting, important, or lofty in human life, and whose infinite variety age cannot wither nor custom stale. Art, science, history, politics, physics, philosophy, shall tax him for illustration while the tide of human feelings and passions shall continue its course.

Shakespeare is like a great primeval forest, whence timber shall be cut and used as long as winds blow and leaves are green.

# PHILOSOPHIC PERIOD.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### FEATURES.

Man is explicable by nothing less than all his history.—*Emerson.*

**Politics.**—European civilization had merged in two essential facts,—free inquiry and centralization of power; the first prevailing in religious society, the second in civil. Before these two could be reconciled, a struggle between them was inevitable. On the one hand, royalty declared itself superior to the laws; on the other, the spirit of liberty was passing from the public mind to the state. When, in 1603, James, the *Sixth* of Scotland and the *First* of England, ascended the throne, the decisive hour was fast approaching when either the king must become absolute, or the parliament preponderant. He alternately enraged and alarmed them by his monstrous claims, and excited their scorn by his concessions; kept discontent alive by his fondness for worthless and tyrannical favorites; provoked derision by his cowardice, his pedantry, his ungainly person, and his uncouth manners. The dignity of government was weakened, loyalty was cooled, and revolution was fostered. Under his son and successor Charles I, the struggle went on. He inherited his father's theories, with a stronger disposition to carry them into effect. He imposed and collected illegal taxes, made forced loans; was artful, capricious, and winding; entered into compacts which he had no intention of observing; was perfidious from habit and on principle. The commons put on a sterner front. Parliament after parliament was dissolved, each more intractable than the former. Then he attempted to rule without one, and for eleven years—an interval utterly without precedent—the Houses were not convoked. Yielding at length to the pressure of necessity, he summoned them in 1640, but quickly dismissed them when they would have considered the grievances of the nation. The

opposition grew fiercer. In November of the same year, without money, without credit, without authority even in his own camp, he yielded again; and then met the ever-memorable body known as the Long Parliament. Again he broke faith with his council, with his people; and in August, 1642, the sword was drawn. Charles, driven to Scotland and by the Scots surrendered to his English subjects, expiated his crimes with his blood. The soul of the revolutionary party was Cromwell, whose warrior saints, devotedly attached to their leader, were bent on the establishment of a free and pious commonwealth. Having destroyed the king, they vanquished in turn the Parliament, which, having outlived its usefulness, and forgetting it was the creature of the army, exasperated the latter by its dictation. The victorious chief became king in everything but name. The government, though in form a republic, was in truth a military despotism; but the despot was wise and magnanimous, and the glory of England, grown dim in the two preceding reigns, shone again, with a brighter lustre than ever. Cromwell's death, in 1658, brought the rule of Puritanism to an end. The master had been a temporary necessity. His system, acknowledged by all to be necessary, was acceptable to none. The soldiers, against whom, while united, plots and risings of malcontents were ineffectual, now released from the control of that mighty spirit, separated into factions. Weary of strife, and terrified at the prospect of renewed civil warfare, the country sought again the shelter of the monarchy, and invited the return of its exiled prince. Charles II was proclaimed, and the Restoration was accomplished.

From 1641 dates the corporate existence of the two great parties which have ever since contended for the direction of public affairs. The royalists, comprising the nobles, the gentry, and the prelacy, were called *Cavaliers*, from their gallant bearing and equestrian skill. The opposition, comprising a few of the peers, the bulk of citizens and yeomen, and the Nonconformists, were called *Roundheads*, from the Puritan fashion of wearing closely cropped hair. The names were afterwards changed to *Tory* and *Whig*, and these, still later, to *Conservative* and *Liberal*; but the principles have remained essentially the same. The watchword of the first is Order; that of the second, Progress.

**Society.**—In the midst of light, the thick darkness of the middle-age rested on Ireland. Only the heavy hand of a single despot could deliver her from the local despotism of a hundred masters. Cromwell's conquest was a series of awful massacres. 'I am persuaded,' he says, 'that this is a righteous judgement of God upon these barbarous wretches who have imbrued their hands in so much innocent blood, and that it will tend to prevent the effusion of blood for the future.' She was, as ever since, undisguisedly governed as a dependency won by the sword.

Scotland, joined to her neighbor on the most honorable terms, preserved her dignity in retaining her constitution and laws. Her people, however, had always been singularly turbulent. They had butchered their first James in his bed-chamber; had rebelled repeatedly against the second; had slain the third on the field of battle; had broken the heart of the fifth by their disobedience; had imprisoned Mary, and led her son captive. The border was a chaos of violence; and along the line between the Highlands and Lowlands raged an incessant predatory war.

England had long been steadily advancing. Men had become accustomed to peaceful pursuits, and irritation did not now so readily as in former ages take the form of rebellion. From the rising of the northern earls against Elizabeth, to the memorable reckoning against Charles I, seventy years had elapsed without intestine hostilities. The national wealth had greatly multiplied, and civilization had greatly increased.

Still, we shall not forget the difference between the rude and thoughtless boy and the refined and accomplished man. Masters habitually beat their servants, teachers their pupils, and husbands their wives. The offender in the pillory was happy to escape with life from the shower of brickbats and paving stones. If tied to the cart's tail, the officer was implored to make him howl. Pleasure parties were arranged for the purpose of seeing wretched women whipped. Fights, in which gladiators hacked each other to pieces, were the delight of multitudes. At the Restoration, the glorious leaders of the Puritan faith were cut down alive from the gallows, and quartered amidst insults; while others—Cromwell among them—were dug up, and exposed on the gibbet.

The police were in constant collision with ruffians who wore rapiers and daggers. At night bands of dissolute youth dominated over the streets, which were buried in profound darkness. It was these pests of London that suggested to Milton the lines:

‘And in luxurious cities, when the noise  
Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,  
And injury and outrage, and when night  
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons  
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.’

In the outcast quarters of the city, even the warrant of the Chief Justice could not be executed without a company of musketeers. Sanguinary encounters with robbers were frequent. Mounted highwaymen infested all the great approaches to the metropolis.

With the decline of enthusiasm and respect, courtly manners degenerated into a base sensuality. An arch of triumph under James I often represented obscenities. On one occasion, the king and his royal brother of Denmark were carried to bed drunk. Hear a description of the entertainment—the masque of the Queen of Sheba:

‘The ladies abandon their sobriety, and are seen to roll about in intoxication. . . . The lady who did play the Queen’s part . . . did carry most precious gifts to both their Majesties; but, forgetting the steppes arising to the canopy, overset her caskets into his Danish Majesties lap, and fell at his feet, tho rather I think it was in his face. Much was the hurry and confusion; clothes and napkins were at hand, to make all clean. His Majesty then got up and would dance with the Queen of Sheba; but he fell down and humbled himself before her, and was carried to an inner chamber and laid on a bed of state; which was not a little defiled with the presents of the Queen which had been bestowed on his garments; such as wine, cream, jelly, beverage, cakes, spices, and other good matters. The entertainment and show went forward, and most of the presenters went backward, or fell down; wine did so occupy their upper chambers. Now did appear, in rich dress, Hope, Faith, and Charity: Hope did assay to speak, but wine rendered her endeavors so feeble that she withdrew, and hoped the king would excuse her brevity; Faith . . . left the court in a staggering condition. . . . They were both sick and spewing in the lower hall. Next came Victory, who . . . by a strange medley of versification . . . and after much lamentable utterance, was led away like a silly captive, and laid to sleep in the outer steps of the ante-chamber. As for Peace, she most rudely made war with her olive branch, and laid on the pates of those who did oppose her coming.’

Farther on we shall see how, underneath the disorderly bubbles at the surface, Puritanism was raising the national morality.

**Religion.**—The Reformation was incomplete. It had been made in accordance with the interests of its leaders,—the king and the prelates, who divided between themselves the riches and power of which they had despoiled the popes. By a large body of Protestants the alliance was regarded as a scheme for serving



two masters. It had closed reform, while the greater part of the abuses which induced them to desire it were continued. They denounced its pretensions, complained of its tyranny. They had not thrown off one yoke in order to receive another. They were not afraid to dissent from those who had themselves dissented. To no purpose were they fined, imprisoned, pilloried, mutilated; their ministers dismissed, tracked by spies, prosecuted by usurping and rapacious courts. They flourished in spite of the efforts to destroy them, because they lived honestly, sustained by the powerful ideas of God and conscience. Private life was transformed. Enthusiasm spread. From individual manners, the movement extended to public institutions. When the Long Parliament assembled, they were able to resort to arms. Every week the Commons occupied a day in deliberating on the progress of religion. The external and natural man was abolished. Recreations and ornaments were abandoned. To wear love-locks, to starch a ruff, to read the Fairy Queen, were sins. Law was changed into a guardian of morals:

‘Though the discipline of the church was at an end, there was nevertheless an uncommon spirit of devotion among people in the parliament quarters; the Lord’s day was observed with remarkable strictness, the churches being crowded with numerous and attentive hearers three or four times in the day; the officers of the peace patrolled the streets, and shut up all publick houses; there was no travelling on the road, or walking in the fields, except in cases of absolute necessity. Religious exercises were set up in private families, as reading the Scriptures, family prayer, repeating sermons, and singing of psalms, which was so universal that you might walk through the city of London on the evening of the Lord’s day, without seeing an idle person, or hearing anything but the voice of prayer or praise from churches and private houses.’

All the outlets of instinctive nature were closed. In 1644 it was ordained:

‘That no person shall travel, or carry a burden, or do any worldly labour, upon penalty of 10s. for the traveller and 5s. for every burden. That no person shall on the Lord’s day use, or be present at, any wrestling, shooting, fowling, ringing of bells for pleasure, markets, wakes, church-ales, dancing, games or sports whatsoever, upon penalty of 5s. to every one above fourteen years of age. And if children are found offending in the premises, their parents or guardians to forfeit 12d. for every offense. If the several fines above mentioned cannot be levied, the offending party shall be set in the stocks for the space of three hours.’

One ordinance directed that all the May-poles in England should be cut down. Later they attacked the stage. Theatres were to be dismantled, the spectators fined, the actors whipped at the cart’s-tail. They persecuted pleasure, the more surely to punish crime. In the army there was a like theory and a like practice. Cromwell’s Ironsides were organized upon the principle that a

perfect Christian makes a perfect soldier. A quartermaster, convicted of blasphemy, was condemned to have his tongue bored with a red-hot iron, his sword broken over his head, and himself to be dismissed. During the expedition in Ireland, soldiers passed their leisure hours in reading the Bible, in singing psalms, in religious controversy.

Into the primeval forests of America, exiles, from conscience, they carried the same fixed determination, the same fervent faith, the same stoical spirit. A rigid morality was raised into a civil law, and the Bible was the basis of the state. It was enacted in New Hampshire:

‘That if any person shall in the night time break and enter any dwelling-house in this State, with intent to kill, rob, steal, or to do or perpetrate any felony, the person so offending being thereof convicted shall suffer death.’

Again:

‘That no person shall travel on the Lord’s day between sun-rising and sun-setting, unless from necessity, or to attend public worship, visit the sick, or do some office of charity, on penalty of a sum not exceeding six dollars, nor less than one.’

And:

‘If any person shall openly deny the being of a God, or shall wilfully blaspheme the name of God, Jesus Christ, or the Holy Ghost, or shall curse or reproach the word of God, . . . he shall be punished by fine not exceeding fifty pounds, and may be bound to good behavior for a term not exceeding one year.’

In Maryland the law declared:

‘That if any person shall hereafter, within this province, wittingly, maliciously, and advisedly, by writing or speaking blaspheme or curse God, or deny our Saviour, Jesus Christ, to be the Son of God, or shall deny the Holy Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or the Godhead of any of the three persons, or the unity of the Godhead, or shall utter any profane words concerning the Holy Trinity, or any of the persons thereof, and shall thereof be convicted by verdict, he shall, for the first offence, be bored through the tongue, and fined £20 to be levied of his body. And for the second offence, the offender shall be stigmatized by burning in the forehead with the letter B, and fined £40. And that for the third offense, the offender shall suffer death without the benefit of clergy.’

In Massachusetts, a man was publicly whipped for singing a profane song. A girl, who gave some roasted chestnuts to a boy, adding ironically that they would put him into Paradise, was sentenced to ask pardon three times in church, and to be imprisoned three days. So does personal asceticism develop into public tyranny.

Such were the ‘Precisians’ or ‘Puritans,’—Protestant dissenters, precise and combative minds, who, with the fundamental honesty of the race, demanded of the Anglicans a more searching and extensive reform, resolved to do all and to bear all rather

than be false to their convictions, firm in suffering as scrupulous in belief, and, amid all the fluctuations of fortune, leavening the temper of the times with a new conception of life and of man. If this ideal was, in the end, warped and overwrought, think of its genesis. Puritanism was the product of war. Hence the rigor of its precepts, its social austerity, its unbending creed. The general intoxication forced it into total abstinence. Only thus could it withstand laxity and license. To become belligerent was to become severe.

Each party—Royalists and Episcopalians in alliance against the Puritans—was in turn oppressed by the other. The latter, in the day of its power, was as intolerant as had been the former. We hate with a will, when we can hate at once God's enemies and our own. How will it be when power is restored to the supporters of the throne and Established Church, embittered, not instructed, by misfortune, and fretting under restraints like a checked and flooded stream?

If now it be asked what was the worth and meaning of this heroic sternness, the answer is,—it accomplished much, and we walk smoothly over its results. It enthroned purity on the domestic hearth, labor in the workshop, probity in the counting-house, truth in the tribunal; developed the science of emigration, fertilized the desert, practised the virtues it exacted; above all, it saved the national liberty, against the predominating Church, who, seeking to realize in England the same position as Romanism had occupied in Europe, flung herself on every occasion into the arms of the Court, and taught that no tyranny however gross, no violation of the constitution however flagrant, could justify resistance.<sup>1</sup> Little culture, indeed; no philosophy, no sentiment of harmonious beauty; but solid and convincing reasoners, energetic men of action. We can excuse the fanaticism of those who, when the battle-instinct is yet strong, are so intent on the essence of things, against others intent on semblances and forms divorced from reality.

Not unmixed good, certainly. The sun flings out impurities, gets balefully incrustated with spots. Ideals can never be completely embodied here. Not to reiterate what has already been

<sup>1</sup> 'Eternal damnation is prepared for all impenitent rebels in hell with Satan, the first founder of rebellion.'

noticed, one effect of Puritanism was to inflame, by its gloomy tenets, the zeal against witches. In the short space of the Commonwealth, more of these unfortunates perished than in the whole period before and after. In Suffolk sixty were hung in a single year,—a barbarity to which Butler alludes in *Hudibras*:

‘Hath not this present parliament  
A leger to the devil sent  
Fully empowered to treat about  
Finding revolted witches out?  
And has not he within a year  
Hanged three-score of them in one shire?’

The superstition grew into a panic. In Scotland, controlled by a system of religious terrorism, it obtained an absolute ascendancy. In solemn synod, every minister was enjoined to appoint two of the elders of his parish as ‘a subtle and privy inquisition,’ who should question all parishioners upon oath as to their knowledge of witches. If the witch—commonly a half-doting woman—was obdurate, the first method of extorting confession was to ‘wake her.’ Across her face was bound an iron hoop with four prongs, which were thrust into her mouth. It was fastened behind to the wall, in such a manner that the victim was unable to lie down; and in this position she was sometimes kept for several days, carefully prevented from closing her eyes for a moment in sleep. To discover the *insensible* mark, which was the sure sign of guilt, long pins were thrust into her body. If this was ineffectual, other and worse tortures were in reserve—a kind of thumb-screw, or a frame in which the lower limbs were inserted, then broken by wedges driven in by a hammer. The seeds of the superstition were carried to New England by the Pilgrim Fathers. It flourished with frightful vigor in Massachusetts. Cotton Mather proclaimed it, and created a commission. Those who ventured to oppose the prosecutions were denounced as Sadducees and infidels. Multitudes were imprisoned, others fled, twenty-seven were executed. An old man of eighty was pressed to death. The clergy of Boston drew up an address of thanks to the commissioners, and expressed the hope that their zeal would never be relaxed.

Yet this was orthodoxy once, attested by an amount of evidence so varied and so ample as to preclude the possibility of doubt! You who would stifle the voice of reason, you who deem

another a heretic because his views are different from your own, you who would stigmatize the professors of other creeds as idolatrous,—consider the lesson of history. What is truth? Has it any absolute criterion? Your opinions are imagined to be conclusive and final; but have not the finalities of yesterday yielded to the larger generalizations of to-day? What assurance that, in the onward march of the collective soul, your doctrines shall not wane and vanish like the scattered dreams of your ancestors? Your faith assumes to be perfect; but what is perfection? The realized anticipations of the present. But is humanity tottering into the grave, or yet crawling out of the cradle? Who shall set a limit to the giant's unchained strength? Is not man forever defining himself? Does he not mould himself incessantly in thoughts, sentiments, acts? And, as incessantly progressing by these determinations, does he not successively burst his environments as he assumes them, only to pass into new ones, from which he will again escape in his unflagging and indefinite ascent? Through the ages to be, as through the ages gone, it shall be asked, 'Brethren, what of the *night*?' while to each and to all the same answer shall be returned, 'Lo, the *morning* cometh.'

**Poetry.**—We have seen its ardent youth and its early manhood; not preoccupied, as we are, with theories; happy in contemplating lovely objects, dreaming of nothing else, and wishing only that they might be the loveliest possible; not that things were more beautiful then, but that men, in the vernal freshness of the senses, found them so. Now prettiness takes the place of the beautiful. To the impassioned succeeds the agreeable. It is no more the overflow of images, compelling relief in words, but the sentiment of gallantry, turning a delicate compliment and a graceful phrase. The literary exhaustion is manifested in verses like these of **Wither**:

'Shall I, wasting in despair,  
Die because a woman's fair?  
Or make pale my cheeks with care  
'Cause another's rosy are?  
Be she fairer than the day  
Or the flowery meads in May,  
If she thinks not well of me,  
What care I *how* fair 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?'

But if like the rest, he is a reader and a versifier rather than a seer, he keeps close to the best he knows, pure enough to have delight in nature, reverent enough to give praise:

'Now the glories of the year  
 May be viewed at the best,  
 And the earth doth now appear  
 In her fairest garments dress'd:  
 Sweetly smelling plants and flowers  
 Do perfume the garden bowers;  
 Hill and valley, wood and field,  
 Mixed with pleasure profits yield.'

Withal, he has the dominating bent,— the serious thought of the long sad sleep beyond the dark gulf into which we plunge, uncertain of the issue:

'As this my carnal robe grows old,  
 Soil'd, rent, and worn by length of years,  
 Let me on that by faith lay hold  
 Which man in life immortal wears:  
 So sanctify my days behind,  
 So let my manners be refined,  
 That when my soul and flesh must part,  
 There lurk no terrors in my heart.'

These are the words of a Puritan. We must expect even less substance in wits of the court, cavaliers of fashion,— **Carew**, **Herrick**, and **Suckling**. If the first is destitute of noble ideas, he gives us smooth and flexible verse, mere perfume and dainty form, with hardly a gem amid the rubbish-heap of trivialities:

'He that loves a rosy cheek,  
 Or a coral lip admires,  
 Or from star-like eyes doth seek  
 Fuel to maintain his fires,  
 As old Time makes these decay,  
 So his flames must waste away.  
  
 But a smooth and steadfast mind,  
 Gentle thoughts and calm desires,  
 Hearts, with love combined,  
 Kindle never-dying fires;  
 Where these are not, I despise  
 Lovely cheeks or lips or eyes.'

No fire in the second, but light; no passion, but sensuous reverie, with a radical indelicacy of fancy and a garrulous egotism. Let

us hear the exquisite who wrote twelve hundred little poems in Arcadian repose, while public riot was drowning the voices of some and driving others to madness:

'Some ask'd me where the Rubies grew:  
And nothing did I say,  
But with my finger pointed to  
The lips of Julia.  
Some ask'd how Pearls did grow, and where:  
Then spoke I to my girl,  
To part her lips, and shew me there  
The quarrelets of Pearl.'

Again:

'Cherry-ripe, ripe, ripe, I cry,  
Full and fair ones; come and buy:  
If so be you ask me where  
They do grow? I answer, there  
Where my Julia's lips do smile;—  
There's the land, or cherry-isle,  
Whose plantations fully show  
All the year where cherries grow.'

It is not the inner character of things which moves him, but the sense of bodily loveliness, which is perilously acute, nor easily restrained within bounds by artistic tact. Where is the mounting melody of Burns or Shelley? Even at his prayers, his spirit is mundane:

'When the house doth sigh and weep,  
And the world is drown'd in sleep,  
Yet mine eyes the watch do keep,  
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the artless doctor sees  
No one hope, but of his fees,  
And his skill runs on the lees,  
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When his potion and his pill,  
Has, or none, or little skill,  
Meet for nothing but to kill,  
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!'

The third, handsome, rich, and prodigal, was a Royalist gentleman, and as such, wishing to try his hand at imagination and style, was able to write in liquid numbers a love-song that was in sympathy with the age:

'Why so pale and wan, fond lover?  
Prithee, why so pale?  
Will, when looking well can't move her,  
Looking ill prevail?  
Prithee, why so pale?

Why so dull and mnte, young sinner?  
Prithee, why so mute?

Will, when speaking well can't win,  
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 devil take her!'

He has none of the penetrating faculty which opens the invisible door of obscure, endless depths, leads us to the centre, and leaves us to gather what more we may of the treasure of pure gold. He has only fancy, which stays at externals. Thus:

'Her feet beneath her petticoat  
Like little mice stole in and out,  
As if they feared the light,'<sup>1</sup>

Again:

'Her lips were red, and one was thin,  
Compared with that was next her chin,  
Some bee had stung it newly.'<sup>2</sup>

The real bright being of the lip is there in an instant, but it is all outside; no expression, no mind. Now hear imagination speak:

'Lamp of life, thy lips are burning  
Through the veil that seems to hide them,  
As the radiant lines of morning  
Through thin clouds, ere they divide them.'<sup>3</sup>

There is no levity here. He who sees into the heart of things sees too far, too darkly, too solemnly, too earnestly, to smile.

A second mark of decadence is the affectation of poets, their involved obscurity of style, their ingenious absurdities, their conceits. They desire to display their skill and wit in yoking together heterogeneous ideas, in justifying the unnatural, in converting life into a puzzle and a dream. They are characterized by the philosophizing spirit, the activity of the intellect rather than that of the emotions. The prevalent taste is to trace resemblances that are fantastic, to strain after novelty and surprise. Thus **Donne**, earliest of the school, says of a sea-voyage:

'There note they the ship's sicknesses,— the mast  
Shaked with an ague, and the hold and waist  
With a salt dropsy clogged.'

When a flea bites him and his mistress, he says:

'This flea is you and I, and this  
Our marriage bed and marriage temple is.  
Though Parents grudge, and you, w'are met,

<sup>1</sup> *Ballad upon a Wedding.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Shelley.

And cloyster'd in the living walls of jet.  
 Though use make you apt to kill me,  
 Let not to that selfe-murder added be,  
 And sacrilege, three sins in killing three.'

We find little to admire, and nothing to love. We see that far-fetched similes, extravagant metaphors, are not here occasional blemishes, but the substance. He should have given us simple images, simply expressed; for he loved and suffered much: but fashion was stronger than nature. Much in this manner, though never in so light a humor, is the poetry of **Herbert**, whose quaintness is vitally connected with essential beauty and sweetness of soul. Let him live in these tender and beautiful lines:

'Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,  
 The bridal of the earth and sky;  
 The dewes shall weep thy fall to-night,  
 For thou must die.'

And in these, than which no profounder were uttered in the Elizabethan age:

'More servants wait on Man  
 Than he'll take notice of; in every path  
 He treads down that which doth befriend him.  
 When sickness makes him pale and wan  
 O mighty Love! Man is one world, and hath  
 Another to attend him.'

To the same class of verse — concoctions of novel and remote analogies, belongs *The Purple Island* of Fletcher, five cantos of allegorical anatomy and one of psychology, a languid sing-song of laborious riddles. Other instances of the change, equally frigid if less extravagant, are Wotton's *Character of a Happy Life*, Bacon's *Life of Man*, Brook's *Treatise of Religion*, which are noticed only as indications that the sentiment of truth was encroaching upon the sentiment of beauty, that the imaginary figures of art were giving way to the precise formulas of logic.

Apart from the crowd of sedulous imitators, is one who, preserving something of the energy and thrill of the original inspiration, refuses to be perverted; a Scot,—**Drummond** of Hawthornden,—whose private happiness was suddenly ruined, and whose public hopes were slowly wasted; a brooding, silent, tragic soul, altogether too serious to be artificial, with the fundamental Saxon idea of man and of existence:

'This world a hunting is.  
 The prey poor man, the Nimrod fierce is death;  
 His speedy greyhounds are

Lust, sickness, envy, care,  
 Strife that ne'er falls amiss,  
 With all those ills which haunt us while we breathe.  
 Now if by chance we fly  
 Of these the eager chase,  
 Old age with stealing pace  
 Casts up his nets, and there we panting die.'

There are moments when the greatest must feel and speak thus, troubled by the infinite obscurity that embraces our short, glimmering life, which seems then but a madness, a sorrow, a phantom: behind, a submerged continent; before, oblivion and dust:

'If crost with all mishaps be my poor life,  
 If one short day I never spend in mirth,  
 If my sprite with itself holds lasting strife,  
 If sorrow's death is but a new sorrow's birth;  
 If this vain world be but a sable stage  
 Where slave-born man plays to the scoffing stars;  
 If youth be toss'd with love, with weakness age,  
 If knowledge serve to hold our thoughts in wars;  
 If time can close the hundred months of fame,  
 And make what long since past like that to be;  
 If virtue only be an idle name,  
 If I, when I was born, was born to die;  
 Why seek I to prolong these loathsome days?  
 The fairest rose in shortest time decays.'

At the end of one intellectual epoch, and at the beginning of another, appeared one of the most illustrious of these brain-poets, **Abraham Cowley**, a marvel of precocity, widely known at fifteen, and, like Reynolds the painter, accidentally determined to a particular direction:

'How this love of poetry came to be produced in me so early is a hard question. I believe I can tell the particular little chance which filled my head first with such chimes of verse as have never since left ringing there; for I remember when I began to read, and to take some pleasure in it, there was wont to lie in my mother's parlor (I know not by what accident, for she herself never in her life read any book but of devotion) . . . Spenser's works; this volume I happened to fall upon, and was infinitely delighted with the stories of the knights, monsters, giants, and brave houses which I found everywhere there (though my understanding had very little to do with all this), and by degrees, with the tinkling of the rhymes and the dance of the numbers, I had read him all over before I was twelve years old, and was thus made a poet almost immediately.'

He read much, learned much, wrote much; but while he is always either ingenious or profound, he is usually wearisome. Always on the watch for novelty, he is seldom natural, never pathetic, if ever sublime. His best performances are his translations from Anacreon, which are but the literature of pleasure—the idle joys of the banquet and the wine circle. Still, it is refreshing to see the beholder, once a partaker, abandoned to the fresh impulses



of an eager delight, quite forgetful of the skeleton that stands there to scare him from his roses and his cups:

‘The thirsty earth soaks up the rain,  
 And drinks, and gapes for drink again,  
 The plants suck in the earth, and are  
 With constant drinking fresh and fair.  
 The sea itself, which one would think  
 Should have but little need of drink,  
 Drinks ten thousand rivers up,  
 So fill'd that they o'erflow the cup.  
 The busy sun (and one would guess  
 By its drunken fiery face no less)  
 Drinks up the sea, and when he's done,  
 The moon and stars drink up the sun.  
 They drink and dance by their own light,  
 They drink and revel all the night.  
 Nothing in nature's sober found,  
 But an eternal health goes round.  
 Fill up the bowl then, fill it high,  
 Fill all the glasses there, for why  
 Should every creature drink but I,  
 Why, man of morals, tell me why?’

It is the waste of power in these men, not the want of it; the abuse of talent, not the absence of it, which we lament. To this they owe their poetical effacement with posterity. He who pays court to temporary prejudices, must content himself with ‘a deciduous laurel, of which the verdure in its spring may be bright and gay, but which time will continually steal from his brows.’

The Puritan conception of life was not one to nourish the eloquence of a ‘divine madness’; yet, Puritanism, in its higher attributes, in its moral elevation, was to have its monument, the work of a mighty and superb mind,—**Milton**, the prince of scholars, the impassioned devotee of virtue, a poetic seer of the antique type, with a strong affinity for the genius of Greece and of Rome, and able to estimate all the Renaissance could tell or teach.

The Muses had taken sanctuary in the theatres. England, indeed, was not to produce another *Hamlet*. Such heights could not be maintained. As the unknown was explored, the romantic ideal was fading. Puritanism was hardening and narrowing, while it was ennobling, life. Imagination was losing its buoyancy and bloom. The natural was giving place to the artificial. But the infection that tainted lyric and didactic poetry, affected in a less degree the drama, which even in its decay was

still magnificent, and, with an altered tone and manner, retained much of the warmth, mellowness, and reality of painting. Only at intervals does the chorus equal the solo of their matchless leader. The great elements in their natures are imperfectly harmonized. All grope amid qualified successes. All are noble in parts but without any general effect of nobleness. **Jonson**, the foremost, is but partial. He paints, not the whole of human nature, but a feature. His characters are not men and women as they are, but as they may be when mastered by a special bias or *humor*.

However, to be tenacious of what is grand and lofty is more praiseworthy than to delight in what is low and disagreeable. None refuse wholly the color of the low world around them. **Beaumont** and **Fletcher** are 'studiously indecent.' The object is to excite, at any cost, the passions of an audience craving crudities and horrors. Their young men are the 'bloods' of the Stuart Court. The older and graver are foul. If they paint a bad woman, she is monstrous; if a good one, she is unreal, as if the one extreme were to compensate or atone for the other. We are willing to accept this transcendental conception of goodness as a redeeming merit; for that stature appears in everything which we profoundly revere and love, and only by a certain infinitude which belongs to it are we drawn into perpetual aspiration. These two writers were fellow-laborers, brothers in heart as well as brothers in work; the first, slow, solid, and painstaking; the second, rapid, volatile, and inventive. The first is the smoother, sweeter; the second, the more fertile and forceful. Both agree in impurity, the one deliberately impure, the other heedlessly so. Of the fifty-two plays in the collection that bears their names jointly, there is scarcely one that has not marks of blight—haste, extravagance, or grossness. If we seek for a burst of passion, a beautiful sentiment, a brilliant dialogue, or a vivid picture, we shall find it. Amid tavern-rackets, the clash of swords, and the howl of slaughter, they cut life into scenes of shame and terror, yet carry before the footlights touching and poetical figures that would seem to place them on the open borders of the infinite. Thus Philaster, speaking of Bellario, whom he has taken for a page, but who is no other than a maiden that has disguised herself in order to be near him, says:

'I found him sitting by a fountain-side,  
 Of which he borrowed some to quench his thirst,  
 And paid the nymph again as much in tears.  
 A garland lay him by, made by himself,  
 Of many several flowers, bred in the bay,  
 Stuck in that mystic order, that the rareness  
 Delighted one: But ever when he turned  
 His tender eyes upon them, he would weep,  
 As if he meant to make them grow again.  
 Seeing such pretty helpless innocence  
 Dwell in his face, I asked him all his story.  
 He told me that his parents gentle died,  
 Leaving him to the mercy of the fields,  
 Which gave him roots; and of the crystal springs,  
 Which did not stop their courses; and the sun,  
 Which still, he thanked him, yielded him light.  
 Then took he up his garland, and did shew  
 What every flower, as country people hold,  
 Did signify; and how all ordered thus,  
 Expressed his grief: and to my thoughts did read  
 The prettiest lecture of his country art  
 That could be wished; so that methought I could  
 Have studied it.'<sup>1</sup>

When she is detected, an explanation is demanded, and she recounts her hopeless attachment:

'My father oft would speak  
 Your worth and virtue; and, as I did grow  
 More and more apprehensive, I did thirst  
 To see the man so praised; but yet all this  
 Was but a maiden longing, to be lost  
 As soon as found; till, sitting in my window,  
 Printing my thoughts in lawn, I saw a god,  
 I thought,—but it was you,—enter our gates.  
 My blood flew out, and back again as fast  
 As I had puffed it forth and sucked it in  
 Like breath. Then was I called away in haste  
 To entertain you. Never was a man,  
 Heaved from a sheep-cote to a sceptre raised,  
 So high in thoughts as I; you left a kiss  
 Upon these lips then, which I mean to keep  
 From you forever. I did hear you talk,  
 Far above singing! After you were gone,  
 I grew acquainted with my heart, and searched  
 What stirred it so. Alas! I found it love;  
 Yet far from lust; for could I but have lived  
 In presence of you, I had had my end.  
 For this I did delude my noble father  
 With a feigned pilgrimage, and dressed myself  
 In habit of a boy: and for I knew  
 My birth no match for you, I was passed hope  
 Of having you. And, understanding well  
 That when I made discovery of my sex,  
 I could not stay with you, I made a vow,

<sup>1</sup> *Philaster*; or, *Love Lies Bleeding*.

By all the most religious things a maid  
 Could call together, never to be known,  
 Whilst there was hope to hide me from men's eyes,  
 For other than I seemed, that I might ever  
 Abide with you.'<sup>1</sup>

Here are feminine innocence with feminine power, ethereal softness with martyr heroism. Few have equalled, fewer have excelled, this superior fineness of perception. Again, what could be more angelic than the modesty of Amoret, the faithful shepherdess?—

'Fairer far  
 Than the chaste blushing morn, or that fair star  
 That guides the wand'ring seaman thro' the deep.'<sup>2</sup>

She is transported by her tenderness, as her lover by his violence. Persuaded that she is unchaste, he strikes her to the ground with his sword, and casts her into a well, but the god lets fall into the wound 'a drop from his watery locks,' and, recovering, she goes in search of her Perigot—

'Speak if thou be here, . . .  
 Thy Amoret, thy dear,  
 Calls on thy loved name. . . 'Tis thy friend,  
 Thy Amoret; come hither to give end  
 To these consumings. Look up, gentle boy,  
 I have forgot those pains and dear annoy  
 I suffer'd for thy sake, and am content  
 To be thy love again. Why hast thou rent  
 Those curled locks, where I have often hung  
 Ribbons, and damask roses, and have flung  
 Waters distill'd to make thee fresh and gay,  
 Sweeter than nosegays on a bridal day?  
 Why dost thou cross thine arms, and hang thy face  
 Down to thy bosom, letting fall apace,  
 From those two little Heav'ns, upon the ground,  
 Show'rs of more price, more orient, and more round,  
 Than those that hang upon the moon's pale brow?  
 Cease these complainings, shepherd! I am now  
 The same I ever was, as kind and free,  
 And can forgive before you ask of me:  
 Indeed, I can and will.'

At last the shepherd, after he has wounded her, and a nymph has cured her, is disabused, and throws himself on his knees before her. In spite of all he has done, she is unchanged:

'I am thy love!  
 Thy Amoret, for ever more thy love!  
 Strike once more on my naked breast, I'll prove  
 As constant still. Oh, cou'dst thou love me yet,  
 How soon could I my former griefs forget!'

<sup>1</sup> *Phylaster*; or, *Love Lies Bleeding*.

<sup>2</sup> *The Faithful Shepherdess*, by Fletcher alone, who survived his friend ten years. The joint productions of the two are usually estimated at fifteen.

Now hear the resounding talk of Memnon:

'I know no court but martial,  
 No oily language but the shock of arms,  
 No dalliance but with death, no lofty measures  
 But weary and sad marches, cold and hunger,  
 'Larums at midnight Valor's self would shake at;  
 Yet, I ne'er shrunk. Balls of consuming wildfire,  
 That licked men up like lightning have I laughed at,  
 And tossed 'em back again, like children's trifles.  
 Upon the edge of my enemies' swords  
 I have marched like whirlwinds, Fury at this hand waiting.  
 Death at my right, Fortune my forlorn hope:  
 When I have grappled with Destruction,  
 And tugged with pale-faced Ruin, Night and Mischief,  
 Frighted to see a new day break in blood.'<sup>1</sup>

These contrasts are characteristic,—timidity, grace, devotion, patience; boldness, fury, contempt for consequences, concern only for the wild, reckless whim of the moment. Sometimes the heroic spirit appears, not as a mere flash, but as a character. When the Egyptians, to propitiate the mighty Cæsar, bring him Pompey's head, he says nobly, grandly, of his mortal enemy:

'Egyptians, dare ye think your highest pyramids,  
 Built to out-dure the sun, as you suppose,  
 Where your unworthy kings lie raked in ashes,  
 Are monuments fit for him? No, brood of Nilus,  
 Nothing can cover his high fame but heaven.  
 No pyramids set off his memories,  
 But the eternal substance of his greatness;  
 To which I leave him.'<sup>2</sup>

Scattered all over these dramas are exquisite lyrics, luxuriant descriptions, which show the poet greater than the dramatist. He who would have left the hoof-prints of unclean beasts in Paradise, could sing, in the rebound from sportive excess:

'Hence, all you vain delights,  
 As short as are the nights  
 Wherein you spend your folly!  
 There's naught in this life sweet,  
 If man were wise to see't,  
 But only melancholy;  
 O sweetest melancholy!  
 Welcome, folded arms and fixed eyes,  
 A sigh that piercing mortifies,  
 A look that's fasten'd to the ground,  
 A tongue chain'd up without a sound!  
 Fountain heads and pathless groves,  
 Places which pale passion loves!  
 Moonlight walks, when all the fowls  
 Are warmly hous'd, save bats and owls!

<sup>1</sup> *The Mad Lover.*

<sup>2</sup> *The False One.*



A midnight bell, a parting groan,  
 These are the sounds we feed upon;  
 Then stretch our bones in a still gloomy valley;  
 Nothing's so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy.'

He who sold his birthright with posterity for the loathsome pot-  
 tage of contemporary praise, could, in his diviner moods, regale  
 the soul with medicinal sweets. For example, how charming are  
 the aspects of his landscape, of the dewy verdant grove, where  
 on a summer night, after their custom, the young men and girls  
 go to gather flowers and plight their troth·

'Thro' yon same bending plain  
 That flings his arm down to the main,  
 And thro' these thick woods, have I run,  
 Whose bottom never kiss'd the sun  
 Since the lusty spring began. . . .

For to that holy wood is consecrate  
 A virtuous well, about whose flow'ry banks  
 The nimble-footed fairies dance their rounds,  
 By the pale moon-shine, dipping oftentimes  
 Their stolen children, so to make them free  
 From dying flesh, and dull mortality.  
 By this fair fount hath many a shepherd sworn  
 And given away his freedom, many a troth  
 Been plight, which neither Envy nor old Time  
 Could ever break, with many a chaste kiss given  
 In hope of coming happiness: by this  
 Fresh fountain many a blushing maid  
 Hath crowned the head of her long-loved shepherd  
 With gaudy flowers, whilst he happy sung  
 Lays of his love and dear captivity.

See the dew-drops, how they kiss  
 Ev'ry little flower that is;  
 Hanging on their velvet heads  
 Like a rope of crystal beads.  
 See the heavy clouds low falling  
 And bright Hesperus down calling  
 The dead Night from underground.'

In **Massinger** there is the same deplorable evil — licentious inci-  
 dent. But we remember that decorum was then unknown, and  
 that his vital sympathies were for justice and virtue. He sang,  
 like the nightingale, darkling. His life was spent in conflict and  
 distress. Hence nowhere is he so great as when he describes the  
 struggles of the brave through trial to victory, the unmerited  
 sufferings of the pure, and the righteous terrors of conscience.  
 If ever his placid spirit rises to ecstasy, the ecstasy is moral.  
 Passages like the following are the best of him, ethically and  
 poetically:

‘Look on the poor  
With gentle eyes, for in such habits, often,  
Angels desire an alms.’

‘By these blessed feet  
That pace the paths of equity, and tread boldly  
On the stiff neck of tyrannous oppression,  
By these tears by which I bathe them, I conjure you  
With pity to look on me.’

‘Happy are those  
That knowing in their births, they are subject to  
Uncertain changes, are still prepared and armed  
For either fortune.’

‘When good men pursue  
The path marked out by virtue, the blest saints  
With joy look on it, and seraphic angels  
Clap their celestial wings in heavenly plaudits.’

‘As you have  
A soul moulded from heaven, and do desire  
To have it made a star there, make the means  
Of your ascent to that celestial height  
Virtue mingled with brave action: they draw near  
The nature and the essence of the gods  
Who imitate their goodness.’<sup>1</sup>

More intense, though less genial, is the sombre and retiring **Ford**, the poet not merely of the heart but of the broken heart,—the heart worn, tortured, and torn. His tragedies surprise, stun, perplex, by the overpowering force of a passion which suggests kinship to insanity. The noblest is *The Broken Heart*. Penthea, whose soul is pledged to Orgilus, permits herself, from duty or submission, to be led to other nuptials, and finds the source of life dried up. Only the marriage of the heart is, in her eyes, genuine; the other is moral infidelity. In the depths of her despair, she says, not bitterly, but sadly:

‘My glass of life, sweet princess, hath few minutes  
Remaining to run down; the sands are spent:  
For by an inward messenger, I feel  
The summons of departure short and certain. . . .  
Glories of human greatness are but pleasing dreams,  
And shadows soon decaying: on the stage  
Of my mortality my youth hath acted  
Some scenes of vanity, drawn out at length;  
But varied pleasures sweetened in the mixture,  
But tragical in issue. . . .  
How weary I am of a lingering life,  
Who count the best a misery. . . .  
That remedy must be a winding-sheet, a fold of lead,  
And some untrod-on corner in the earth.’

<sup>1</sup> Only eighteen of his thirty-seven plays are extant. The best known are *The Virgin Martyr*, *The Fatal Dowry*, *The Duke of Milan*, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*. The last has yet occasional representation, and contains the famous character of Sir Giles Overreach.

In the end she becomes mad, sinking continually under the incurable grief, the fatal thought:

'Sure, if we were all sirens, we should sing pitifully,  
And 'twere a comely music, when in parts  
One sung another's knell; the turtle sighs  
When he hath lost his mate; and yet some say  
He must be dead first: 'tis a fine deceit  
To pass away in a dream! indeed, I've slept  
With mine eyes open, a great while. No falsehood  
Equals a broken faith; there's not a hair  
Sticks on my head, but, like a leaden plummet,  
It sinks me to the grave: I must creep thither;  
The journey is not long.'

Calantha, after enduring the most crushing calamities, concealed under a show of mirth, breaks under the terrible tension, and dies — without a tear:

'Death shall not separate us. Oh, my lords,  
I but deceived your eyes with antic gesture,  
When one news strait came huddling on another  
Of death, and death, and death: still I danced forward;  
But it struck home and here, and in an instant.  
Be such mere women, who with shrieks and outcries  
Can vow a present end to all their sorrows,  
Yet live to court new pleasures, and outlive them:  
They are the silent griefs which cut the heart-strings:  
Let me die smiling.'

There is the same sad strain in his few songs, though subdued; as:

'Crowns may flourish and decay,  
Beauties shine, but fade away.  
Youth may revel, yet it must  
Lie down in a bed of dust.'

And:

'Fly hence, shadows, that do keep  
Watchful sorrows, charmed in sleep!  
Though the eyes be overtaken,  
Yet the heart doth ever waken  
Thoughts chained up in busy snares  
Of continual woes and cares:  
Love and griefs are so exprest,  
As they rather sigh than rest.  
Fly hence, shadows, that do keep  
Watchful sorrows, charmed in sleep.'

Of all these later dramatists, the most Shakespearean is **Webster**, an artist of agony. But one has seen farther into the dark, woful, and diabolical. He calls one of his heroines *The White Devil*,

<sup>1</sup>*The Broken Heart.*

<sup>2</sup>*The Lover's Melancholy.*

Vittoria Corombona, an Italian. Her mate is a duke, an adulterous lover, another devil, to whom she says:

'To pass away the time, I'll tell your grace  
 A dream I had last night. . . .  
 Methought I walk'd about the mid of night,  
 Into a church-yard, where a goodly yew-tree  
 Spread her large root in ground. Under that yew,  
 As I sat sadly leaning on a grave  
 Checquer'd with cross-sticks, there came stealing in  
 Your duchess and my husband; one of them  
 A pick-axe bore, th' other a rusty spade,  
 And in rough terms they 'gan to challenge me  
 About this yew. . . .  
 They told me my intent was to root up  
 That well-known yew, and plant i' th' stead of it  
 A wither'd black-thorn: and for that they vow'd  
 To bury me alive. My husband straight  
 With pick-axe 'gan to dig; and your fell duchess  
*With shovel, like a fury, voided out*  
*The earth, and scattered bones; Lord, how, methought,*  
 I trembled, and yet for all this terror  
 I could not pray. . . .  
 When to my rescue there arose, methought  
 A whirlwind, *which let fall a massy arm*  
*From that strong plant;*  
*And both were struck dead by that sacred yew.*  
*In that base shallow grave which was their due.'*

The import is clear, and her brother says, aside:

*'Excellent devil! she hath taught him in a dream  
 To make away his duchess and her husband.'*

Her husband is strangled, his wife is poisoned, and she, accused of both crimes, is brought before the tribunal. She defies her judges:

'To the point.  
 Find me guilty, sever head from body,  
 We'll part good friends: I scorn to hold my life  
 At yours, or any man's entreaty, sir. . . .  
 These are but feigned shadows of my evils;  
 Terrify babes, my lord, with painted devils;  
 I am past such needless palsy. For your names  
 Of whore and murderess, they proceed from you,  
 As if a man should spit against the wind;  
 The filth returns in's face.'

More insulting at the dagger's point:

'Yes, I shall welcome death  
 As princes do some great ambassadors;  
 I'll meet thy weapon half way. . . . 'Twas a manly blow;  
 The next thou giv'st, murder some sucking infant;  
 And then thou wilt be famous.'

Another is the Duchess of Malfi, who has secretly married her

steward. Her enraged brother determines to destroy her husband and children, resolves to kill her, but will first torture her. He comes to her in the dark, pretends to be reconciled, speaks affectionately, offers her his hand, but gives her a dead man's, then suddenly exhibits a group of waxen figures, covered with wounds to represent her slaughtered family. Then appears a company of madmen, who leap and howl; at last, with executioners and a coffin, a grave-digger, whose taunting talk is of the charnel-house. Sensibility dies. Asked of what she is thinking, she replies, with fixed gaze:

‘Of nothing:  
 When I muse thus, I sleep. . . .  
 Dost thou think we shall know one another  
 In the other world? . . .  
 Oh, that it were possible we might  
 But hold some two days’ conference with the dead!  
 From them I should learn somewhat, I am sure,  
 I never shall know here. I’ll tell thee a miracle;  
 I am not mad yet. . . .  
 The heaven o’er my head seems made of molten brass,  
 The earth of flaming sulphur, yet I am not mad.’

Told that she is to be strangled, she replies, with brave, quiet dignity:

‘I pray thee look thou giv’st my little boy  
 Some syrup for his cold; and let the girl  
 Say her prayers ere she sleep. . . .  
 Pull, and pull strongly, for your able strength  
 Must pull down heaven upon me.  
 Yet stay, *heaven gates are not so highly arched  
 As princes’ palaces; they that enter there  
 Must go upon their knees. . . .*  
 Go, tell my brothers when I am laid out;  
 They then may feed in quiet.’

After this, her servant, the duke and his confidant, the cardinal and his mistress, are poisoned or assassinated. To the dying, in the midst of this butchery, what is the state of humanity? A troubled dream, a nightmare, a clashing destiny, and, at the end of all, a void:

‘We are only like dead walls or vaulted graves,  
 That, ruin’d, yield no echo. Fare you well. . . .  
 O, this gloomy world!’  
 In what a shadow, or deep pit of darkness,  
 Doth womanish and fearful mankind live! . . .  
 In all our quest of greatness,  
 Like wanton boys, whose pastime is their care,  
 We follow after bubbles blown in the air.  
 Pleasure of life, what is’t? only the good hours



Of an ague; merely a preparative to rest,  
 To endure vexation. . . .  
 Whether we fall by ambition, blood, or lust,  
 Like diamonds, we are cut with our own dust.<sup>1</sup>

To little of the dramatic talent, as we pass on to its lower grades, are we able to accord a distinct notice. The writers have merit, might have left a rich legacy to all generations, but wrote too much, which is perhaps the fault of all ages and of every author. They have the diversity of human life, but no central principle of order. Their scenes are more effective as detached than as connected. All degrade their fine metal by the intermixture of baser. All afford veins or lumps of the precious ore in the duller substance of their work. Here are specimens:

*'Man is a torch borne in the wind; a dream  
 But of a shadow.'*<sup>1</sup>

*'Now, all ye peaceful regents of the night,  
 Silently gliding exhalations,  
 Languishing winds, and murmuring falls of waters,  
 Sadness of heart, and ominous secureness,  
 Enchantments, dead sleeps, all the friends of rest  
 That ever wrought upon the life of man,  
 Extend your utmost strengths; and this charmed hour  
 Fix like the centre.'*<sup>2</sup>

*'From his bright helm and shield did burn a most unwearied fire,  
 Like rich Antumnus' golden lamp, whose brightness men admire,  
 Past all the other host of stars, when with his cheerful face,  
 Fresh washed in lofty ocean waves, he doth the sky enchase.'*<sup>3</sup>

*'Patience, my lord! why, 't is the soul of peace;  
 Of all the virtues, 't is nearest kin to heaven;  
 It makes men look like gods. The best of men  
 That e'er wore earth about him was a sufferer,  
 A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit;  
 The first true gentleman that ever breathed.'*<sup>4</sup>

*'He that in the sun is neither beam nor moat,  
 He that's not mad after a petticoat,  
 He for whom poor men's curses dig no grave,  
 He that is neither lord's nor lawyer's slave,  
 He that makes This his sea and That his shore,  
 He that in's coffin is richer than before,  
 He that counts Youth his sword and Age his staff,  
 He whose right hand carves his own epitaph,  
 He that upon his death-bed is a swan,  
 And dead no crow,—he is a Happy Man.'*<sup>5</sup>

Of all the roses grafted on her cheeks,  
 Of all the graces dancing in her eyes,  
 Of all the music set upon her tongue,

<sup>1</sup> Chapman; a wise, manly, but irregular genius, greater as a translator of Homer than as a dramatist. <sup>2</sup> Ibid. <sup>3</sup> Ibid: *Homer*.

<sup>4</sup> Decker; a hopeful, cheerful, humane spirit, who turned vexations and miseries into commodities. <sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Of all that was past woman's excellence,  
In her white bosom; look, a painted boar  
Circumscribes all!'<sup>1</sup>

'Love! hang love!

It is the abject outcast of the world,  
Hate all things; hate the world, thyself, all men;  
Hate knowledge; strive not to be overwise;  
It drew destruction into Paradise;  
Hate honor, virtue, they are bates  
That entice men's hopes to sadder fates.'<sup>2</sup>

'As having clasped a rose

Within my palm, the rose being ta'en away,  
My hand retains a little breath of sweet,  
So may man's trunk, his spirit slipp'd away,  
Hold still a faint perfume of his sweet guest.'<sup>3</sup>

'Black spirits and white; red spirits and gray;  
Mingle, mingle, mingle, you that mingle may.

Titty, Tiffin, keep it stiff in;

Firedrake, Puckey, make it lucky;

Lizard, Robin, you must bob in:

Round, around, around, about, about;

All ill come running in; all good keep out!

*1st Witch.* Here's the blood of a bat.

*Hecate.* Put in that; oh, put in that.

*2d Witch.* Here's libbard's bane.

*Hecate.* Put it in again.

*1st Witch.* The juice of a toad, the oil of adder.

*2d Witch.* Those will make the younker madder.

*All.* Round, around, around, about, about;

All ill come running in; all good keep out!'<sup>4</sup>

'Now I go, now I fly

Malkin, my sweet spirit, and I.

Oh, what dainty pleasure 'tis

To ride in the air,

When the moon shines fair,

And sing and dance, and toy and kiss!

Over woods, high rocks, and mountains,

Over seas, our mistress' fountains,

Over steep towers and turrets,

We fly by night, 'mongst troops of spirits.

No ring of bells to our ears sounds;

No howls of wolves, no yelp of hounds;

No not the noise of waters' breach,

Or cannon's roar our height can reach.'<sup>5</sup>

'Simple and low is our condition,

For here with us is no ambition:

We with the sun our flocks unfold,

Whose rising makes their fleeces gold;

Our music from the birds we borrow,

They bidding us, we them, good-morrow.

<sup>1</sup> Decker.

<sup>2</sup> Marston; properly a satirist, bitter, misanthropic, cankered. <sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Middleton; a sagacious cynic, best known by his play of *The Witch*. <sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Our habits are but coarse and plain,  
 Yet they defend from wind and rain:  
 As warm too, in an equal eye,  
 As those bestained in scarlet dye.  
 The shepherd, with his homespun lass,  
 As many merry hours doth pass,  
 As courtiers with their costly girls,  
 Though richly dressed in gold and pearls.<sup>1</sup>

In **Shirley**, last of the great race, the fire and passion of the grand old era passes away. Imagination is driven from its last asylum. The sword is drawn, and the theatres are closed. Dramatists are stigmatized, actors are arrested; and when, after the lapse of a few years, they return to their old haunts, it is as roisterers under a foreign yoke.

**Prose.**—The drooping flower of poesy was succeeded by a blossom of prose, produced by the same inner growth, and, at its highest point, tinged with the like ideal colors. A half dozen writers will exhibit the expansion. We omit, at present, those who offer only the material of knowledge, the substance of wisdom merely,—annalists, antiquaries, scientists, pamphleteers, whether poets, dramatists, divines, or politicians; and pass to those who bring us merit of execution, as well as the residuary element of thought-value. Of **Bacon** we shall elsewhere treat. Fulness of thought and splendor of workmanship raise him into the realm of pure literature. Less originative and luminous, though of the same band of scholars and dreamers; is **Robert Burton**, an ecclesiastic, a recluse, an eccentric, spasmodically gay, as a rule sad. To amuse and relieve himself, after thirty years' reading, he wrote the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, an enormous medley of ideas, musical, medical, poetical, mathematical, philosophical; every page garnished with Latin, Greek, or French, from rare and unknown authors. It is the only book that ever took Dr. Johnson out of bed two hours sooner than he wished to rise. Here is a faint suggestion of his style—a glimpse into its jumble of observation, erudition, anecdote, instruction, and amusement:

<sup>1</sup>Boccace hath a pleasant tale to this purpose, which he borrowed from the Greeks, and which Beroaldus hath turned into Latin, Bebelius into verse, of Cymon and Iphigenia. This Cymon was a fool, a proper man of person, and the governor of Cyprus' son, but a very ass; insomuch that his father being ashamed of him, sent him to a farm-

<sup>1</sup>Thomas Heywood; graceful and gentle, one of the most prolific writers the world has ever seen.

house he had in the country, to be brought up; where by chance, as his manner was, walking alone, he espied a gallant young gentlewoman named Iphigenia, a burgomaster's daughter of Cyprus, with her maid, by a brook side, in a little thicket, fast asleep in her smock, where she had newly bathed herself. *When Cymon saw her he stood leaning on his staff, gaping on her immovable, and in a maze*: at last he fell so far in love with the glorious object, that he began to rouse himself up; to bethink what he was; would needs follow her to the city, and for her sake began to be civil, to learn to sing and dance, to play on instruments, and got all those gentleman-like qualities and compliments, in a short space, which his friends were most glad of. In brief, he became from an idiot and a clown, to be one of the most complete gentlemen in Cyprus; did many valorous exploits, and all for the love of Mistress Iphigenia. In a word, I may say thus much of them all, let them be never so clownish, rude and horrid, Grobians and sluts, if once they be in love, they will be most neat and spruce; for, *Omnibus rebus, et nitidis nitoribus antevenit amor*; they will follow the fashion, begin to trick up, and to have a good opinion of themselves; *venustatum enim mater Venus*; a ship is not so long a-rigging, as a young gentlewoman a-trimming up herself against her sweetheart comes. A painter's shop, a flowery meadow, is not so gracious an aspect in Nature's store-house as a young maid, *nubilis puella*, a Novitsa or Venetian bride, that looks for an husband; or a young man that is her suitor; composed looks, composed gait, clothes, gestures, actions, all composed; all the graces, elegancies, in the world, are in her face. Their best robes, ribbons, chains, jewels, lawns, linens, laces, spangles, must come on; *præter quam res patitur student elegantiae*, they are beyond all measure coy, nice, and too curious on a sudden. 'Tis all their study, all their business, how to wear their clothes neat, to be polite and terse, and to set out themselves. No sooner doth a young man see his sweetheart coming, but he smugs up himself, pulls up his cloak, now fallen about his shoulders, ties his garters, points, sets his band, cuffs, slicks his hair, twires his beard, etc.'

The *Meditations* of **Bishop Hall**, the 'English Seneca,' are alike rich in imagery and sententious in expression. Passages like the following reveal the poetic temperament:

'Here is a tree overlaid with blossoms: it is not possible that all these should prosper; one of them must needs rob the other of moisture and growth. I do not love to see an infancy over-hopeful; in these pregnant beginnings one faculty starves another, and at last leaves the mind sapless and barren; as, therefore, we are wont to pull off some of the too frequent blossoms, that the rest may thrive, so it is good wisdom to moderate the early excess of the parts, or progress of over-forward childhood. Neither is it otherwise in our Christian profession; a sudden and lavish ostentation of grace may fill the eye with wonder, and the mouth with talk, but will not at the last fill the lap with fruit.'

Again:

'What a strange melancholic life doth this creature lead; to hide her head all the day long in an ivy bush, and at night, when all other birds are at rest, to fly abroad, and vent her harsh notes. I know not why the ancients made sacred this bird to wisdom, except it be for her safe closeness and singular perspicuity; that when other domestical and airy creatures are blind, she only hath inward light to discern the least objects for her own advantage. Surely thus much wit they have taught us in her: that he is the wisest man that would have least to do with the multitude; that no life is so safe as the obscure; that retiredness, if it have less comfort, yet has less danger and vexation; lastly, that he is truly wise who sees by a light of his own, when the rest of the world sit in an ignorant and confused darkness, unable to apprehend any truth save by the helps of an outward illumination.'

A like irradiating power of fancy, with a less sustained dignity, may be seen in **Dr. Fuller**, facetious without irreverence, and witty without bitterness. A few of his aphorisms may

suggest that strong and weighty, yet gentle and beautiful style which was his habit:

'Learning hath gained most by those books by which the printers have lost.'

'Moderation is the silken string running through the pearl-chain of all virtues.'

'Anger is one of the sinews of the soul: he that wants it hath a maimed mind.'

'Tombs are the clothes of the dead. A grave is but a plain suit, and a rich monument is one embroidered.'

'They that marry ancient people, merely in expectation to bury them, hang themselves in hope that one will come and cut the halter.'

'Heat gotten by degrees, with motion and exercise, is more natural, and stays longer by one, than what is gotten all at once by coming to the fire. Goods acquired by industry prove commonly more lasting than lands by descent.'

'It is dangerous to gather flowers that grow on the banks of the pit of hell, for fear of falling in; yea, they which play with the devil's rattles will be brought by degrees to wield his sword; and from making of sport, they come to doing of mischief.'

'Generally, nature hangs out a sign of simplicity in the face of a fool, and there is enough in his countenance for a hue and cry to take him on suspicion; or else it is stamped in the figure of his body; their heads sometimes so little, that there is no room for wit; sometimes so long, that there is no wit for so much room.'

While the clash of arms is drawing men of letters from contemplation into the war of pens, **Sir Thomas Browne**, a physician and an idealist, is plunging into the abysses of meditative reverie. Unlike most of his profession, his delight is in the preternatural and visionary; he penetrates the internal structure of things, sees in the universe more than a dry catalogue, divines in every fact a mysterious soul, looks as from an eminence beyond visible phenomena, trembling with a kind of veneration before the dim vistas of the unknown, stirred to an eloquent sadness by the decay of nature and the dust of forgotten tombs, moved with an eloquent pity for the plumed and disorderly procession swallowed up in the fatal, all-devouring pit:

'Circles and right lines limit and close all bodies, and the mortal right-lined circle must conclude and shut up all. There is no antidote against the opium of time, which temporally considereth all things. Our fathers find their graves in our short memories, and sadly tell us now we may be buried in our survivors. Gravestones tell truth scarce forty years. Generations pass while some trees stand, and old families last not three oaks. . . . Who can but pity the founder of the Pyramids? Herostratus lives that burnt the temple of Diana; he is almost lost that built it: time hath spared the epitaph of Adrian's horse; confounded that of himself. In vain we compute our felicities by the advantage of our good names, since bad have equal durations; and Thersites is like to live as long as Agamemnon. Who knows whether the best of men be known; or whether there be not more remarkable persons forgot than any that stand remembered in the known account of time. Without the favour of the everlasting register, the first man had been as unknown as the last, and Methuselah's long life had been his only chronicle.

Oblivion is not to be hired: the greatest part must be content to be as though they



had not been; to be found in the register of God, not in the record of man. Twenty-seven names make up the first story before the Flood; and the recorded names ever since contain not one living century. The number of the dead long exceedeth all that shall live. The night of time far surpasseth the day, and who knows when was the equinox? . . .

Darkness and light divide the course of time, and oblivion shares with memory a great part even of our living beings; we slightly remember our felicities, and the smartest strokes of affliction leave but short smart upon us. Sense endureth no extremities, and sorrows destroy us or themselves. To weep into stones are fables. Afflictions induce callosities; miseries are slippery, or fall like snow upon us, which, notwithstanding, is no unhappy stupidity. . . . The Egyptian mummies, which Cambyses or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth. Mummy is become merchandise; Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams. . . .

Man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnising natiivities and deaths with equal lustre, nor omitting ceremonies of bravery in the infancy of his nature.<sup>1</sup>

Those whose minds are intent, constantly or mainly, on mere pleasure and gain, on the petty interests of appetite, will here find little to their satisfaction. But the meditations that lead us into the inner chambers of life and death are, if we be rightly attuned, more precious than the positive facts that put money into a man's pocket or actual knowledge into his head. We are more than sentiment — we are rational, we are ethical. The scale of our affinities is indicated by the intellect which seeks to transcend the finite in space and time and truth, by the conscience which owns the infinite in duty and stays itself on the infinite in love. A noble melancholy is the source of every generous passion and of every philosophical discovery.<sup>2</sup> Whatever depth there may be in our tenderness, whatever reverence in our voice, flows into us from the two eternities.

Another who rises above the din of strife into the region of spiritualities, is **Jeremy Taylor**,<sup>3</sup> an Anglican and a Royalist, upright, zealous, tolerant, a sensitive and creative genius, less profound than Browne, but as opulent in resources, warmer, richer, more gorgeous in style. His soul was made for the sublime, the beautiful, and the picturesque. Never was such wealth and sweetness of imagery, or readier perception of analogies in things familiar and fair. He sees the skylark build her nest on

<sup>1</sup>*Hydriotaphia, or Urn Burial*; 'a Discourse on the Sepulchral Urns lately found in Norfolk.'

<sup>2</sup>Melancholy is the genuine inspiration of true genius; whoever is not conscious of this affection of the mind must not aspire to any great celebrity as an author. *Madam de Staël*.

Happy is the country where the authors are melancholy, the merchants satisfied, the rich gloomy. *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>Son of a poor surgeon-barber, entered college at fourteen as a sizar, won his way, married a natural daughter of Charles I, was wrecked in the storm of the Civil War, twice imprisoned, and after the Restoration loaded with honors.

the ground, sees her rise amid the early perfumes of the fields, soaring highest of all the feathered tribe, or breasting the tempest in her upward flight, and compelled to return panting; then he thinks of the good man's spirit, struggling to ascend towards the throne of mercy:

'For so I have seen a lark rising from his bed of grass, and soaring upwards, singing as he rises, and hopes to get to heaven, and climb above the clouds; but the poor bird was beaten back with the loud sighings of an eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and inconstant, descending more at every breath of the tempest, than it could recover by the libration and frequent weighing of his wings; till the little creature was forced to sit down and pant, and stay till the storm was over; and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing, as if it had learned music and motion from an angel as he passed sometimes through the air, about his ministries here below. So is the prayer of a good man.'

Or his full imagination traces in sensible colors the progress of sin:

'I have seen the little purls of a stream sweat through the bottom of a bank, and intenerate the stubborn pavement, till it hath made it fit for the impression of a child's foot; and it was despised, like the descending pearls of a misty morning, till it had opened its way and made a stream large enough to carry away the ruins of the undermined strand, and to invade the neighboring gardens: but then the despised drops were grown into an artificial river, and an intolerable mischief. So are the first entrances of sin stopped with the antidotes of a hearty prayer, and checked into sobriety by the eye of a reverend man, or the counsels of a single sermon: but when such beginnings are neglected, and our religion hath not in it so much philosophy as to think anything evil as long as we can endure it, they grow up to ulcers and pestilential evils; they destroy the soul by their abode, who at their first entry might have been killed with the pressure of a little finger.'

With like fertility and continuity, he describes the growth of reason:

'We must not think that the life of a man begins when he can feed himself or walk alone, when he can fight or beget his like, for so he is contemporary with a camel or a cow; but he is first a man when he comes to a certain steady use of reason, according to his proportion: and when that is, all the world of men cannot tell precisely. Some are called *at age* at fourteen, some at one and twenty, some never; but all men late enough; for the life of a man comes upon him slowly and insensibly. But, as when the sun approaches towards the gates of the morning, he first opens a little eye of heaven, and sends away the spirits of darkness, and gives light to a cock, and calls up the lark to matins, and by and by gilds the fringes of a cloud, and peeps over the eastern hills, thrusting out his golden horns like those which decked the brow of Moses, when he was forced to wear a veil, because himself had seen the face of God; and still, while a man tells the story, the sun gets up higher, till he shews a fair face and full light, and then he shines one whole day, under a cloud often, and sometimes weeping great and little showers, and sets quickly; so is a man's reason and his life.'

We see that he is a philanthropist, who is not content to have religion a ritual or a dream; with whom the business of life is not to gather gold or get station, but to be a man; not to pass an ephemeral being in a whirl of fashion, but to be a woman; a godly man, who does not spoil the poetic depth of holiness by

reducing its speech to a technical use; a counsellor, who does his work only with thought that it be good, whose marriage—let us hope—was the noble poem, the interior relation, the rudimentary heaven, which he would have it be:

‘They that enter into the state of marriage cast a die of the greatest contingency, and yet of the greatest interest in the world, next to the last throw for eternity. Life or death, felicity or a lasting sorrow, are in the power of marriage. A woman, indeed, ventures most, for she hath no sanctuary to retire to from an evil husband; she must dwell upon her sorrow, and hatch the eggs which her own folly or infelicity hath produced; and she is more under it, because her tormentor hath a warrant of prerogative, and the woman may complain to God, as subjects do of tyrant princes; but otherwise she hath no appeal in the causes of unkindness. And though the man can run from many hours of his sadness, yet he must return to it again; and when he sits among his neighbors, he remembers the objection that lies in his bosom, and he sighs deeply. The boys and the pedlers, and the fruiterers, shall tell of this man when he is carried to his grave, that he lived and died a poor wretched person.

The stags in the Greek epigram, whose knees were clogged with frozen snow upon the mountains, came down to the brooks of the valleys, hoping to thaw their joints with the waters of the stream; but there the frost overtook them, and bound them fast in ice, till the young herdsmen took them in their stronger snare. It is the unhappy chance of many men, finding many inconveniences upon the mountains of single life, they descend into the valleys of marriage to refresh their troubles; and there they enter into fetters, and are bound to sorrow by the chords of a man’s or woman’s peevishness. . . .

Man and wife are equally concerned to avoid all offences of each other in the beginning of their conversation; every little thing can blast an infant blossom; and the breath of the south can shake the little rings of the vine, when first they begin to curl like the the locks of a new weaned boy: but when by age and consolidation they stiffen into the hardness of a stem, and have by the warm embraces of the sun and the kisses of heaven, brought forth their clusters, they can endure the storms of the north, and the loud noises of a tempest, and yet never be broken: so are the early unions of an unfix’d marriage.’

It is not a cold rigorist who speaks, but a saviour, who feels the sore travail of the world, and esteems nothing greater than by word or deed to minister comfort to a weary or troubled soul:

‘This is glory to thy voice, and employment fit for the brightest angel. But so have I seen the sun kiss the frozen earth, which was bound up with the images of death, and the colder breath of the north; and then the waters break from their inclosures, and melt with joy, and run in useful channels; and the flies do rise again from their little graves in walls, and dance awhile in the air, to tell that there is joy within, and that the great mother of creatures will open the stock of her new refreshment, become useful to mankind, and sing praises to her Redeemer. So is the heart of a sorrowful man under the discourses of a wise comforter.’

He has, like Browne, the stamp of the national spirit, the Northern gloom which, in the days of the *Edda*, was soothed by the roaring of the sea and the hollow blast of the barren heath. For what is the end and sum of mortal designs? A dark night and an ill guide, ‘a boisterous sea and a broken cable,’—a rock and a wreck, while they who weep loudest have yet to enter into the storm. All, fair as the morning, brave as the noon, are the heri-

tage of worms. Go where you may, you tread upon the bones of a dead man. 'Where is the dust that has not been alive?'

'Nature calls us to meditate of death, by those things which are the instruments of acting it; and God by all the variety of His providence, makes us see death everywhere in all variety of circumstances, and dressed up for all the fancies and the expectation of every single person. Nature has given us one harvest every year, but death hath two; and the spring and the autumn send throngs of men and women to charnel-houses: and all the summer long, men are recovering from their evils of the spring, till the dog-days come, and then the Sirian star makes the summer deadly; and the fruits of the autumn are laid up for all the year's provision, and the man that gathers them eats and surfeits, and dies and needs them not, and himself is laid up for eternity; and he that escapes till winter, only stays for another opportunity, which the distempers of that quarter minister to him with great variety. Thus death reigns in all the portions of our time. The autumn with its fruits provides disorders for us, and the winter's cold turns them into sharp diseases, and the spring brings flowers to strew our hearse, and the summer gives green turf and brambles to bind upon our graves.'

The style of all these writers, by its copiousness and pomp, by its redundancies and irregularities, links them to the age of Elizabeth. It has the Elizabethan ardor and the Elizabethan faults. If now we turn to **Cowley**, we shall see, in startling contrast, the powerful and erratic breeze slacken to a smooth and placid equability:

'The first minister of state has not so much business in public as a wise man has in private: if the one have little leisure to be alone, the other has less leisure to be in company: the one has but part of the affairs of one nation, the other all the works of God and Nature under his consideration. 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.'

Of Oliver Cromwell:

'What can be more extraordinary than that a person of mean birth, no fortune, no eminent qualities of body, which have sometimes, or of mind, which have often, raised men to the highest dignities, should have the courage to attempt, and the happiness to succeed in, so improbable a design as the destruction of one of the most ancient and most solidly founded monarchies upon the earth? that he should have the power or boldness to put his prince and master to an open and infamous death; to banish that numerous and strongly allied family: to do all this under the name and wages of a parliament; to trample upon them, too, as he pleased, and spurn them out of doors when he grew weary of them; to raise up a new and unheard-of monster out of their ashes; to stifle that in the very infancy, and set up himself above all things that ever were called sovereign in England; to oppress all his enemies by arms, and all his friends afterwards by artifice; to serve all parties patiently for a while, and to command them victoriously at last; to overrun each corner of the three nations, and overcome with equal facility both the riches of the south and the poverty of the north; to be feared and courted by all foreign princes, and adopted a brother to the gods of the earth; to call together parliaments with a word of his pen, and scatter them again with the breath of his mouth; to be humbly and daily petitioned, that he would please to be hired, at the rate of two millions a year, to be the master of those who had hired him before to be their servant; to have the estates and lives of three kingdoms as much at his disposal as was the little inheritance of his father, and to be as noble and liberal in the spending of them; and lastly—for there is no end of all the particulars of his glory—to bequeath all this with one word to

<sup>1</sup> Young's *Night Thoughts*.



his posterity; to die with peace at home, and triumph abroad; to be buried among kings, and with more than regal solemnity; and to leave a name behind him not to be extinguished but with the whole world; which, as it is now too little for his praises, so might have been, too, for his conquests, if the short line of his human life could have been stretched out to the extent of his immortal designs.'

This is the mark of a new culture, a new society: it is the model which Temple and Addison will adopt and improve.

**History.**—The contribution to this department in the first quarter of the century, most valuable as authority and most masterly in execution, is **Bacon's *Reign of Henry VII.*** In the collection of materials, the period was exceedingly active. Volumes of *Antiquities*, *Memoirs*, *Memorials*, *Travels*, contemporary narratives and retrospective treatises, most of which from the literary point of view are worthless, attest the great amount of industry subsidiary to true history. Always liable in all its forms to be partisan, the historical literature of the seventeenth century, as a whole, is violently so. The historian speaks less with the air of a judge than with the gesticulations of an attorney. Indeed, the grave and judicial, ancient or modern, are not altogether unbiased by their sympathies and antipathies. They are prone—let the reader or student remember—to write in the interest of some political party, some social caste, some favorite hero, some *Idol of the Tribe*, the *Den*, the *Forum*, or the *Theatre*. There are, also, unmistakable signs that historians were shifting their ground. Thus Selden, the chief of scholars, offended many of the Royalists by his *History of Tithes*, wherein he denied their divine right. Baker compiled a *Chronicle* 'with such care and diligence,' he assures us, 'that if all other chronicles were lost, this only would be sufficient to inform posterity of all passages worthy to be known.' Bacon analyzes motives, weighs actions, examines and describes the laws and events affecting trade and agriculture, with an evident purpose to enable the reader to glean the lessons which may hereafter be turned to useful account. We observe an increasing respect for the human intellect, an indisposition to believe in things strange, merely because they have been believed, and an inclination to take the side of the people, rather than that of the rulers.

**Theology.**—The persecutions of Galileo, and his recantation, suffice to show that Religion was still considered the arbiter of Science. In England, though creeds did not at once come into



conflict with the general culture, the temper of the nation was intensely theological. 'There is a great abundance of theologians in England,' says a contemporary; 'all point their studies in that direction.' It was a period of distrust and dissension,—of the strife of conservative and radical reform. As the struggle progressed, fanaticism gained ground, faith became more stubborn, divinity more sinister, action and intelligence more restrictive. But—Milton aside—the Episcopalians were not only more talented and scholarly than their opponents, but also more liberal. If, by their alliance with the crown, they were oppressive in politics, they were tolerant in doctrine, more friendly, perhaps, to the large ideas of the Renaissance.

What it is chiefly important to observe, is, that the rage of controversy reacted upon the spirit of insubordination that was abroad, and tended to the rapid increase of heresy. In 1647, Boyle writes from London:

'There are few days pass here that may not justly be accused of the brewing or broaching of some new opinion. Nay, some are so studiously changing in that particular, they esteem an opinion as a diurnal, after a day or two scarce worth the keeping. If any man have lost his religion, let him repair to London, and I'll warrant him he shall find it. I had almost said too,—if any man has a religion, let him but come hither now, and he shall go near to lose it.'

Each sect proclaimed its contempt of tradition and the efficiency of reason. Hales, the 'ever-memorable,' declared that he would quit the Church of England to-morrow if she insisted on the damnation of dissenters. He advised men to trust to themselves alone in religious matters. Of the authority of the Fathers and of Councils, he said briefly, 'It is none.' Universality is no conclusive test. It 'is such a proof of truth as truth itself is ashamed of. The most singular and strongest part of human authority is properly in the wisest and most virtuous, and these, I trow, are not the most universal.' **Chillingworth**, a militant and Royalist, of strong and subtle intellect, asserted the insecurity of any basis for belief but that of private judgment. No man is bound to believe the points at issue between the Catholics and Protestants if he finds them repugnant to reason. 'God requires only that we believe the conclusion as much as the premises deserve.' Nothing can be more detrimental to religion than to force it. 'For my part, I am certain that God hath given us our reason to discern between truth and falsehood; and he that makes not this use of it, but believes things he knows not why, I say it is by

chance that he believes the truth, and not by choice; and I can not but fear that God will not accept of this sacrifice of fools.' The great principle of religious toleration is clearly implied in this, if it is not clearly expressed in what follows:

'This deifying our own interpretations and tyrannous enforcing them upon others; this restraining of the word of God from that latitude and generality, and the understandings of men from that liberty wherein Christ and His apostles left them, is and hath been the only foundation of all the schisms of the Church and that which makes them immortal.'

But the first famous plea for tolerance, on a solid and comprehensive basis, was **Taylor's** *Liberty of Prophesying*. That freedom of conscience which the Puritan founded on the personal communion of each soul with God, is here founded on the weakness of authority and the infirmity of reason. The Apostle's Creed comprises all that can be absolutely proven, and therefore all that is fundamental. All errors beyond do not affect salvation, and hence ought not to be punished. The magistrate, however, must see to the safety of the commonwealth, and put down, if necessary, those religions whose principles destroy government, as well as 'those religions—if there be any such—which teach ill life.'

Among Puritans, the Independents allowed the greater latitude. Milton deemed persecution, in defense of truth, inexcusable: 'For truth is strong next to the Almighty. She needs no policies or stratagems or licensings to make her victorious. These are the shifts and the defences that error uses against her power.' The Presbyterians desired to tolerate only those who accepted the 'fundamentals' of Christianity, and drew up a list which formed as elaborate and exclusive a test as the Anglican articles which they rejected. They tried in 1648 to induce Parliament to enact that any one who advocated views contrary to the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, should be punished with death, and all who taught Popish, Arminian,<sup>1</sup> Baptist, or Quaker doctrines, should be imprisoned for life. Catholicism, indeed, was by all sectaries ruthlessly proscribed; but the nation, it is evident, was advancing towards religious liberty. It must not be forgotten that this great process—yet far from being completed in any country—was begun by the union of the spirit of Christianity

<sup>1</sup> A scheme of Arminius, a Dutch theologian, who died in 1608. It arose by way of reaction against the predestinarianism of Calvin.

with the spirit of scepticism. He who has learned to doubt has learned to tolerate. They who have recognized the fallibility of their own opinions, cease to dream that guilt can be associated with an honest conclusion.

**Ethics.**—When dogmatism declines, we may be sure that men are interrogating their moral sense more than the books of theologians, and that they will soon proceed to make that sense a supreme arbiter. While the period offers nothing that can be reckoned a treatise, much less a system, of moral philosophy, indications are not wanting that conditions were rapidly maturing for the examination, analysis, and classification of moral feelings on a rationalistic basis. **Bacon**, without attempting a scheme, calls attention to the insufficient treatment of Ethics, and suggests the double line of investigation — *theory* and *practice* :

‘The main and primitive division of moral knowledge seemeth to be into the exemplar or platform of good, and the regimen or culture of the mind: the one describing the nature of good; the other presenting rules how to subdue, apply, and accommodate the will of man thereunto.’

The ‘platform’ seems to consist in seeking the good of the whole — or the greatest good of the greatest number. He contributes several passages, moreover, to the rising issues touching the rights of belligerents. We also meet with allusions, reflections, precepts, counsels, in Feltham’s *Resolves*, Berkin’s *Cases of Conscience*, Selden’s *Table Talk*, and **Browne’s** *Christian Morals*. The aim of these writers is not to inquire into the principles of action, but rather to enforce the duties of practical religion. We quote briefly from the last:

‘Live by old ethicks and the classical rules of honesty. . . . Think not that morality is ambulatory; . . . that virtues, which are under the everlasting seal of right reason, may be stamped by opinion. And therefore though vicious times invert the opinions of things, and set up new ethics against virtue, yet hold thou unto old morality; and rather than follow a multitude to do evil, stand like Pompey’s pillar conspicuous by thyself, and single in integrity. And since the worst of times afford imitable examples of virtue; since no deluge of vice is like to be so general but more than eight will escape; eye well those heroes who have held their heads above water, who have touched pitch and not been defiled, and in the common contagion have remained uncorrupted.’

And:

‘Live happy in the Elysium of a virtuously composed mind, and let intellectual contents exceed the delights wherein mere pleurists place their paradise. Bear not too slack reins upon pleasure, nor let complexion or contagion betray thee unto the exorbitancy of delight. Make pleasure thy recreation or intermissive relaxation, not thy Diana, life and profession. . . . Our hard entrance into the world, our miserable going out of it, our sicknesses, disturbances, and sad rencounters in it, do clamorously tell us we come not into the world to run a race of delight.’

Again:

‘Lastly, if length of days be thy portion, make it not thy expectation. Reckon not upon long life; think every day the last, and live always beyond thy account. He that so often surviveth his expectation lives many lives, and will scarce complain of the shortness of his days. Time past is gone like a shadow; make time to come present. Approximate thy latter times by present apprehensions of them; be like a neighbour unto the grave, and think there is but little to come. And since there is something of us that will still live on, join both lives together, and live in one but for the other. He who thus ordereth the purposes of this life will never be far from the next.’

That moral instruction has been secularized, constitutes an important advance towards the exploration of the nature and foundation of morals.

**Science.**—As poetry languished, science rose, a second creation which continued the first. What one had represented, the other proceeded to observe, to analyze, and to classify. On the Continent, the discoveries of **Galileo** established the Copernican theory of the universe. Summoned before the Inquisition, he was forced to kneel in the sackcloth of a penitent, and swear with his hands upon the gospels, that ‘it was not true that the earth moved round the sun, and that he would never again in words or writing spread this damnable heresy.’ ‘And yet,’ he immediately whispered to a friend, ‘it *does* move.’ In 1609, he had constructed his telescope, and, applying it to the heavens, had excited the strongest interest by revealing the inequalities of the moon’s surface, the moon-like phases of Venus, the satellites of Jupiter, and the ring of Saturn. Space was thus seen to be very different from what the ancients had imagined. Men were led to suspect that it contained a mechanism more various and more vast than had ever been conjectured. **Kepler** took up the notion of a physical connection among celestial bodies, and arrived at three laws the most magnificent which the whole expanse of human knowledge can show: *that the planets move round the sun in ellipses; that they describe equal areas about their centres in equal times; that the squares of their periodic times are proportional to the cubes of their distances.* Why they so moved, or how their motions were maintained, he also endeavored to explain. It was assumed that a current of fluid matter circulated round the sun, and carried them with it, like a boat in a stream, or straws in a whirlpool. The true explanation was to be the glory and merit of Newton. The theory of vortices,—put forward more distinctly and elaborately by

Descartes,—though it is now known to have no scientific value, has a mental value of the highest order: for (1) it reminds us again that the complete disclosure of a new truth by the principal discoverer is preceded by guesses, trials, and glimpses; and (2) it introduced the conception of natural law into what had long been the special realm of superstition.

In England, the intellectual impulse was in the same direction. Weeds and the grain often thrive and flourish together, but if **Bacon** set aside with scorn the astronomical system of Copernicus, he was the first to impress upon mankind at large, the power and importance of physical research. ‘Through all those ages,’ he says, ‘wherein men of genius or learning principally or even moderately flourished, the smallest part of human industry has been spent on natural philosophy, though this ought to be esteemed as the great mother of the sciences; for all the rest, if torn from the root, may perhaps be polished and formed for use, but can receive little increase.’ Many were undecided, Milton among others:

‘What if seventh to these  
The planet earth, though steadfast she seem,  
Insensibly three different motions move?’

And:

‘What if the sun  
Be centre to the world; and other stars,  
By his attractive virtue and their own  
Incited, dance about him various rounds?’

His leaning, however, seems to have been for the new:

‘Or she from west her silent course advance  
With inoffensive pace, that spinning sleeps  
On her soft axle, while she paces even,  
And bears thee soft with the smooth air along?’

Many were knocking at the door which another and a later was to force open. In 1638 a book appeared with the title, *The Discovery of a New World*; two years afterward, a *Discourse concerning a New Planet*. The art of numerical calculation made inestimable progress by means of **Napier’s** invention of Logarithms, without which the sciences in which the most splendid triumphs have been achieved, could never have been carried to the height they have reached. The circulation of the blood had been partially anticipated. **Harvey** completed the doctrine, demonstrated and announced it. It encountered as much popular as professional odium; but like the heliocentric doctrine,—



‘Untamed its pride, unchecked its course,  
From foes and wounds it gathers force.’

This was the beginning of a revolution in medicine. In the ferment of the Civil War, some speculative persons formed themselves into a club, which they called the Invisible College, and met once a week, sometimes in London, sometimes in Oxford, according to the changes of fortune and residence of members. ‘Our business,’ says one of them, ‘precluding affairs of state and questions of theology, was to consider philosophical subjects, and whatever related thereto,—physic, anatomy, geometry, astronomy, navigation, statics, magnetism, chemistry, mechanics, and natural experiments, with the state of these studies as then cultivated at home or abroad.’

A witness to the resistless tendencies of the age, is the celebrated work of **Sir Thomas Browne**—*Inquiries into Vulgar and Common Errors*. His enumeration of errors to be dispelled exemplifies the notions which prevailed:

‘That crystal is nothing else but ice strongly congealed; that a diamond is softened or broken by the blood of a goat; that a pot full of ashes will contain as much water as it would without them; that hays preserve from the mischief of lightning and thunder; that an elephant hath no joints; that a wolf, first seeing a man, begets a dumbness in him; that moles are blind; that the flesh of peacocks corrupteth not; that storks will only live in republics and free states; that the chicken is made out of the yolk of the egg; that men weigh heavier dead than alive; that the forbidden fruit was an apple; that there was no rainbow before the Flood; that John the Evangelist should not die.’

‘Many others there are,’ he adds, ‘which we resign unto divinity, and perhaps deserve not controversy.’ We are here informed that one main cause of error is ‘adherence unto authority’; that another is ‘neglect of inquiry’; that a third is ‘credulity.’ All which is confirmatory of that vast social and intellectual movement which we have seen sweep away the institutions that vainly attempted to arrest it, and which was steadily introducing a new series of conceptions into every province of speculative and practical life.

**Philosophy.**—The sterile empire of scholasticism was at an end. The sound of great names had lost its omnipotent charm. Speculators felt the need of a law and a law-giver to methodize the discordant elements, but pursued no determinate course, while pretenders struggled for the vacant throne. At this juncture a leader appeared—**Francis Bacon**, who set aside the traditions of the past, separated philosophy from theology, and in

a large and noble temper called the attention of mankind to the power and importance of experimental research. While his own researches lay chiefly in the domain of physical science, yet the *spirit* of his method—slow and patient investigation—was one which applied equally to the whole realm of knowledge. More clearly than any other, he saw where the error of the ancients lay,—in making the largest generalizations first, without the aid or warrant of rigorous inductive methods, and applying them deductively without verification. But the revolt from this waste of intelligence, as well as his ignorance of mathematical knowledge, blinded him to the real value of deduction as an instrument of discovery.<sup>1</sup> His influence, however, especially on the development of science, was decisive, if not immediate. His fundamental maxim—excellent though not without its dangers—suited the English positive, practical genius,—that philosophy should begin in observation and end in art:

‘In the same manner as we are cautioned by religion to show our faith by our works, we may freely apply the principle to philosophy, and judge of it by its works, accounting that to be futile which is unproductive, and still more, if instead of grapes and olives it yield but the thistles and thorns of dispute and contention?’

What is that world? What is man? What is the origin of knowledge? What are its limits? How can it be increased? From what principles must we start? What methods are we to employ? What rule shall we deduce for the conduct of life? To answer these questions is the dark problem of metaphysics, to which Bacon, from the bent of his genius, was no way addicted. On the continent a Frenchman, **Descartes**, gave an answer which, while it has ceased to be satisfactory, formed the starting-point of much English speculation, though he himself made no distinguished disciples among English thinkers. Turning the mental vision inward, as Bacon turned it outward, he watched the operations of the soul, as an object in a microscope. Resolved to believe nothing but upon evidence so convincing that he could not by any effort refuse his assent, he found, as he inspected his beliefs, that he could plausibly enough doubt everything but his own existence. Here at last was the everlasting rock, and

<sup>1</sup>Mechanics, astronomy, optics, acoustics, involve a deductive element. Each supposes the law to be so and so, that is, devises an hypothesis, and inquires what consequences will follow, always with the design of trying such results by facts, and adopting the hypothesis only when it can stand the test. From a principle thus established a multitude of truths are deduced by the mere application of geometry and algebra.

this was revealed in his own *Consciousness*. Hence his famous *Cogito, ergo sum,—I think, therefore I am*. Consciousness, said he, is the basis of certitude. Interrogate it, and its clear replies will be science; *for all clear ideas are true*. Down in the depths of self, he tells you, is the distinct immutable idea of the Infinite Perfection — *the mark of the workman impressed upon his work*; therefore, *God exists*. This fact established, the veracity of our faculties is guaranteed; for an Infinite and Perfect Being would not so constitute His creatures that they should be always and essentially deceived. His method of ascent to the basis of truth was inductive; thenceforth, from that irreversible Certainty, it was deductive. He was greatest in that in which Bacon was least,—mathematics. The latter argued from effects to causes; the former *deduced* effects from causes—explaining the phenomena of sense by those of intuition. The one used experiment to *verify* an *a priori* conception; the other, to *form* conceptions.

Against the prosaic, earthy temper of the next period, when Philosophy shall turn her face earthward, the mind be plotted out into real estate, and grandeur become a thing unknown, let us hold in remembrance the sublime words of **Sir Thomas Browne** on the true dignity and destiny of man as the highest sublunary object of our theoretical and moral interest. This poet-philosopher shall give us the last accents of the great Elizabethan age:

‘For the world, I count it not an inn but an hospital, and a place, not to live but to die in. The world that I regard is myself; it is the microcosm of my own frame that I cast mine eye on; for the other, I use it but like my globe, and turn it round sometimes for my recreation. . . . The earth is a point not only in respect of the heavens above us, but of that heavenly and celestial part within us; that mass of flesh that circumscribes me limits not my mind; that surface that tells the heavens it hath an end cannot persuade me I have any: . . . whilst I study to find how I am a microcosm or little world, I find myself something more than the great. There is surely a piece of divinity in us, something that was before the elements and owes no homage unto the sun. Nature tells me I am the image of God, as well as Scripture; he that understands not thus much, hath not his introduction or first lesson, and is yet to begin the alphabet of man.’

**Résumé.**—The opinions and feelings that had been growing up in the bosom of private families now manifested themselves in Parliamentary debates, then overturned the throne, and instituted the Commonwealth. Against the loyal enthusiasm of English gentry, and the fierce licentiousness of Royalist reprobates, were arrayed the valor, the policy, and the public spirit of the

Puritans, with their severe countenance, precise garb, petty scruples, and affected accent. Out of the struggle sprang into organized existence two great parties,—standing the one for political tradition, the other for political progress; the one for religious conformity, the other for religious liberty.

In the drama, the noonday of Shakespeare was followed by the afternoon flush of Jonson, the delineator of *humors*, and a semi-classic in taste; of Beaumont and Fletcher, luxuriating in irregularity of form, and heralding the sensual excess that ended in the violent extinction of the art; of Massinger, Ford, and the rest of that bright throng, whose final and almost solitary successor was Shirley.

Having reached the limit of its expansion, the poetic bloom withered. The serious temper, the blast of strife, the ascetic gloom, accelerated the decay which natural causes began. The agreeable replaced the forceful; and the pretty, the beautiful. Donne founded the fantastic or metaphysical school, marked by the love of quaint phrases, strange analogies, and ambitious efforts at antithesis. Poets lost the romantic fervor without gaining the classic grace. Yet in this exhausted soil, the old sap, lost to the eye, sent up one more of its most vigorous products. Prose was unexampled in vigor and amount; most of it—in particular during the Civil War—political and theological, inspired by the rage of sects and factions, meant for the ravenous appetites of the moment, and therefore ephemeral. A few notable books—like the *Areopagitica* of Milton, those of Taylor, the Spenser of theology, of Bacon, the diviner in science, and of Browne, the dreamer of Norwich—glow with the colored lights and the heart of fire which give to the productions of genius enduring life. Style was copious, even to redundancy; ornate, even to intemperance; not seldom pedantic, with blemishes of vulgarity and tediously prolonged periods. We do not look for grace in Leviathans, nor for urbanity in mastodons.

The scholastic dynasty, which had survived revolutions, empires, religions, and languages, was fallen. Into the ensuing anarchy Bacon introduced the principle of order, and furnished to liberated thought a chart and compass. His preëminent service was his classification of the *Idola*, and his constant injunction to correct theory by confronting it with facts. In him, and in

Descartes of France, modern philosophy may be said to originate, inasmuch as they were the first to make the doctrine of method a principal object of consideration.

Literary eras have no arbitrary or precise bounds. They are discriminated by centres and directions, by a certain set of influences affecting the public mind and character during a more or less definite time, to be succeeded by a new set producing a new phase of the nation's literature. The characteristic tendencies which stretch across them are denoted by persons scattered through them, as the mountain trend is determined by its isolated peaks. The poetic conception of the world, as distinguished from the mechanical, may be taken as the dominant mark of the so-called Elizabethan Age, first clearly defined in Spenser, rising to its zenith in Shakespeare, and passing away in Milton—last of the famed race who slaked the thirst of their souls at the springs of imagination and faith.

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## JONSON.

Then Jonson came, instructed from the school,  
To please in method, and invent by rule;  
His studious patience and laborious art  
By regular approach essay'd the heart.—*Samuel Johnson.*

Many were the wit-combats betwixt Shakspeare and Ben Jonson, which two I beheld 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 his performances. Shakspeare, 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.—*Fuller.*

**Biography.**—Born in Westminster, in 1574, a few days after the death of his father, who was a clergyman; attracted the attention of Camden, who sent him to school, where he made extraordinary progress; entered Cambridge at sixteen, but was shortly recalled by his step-father, a bricklayer, who set him to the trowel; ran away, enlisted, fought in the Netherlands, killed a man in single combat in the view of both armies; returned to England at the age of nineteen, with a roistering reputation and an empty purse; turned to the stage for a livelihood, and failed; quarrelled with a fellow-performer, and slew him in a duel, was



arrested for murder, imprisoned, almost brought to the gallows; was released, and immediately married a woman as poor as himself—a wife whom he afterwards described as ‘a shrew yet honest’; was forced again to the stage both as an actor and a writer, beginning his dramatic career by doing job-work for the managers; sprang into fame in his twenty-second year, proclaimed himself a reformer of the drama, assumed an imperious attitude, railed at his rivals, and made bitter enemies, against whom he struggled without intermission to the end; excited the king’s anger by an irreverent allusion to the Scotch, was in danger of mutilation, but was set at liberty without a trial; amid feasting and rejoicing, his mother showed him a poison which she had intended to put into his drink, to save him from the disgraceful punishment, and ‘to show that she was not a coward,’ says Jonson, ‘she had resolved to drink first’; received the appointment of Poet Laureate, with a pension of a hundred marks, which was subsequently advanced to a hundred pounds by Charles I. His latter days were dark and painful. For twelve years he battled with want and disease. His pockets had holes, and his money failed. Still obliged to write in order to live, he wrote when his pen had lost its vigor and lacked the charm of novelty. Scurvy increased, paralysis came, and dropsy. In the epilogue to the *New Inn* (1630), he appeals to the audience:

‘If you expect more than you had to-night,  
The maker is sick and sad. . . .  
All that his faint and falt’ring tongue doth crave,  
Is, that you not impute it to his brain,  
That’s yet unhurt, altho’ set round with pain  
It cannot long hold out.’

Deprived of Court patronage, he was forced to beg, first from the Lord Treasurer, then from the Earl of Newcastle. Shattered, drivelling, and suffering, he died in August, 1637,—alone, served by an old woman; and was buried, in an upright posture, in the Poet’s Corner of the Abbey. A workman, hired for eighteen pence by the charity of a passer-by, carved into the simple stone over his grave the laconic inscription:

‘O RARE BEN JONSON!’

**Appearance.**—Big and coarsely framed, of wide and long face, early marred by scurvy, square jaw, enormous cheeks, thick lips, with a ‘mountain belly’ and an ‘ungracious gate’; a pon-

derous athlete, of free and boisterous habits, built up out of beef and Canary wine, for action and for endurance. His life and manners were in harmony with his person.

**Writings.**—We perceive at once the introduction of a new model,—art subjected strictly to the laws of classical composition. The understanding of the artist is solid, strong, penetrating, assertive; his mind, extensively furnished from experience and from books; his memory, retentive and exact, crowded with technical details and learned reminiscences. It is not for him to imitate, but to be imitated. He has a doctrine, which he expounds with Latin regularity. He will be loyal to culture, and therefore observes the unities. His plot shall be a diagram, the incidents rapid and natural; and you may see the dramatic effect, perceptible to every reader, rise to a climax by a continuous and uniform ascent. You have seen greater spontaneity, finer sympathy, finer fancy, a more genial spirit of enjoyment, but never such preoccupation of rule and method; above all, such power of working out an idea to a painful and oppressive issue, such persistency of thirst to unmask folly and punish vice. A character, with him, is but an incorporated idea,—a leading feature, conceit, or passion, produced on the stage in a man's dress,—which masters the whole nature, and which the personages combine to illustrate. At twenty-two, having exulted in his own exploits on the field, he writes *Every Man in his Humour*, to clothe in flesh and blood a colossal coward and braggart,—Bobadil, who swears 'by the body of Cæsar,' or 'by the foot of Pharaoh,' or, more terrifically still, 'by my valor!' His proposal for the pacification of Europe is famous:

'I will tell you, sir, by the way of private, and under seal, I am a gentleman, and live here obscure, and to myself; but were I known to her majesty and the lords (observe me), I would undertake, upon this poor head and life, for the public benefit of the state, not only to spare the entire lives of her subjects in general, but to save the one-half, nay, three-parts, of her yearly charge in holding war, and against what enemy soever. And how would I do it, think you! . . . Why, thus, sir. I would select nineteen more, to myself, throughout the land; gentlemen they should be of good spirit, strong and able constitution; I would choose them by an instinct, a character that I have: and I would teach these nineteen the special rules,—as your punto, your reverso, your stoccata, your imbrocato, your passado, your montanto,—till they could all play very near, or altogether, as well as myself. This done, say the enemy were forty thousand strong, we twenty would come into the field the tenth of March, or thereabouts; and we would challenge twenty of the enemy; they could not in their honour refuse us; well, we would kill them; challenge twenty more, kill them; twenty more, kill them; twenty more, kill them too; and thus would we kill every man his twenty a day, that's twenty score;

twenty score, that's two hundred; two hundred a day, five days a thousand; forty thousand; forty times five, five times forty, two hundred days kills them all up by computation. And this will I venture my poor gentleman-like carcass to perform, provided there be no treason practiced upon us, by fair and discreet manhood; that is, civilly by the sword.'

It is affectation and bluster grown to egregious excess. So in the *Alchemist*, Sir Epicure Mammon, in public and alone, expatiates continually in gigantic fancies of luxury and sensuality. Hear him unfold the vision of splendors and debauchery into which he will plunge when, by the possession of the philosopher's stone, he has learned to make gold:

'I assure you

He that has once the flower of the Sun,  
 The perfect ruby, which we call elixir, . . .  
 Can confer honour, love, respect, long life;  
 Give safety, valour, yea, and victory,  
 To whom he will. In eight and twenty days  
 I'll make an old man of fourscore a child. . . .  
 I will have all my beds blown up, not stuff'd:  
*Down is too hard.* My mists  
 I'll have of perfume, vapored 'bout the room  
 To lose ourselves in; and my baths, like pits,  
 To fall into: from whence we will come forth,  
*And roll us dry in gossamer and roses.—*  
 Is it arriv'd at ruby?—And my flatterers  
 Shall be the pure and *gravest of divines.*  
 And they shall fan me with ten ostrich tails  
 Apiece, made in a plume to gather wind.  
 We will be brave, Puffe, now we have the medicine  
*My meat shall all come in, in Indian shells,*  
 Dishes of agate, set in gold, and studded  
 With emeralds, sapphires, hyacinths, and rubies,  
 The tongues of carps, dormice, and camel's heels,  
 Boil'd in the spirit of sol, and *dissolv'd pearl,*  
 Apicius' diet 'gainst the epilepsy:  
 And I will eat these broths with spoons of amber,  
 Headed with diamond and carbuncle.  
 My foot-boy shall eat pheasants, calver'd salmons,  
 Knots, godwits, lampreys: I myself will have  
 The beards of barbels serv'd, instead of salads;  
 Oil'd mushrooms; and the swelling, unctuous paps  
 Of a fat pregnant sow, newly cut off,  
*Drest with an exquisite and poignant sauce,*  
*For which I'll say unto my cook, "There's gold;*  
*Go forth, and be a knight."* . . .

My shirts

I'll have of taffeta-sarsnet, soft and light  
 As cobwebs; and for all my other raiment,  
 It shall be such as might provoke the Persian,  
 Were he to teach the world riot anew.  
 My gloves of fishes' and birds' skins, perfum'd  
 With gums of Paradise and eastern air.'

Or the dominant trait assumes the form of a mental eccentricity, bordering on madness, as in *The Silent Woman*. Morose is an old citizen who has a horror of noise, but loves to talk. He discharges his servant whose shoes creaked. The new one wears slippers soled with wool, and speaks only in a whisper through a tube; but even the whisper is finally forbidden, and he is made to reply by signs. Further, Morose is rich; and has a nephew, witty but penniless, who, in revenge for all his treatment, finds him a supposed silent woman, the beautiful Epicene. Morose, enchanted by her brief replies and nearly inaudible voice, marries her, with a view to disinherit his nephew who has laughed at his infirmity. The ceremony is no sooner over than she turns out a very shrew:

‘Why, did you think you had married a statue? or a motion only? one of the French puppets, with the eyes turn’d with a wire? or some innocent out of the hospital, that would stand with her hands thus, and a playse mouth, and look upon you?’

She directs the valets to speak louder; opens wide the doors to her friends, who arrive in troops and overwhelm him all at once with congratulations, questions, and counsels. Here comes one with a band of music, who play suddenly, to their utmost volume. Now a procession of menials, with clattering dishes, a whole tavern. Amid the shouts of revelry, the din of trumpet and drum, Morose flees to the top of the house, puts ‘a whole nest of night-caps’ on his head and stuffs his ears. In vain. The racket increases. The house is turned into a thunder factory. ‘Rogues, hell-hounds, Stentors! . . . They have rent my roof, walls, and all my windows asunder with their brazen throats!’ Goaded to desperation, he casts himself on the guests with his long sword, looking like a maniac; chases the musicians, breaks their instruments, and disperses the gathering amid indescribable uproar. Afterwards, he is pronounced mad, and they discuss his alleged insanity before him. They jingle in his ear most barbarous words, consider the books which he must read aloud for his cure, assure him that his wife talks in her sleep, and snores dreadfully. ‘O, redeem me, fate; redeem me, fate,’ he cries in his extremity. ‘For how many causes may a man be divorced?’ he asks of his nephew, who replies, like a clever rascal, ‘Allow me but five hundred during life, uncle, and you are free.’ Morose accepts the proposition eagerly, joyfully; and his nephew then shows him that Epicene is no woman — only a boy in disguise.

In sensual Venice, queen city of vices and of arts, he finds a magnificent cheat, and hounds him to a merited retribution in *Volpone*. Never was such ignoble lust of gold, such shameless artistry in guile, such debasement to evil and the visibly vile. The fearful picture is flashed upon us at the outset, when Volpone says:

'Good morning to the day, and next, my gold:  
Open the shrine, that I may see my saint!'

Then:

'Hail the world's soul, and mine! . . .  
O thou son of God,  
But brighter than thy father, let me kiss,  
With adoration, thee, and every relic  
Of sacred treasure in this blessed room!'

Childless and without relations, he has many flatterers who hope to be his heir; and he plays the invalid to encourage their gifts. First Voltore arrives, bearing a huge piece of precious plate. Volpone has cast himself on the bed and buried himself in wraps, coughing as if at the point of death:

'I thank you, signior Voltore,  
Where is the plate? mine eyes are bad. . . . Your love  
Hath taste in this, and shall not be unanswered. . . .  
I cannot now last long. . . . I feel me going,—  
Uh, uh, uh, uh!'

He is exhausted, his eyes close; and Voltore inquires of his parasite, Mosca: 'Am I inscribed his heir for certain?'—

'Are you?  
I do beseech you, sir, you will vouchsafe  
To write me i' your family. All my hopes  
Depend upon your worship. I am lost  
Except the rising sun do shine on me.  
*Vol.* It shall both shine and warm you, Mosca.  
*M.* 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 lockt,  
Keep the poor inventory of your jewels,  
Your plate and moneys; am your steward, sir,  
Husband your goods here.  
*Vol.* But am I sole heir?  
*M.* Without a partner, sir, confirm'd this morning:  
The wax is warm yet, and the ink scarce dry  
Upon the parchment.  
*Vol.* Happy, happy me!  
By what good chance, sweet Mosca?  
*M.* Your desert, sir;  
I know no second cause.'



The second is a deaf old miser, Corbaccio, hobbling on the verge of the grave, yet trusting to survive Volpone, whom he is joyed to find more ill than himself:

- C.* How does your patron? . . .
- M.* His mouth  
Is ever gaping, and his eyelids hang.
- C.* Good.
- M.* A freezing numbness stiffens all his joints,  
And makes the color of his flesh like lead.
- C.* 'Tis good.
- M.* His pulse beats slow, and dull.
- C.* Good symptoms still.
- M.* And from his brain—
- C.* I conceive you, good.
- M.* Flows a cold sweat, with a continual rheum,  
Forth the resolved corners of his eyes.
- C.* Is't possible? Yet I am better, ha!  
How does he with the swimming of his head
- M.* O, sir, 'tis past the scotomy, he now  
Hath lost his feeling, and hath left to snort:  
You hardly can perceive him, that he breathes.
- C.* Excellent, excellent, sure I shall outlast him:  
This makes me young again, a score of years.'

He is reminded that Voltore has been here, to forestall him, leaving a splendid token of regard; but:

- 'See, Mosca, look,  
Here, I have brought a bag of bright cecchines,  
Will quite weigh down his plate. . . .
- M.* Now, would I counsel you, make home with speed,  
There, frame a will; whereto you shall inscribe  
My master your sole heir. . . .
- C.* This plot  
Did I think on before. . . .
- M.* And you so certain to survive him.
- C.* I.
- M.* Being so lusty a man.
- C.* 'Tis true.'

When he is gone, Corvino, a merchant, appears, with an orient pearl and a superb diamond. 'Am I his heir?'—

'Sir, I am sworn, I may not shew the will  
Till he be dead: but here has been Corbaccio,  
Here has been Voltore, here were others too,  
I cannot number 'em, they were so many.  
All gaping here for legacies; but I,  
Taking the vantage of his naming you,  
Signior Corvino, Signior Corvino, took  
Paper, and pen, and ink, and there I ask'd him,  
Whom he would have his heir? Corvino. Who  
Should be executor? Corvino. And,  
To any question he was silent to,  
I still interpreted the nods he made

(Through weakness) for consent: and sent home th' others,  
Nothing bequeath'd them, but to cry and curse.

*Cor.* O my dear Mosca!

Presently he departs; and Volpone, springing up, cries in raptures:

'My divine Mosca!  
Thou hast to-day outgone thyself. . . . Prepare  
Me music, dances, banquets, all delights;  
The Turk is not more sensual in his pleasures,  
Than will Volpone.'

He is accused, before the tribunal, of imposture and rape; and the would-be heirs defend him with an incredible energy of lying and open villainy. Then he writes a will in Mosca's favor, has his death reported, conceals himself, and enjoys the looks of those who have just saved him, now stupefied with disappointment. Now is Mosca's moment. He has the will, and demands of Volpone half his fortune. Their dispute exposes the common rascality. The arch villain has outwitted himself, and all are sent to the pillory.

The best testimony to his imagination is *The Sad Shepherd*, an unfinished pastoral drama, more poetical than dramatic, with nothing low in the comic and nothing inflated in the serious. It were not easy to surpass the charm of the opening lines:

'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;  
For other print her airy steps ne'er left:  
Her treading would not bend a blade of grass,  
Or shake the downy blow-ball from his stalk!  
But like the soft west-wind she shot along,  
And where she went the flowers took thickest root,  
As she had sowed them with her odorous foot!'

And where should we look for a more masterly delineation of that sorceress of evil, the witch?—

'Within a gloomy dimble she doth dwell,  
Down in a pit, o'ergrown with brakes and briars  
*Close by the ruins of a shaken abbey,*  
*Torn with an earthquake down unto the ground,*  
'Mongst graves and grots, near an old charnel-house, . . .

Where the sad mandrake grows,  
Whose groans are dreadful; and dead-numbing night-shade,  
The stupefying hemlock, adder's tongue,  
And martagan; the shrieks of luckless owls  
We hear, *and croaking night-crows in the air!*  
*Green-bellied snakes, blue fire-drakes in the sky,*  
And giddy flitter-mice with leather wings!  
The scaly beetles, with their habergeons,

*That make a humming murmur as they fly!*  
 There in the stocks of trees, *while fairies do dwell,*  
*And span-long elves that dance about a pool,*  
*With each a little changeling in their arms!*  
 The airy spirits play with falling stars,  
 And mount the spheres of fire to kiss the moon!  
 While she sits reading by the glow-worm's light,  
*Or rotten wood o'er which the worm hath crept,*  
 The baneful schedule of her nocent charms.'

Jonson's fame rests chiefly on his comedies, which constitute by far the largest part of his work. His tragedies are men-of-war, stately and heavy. *Sejanus* is distinguished by sustained depth of knowledge and gravity of expression. But more than once, in this and in *Cataline*, nature forces its way through pedantry and erudition. *Cataline's* imprecation is fine:

'It is decreed! Nor shall thy fate, O Rome!  
 Resist my vow. Though hills were set on hills,  
 And seas met seas, to guard thee, I would through:  
 I'd plough up rocks, steep as the Alps, in dust,  
 And lave the Tyrrhene waters into clouds,  
 But I would reach thy head, thy head, proud city!'

The description of the morning on which the conspirators meet, is powerful and dramatic:

'It is, methinks, a morning full of fate!  
 She riseth slowly, as her sullen car  
 Had all the weights of sleep and death hung at it.  
 She is not rosy-fingered, but swoll'n black!  
 Her face is like a water turned to blood,  
 And her sick head is bound about with clouds  
 As if she threatened night ere noon of day!'

The following is vivid and impressive:

'The rugged Charon fainted,  
 And asked a navy rather than a boat,  
 To ferry over the sad world that came.  
 The maws and dens of beasts could not receive  
 The bodies that those souls were frighted from;  
 And e'en the graves were fill'd with men yet living,  
 Whose flight and fear had mix'd them with the dead.'

Jonson should have written an epic.

**Style.**—Massive, erudite, concise, compact, equiposed, rotund; in a word, classic. As literal as Shakespeare's is figurative; as studied as Shakespeare's is intuitive and unrestrained. His adversaries asserted that every line cost him a cup of sack. In prose, terse, sharp, swift, biting. In versification, peculiarly smooth and flowing; for this literary leviathan, it strangely appears, has eminently the merits of elegance and grace. What, for example,

could be more lightsome and airy, more artistic, than the proclamation of the Graces, when Venus has lost her son Cupid?—

'Beauties, have you seen this toy,  
Called Love, a little boy,  
Almost naked, wanton, blind,  
Cruel now, and then as kind?  
If he be amongst ye, say;  
He is Venus' runaway.

She that will but now discover  
Where the winged wag doth hover,  
Shall to-night receive a kiss,  
How or where herself would wish;  
But who brings him to his mother  
Shall have that kiss, and another.

He hath marks about him plenty;  
You shall know him among twenty.  
All his body is a fire,

And his breath a flame entire,  
That, being shot like lightning in,  
Wounds the heart, but not the skin.

At his sight the sun hath turned;  
Neptune in the waters burned;  
Hell hath felt a greater heat;  
Jove himself forsook his seat;  
From the centre to the sky  
Are his trophies reared high.

Wings he hath, which though ye clip,  
He will leap from lip to lip,  
Over liver, lights, and heart,  
But not stay in any part;  
And if chance his arrow misses,  
He will shoot himself in kisses.'

**Rank.**—In the cluster of poets who sing the meditative, aspiring, and romantic life of the period, Jonson is a soloist; next to Shakespeare, a leader,—a leader by profundity of knowledge and vigor of conception, by the dash of the torrent and the force of the flood. Above all, has he the art of development, the habit of Latin regularity. For the first time, a plot is a symmetrical whole, advancing by consecutive deductions; having a beginning, middle, and end, its subordinate actions well ordered, and its leading truth which they combine to elucidate and establish. He is persuaded that he ought to observe the severity and accuracy of the ancients; not, in the same play,—

'Make a child new-swaddled, to proceed  
Man, and then shoot up, in one beard and weed,  
Past threescore years; or with three rusty swords,  
And help of some few foot and half-foot words,  
Fight over York and Lancaster's long jars.'

But in this full attainment of form, he fails in completeness of life. He is too much of a theorist, too little of a seer. Given a peculiarity, he can work it out with logical exactness and realistic intensity. That is, he delineates absorbing singularities rather than persons. He thus inverts the true process of characterization, which conceives the 'humour' as an offshoot of the individual. He is English merely, where Shakespeare is cosmopolitan. He is too ponderous and argumentative. His plots, admirable of their kind, are external contrivances of the understanding rather than interior organisms of the imaginative

insight. Depth of passion and winning tenderness are wanting. The energy which should be vital too often becomes mechanical. His point of view is usually or always that of the satirist:

‘My strict hand  
Was made to seize on vice, and with a gripe  
Squeeze out the humour of such spongy natures,  
As lick up every idle vanity.’

And thus, even in the lower levels of comedy, where he is most at home, the critic frequently, consciously or unconsciously, mars the artist. Neither he nor the reader forgets himself. The process is seen, the intention is felt. Calculation strips him of that delicate and easy-flowing imitation which begets hallucination.

Still, if unable to construct characters, variety of learning, clearness of mind, and energy of soul, suffice to depict English manners and to render vice visible and odious. But he is loftier from another side. We have seen how charming, how elegant and refined, this same war-elephant may be when he enters the domain of pure poetry; as in the polished songs and other lyrical pieces sprinkled over his dramas, in the beautiful dream of the *Shepherd*, or the courtly *Masques*, which display the whole magnificence of the English Renaissance. His inequality—great excellences offset by great defects—is in strong contrast with the unebbing fulness and amplitude of the creative Shakespeare. Nevertheless, in his field, in his *genus* of the drama, he stands on the summit of his hill.

**Character.**—The most obvious qualities of his intellectual nature are weight and force; of his spiritual nature, earnestness and courage. In the classics, accurate and thorough; and on every subject, athirst. He is said to have carried books in his pocket while working at his trade, in order, during leisure moments, to refresh his memory upon favorite passages in the Latin and Greek poets. In method, he was careful and precise:

‘For a man to write well, there are required three necessaries:—to read the best authors; observe the best speakers; and much exercise of his own style. In style, to consider what ought to be written, and after what manner; he must first think, and excogitate his matter; then choose his words, and examine the weight of either. Then take care in placing and ranking both matter and words, that the composition be comely; and to do this with diligence and often. No matter how slow the style be at first, so it be labored and accurate; seek the best, and be not glad of the forward conceits, or first words that offer themselves to us, but judge of what we invent, and order what we approve.’





Have you marked but the fall o' the snow  
 Before the soil hath smutched it?  
 Have you felt the wool of beaver?  
 Or swan's down ever?  
 Or have smelt o' the bud o' the briar?  
 Or the nard in the fire?  
 Or have tasted the bag of the bee?  
 O so white,—O so soft,—O so sweet is she!

**Influence.**—It is believed that his social position was superior to Shakespeare's. With royalty he was familiar. Elizabeth and James admired and employed him. His society was courted by the time-worn and the youthful; and by an inner circle of devotees he was venerated. In his declining days, he was the acknowledged chief of his art, and during the Restoration his reputation as a critic was still second to none. In his own age, his power was similar to that of his massive namesake, Samuel Johnson, in the succeeding century. Swift was to find suggestions in his *Tale of the Tub*. Milton was to go to his masques and odes for some of the elegancies of his own dignified muse. Dryden was to think, erroneously, 'He did a little too much Romanize our tongue.' For reasons given, his readers are now, unhappily and unworthily, relatively few; but, as his good parts are enduring and imperishable, no fame is more secure.

To every soul that is taxed, to every youth that resolves to be eminent, he brings the assurance that manly resistance subdues the opposition of the world; the resolution to surmount an obstacle reduces it one half; before a fearless step, foes will slink away; around perseverance the Graces collect, and at its bidding the laurel comes.

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## LORD BACON.

Who is there that upon hearing the name of Lord Bacon does not instantly recognize everything of genius the most profound, everything of literature the most extensive, everything of discovery the most penetrating, everything of observation of human life the most distinguishing and refined?—*Burke*.

**Biography.**—Born in London, in 1561; his father, Sir Nicholas, one of Elizabeth's most sagacious statesmen; his mother, the learned daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke; received his early education under his mother's eye, mixed freely with the wise

and great who were visitors at his home; at thirteen, entered Cambridge University, where his deepest impressions became an inveterate scorn for Aristotle and his followers; left before he was sixteen, without taking a degree, and was sent to France as an attaché of the English ambassador, to learn the arts of statecraft; designed to stay some years abroad, and was studying assiduously when his father's sudden death recalled him, making it incumbent 'to think how to live, instead of living only to think'; applied for office, but his abilities were too splendid, and a jealous uncle 'suppressed' him; took to law, and soon rose to eminence; at twenty-four, obtained a seat in the Commons; was appointed by the queen her counsel extraordinary, but, owing to the secret opposition of his kinsman, was not immediately raised to any office of emolument; loved but lost a rich young widow, and at forty-five married a fair young bride; steadily advanced in fortune after the accession of James, till he reached the post to which he had long aspired—Lord High Chancellor; was accused of accepting bribes in his official capacity, was rudely stripped of all his dignities, sentenced to the Tower during the king's pleasure, and heavily fined; was restored to liberty within forty-eight hours, with a remission of his fine, but permitted to pass the remainder of his days in penury, obscurity, and disgrace, hunted by creditors and vexed by domestic disquiet; died after five years of dishonor, in consequence of a cold induced by an open-air experiment, on a snowy day, to ascertain whether flesh might not be preserved in snow as well as in salt; consoled, in his last hours, by the reflection that 'the experiment succeeded excellently well.'

**Intellectual Scheme.**—With a just scorn for the trifles which were occupying the followers of Aristotle, Bacon early conceived the dream of converting knowledge from a speculative waste into 'a rich storehouse for the glory of the Creator and the relief of man's estate.' It was the supreme effort of his life to embody this grand conception in the *Instauratio Magna*—the renewal of Science—the Restoration, to man, of the empire of nature. The vast plan, for which many lives would not have sufficed, consisted, in its final form, of six divisions:

1. A survey of the sciences, a summary of all the possessions of the human mind, comprehending 'not only the things already

invented and known, but also those omitted and wanted.' Here occurs the famous but inadequate distribution of learning into *History*, which uses the memory; *Poetry*, which employs the imagination; and *Philosophy*, which requires the reason. Here, in particular, occurs the short but beautiful paragraph which exhausts everything yet offered on the subject of the *beau ideal*:

'Therefore because the acts or wants of true history have not that magnitude which satisfieth the mind of man, poesy feigneth acts and events greater and more heroical; because true history propoundeth the successes and issues of actions, not so agreeable to the merits of virtue and vice, therefore poesy feigns them more just in retribution, and more according to revealed Providence; because true history representeth actions and events more ordinary and less interchanged, therefore poesy indneth them with more rareness, and more unexpected and alternative variations. . . . And therefore it was ever thought to have some participation of divineness, because it doth raise and erect the mind by submitting the show of things to the desires of the mind.'

2. Precepts for the interpretation of nature; 'the science of a better and more perfect use of reason in the investigation of things, and of the true aids of the understanding'; 'a kind of logic, . . . differing from the common logic . . . in three respects,—the end, the order of demonstrating, and the grounds of inquiry.' This, which is but a fragment of what he had promised, is known as the *Novum Organum*, the most admirable of his books, and the chief foundation of his fame. Its first portion enumerates the causes of error, the illusions to which man is subject:

*Idols of the Tribe*, to which all by common infirmity are liable;

*Idols of the Den*, such as are peculiar to individuals;

*Idols of the Forum*, such as arise from the current usage of words;

*Idols of the Theatre*, springing from Partisanship, Fashion, and Authority.

Its second portion describes and exemplifies the rules for conducting investigations.

3. An extensive collection of facts and observations,—the *Natural History* of any desired class of phenomena,—an immense chart of nature, furnishing the raw material for the application of the new method. But, in fact, an outline of the field to be explored, rather than an exploration; a sketch of what he would do: as, for instance, a complete account of comets, of meteors, of winds, of rain, hail, snow; the facts to be accurately related and distinctly arranged; their authenticity diligently ex-

amined; those that rest on doubtful evidence, to be noted as uncertain, with the grounds of the judgment so formed.

4. A scale of the intellect—a ladder of the understanding—illustrations of the mind's gradual ascent from phenomena to principles,—‘not such examples as we subjoin to the several rules of our method, but *types* and *models*, which place before our eyes the *entire process* of the mind in the discovery of truth, selecting various and *remarkable* instances.’ Only a few introductory pages, however, are contributed.

5. Specimens of the perfect system which he hoped to erect,—provisional anticipations of the whole, ‘hereafter to be verified,’—a sort of scaffolding, to be of use only till the building is finished,—‘the payment of interest till the principal could be raised.’

6. Science in practice—the new philosophy—the magnificent birth. ‘To this all the rest are subservient,—to lay down that philosophy which shall flow from the just, pure, and strict inquiry hitherto proposed.’ But, ‘to perfect this is beyond both our abilities and our hopes; yet we shall lay the foundations of it, and *recommend the superstructure to posterity.*’ ‘Such,’ in the language of Hallam, ‘was the temple which Bacon saw in vision before him: the stately front and decorated pediments, in all their breadth of light and harmony of proportion; while long vistas of receding columns and glimpses of internal splendor revealed a glory that it was not permitted him to comprehend.’ The world we move in, is not the world we think. Only the latter sets aside disturbances, defects, and limitations. There, at least, the seamless heaven is attainable. To the consummation which flees before him as the shadow of his achievement, he gives ‘local habitation’ in the *New Atlantis*, a philosophical romance, in which, with a poet's boldness and a seer's precision, he describes, with almost literal exactness, modern arts, academies, observatories, air-balloons, submarine vessels, discovery of remedies, preservation of food, transmutation of species, and whatever prodigies cannot be proved to lie beyond the mighty magic of time. Here is a college worthy of the name, Solomon's House, ‘the end of whose foundation is the knowledge of causes and the secret motions of things, and the enlarging of the bounds of human empire to the effecting of all things possible.’



**His Motive.**—The intense conviction that knowledge, in its existing state, was barren of *practical* results,—a waste wilderness in which successive generations had been moving without advancing. He would propose as the end of thought, *fruit*—the discovery of useful truth—victory over nature, not victory in controversy. He would lead men out of a sterile desert, with its deceitful mirage, into a fertile country, with its ample pastures and abiding cities:

‘Is there any such happiness as for a man’s mind to be raised above the confusion of things, where he may have the prospect of the order of nature and error of man? But is this a view of delight only and not of discovery? of contentment and not of benefit? Shall he not as well discern the riches of nature’s warehouse as the beauty of her shop? Is truth ever barren? Shall he not be able thereby to produce worthy effects, and to endow the life of man with infinite commodities?’

**His Method.**—A different point of arrival requires a different path of travel. To change the goal is to transform the method. ‘It would be an unsound fancy, and self-contradictory, to expect that things which have never yet been done can be done except by means which have never yet been tried.’ The syllogists had fashioned nature according to preconceived ideas, starting from axioms not accurately obtained, and caring more for an opinion than for a truth. But:

‘Syllogism consists of propositions, propositions of words, and words are the signs of notions; therefore, if our *notions, the basis of all*, are confused, and *over-hastily taken from things*, nothing that is built upon them can be firm; *whence our only hope rests upon genuine Induction.*’

Not, however, the perfect induction which would reason that what we can prove of *a, b, c, and d* separately, we may properly state as true of *g*, the whole; nor exactly the partial induction which would argue that what is believed true of three of the species, is to be believed as true likewise of the fourth, and hence of the genus: but a *graduated system of helps*, by the use of which an ordinary mind, when started on the right road, might proceed, through successive stages of generality, *with unerring and mechanical certainty*, to the vision of *fruitful* principles. Thus, for every general effect, as heat, we must seek a general condition, so that in producing the condition we may produce the effect. If we find by long and continued experience that the second uniformly succeeds the first, we may conclude, with a high degree of probability, that the connection between them is necessary. But, says Bacon, there is a shorter way to the result.

From the copious *Natural History* which I contemplate, make out as complete and accurate an account of the facts connected with the subject of inquiry, as possible; select, compare, and scrutinize these according to the rules stated in the second book of my *Organum*, and by the same rules conduct your experiments, if experiments are admissible: that is, you are to construct the table of causes from which the effect is absent, the table where it is present, and the table where it is shown in various degrees; then, 'by *fit rejections and exclusions*,' extract the condition sought. Light, for example, is denied to be the cause or *form* of heat, because light is found to be present in the instance of the moon's rays, while heat is absent.

Thus philosophy resembles a compass, with whose aid the novice can draw a better circle or line than the expert can produce without it.

**Its Spirit.**—A curious piece of machinery, you will say, very subtle, very elaborate, very ingenious. You will suspect, also, that nothing has been accomplished by it; that it has solved no problems. True, but its merit lies in the general advice which developed it, in the wise and eminently scientific spirit which pervades it. To pluck a few illustrations from his string of aphorisms:

'Man, the minister and interpreter of Nature, can act and understand in as far as he has, either in fact or in thought, observed the order of Nature; more he can neither know nor do.'

'The real cause and root of almost all the evils in science is this: *that, falsely magnifying and extolling the powers of the mind*, we seek not its real helps.'

'The human understanding is like an unequal mirror to the rays of things, which, *mixing its own nature with the nature of things, distorts and perverts them*.'

'The understanding, when left to itself, takes the first of these ways; for the mind *delights in springing up to the most general axioms, that it may find rest*; but after a short stay there, *it disdains experience*, and these mischiefs are at length increased by logic, for the ostentation of disputes.'

For the first time, Science is sundered from Metaphysics and Theology, and Physics is constituted 'the mother of all the sciences.' This is eminently *positive*, and hence entirely modern. Nothing could be more thoroughly opposed to antiquity:

'The opinion which men entertain of antiquity is a very idle thing, and almost incongruous to the word; for the old age and length of days of the world should in reality be accounted antiquity, and ought to be attributed to our own times, not to the youth of the world which it enjoyed among the ancients; for that age, though with respect to us it be ancient and greater, yet with regard to the world it was new and less.'

Whence can arise the sterility of the physical systems hitherto in vogue?—

‘It is not, certainly, from any thing in nature itself; for the *steadiness and regularity of the laws by which it is governed, clearly mark them out as objects of precise and certain knowledge.*’

Nor from the want of talent, but from ‘the perverseness and insufficiency of the methods which have been pursued’:

‘Men have sought to make a world from their own conceptions, and to draw from their own minds all the materials which they employed; but if, instead of doing so, they had consulted experience and observation, they would have had *facts.*’

But:

‘As things are at present conducted, a sudden transition is made from sensible objects and particular facts to *general propositions, which are accounted principles*, and round which, as round so many fixed poles, disputation and argument continually revolve.’

Quite the reverse is the way that promises success:

‘It requires that we should *generalize slowly, going from particular things* to those that are *but one step more general*; from those to those of still *greater extent*, and so on to such as are *universal*. By such means we may hope to arrive at principles, not vague and obscure, but luminous and well-defined, such as Nature herself will not refuse to acknowledge.’

**Its Novelty.**—It is already apparent that Bacon understood his method to be original, though he admits that Plato had used a method somewhat akin to his own:

‘The induction which is to be available for the discovery and demonstration of sciences and art must analyse nature by proper rejections and exclusions; and then, after a sufficient number of negatives, come to a conclusion on the affirmative instances, which has not yet been done, or even attempted, save only by Plato.’

Induction, as such, had been defined by Aristotle, though he seems to have regarded it as less important than the syllogism. Roger Bacon had insisted on experience as the truest guide. At this very moment, it was being employed on the Continent, notably by Galileo, in whose dialogues the Aristotelian disputant frequently appeals to observation and experiment. It was latent in the tendencies of the age,—as the steam-engine was latent in the tendencies of the age of Watt. But (1) no one till now had coördinated into a compact body of doctrine all the elements of the Inductive Method, nor (2) had any one even attempted that part in which the author took most pride,—the process of exclusion or rejection.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Macanlay is correct when he says: ‘The inductive method has been practised ever since the beginning of the world by every human being. It is constantly practised by the most ignorant clown.’ He is egregiously *incorrect* when he adds that ‘everybody

**Its Utility.**—Nothing can be more certain than that the inductive sciences have not followed it. No great physicist has used it. No important discovery has been effected by it. It has no present intrinsic value. It has long been superseded by a better. It can be made applicable only when the phenomena of the universe have been tabulated and arranged:

‘It comes, therefore, to this, that my *Organum*, even if it were completed, would not without the *Natural History* much advance the *Instauration of the Sciences*, whereas the *Natural History* without the *Organum* would advance it not a little.’

The true scientific procedure, moreover, is by hypothesis, followed up and tested by verification. Kepler tried twenty guesses on the orbit of Mars, and the last fitted the facts. But the *Organum* does not admit hypotheses as guides to investigation.<sup>1</sup>

It was indirectly, however, of inestimable service,—by its general spirit, by its systematization of the new mode of thinking, by the power and eloquence with which it was expounded and enforced. If its details, on which was laid the greatest stress, have not been useful, it was still the basis of the more perfect structure which successors have erected. Induction had been adopted from accident or from taste; it was henceforth to be applied and defended on principle.

**Essays.**—Bacon’s philosophical writings have operated on mankind through a school of intermediate agents. To the multitude he is best known by the *Essays*, in which he talks to plain men in language intelligible to all, on subjects in which everybody is interested. Never was observation at once more recon-dite, better matured, and more carefully sifted; attractive for the fulness of imagination that draws so many stately pictures, and for the wise reflection that suggests so many wholesome truths. Here are a few sample thoughts for memory and for use—texts for sermons and dissertations, if you will:

is constantly performing the process described in the second book of the *Novum Organum*.’ Here (1) the brilliant essayist confounds simple incantations induction with cautious methodical induction, between which there is as much difference as between instinct and science. (2) In experimental philosophy, to which the rules of the *Organum* especially referred, there was a notorious want of inductive reasoning. (3) Not only had Bacon’s peculiar system of rules never been applied before,—they have never been applied since. Macaulay has had followers, but his argument receives its force solely from a misconception of the Baconian method. Draper (*Intellectual Development of Europe*) is guilty of like confusion when he asserts that the Baconian principles were understood eighteen hundred years before; and of lamentable ignorance when he adds that ‘they were carried into practice.’ Its inaccuracies and partisanship have abated greatly our early enthusiasm for this still valuable work.

<sup>1</sup> Very surprising, after this, is the declaration of Taine: ‘After more than two centuries, it is still to him that we go to discover the theory of what we are attempting and doing.’ The mistake arises from confounding induction with the Baconian *method* of induction.

Of beauty,—

‘Virtue is like a rich stone — best plain set.’

Of happiness,—

‘They are happy men whose natures sort with their vocations.’

Of youth and age,—

‘A man that is young in years may be old in hours, if he have lost no time.’

Of nature in men,—

‘A man’s nature runs either to herbs or weeds; therefore, let him seasonably water the one, and destroy the other.’

Of riches,—

‘A great estate left to an heir, is as a lure to all the birds of prey round about to seize on him, if he be not the better stablished in years and judgment.’

Of friendship,—

‘There is no man that imparteth his joys to his friend, but he joyeth the more; and no man that imparteth his griefs to his friend, but he grieveth the less.’

Of love,—

‘There was never proud man thought so absurdly well of himself as the lover doth of the person loved; and therefore it was well said, “That it is impossible to love and to be wise.”’

Of envy,—

‘He that cannot possibly mend his own case, will do what he can to impair another’s.’

Of marriage,—

‘He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief.’

And,—

‘Grave natures, led by custom, and therefore constant, are commonly loving husbands.’

Again,—

‘It is one of the best bonds, both of chastity and obedience, in the wife, if she thinks her husband wise, which she will never do if she find him jealous.’

Of gardens,—

‘God Almighty first planted a garden,— and, indeed, it is the purest of human pleasures; it is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man; without which buildings and palaces are but gross handyworks; and a man shall ever see, that, when ages grow to civility and elegancy, men come to build stately, sooner than to garden finely; as if gardening were the greater perfection.’

It is by their inexhaustible aliment and illustrative enrichment, that the *Essays* belong most to literature. Few books are more quoted, few are more generally read. ‘These, of all my works,’ says Bacon, ‘have been most current; for that, as it seems, they *come home to men’s businessse and bosomes.*’ He justly foretold that they would ‘live as long as books last.’ Their brief, pithy sayings have passed into popular mottoes and household words, like—



‘Jewels, five words long,  
That on the stretched forefinger of all time  
Sparkle forever.’

**Style.**—Clear and strong, elaborate and full of color, replete with images that serve only to concentrate meditation; now in an apothegmatic sentence:

‘A crowd is not company; and faces are but a gallery of pictures; and talk but a tinkling cymbal, when there is no love.’

Now in the majesty of a grand period:

‘For as water, whether it be the dew of Heaven or the springs of the earth, easily scatters and loses itself in the ground, except it be collected into some receptacle, where it may by union and consort comfort and sustain itself (and for that cause, the industry of man has devised aqueducts, cisterns, and pools, and likewise beautified them with various ornaments of magnificence and state, as well as for use and necessity); so this excellent liquor of knowledge, whether it descend from divine inspiration or spring from human sense, would soon perish and vanish into oblivion, if it were not preserved in books, traditions, conferences, and especially in places appointed for such matters, as universities, colleges, and schools, where it may have both a fixed habitation, and means and opportunity of increasing and collecting itself.’

Now in the symmetry of concise and well-balanced antithesis:

‘Crafty men contemn studies; simple men admire them; and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use: that is a wisdom without them, and won by observation. Read not to contradict, nor to believe, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested. 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, have a present wit; and if he read little, have much cunning to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise, poets witty, the mathematics subtle, natural philosophy deep, morals grave, logic and rhetoric able to contend.’

A passage to be *chewed* and *digested*. Always grave, often metaphorical, his style grew richer and softer with increasing years. Not long before his death, he wrote:

‘Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament, adversity is the blessing of the New, which carrieth the greater benediction and the clearer evidences of God’s favour. Yet, even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David’s harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath laboured more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon. Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; and adversity is not without comforts and hopes. We see in needleworks and embroideries it is more pleasing to have a lively work upon a sad and solemn ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work upon a lightsome ground. Judge therefore of the pleasures of the heart by the pleasures of the eye. Certainly virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed; for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue.’

Shakespeare, with far greater variety, contains no more vigorous or expressive condensations.

Bacon feared that the modern languages would ‘at one time or another play the bankrupt with books.’ Dreading to trust the

mutability of English, he composed the *Instauratio* in Latin, which fifteen centuries had fixed sacred from innovations; and into the same tongue his vernacular compositions were translated by himself and friends — Jonson, Hobbes, and Herbert.

**Rank.**—The principal figure in English prose; the most comprehensive, cultivated, and originative thinker of the age; the master spirit of the long-agitated antagonism to ancient and scholastic thought; the first great exponent of the increasing tendency to positivism; the first to systematize the inductive process, to teach its extensive use, to give it a clear appreciation; and thus the great leader in the reformation of modern science. Not strictly a scientist—rather a scientific philosopher—an expounder of the scientific spirit and method—a surveyor who *broadly* mapped the road—the philosopher more of human than of general nature. He belongs to the realm of imagination, of eloquence, of history, of jurisprudence, of ethics, of metaphysics—the investigation of the powers and operations of the human mind. His writings have the gravity of prose, with the fervor and vividness of poetry; in this, unlike those of the materialistic succession, such as Spencer and Mill; but resembling those of Plato, who was loftier, and of Burke, who was less profound.

Commanding as is his merit, he has perhaps been overrated. The time was ripe. He had better eyes than his fellow-men, and found what others were seeking. More judicial than they, he gave expression to ideas already in the air. The epoch-making genius gathers up in a harmonious vibration a thousand buzzing and swelling voices. He did not thoroughly understand the older philosophy which he attacked, nor accurately anticipate the methods of the new. In banishing deduction, he failed to see that it makes up with induction the double enginery of thought. His circle of observation was external. But within that, are ideas which experience can never furnish—ideas necessary, absolute, eternal; truths which it were madness to deny, folly to attempt to prove, and without which reason could not advance a step,—as, *matter has uniform and fixed laws; qualities imply a substance*. Without an assumption of the first, the simplest process of induction is impossible. He who doubts the second, can make no pretension to the knowledge of spiritual and material essence. Ignorant of geometry, he had no prevision of the

important part that mathematics was to perform in the interpretation of nature. Galileo revived that science, excelled in it, first applied it, and fortified with new proofs the system of Copernicus, which Bacon rejected with positive disdain:

'In the system of Copernicus there are many and grave difficulties; for the threefold motion with which he encumbers the earth is a serious inconvenience, and the separation of the sun from the planets, with which he has so many affections in common, is likewise a harsh step; and the introduction of so many immovable bodies in nature, as when he makes the sun and stars immovable, the bodies which are peculiarly lucid and radiant, and his making the moon adhere to the earth in a sort of epicycle, and some other things which he assumes, are proceedings which mark a man who thinks nothing of introducing fictions of any kind into nature, provided his calculations turn out well.'

He did not use skilfully his own system. His conjectures in physics, though often acute, are often chimerical, owing to his defective acquaintance with natural phenomena. He saw, from the mountain-top, the Promised Land, pointed it out, but did not enter there. In any special department, he has latterly been excelled by many. There have been thousands of better astronomers, chemists, physicians. But in wide-ranging intellect, in the union of speculative power with practical utility, he has been equalled by none.

**Character.**—As a boy, he was delicate in health, indifferent to the sports of youth, quick and curious in mind, with that sweet sobriety of manner which led the queen to call him 'my young Lord Keeper.' Still in his 'teens,' he saw, in dim vision, a philosophic revolution. He solicited employment only that he might have leisure to become a 'pioneer in the deep mines of truth; not being born under Sol, that loveth honor, nor under Jupiter that loveth business, but being wholly carried away by the contemplative planet.' At the moment of his greatest elevation, he said: 'The depth of three long vacations I would reserve in some measure free from business of estate, and for studies, arts, and sciences, to which of my own nature I am most inclined.'

His point of view was so exalted that he saw the eddying, dashing stream of human events as a motionless silvery thread in the plain; so profound that his reflections shine like the far-off stars seen from the bottom of the deep sunken shaft; his circle so spacious, that it took in all the domains of science,—the errors of the past, the signs of the present, the hopes of the future. Like the archangel glancing from heaven to earth,—

- ‘Round he surveyed—and well might, where he stood  
 • So high above the circling canopy  
 Of night’s extended shade—from eastern point  
 Of Libra, to the fleecy star which bears  
 Andromeda far off Atlantic seas  
 Beyond the horizon.’

What he was as a writer, he was as an orator. Ben Jonson witnessed his eloquence:

‘There happened in my time one noble speaker who was full of gravity in his speaking. His language, where he could spare or pass by a jest, was nobly censorious. No man ever spoke more neatly, more pressly, more weightily, or suffered less emptiness, less idleness, in what he uttered. No member of his speech but consisted of his own graces. His hearers could not cough or look aside from him without loss. He commanded where he spoke, and had his judges angry and pleased at his devotion. No man had their affections more in his power. The fear of every man that heard him was lest he should make an end.’

Like Shakespeare and the rest, he grasped objects, not fractionally, but organized and complete. Like them, he speaks in the style of an oracle. He will not dispute, though he moves against a vast mass of prejudices. He condenses the details into a maxim, and hands us the result, with the words, ‘*Francis of Verulam thought thus.*’

He has the strong common sense which marks the English mind. He will not catch at clouds. He must stand on a fact,—a palpable and resisting fact. His motto is, experiment, again and again experiment. The end of knowledge is empire over matter. Plato and Seneca would extinguish cupidity; Bacon would secure property. They would teach us to endure pain; he would assuage it. They would form the mind to a high degree of wisdom and virtue; he would minister to the comforts of the body, without neglecting moral and religious instruction. He lacks the upright bias,—insight into transcendental truths.

He was a thinker living amid the turmoil of a fresh and stirring life, yet with the genius of counsel rather than of action. Scorning the least prudential care of his fortune, he was often in pecuniary distress. On one occasion he was arrested in the street for a debt, and lodged in a spunging-house. His heart, he declared, was not set on exterior things. His purpose was noble. ‘I am not hunting for fame. I have no desire to found a sect.’ ‘Enough for me,—the consciousness of well-deserving, and those real and effectual results with which fortune itself cannot interfere.’

But mortal greatness is not without mortal infirmity. He who

was to teach us how to philosophize, was himself fascinated by magical sympathies, surmised why witches eat human flesh; asserted: 'It is constantly received and avouched, that *the anointing of the weapon that maketh the wound* will heal the wound itself;' presented Prince Henry, as 'the first-fruits of his philosophy, a *sympathizing stone*, made of several mixtures, to know the heart of man,' whose 'operative gravity, magnetic and magical, would show, by the hand which held it, whether the heart was warm and affectionate.' He dictated the laws and economy of Nature, and was himself enamored of state and magnificence. He took a feminine delight in the brilliancy of his robes, loved to be gazed on in the streets, and to be wondered at in the cabinet. He championed the cause of intellectual freedom, and was himself a servile intriguer for place. A devoted worshipper of truth, he had the double temper of a lawyer and a politician,—duplicity. As *utility* was his watchword, he assiduously courted the favor of all who were likely to be of use to him; and might prop the fortunes of a friend,—till he was in danger of shaking his own. Loved, trusted, and befriended by Essex, he bore a principal part in sending that nobleman to the scaffold. In his judicial capacity, pledged to discharge his functions impartially, he accepted bribes from plaintiff and defendant. His illicit gains were stated at a hundred thousand pounds. After he had tried in vain to avert the sudden and terrible reverse, he wrote to the Peers: 'Upon advised consideration of the charges, descending into my own conscience, and calling my memory to account so far as I am able, I do plainly and ingenuously confess that I am guilty of corruption, and do renounce all defence.' 'My lords,' said he to the deputies who came to inquire whether the confession was really subscribed by himself, 'it is my act, my hand, my heart. I beseech your lordships to be merciful to a broken reed.'

He had none of the fire of sentiment or passion,—none of the kindling impulses which give intensity to character. To impulse he was serenely, coldly superior. Let us hope that his wife was equally unimpassioned,—a pure intelligence, craving no love, for it is doubtful if she received any. He desired to marry Lady Hatton, not for her disposition, which was that of an eccentric termagant, but for her money. Though indifferent or selfish in



personal relations, he had the mellow spirit of humanity, without which, he tells us, 'men are but a better kind of vermin.' His benevolence embraced all races and all ages. This philanthropy which distinguishes between individuals and mankind, and which we believe, after all, to have formed the essential feeling of his soul, is expressed in the description of one of the fathers of Solomon's House: '*His countenance was as the countenance of one who pities men.*'

As he preserved a calm neutrality, though living in an age of controversy, his creed, if he held any, may not be told. Theology is relegated to the province of faith. 'If I proceed to treat of it,' he said, 'I shall step out of the bark into the ship of the Church. Neither will the stars of philosophy, which have hitherto so nobly shone on us, any longer give us their light.' But speculation is profitless, and scepticism is powerless, before these vital, grand, imperial words:

'I had rather believe all the fables in the legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind.'

He cultivated letters to the last moment of his life. We could fancy him awaiting the signal for his departure, without boldness and without fear, with that sublime reliance on the future which makes the hour of evening tranquil. He contemplated the end with the composure that becomes the scholar:

'I have often thought upon death, and I find it the least of all evils. All that which is past is as a dream; and he that hopes or depends upon time coming, dreams waking. So much of our life as we have discovered is already dead; and all those hours which we share, even from the breasts of our mothers, until we return to our grandmother the earth, are part of our dying days, whereof even this is one, and those that succeed are of the same nature, for we die daily; and, as others have given place to us, so we must, in the end, give way to others.'

Then, as if sensibly passing to the last rest:

'Mine eyes begin to discharge their watch, and compound with this fleshly weakness for a time of perpetual rest; and I shall presently be as happy for a few hours, as I had died the first hour I was born.'

Not without emotion do we read:

'First, I bequeath my soul and body into the hands of God by the blessed oblation of my Saviour; the one at the time of my dissolution, the other at the time of my resurrection. For my burial, I desire it may be in St. Michael's Church, near St. Albans: there was my mother buried. . . . For my name and memory, I leave it to men's charitable speeches, and to foreign nations, and the next ages.'

**Influence.** — He confirmed and accelerated the new movement by a thorough and large apprehension of its bent and value.

At home, his authority, within forty years, was the subject of complaint. Abroad, treatises were written on his method, and academies were formed which expressly recognised him as their master. In France it was said: 'However numerous and important be the discoveries reserved for posterity, it will always be just to say of *him*, that he laid the foundation of their success, so that the glory of this great man, so far from diminishing with the progress of time, is destined to receive perpetual increase.'

He had taken all knowledge for his province, and all realms were to be affected:

'One may doubt, not to say object, whether it is natural philosophy alone that we speak of perfecting by our method, or other sciences as well—logic, ethics, politics. But we certainly intend what has been said as applicable to *all*; and as the common logic which governs by syllogisms pertains not only to natural but to all sciences, so also our own, which proceeds by induction, embraces all.'

Hence his influence, though indirect, due to the practical or *positive* spirit of his method, has perhaps been more powerful on mental and moral than on physical science; for the dominant principle of modern psychology is, that experience, exterior and interior, is the only origin of knowledge. 'The philosophy of Locke,' says Degerando, 'ought to have been called the philosophy of Bacon.' Not without justice, may he be looked upon as the inspiration of that empirical school which numbers among its adherents such names as Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Hartley, Mill, Condillac, and others of less note.

We have elsewhere indicated some of the 'fruits' of the new philosophy. We have also explained that in illuminating the physical field, it has darkened the intellectual and moral. It has furnished a lamp to guide our feet through the outer world, but none to light our way to the inward. It has fastened upon ethics an earthy utilitarian temper, taking no account of the motives that drop from the skies.

We have remarked, too, those profound reflections which, besides forming a treasure of ethical and political wisdom, have stimulated the thought and suggested the inquiries of after times. If to-day a scientist wishes to express compactly his scorn of dogmatism, of custom, it is to the *Organum* that he goes for an aphorism. Volumes have been written in the expansion of its statements. The ideas of the *Essays* have become

domesticated, and have been continually reproduced, to enrich and enlarge the individual and collective mind.

Finally, mournfully, my lord, you whose glorious day-dream is hourly accomplishing around us, whose inductive spell has proved more puissant than the incantations of Merlin,—you have left to all the children of men, from your own checkered life of magnificence and of shame, this retributive, warning induction, albeit not contemplated in your scheme: *When man departs from the divine means of reaching the divine end, he suffers harm and loss.*

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## MILTON.

Three poets in three distant ages born,  
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn;  
The first in loftiness of thought surpassed;  
The next in majesty, in both the last:  
The force of nature could no further go,—  
To make a third, she joined the other two.—*Dryden.*

**Biography.**—Born in London, in 1608, son of a Puritan scrivener; inherited from his father literary tastes and a love of music, from his mother a gentle nature and weak eyes; was instructed first by private tuition, sent to school at twelve, and at sixteen entered Cambridge; took the usual degrees, and returned home, to spend five soft flowing years among the woods of Horton; read the classics and wrote; travelled on the Continent; formed the acquaintance of Grotius at Paris, and of Galileo at Florence; fed his imagination on Italian scenery, art, and letters; received some distinction, and was excluded from others by his liberal utterances on religion; was about to start for Sicily and Greece, but, hearing of the pending rupture between the king and parliament, hastened back to England, too conscientious to pass his life in foreign amusements while his countrymen were contending for their rights; while waiting for a call to service, conducted a private school; taught many years and at various times; threw himself into the raging sea of controversy, against the Royalists and the Established Church; at thirty-five, within a month after meeting her, married Mary Powel, who, four weeks

afterwards, repelled by spare diet and austere manners, returned to her parents; wrote to her, but got no answer; sent, and his messenger was ill-treated; determined to repudiate her for disobedience, published essays on *Divorce*, held himself absolved from the bond; paid court to another lady of great accomplishments, but suddenly, seeing his wife on her knees imploring forgiveness, received her back, and lived with her until her death; in later life married twice, the last time to a woman thirty years his junior; meanwhile, had become Latin secretary to Cromwell; carried on the wordy strife with puritanical savageness, and lost his sight willingly in the war of pamphlets; survived the funeral of the Republic and the proscription of his doctrines, his books burned by the hangman, himself constrained to hide, at length imprisoned, then released; living in expectancy of assassination, losing three-fourths of his fortune by confiscations, bankruptcy, and the great fire; neither loved nor respected by his daughters, who had bitterly complained of his exactions, and the second of whom on being told that he was to be married, had said that his marriage would be no news—the best would be his death; seeking solace, yet a little, in meditation and in poverty; and, after so many miseries, expiring in 1674, calm as the setting sun, tried at once by pain, danger, poverty, obloquy, and blindness,—prepared by culture for a book of universal knowledge, and, by suffering, for a Christian epic.

**Writings.**—During a long, sultry midday of twenty years—1640 to 1660—Milton gave himself to the championship of ideas—ideas that were to emancipate the press—ideas that plucked at thrones—ideas that were to raise up commonwealths. At the outset, as one created for strife, he wrote against Episcopacy with incomparable eloquence and concentrated rancor:

‘All mouths began to be opened against the bishops. . . . I saw that a way was opening for the establishment of real liberty; that the foundation was laying for the deliverance of man from the yoke of slavery and superstition; . . . and as I had from my youth studied the distinction between religious and civil rights, . . . I determined to relinquish the other pursuits in which I was engaged, and to transfer the whole force of my talents and my industry to this one important object.’<sup>1</sup>

Then, in conjunction with others, hurled himself upon the prince with inexpiable hatred; and, when bishops and king had been made to suffer for their long despotism, justified the regicide:

<sup>1</sup>*Second Defence.*

‘For what king’s majesty sitting upon an exalted throne, ever shone so brightly, as that of the people of England then did, when, shaking off that old superstition, which had prevailed a long time, they gave judgment upon the king himself, or rather upon an enemy who had been their king, caught as it were in a net by his own laws (who alone of all mortals challenged to himself impunity by a divine right), and scrupled not to inflict the same punishment upon him, being guilty, which he would have inflicted upon any other?’<sup>1</sup>

With like energy, armed with logic and spurred by conviction, he attacked all prevailing systems of education:

‘Language is but the instrument conveying to us things useful to be known. And though a linguist should pride himself to have all the tongues that Babel cleft the world into, yet, if he have not studied the solid things in them, as well as the words and lexicons, he were nothing so much to be esteemed a learned man as any yeoman or tradesman competently wise in his mother dialect only. Hence appear the many mistakes which have made learning generally so displeasing and so unsuccessful: first, we do amiss to spend seven or eight years merely in scraping together so much miserable Latin and Greek as might be learned otherwise easily and delightfully in one year.’<sup>2</sup>

The pupil shall not begin with results, but reach them by experience. He is not expected to construct a telescope—no more shall he be required to construct a poem or essay without resources either of reflection or of knowledge. The seed must be sown, and the soil fertilized, before the flower and the fruit can be gathered:

‘And that which casts our proficiency therein so much behind, is our time lost partly in a preposterous exaction, forcing the empty wits of children to compose themes, verses, and orations, which are the acts of ripest judgment, and the final work of a head filled, by long reading and observing, with elegant maxims and copious invention. These are not matters to be wrung from poor striplings, like blood out of the nose, or the plucking of untimely fruit.’<sup>3</sup>

Having demonstrated what we should not do,—

‘I shall detain you now no longer, . . . but straight conduct you to a hillside, where I will point you out the right path of a virtuous and noble education; laborious, indeed, at the first ascent, but else so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospect and melodious sounds on every side, that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming.’<sup>4</sup>

Above the roar of revolution, his voice was heard thundering against the tyranny of tradition and custom. In sentences that are like the blasts of a trumpet calling men to freedom, he protested against the oppression of printers and the restriction of printing; and as one who foresees the future and reveals the truth, exulted in that era of deliverance when every man should be encouraged to think, however divergently, and to bring his thoughts to the light:

<sup>1</sup> *Defence.*

<sup>2</sup> *Treatise of Education.* We commend these views to those refiners of method in education who, pavilioned in the glittering pride of our superficial accomplishments, seem to arrogate all excellence to the present, and to fancy that all anterior is but a dull and useless blank.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*



'Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of the heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms.'<sup>1</sup>

He never wearies of railing at the pedantic theologians, who answer an argument by a citation from the Fathers; nor of mocking and jeering at the corpulent prelates, persecutors of free discussion, whose gaudy Church is a political machine to uphold the Crown:

'What greater debasement can there be to royal dignity, whose towering and steadfast height rests upon the unmovable foundations of justice, and heroic virtue, than to chain it in a dependence of subsisting, or ruining, to the painted battlements and gaudy rottenness, of prelatory, which want but one puff of the king's to blow them down like a pasteboard house built of court cards?'<sup>2</sup>

It is the power of superabundant force which courses in athletic limbs. Irony is too refined and feeble. Invectives are blows that ease ferocity, and knock an adversary down:

'The table of communion, now become a table of separation, stands like an exalted platform upon the brow of the quire, fortified with bulwark and barricado, to keep off the profane touch of the laics, whilst the obscene and surfeited priest scruples not to paw and mamnock the sacramental bread as familiarly as his tavern biscuit.'<sup>3</sup>

Then with a vengeful fury that would have delighted Calvin:

'They shall be thrown eternally into the darkest and deepest gulf of hell, where, under the spiteful control, the trample, and spurn of all the other damned, that in the anguish of their torture shall have no other ease than to exercise a raving and bestial tyranny over them as their slaves and negroes, they shall remain in that plight forever the basest, the lowermost, the most dejected, most underfoot, and down-trodden vassals of perdition.'<sup>4</sup>

Enthusiasm may break out in a moment into a resplendent hymn. His reasoning always ends with a poem—a song of triumph whose richness and exaltation, as in the following, carry the splendor of the Renaissance into the earnestness of the Reformation:

'O Thou the ever-begotten Light and perfect Image of the Father, . . . Who is there that cannot trace thee now in thy beamy walk through the midst of thy sanctuary, amidst those golden candlesticks, which have long suffered a dimness amongst us through the violence of those that had seized them, and were more taken with the mention of their gold than of their starry light? . . . Come therefore, O thou that hast the seven stars in thy right hand, appoint thy chosen priests according to their orders and courses of old, to minister before thee, and duly to press and pour out the consecrated oil into thy holy and ever-burning lamps. Thou hast sent out the spirit of prayer upon thy servants over all the land to this effect, and stirred up their vows as the sound of many waters about thy throne. . . . O perfect and accomplish thy glorious acts! . . .

<sup>1</sup>*Areopagitica.*<sup>2</sup>*Of Reformation in England.*<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

Come forth out of thy royal chambers, O Prince of all the kings of the earth! put on the visible robes of thy imperial majesty, take up that unlimited sceptre which thy Almighty Father hath bequeathed thee; for now the voice of thy bride calls thee, and all creatures sigh to be renewed.<sup>1</sup>

Do not take these for the whole, which is ponderous and dull, heavy with scholasticism, and marred by the grossness of the times. They are but fine isolated morsels which show the all-powerful passion, the majestic imagination of the man, whose dominant need and faculty lead him to noble conceptions, and have preordained him a poet. In childhood he had written verses; and at Cambridge his poetic genius opened in the *Hymn on the Nativity*, any stanza of which was sufficient to show that a new and great light was rising:

‘It was the winter wild,  
While the heaven-born child  
All meanly wrapped in the rude manger lies;  
Nature, in awe, to him  
Had doffed her gaudy trim,  
With her great Master so to sympathise:  
It was no season then for her  
To wanton with the sun, her lusty paramour.’

Also:

‘No war, or battle’s sound,  
Was heard the world around:  
The idle spear and shield were high up hung;  
The hooked chariot stood  
Unstained with hostile blood;  
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng:  
And kings sat still with awful eye,  
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.’

Or again:

‘But peaceful was the night  
Wherein the Prince of Light  
His reign of peace upon the earth began:  
The winds, with wonder whist,  
Smoothly the waters kissed,  
Whispering new joys to the mild ocean,  
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,  
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed wave.’

At Horton, ere yet his eye was dimmed, while the soul was fresh, and responsive to the sweet scenes of rural life, he wrote the happiest and richest of his productions. The heart of the scholar, transported from the pale cloister to the flowery mead, is open to the careless beauty and laughing plenty around him;

<sup>1</sup>*Animadversions on the Remonstrants’ Defence.*

and the sensuous imagination bodies forth its serene content in a succession of images unsurpassed for their charm:

‘Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee,  
 Jest and youthful Jollity,  
 Quips and Cranks, and wanton Wiles,  
 Nods and Becks and *wreathed Smiles*,  
*Such as hang on Hebe’s cheek,*  
*And love to live in dimple sleek;*  
 Sport that wrinkled Care derides.  
*And Laughter holding both his sides.*  
*Come and trip it, as you go,*  
*On the light fantastic toe;*  
 And in thy right hand lead with thee  
 The mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty;  
 And, if I give thee honor due,  
 Mirth, admit me of thy crew,  
 To live with her, and live with thee,  
 In unreprieved pleasures free;  
 To hear the lark begin his flight,

And singing, *startle* the dull night,  
*From his watch-tower in the skies,*  
 Till the dappled dawn doth rise;  
 Then to come *in spite of sorrow,*  
*And at my window bid good-morrow,*  
 Through the sweet-briar, or the vine,  
 Or the twisted eglantine;  
 While the cock with lively din,  
 Scatters the rear of darkness thin,  
 And to the stack or the barn-door  
*Stoutly struts his dames before:* . . .  
 While the ploughman near at hand,  
*Whistles o’er the furrowed land,*  
*And the milkmaid singeth blithe,*  
*And the mower whets his scythe.*  
 And every shepherd tells his tale,  
 Under the hawthorn in the dale.’<sup>1</sup>

This is the mirthful aspect of Nature, with the fadeless scent of the hawthorn hedge. But the pensive is nobler. Milton prefers it, and summons Melancholy:

‘Come, pensive nun, devout and pure,  
 Sober, stedfast, and demure,  
 All in a robe of darkest grain,  
 Flowing with majestic train,  
 And sable stole of Cypress lawn  
 Over thy decent shoulders drawn.  
 Come, but keep thy wonted state,  
 With even step and musing gait  
*And looks commercing with the skies,*  
*Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes.’<sup>2</sup>*

With her he wanders among the primeval trees,—

‘Where the rude axe, with heaved stroke,  
 Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,  
 Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.’

Or in the retirement of study,—

‘Where glowing embers through the room  
 Teach light to counterfeit a gloom;  
 Far from all resort of mirth,  
 Save the cricket on the hearth.’

Or under the ‘high embowered roof,’ amid antique pillars,—

‘And storied windows richly dight,  
 Casting a dim religious light.’

While the growth of Puritan sentiment was chilling the taste for such entertainment, Milton, conceiving sublimity, on an altar

<sup>1</sup> *L’Allegro.*

<sup>2</sup> *Il Penseroso.*

of flowers, composed the *Comus*; a masque — a lyric poem in the form of a play, an amusement for the palace; with others, an exhibition of costumes and fairy tales; with him, a divine eulogy of innocence and purity. A noble lady, separated from her two brothers, strays —

‘Through the perplexed paths of this drear wood,  
The nodding horror of whose shady brows  
Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger.’

There *Comus*, son of an enchantress, amid the clamors of men transformed into beasts, holds his wild revels:

‘Now the top of heaven doth hold;  
And the gilded car of day  
His glowing axle doth allay  
In the steep Atlantic stream;  
And the slope Sun his upward beam  
Shoots against the dusky pole;  
Pacing toward the other goal  
Of his chamber in the East.  
Meanwhile, welcome joy, and feast,  
Midnight shout, and revelry,  
Topsy dance, and jollity,  
Braid your locks with rosy twine,  
Dropping odours, dropping wine. . . .  
Come, knit hands, and beat the ground,  
In a light fantastic round.’

She is troubled by the turbulent joy which she hears afar in the darkness. A thousand fantasies startle her, but her strength is in the heavenly guardians who watch over the good:

‘O welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,  
Thou hov’ring angel girt with golden wings,  
And thou, unblemish’d form of Chastity!  
I see ye visibly, and now believe  
That He, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill  
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,  
Would send a glist’ring guardian, if need were,  
To keep my life and honour unassail’d.’

She calls her brothers, in strains that steal upon the air like rich distilled perfumes, and reach the dissolute god, who approaches, changed by a magic dust into a gentle shepherd:

‘Can any mortal mixture of earth’s mould  
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?  
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,  
And with these raptures moves the vocal air  
To testify his hidden residence.  
How sweetly did they float upon the wings  
Of silence through the empty-vaulted night,  
At every fall smoothing the raven down  
Of Darkness till it smiled! I have oft heard

My mother Circe with the Syrens three,  
 Amidst the flowery-kirtled Naiades,  
 Culling their potent herbs, and baleful drugs;  
 Who, as they sung, would take the prison'd soul  
 And lap it in Elysium; Scylla wept,  
 And chid her barking waves into attention,  
 And fell Charybdis murmur'd soft applause:  
 Yet they in pleasing slumber lull'd the sense,  
 And in sweet madness robb'd it of itself;  
 But such a sacred, and home-felt delight,  
 Such sober certainty of waking bliss  
 I never heard till now. I'll speak to her,  
 And she shall be my queen.'

Under pretence of leading her out of the forest, he beguiles her to his palace, and seats her, with 'nerves all chained up,' before a sumptuous table. She scorns his offer, and confounds the tempter by the energy of her indignation. Suddenly her brothers enter, led by the attendant Spirit; cast themselves upon him with drawn swords, and he flees. To deliver their enchanted sister, they invoke a river nymph, who sits—

'Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,  
 In twisted braids of lilies knitting  
 The loose train of her amber-dropping hair.'

Sprinkled by the naiad, the lady leaves the 'venomed seat,' which held her spell-bound. Joy reigns. What stronger breast-plate than a heart untainted? Therefore,—

'Love Virtue; she alone is free.  
 She can teach ye how to climb  
 Higher than the sphery chime;  
 Or, if Virtue feeble were,  
 Heaven itself would stoop to her.'

To the protracted storm succeeded a sombre, reactionary evening; and when the blind old warrior turned again to the dreams of his youth, lightness and grace were gone. Theology, disappointment, and conflict had subdued the lyric flight, and fitted him for a metaphysical theme—exploits of the Deity, battles of the supernatural, the history of salvation. It had been among his early hopes to construct something which the world would not willingly let die. Before entering upon his travels, he had written to a friend: 'I am meditating, by the help of heaven, an immortality of fame, but my Pegasus has not yet feathers enough to soar aloft in the fields of air'; and after his return, he said to another: 'Some day I shall address a work to posterity which will perpetuate my name, at least in the land in which I



was born.' In old age, his choice had settled upon *Paradise Lost*, whose composition occupied from 1658 to 1665, though the vast design had long been shaping itself. It opens with an invocation to the Muse to sing —

'Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit  
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste  
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,  
With loss of Eden, till one greater man  
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat.'

And a petition to the Spirit for inspiration:

'What in me is dark,  
Illumine; what is low, raise and support;  
That to the height of this great argument  
*I may assert eternal Providence,*  
*And justify the ways of God to men.'*

Out of 'solid and liquid fire' is framed a world of horror and suffering, vast and vague:

'A dungeon horrible on all sides round,  
As one great furnace flamed; yet from those flames  
No light, but rather darkness visible  
Served only to discover sights of woe,  
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades.'

There wallows the colossal Satan, with the rebel angels, hurled from the ethereal heights into that livid lake:

'With head uplift above the wave, and eyes  
That sparkling blazed, his other parts besides  
Prone on the flood, extended long and large,  
Lay floating many a rood.'

But 'by permission of all-ruling Heaven,'—

'Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool  
His mighty stature; on each hand the flames,  
Driv'n backward, slope their pointing spires, and, roll'd  
In billows, leave i' th' midst a horrid vale.'

Fiercer than the flames is the defiant spirit they enwrap—the proud but ruined seraph, who, preferring independence to servility, welcomes defeat and torment as a glory and a joy:

'Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,  
Said then the lost Arch-Angel, this the seat  
That we must change for heav'n, this mournful gloom  
For that celestial light? Be it so, since he  
Who now is Sovran can dispose and bid  
What shall be right: farthest from him is best,  
Whom reason hath equall'd, force hath made supreme  
Above his equals. Farewell happy fields,  
Where joy forever dwells! Hail horrors, hail  
Infernal world! and thou profoundest Hell

Receive thy new possessor; one who brings  
 A mind not to be changed by place or time.  
 The mind is its own place, and in itself  
 Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n.  
 What matter where, if I be still the same,  
 And what I should be, all but less than He  
 Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least  
 We shall be free; th' Almighty hath not built  
 Here for His envy, will not drive us hence:  
 Here we may reign secure, and in my choice  
 To reign is worth ambition, though in hell;  
 Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven.'

He gathers his crew, who lay entranced thick as autumnal leaves,  
 and addresses them:

'He, above the rest  
 In shape and gesture proudly eminent,  
 Stood like a tower. . . . His face  
 Deep scars of thunder had intrench'd, and care  
 Sat on his faded cheek; but under brows  
 Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride  
 Waiting revenge. . . . Attention held them mute.  
 Thrice he essay'd, and thrice, in spite of scorn,  
 Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth.'

At last his words find utterance, and he comforts them with the  
 hope of universal empire. A council of peers is held in Pandemonium,—

'A thousand demi-gods on golden seats';

And their dauntless king,—

'High on a throne of royal state, which far  
 Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,  
 Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand  
 Show'rs on her kings barbaric pearl and gold.'

It is resolved to go in search of a new kingdom and a new creature, of which there had been an ancient prophecy or report, and to inflict upon them infinite misery in compensation for the loss of infinite bliss. But,—

'Whom shall we find  
 Sufficient? who shall tempt with wand'ring feet  
 The dark unbottom'd infinite abyss,  
 And through the palpable obscure find out  
 His uncouth way, or spread his aery flight,  
 Upborne with indefatigable wings  
 Over the vast abrupt, ere he arrive  
 The happy isle?'

Each reads in the other's countenance his own dismay. The awful suspense is only broken by their matchless chief, who

offers himself for the general safety, and undertakes the voyage alone, though —

‘Long is the way  
And hard that out of Hell leads up to light;  
Our prison strong; this huge convex of fire,  
Outrageous to devour, immures us round  
Ninefold, and gates of burning adamant  
Barr’d over us prohibit all egress,’

Then the plunge ‘into the void profound of unessential Night.’ Arrived at Hell-bounds, mark the horror and grandeur of the situation:

‘Thrice threefold the gates; three folds were brass,  
Three iron, three of adamantine rock,  
Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire,  
Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat  
On either side a formidable shape;  
The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair,  
But ended foul in many a scaly fold,  
Voluminous and vast, a serpent arm’d  
With mortal sting: about her middle round  
A cry of Hell-hounds never ceasing, bark’d  
With wide Cerberean mouths full loud, and rung  
A hideous peal: yet, when they list, would creep,  
If aught disturb’d their noise, into her womb,  
And kennel there, yet there still bark’d and howl’d  
Within unscen. . . . The other shape,  
If shape it might be call’d that shape had none  
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,  
Or substance might be call’d that shadow seemed,  
For each seem’d either; black it stood as Night,  
Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,  
And shook a dreadful dart. What seem’d his head  
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.  
Satan was now at hand, and from his seat,  
The monster moving onward, came as fast  
With horrid strides, Hell trembled as he strode,  
Th’ undaunted Fiend what this might be admired —  
Admired, not feared.’

Satan, unterrified, and burning like a comet, advances. But the snaky sorceress, rushing between the combatants, takes from her side the fatal key, and unlocks the gates, whose ‘furnace-mouth’ would admit ‘a bannered host with extended wings.’ On the frontiers of Chaos, the flying Fiend weighs his spread wings, and describes —

‘This pendent world, in bigness as a star  
Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.’

In prospect of Eden, he falls into painful doubts:

‘Me miserable! which way shall I fly  
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?  
Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell,

And in the lowest deep a lower deep  
 Still threat'ning to devour me opens wide,  
 To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heav'n.'

There is no repentance, no pardon, but by submission; and that, disdain forbids:

'So farewell hope, and with hope farewell fear,  
 Farewell remorse: all good to me is lost:  
 Evil be thou my good; by thee at least  
 Divided empire with Heav'n's King I hold.'

He reaches the wall, overleaps it, sees Adam and Eve, hears them converse as they repose on the velvet green, amid sporting kids and ramping lions under trees of ambrosial fruitage:

'Sight hateful! sight tormenting! thus these two,  
 Imparadised in one another's arms,  
 The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill  
 Of bliss on bliss; while I to Hell am thrust,  
 Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire,  
 Among our other torments not the least,  
 Still unfulfill'd with pain of longing, pines.  
 Yet let me not forget what I have gained  
 From their own mouths; all is not theirs, it seems;  
 One fatal tree there stands, of Knowledge call'd,  
 Forbidden them to taste: Knowledge forbidden?'

He is arrested, by a night-watch, while tempting Eve in a dream, and brought into the presence of Gabriel, but escapes; returns, however, in a rising mist at midnight:

'Cautious of day,  
 Since Uriel, regent of the sun, descry'd  
 His entrance, and forewarn'd the Cherubim  
 That kept their watch.'

Entering into the form of a serpent, he spies Eve apart, veiled in a cloud of fragrance:

'So thick the roses blushing round  
 About her glow'd, oft stooping to support  
 Each flow'r of slender stalk, whose head, though gay  
 Carnation, purple, azure, or speck'd with gold,  
 Hung drooping unsustainable.'

He knows she is a woman, and therefore must first use all his arts to lure the eye, approaching,—

'Not with indented wave,  
 Prone on the ground, as since, but on his rear,  
 Circular base of rising folds, that tower'd  
 Fold above fold a surging maze, his head  
 Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes;  
 With burnish'd neck of verdant gold, erect  
 Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass  
 Floated redundant.'

She hears the sound of rustling leaves, but heeds not, because she is used to it. Bolder now, he presents himself:

‘But as in gaze admiring, oft he bow’d  
His turret crest and sleek enamel’d neck,  
Fawning, and lick’d the ground whereon she trod,  
His gentle dumb expression turn’d at length  
The eye of Eve to mark his play.’

Having her attention, the next point is to excite the ruling passion — curiosity, which he does by the most delicate of compliments. Amazed to hear a brute articulate, she wants to know what it can mean, and he explains:

‘Empress of this fair world, resplendent Eve,  
Easy to me it is to tell thee all  
What thou command’st; and right thou should’st be obey’d.  
I was at first as other beasts that graze  
The trodden herb, of abject thoughts and low,  
As was my food: nor aught but food discern’d,  
Or sex, and apprehended nothing high;  
Till on a day roving the field, I chanced  
A goodly tree far distant to behold,  
Loaden with fruit of fairest colours mix’d,  
Ruddy and gold. . . . To pluck and eat my fill  
I spared not; for such pleasure till that hour  
At feed or fountain never had I found.’

With many wiles and arguments he overcomes her scruples, and induces her to eat. She says:

‘In the day we eat  
Of this fair fruit, our doom is, we shall die.  
How dies the serpent? he hath eaten and lives,  
And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns,  
Irrational till then.’

True and conclusive:

‘So saying, her rash hand, in evil hour,  
Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she eat!  
Earth felt the wound; and Nature from her seat  
Sighing, through all her works gave signs of woe,  
That all was lost.’

Satan, triumphant, arrives at Pandemonium, and exultingly relates his success. He awaits their shout of applause, but hears instead, on all sides, only a dismal hiss:

‘He wondered, but not long  
Had leisure, wond’ring at himself now more:  
His visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare,  
His arms clung to his ribs, his legs intertwining  
Each other, till supplanted down he fell  
A monstrous serpent on his belly prone,  
Reluctant, but in vain; a greater Pow’r



Now ruled him, punish'd in the shape he sinn'd  
According to his doom. He would have spoke,  
But hiss for hiss return'd with forked tongue  
To forked tongue.'

Solaced by the promise of redemption, the fallen pair are led forth from Paradise, casting back one fond lingering look upon their happy seat,—

'Waved over by that flaming brand, the gate  
With dreadful faces throng'd and fiery arms.  
Some natural tears they dropt, but wiped them soon.'

**Style.**—The difficulties of his prose—the heaviness of its logic, the clumsiness of its discussions, the involution of its sentences—have almost sealed it to common readers; but if it lacks simplicity and perspicuity, it has what is nobler—breadth of eloquence, wealth of imagery, sublimity of diction.

His poetical manner, with more of richness and inversion, is essentially the same—ample, measured, and organ-like; not impulsive and abrupt, but solid and regular, as of one who writes from a superb self-command. All languages, ancient and modern, contributed something of splendor, of energy, of music; but no exotic is so largely and conspicuously helpful as the stately Latin, as none is so valuable for the purposes of harmony. Many of his grandest lines consist chiefly of this element, as,—

'*The palpable obscure.*'

'*Ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,  
Confusion worse confounded.*'

'*Deep on his front engraven  
Deliberation sat, and public care.*'

'*Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds.*'

'*Thrones, dominations, principedoms, virtues, powers.*'

His fondness for Latinisms is perceptible in every such arrangement as—

'*Him the Almighty power  
Hurled headlong, flaming down the ethereal heights,*'

and in that strictly periodic structure, of which finer examples can nowhere be found than those already given. A few of his epithets, taken at random, will suggest his ruling characteristics,—'hideous ruin and combustion'; 'wasteful deep'; 'gentle gales, fanning their odoriferous wings'; 'gay-enamelled colors'; 'ponderous shield, ethereal temper, massy, large, and round.'

His rhythm beats with no intermittent pulse. He is unerr-

ingly harmonious. To specify but two or three of the modes by which from the iambic blank he obtains the most felicitous effects:

1. *By the interchange of feet,—*

Trochee.....‘*High on a throne of royal state.*’

Anapæst.....‘*Created hugest that swim the ocean stream.*’

Spondee.....‘*The force of those dire arms.*’

2. *By a perpetual change of the cæsural pause,—*

‘At once, as far as angel’s ken he views  
The dismal situation, waste and wild;  
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,  
As one great furnace flamed, yet from those flames  
No light, but rather darkness visible,  
Served only to discover sights of woe,  
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace  
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes  
That comes to all, but torture without end  
Still urges, and a fiery deluge fed  
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.’

3. *By an unequalled skill in the management of sound.*  
How expressive of harshness,—

‘On a sudden open fly,  
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,  
The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate  
Harsh thunder.’

How expressive of peace,—

‘Heaven opened wide  
Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound,  
On golden hinges turning.’

Or of the uproar of contending hosts,—

‘Arms on armor clashing bray’d  
Horrible discord, and the madding wheels  
Of brazen chariots raged.’

Or of the virgin charms of Eden,—

‘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.’

His natural movement is majestic, as of a full deep stream; but not, as we have seen, without its phases. In his masterpieces, we may see, in the order of their execution, what might be expected *a priori*,—the intellectual gaining upon the sensual qualities of art: the youthful freshness of *Comus*, passages of

which might have been written by Fletcher or Shakespeare; the grave full-toned harmonies of *Paradise Lost*; the rugged eccentricities and harsh inversions of *Paradise Regained*; and the cold, uncompromising severity of *Samson Agonistes*.

**Rank.**—As a poet, he was little regarded by his contemporaries. ‘The old blind poet,’ says Waller, ‘hath published a tedious poem on the Fall of Man. If its length be not considered as a merit, it hath no other.’ To be neglected by them was the penalty paid for surpassing them. The fame of a great man needs time to give it due perspective. He was esteemed and feared, however, as a learned and powerful disputant. His prose writings, in his own day, seem to have been read with avidity; but the interests which inspired them were accidental, while in argument they have the rambling course of indignation, and their cloth of gold is disfigured with the mud of invective.

The poet of revealed religion under its Puritanic type. *Paradise Lost* is the epic of a fallen cause, the embodiment of Puritan England—its grand ambitions, its colossal energies, its strenuous struggles, its broken hope, its proud and sombre horizon. It has the distinguishing merit and signal defect of the Puritan temper,—the equable realization of a great purpose, and the painful want of a large, genial humanity.

The last of the Elizabethans; holding his place on the borders of the Renaissance, which was setting, and of the Doctrinal Age, which was rising; between the epoch of natural belief, of unbiassed fancy, and the epoch of severe religion, of narrow opinions; displaying, under limitations, the old creativeness in new subjects; concentrating the literary past and future; and when his proper era had passed by, looming in solitary greatness at a moment when imagination was extinct and taste was depraved.

By the purity of his sentiments and the sustained fulness of his style, he holds affinity with Spenser, who calmly dreams; by his theme and majesty, with Dante, who is fervid and rapt; by his profundity and learning, with Bacon, who is more comprehensive; by his inspiration, with Shakespeare, who is freer and more varied: but in sublimity he excels them all, even Homer. The first two books of *Paradise Lost* are continued instances of the sublime.

Its *height* is what distinguishes the entire poem from every

other. Its central figure, the ruined arch-angel, is the most tremendous conception in the compass of poetry; no longer the petty mischief-maker, the horned enchanter, of the middle-age, but a giant and a hero, whose eyes are like eclipsed suns, whose cheeks are thunder-scarred, whose wings are as two black forests; armed with a shield whose circumference is the orb of the moon, with a spear in comparison with which the tallest pine were but a wand; doubly armed by pride, fury, and despair; brave and faithful to his troops, touched with pity for his innocent victims, pleading necessity for his design, actuated less by pure malice than by ambition and resentment.

Burns resolved to buy a pocket-copy of Milton, and study that noble (?) character, Satan; not that his interest fastened upon the evil, but upon the miraculous manifestation of energy,—the vehement will, the spiritual might, which could overpower racking pains, and, in the midst of desolation, cry:

‘Hail, horrors! hail  
Infernal world! and thou, profoundest hell,  
Receive thy new possessor!’

But stoical self-repression limits the imagination. If he was the loftiest of great poets, none ever had less of that dramatic sensibility which creates and differentiates souls, endowing each with its appropriate act and word. He can neither forget nor conceal himself. The most affecting passages in his great epic are personal allusions, as when he reverts to the scenes which exist no longer to him:

‘Thus with the year  
Seasons return, but not to me returns  
Day, or the sweet approach of ev’n or morn,  
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer’s rose,  
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;  
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark  
Surrounds me.’

His individuality is always present. Adam and Eve are often difficult to be separated. They pay each other philosophical compliments, and converse in dissertations. She is too serious. If you are mortal, you will sooner love the laughing Rosalind, with her bird-like petulance and volubility:

‘O coz, coz, coz, my pretty little coz, that thou didst know how many fathoms deep I am in love.’<sup>1</sup>

‘Why, how now, Orlando, where have you been all this while? You a lover?’<sup>2</sup>

Or to one who has seen her lover in this autumn glade:

‘What said he? how looked he? Wherein went he? Did he ask for me? Where remains he? How parted he with thee? and when shalt thou see him again? . . . Do you not know that I am a woman? When I think, I must speak. Sweet, say on.’<sup>1</sup>

Eve is Milton’s ideal. With her he would have been happy. There would have been no friction. He would administer the scientific draughts required, and she would reply becomingly, gratefully, as he wished:

‘My . . . Disposer, what thou bidst,  
Unargued, I obey; so God ordains;  
God is thy law, thou mine; to know no more  
Is woman’s happiest knowledge and her praise.  
With thee conversing I forget all time;  
All seasons and their change, all please alike.’

As for Adam, no mortal woman could love him, however she might admire him,—least of all Mary Powel.

Milton could not divorce himself from dialectics. His Jehovah is too much of an advocate. He expounds and enforces theology like an Oxford divine. The highest art is only indirectly didactic. The most exquisite can produce no illusion when it is employed to represent the transcendent and absolute. Spiritual agents cannot be poetically expressed with metaphysical accuracy. They must be clothed in material forms,—must have a sphere and mode of agency not wholly superhuman.<sup>2</sup>

**Character.**—He was born for great ideas and great service. At ten he had a learned tutor, and at twelve he worked until midnight. John the Baptist is *himself* when in *Paradise Regained* he is made to say:

‘While I was yet a child, no childish play  
To me was pleasing; all my mind was set  
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do,  
What might be public good; myself I thought  
Born to that end, born to promote all truth,  
All righteous things.’

No man ever conceived a loftier ideal, or a firmer resolve to unfold it. Amid the licentious gallantries of the South he perfected himself by study, without soiling himself by contagion:

<sup>1</sup> *As You Like It*.

<sup>2</sup> M. Taine demands of the poet what is altogether impossible,—that God and Messiah should act and feel in conformity with their essential natures. To reconcile the spiritual properties of supernatural beings with the human modes of existence which it is *necessary* to ascribe to them, is a difficulty too great for the human mind to overcome. The infinite cannot be made to enter finite limits without jar and collision. It may be justly insisted, of course, that the Deity shall not be bound to a precise formula.



'I call the Deity to witness that in all those places in which vice meets with so little discouragement, and is practised with so little shame, I never once deviated from the paths of integrity and virtue, and perpetually reflected that, though my conduct might escape the notice of men, it could not elude the inspection of God.'

The idea of a purer existence than any he saw around him, regulated all his toil:

'He who would aspire to write well in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem; . . . not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men or famous cities unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praiseworthy.'

Not art, but life, was the end of his effort,—to identify himself and others with all select and holy images. *Comus* is but a hymn to chastity. Two noble passages attest the conviction which fired him, the purpose which no temptation could shake, and which gives such authority to his strain:

'Virtue could see to do what Virtue would  
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon  
Were in the flat sea sunk.'

And:

'This I hold firm;—  
Virtue may be assail'd, but never hurt,—  
Surpris'd by unjust force, but not enthrall'd;  
Yea, even that, which mischief meant most harm,  
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory:  
But evil on itself shall back recoil,  
And mix no more with goodness: when at last  
*Gather'd like scum, and settled to itself,*  
*It shall be in eternal restless change,*  
*Self-fed, and self-consumed; if this fail,*  
*The pillar'd firmament is rottenness,*  
*And earth's base built on stubble.'*

The mind thus consecrated to moral beauty, is stamped with the superscription of the Most High. Like the Puritans, his eye was fixed continually on an Almighty Judge. This was the light that irradiated his darkness, and, early and late, on all sides round,—

'As one great furnace flamed.'

This was the idea, strengthened by vast knowledge and solitary meditation, that absorbed all the rest of his being, and made him the sublimest of men. Hence the poems that rise like temples, and the rhythms that flow like organ chants. Hence the contempt of external circumstances, the purpose that will not bend to opposition nor yield to seduction, the courage to perform a perilous duty and to combat for what is true or sacred. Hence the calm, conscious energy which no subject, howsoever

vast or terrific, can repel or intimidate, which no emotion or accident can transform or disturb, which no suffering can render sullen or fretful. Hence the larger conception of perpetual growth, the consequent reverence for human nature, hatred of the institutions which fetter the mind, devotion to freedom—above all, freedom of speech, of conscience and worship. Parents and friends had destined him for the ministry, but,—

‘Coming to some maturity of years, and perceiving what tyranny had invaded the church, that he who would take orders must subscribe slave, and take an oath withal, which unless he took with a conscience that would retch, he must either straight perjure, or split his faith; I thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing.’

Hence, too,—from the endurance of the God-idea, from the fixed determination to live nobly and act grandly,—he preserved his moral ardor intact from the withering and polluting influences of politics, which generally extinguish sentiment and imagination in a sordid and calculating selfishness.

Can we expect humor here?—Only at distant intervals, and then with strange slips into the grotesque, as in the heavy witticisms of the devils on the effect of their artillery. Thus Satan seeing the confusion of the angels, calls to his mates:

‘O Friends, why come not on these victors proud?  
Ere while they fierce were coming; and when we  
To entertain them fair with open front  
And breast (what could we more?) propounded terms  
Of composition, straight they changed their minds,  
Flew off, and into strange vagaries fell,  
As they would dance; yet for a dance they seem’d  
Somewhat extravagant and wild.’

And Belial answers:

‘Leader, the terms we sent were terms of weight,  
Of hard contents, and full of force urged home,  
Such as we might perceive amused them all,  
And stumbled many; who receives them right,  
Had need from head to foot well understand.’

Naturally, his habits of living were austere. He was an early riser, and abstemious in diet. The lyrist, he thought, might indulge in wine, and in a freer life; but he who would write an epic to the nations, must eat beans and drink water. His amusements consisted in gardening, in exercise with the sword, and in playing on the organ. Music, he insisted, should form part of a generous education. His ear for it was acute; and his voice, it is said, was sweet and harmonious. In youth, handsome to a

proverb, he was called the lady of his college. The simplicity of his later years accorded with his inner greatness. He listened every morning to a chapter from the Hebrew Bible; and, after meditating in silence on what he had heard, studied till mid-day; then, after an hour's exercise, he attuned himself to majesty and purity of thought with music, and resumed his studies till six.

The most devout man of his time, he frequented no place of worship. He was perhaps too dissatisfied with the clashing systems of the age to attach himself to any sect. Finding his ideal in none, he prayed to God alone :

'Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer  
*Before all temples, the upright heart, and pure.*'<sup>1</sup>

The discovery, in 1823, of his *Treatise on Christian Doctrine* excited considerable amazement by its heterodox opinions. In this he avers himself an anti-Trinitarian, and teaches that the Son is distinct from the Father, inferior to Him, created by Him, and afterwards employed by Him to carry on the creative work. He is opposed, as were most of the ancient philosophers, to the doctrine of creation out of nothing; and maintains that, since there can be no act without a passive material on which the act was exerted, the world was formed out of a preëxistent substance. To the question, What and whence is this primary substance? he answers: It proceeded from God, 'an efflux of the Deity.'<sup>2</sup> He differs from the majority, again, in the rejection of infant baptism, and in the assertion that under the Gospel no time is appointed for public worship, but that the observance of the first day of the week rests wholly on expediency and general consent. On two other points he satisfies himself with the prevalent notions,—original sin, and redemption through Christ.

In the order of Providence, the highest and greatest must have more or less sympathy with their age. Hence his controversial asperity. Gentlemen now are expected to dispute with an elegant dignity. In those days, they sought to devour each other, or, failing in this, to cover each other with filth. Some of his offenders deserved no mercy. Salmasius, a hired pedant, disgorges

<sup>1</sup> *Paradise Lost: Invocation.*

<sup>2</sup> Those who represent, with Macaulay, that Milton asserts the eternity of matter, are in error, as is evident from the following passage, than which nothing could be more explicit: 'That matter, I say, should have existed from all eternity, is inconceivable. If, on the contrary, it did not exist from all eternity, it is difficult to understand from whence it derives its origin. There remains, therefore, but one solution of the difficulty, for which, moreover, we have the authority of Scripture, namely, that all things are of God.'

upon him a torrent of calumny, and he replies with a dictionary of epithets—rogue, wretch, idiot, ass:

‘You who know so many tongues, who read so many books, who write so much about them, you are yet but an ass.’

Again:

‘O most drivelling of asses, you come ridden by a woman, with the curled heads of bishops whom you had wounded.’

And again:

‘Doubt not that you are reserved for the same end as Judas, and that, driven by despair rather than repentance, self-disgusted, you must one day hang yourself, and like your rival burst asunder in your belly.’

Such passages every admirer of Milton must lament. When interests of infinite moment are at stake, the deeply moved soul will speak strongly. The general strain of his prose, however, must exalt him, notwithstanding its occasional violence; but in the more congenial sphere of poetry, he ever appears in the serene strength, the sedate patience, which was proper to him.

To the manners and spirit of his age, as well as to his severe sanctitude, is due his conception of female excellence and the relative position of the sexes:

‘Not equal, as their sex not equal seem’d:  
For contemplation he and valour form’d,  
For softness she and sweet attractive grace;  
He for God only, she for God in him.  
His fair large front and eye sublime declared  
Absolute rule; and hyacinthine locks  
Round from his parted forelock manly hung  
Clust’ring, but not beneath his shoulders broad:  
She, as a veil down to the slender waist,  
Her unadorned golden tresses wore  
Dishevell’d, but in wanton ringlets waved  
As the vine curls her tendrils; which imply’d  
Subjection, but required with gentle sway,  
And by her yielded, by him best received;  
Yielded with coy submission, modest pride,  
And sweet reluctant amorous delay.’<sup>1</sup>

Milton’s heart lived in a sublime solitude. Disappointed of a companionship there, he regarded the actual woman with something of condescension, and, incapable of those attentions which make companionship sweet, probably exacted a studious respect. As for sensibility and tenderness, it was essential to his perfectness that the nature should be quiet. A great mind is master of its enthusiasm,—the less perturbed, the closer its resemblance to

<sup>1</sup>*Paradise Lost*, IV: Adam and Eve.

the Divine. Its emotion, though more intense and enduring than that of other men, is calmer, and therefore less observed. We have seen what susceptibility breathes in Milton's early poetry,—not light or gay, indeed, but always healthful and bright. And later, in his essay on *Education*, he says:

'In those vernal seasons of the year when the air is calm and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against Nature not to go out and see her riches, and partake in her rejoicing with heaven and earth.'

When old, tried, and sightless, he could turn from the stormy scenery of the infernal regions, and luxuriate in the loveliness of Paradise, the innocent joy of its inhabitants. There is no mistaking the fine sense of beauty and the pure deep affection of these exquisite lines, which the gentle Eve addresses to her lover in the 'shady bowers' of Eden:

'Neither breath of Morn, when she ascends  
With charm of earliest birds; nor rising Sun  
On this delightful land; nor herb, fruit, flower,  
Glist'ring with dew; nor fragrance after showers;  
Nor grateful ev'ning mild; nor silent Night  
With this her solemn bird, nor walk by Moon,  
Or glitt'ring star-light, without thee is sweet.'

An Independent in politics and religion, a hero, a martyr, a recluse, a dweller in an ideal city, standing alone and aloof above his times, and, when eyes of flesh were sightless, wandering the more 'where the Muses haunt,'—truly—

'Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart.'

**Influence.**—Such men are sent as soldiers of humanity. They use the sacred fire, divinely kindled within them, not to amuse men or to build up a reputation, but to awaken kindred greatness in other souls. What service Milton has rendered to mankind by his love of freedom and the high, brave morals he taught! On account of the learning necessary to their full comprehension, his works will never be popular in the sense in which those of Shakespeare are so, or Bunyan, or Burns, or even Pope and Cowper; but, like the *Organum*, they move the intellects which move the world. As culture spreads and approaches their spiritual heights, the more they will reveal their efficacy to purify, invigorate, and delight; the more will man aspire to emulate the zeal, the fortitude, the virtue, the toil, the heroism, of their author.

It is a Chinese maxim, that 'a sage is the instructor of a hun-



dred ages.' Talk much with such a one, and you acquire his quality,—the habit of looking at things as he. From him proceeds mental and moral force, will he or not. He is of those who make a period, as well as mark it; who, without ceasing to help us as a cause, help us also as an effect; who reach so high, that age and comparison cannot rob them of power to inspire; who turn, by their moral alchemy,

'The common dust  
Of servile opportunity to gold,  
Filling the soul with sentiments august,  
The beautiful, the brave, the holy, and the just.'



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DEVELOPMENT  
OF  
ENGLISH LITERATURE  
AND  
LANGUAGE

BY

ALFRED H. WELSH, A.M.

MEMBER OF VICTORIA INSTITUTE, THE PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

VOLUME II

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Books are a real world, both pure and good,  
Round which, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,  
Our pastime and our happiness may grow.—WORDSWORTH

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# DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE.

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## FIRST TRANSITION PERIOD.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### FEATURES.

The fact that 'constitutions are not made, but grow,'<sup>1</sup> is simply a fragment of the much larger fact, that under all its aspects and through all its ramifications, Society is a growth and not a manufacture.—*Herbert Spencer.*

**Politics.**—To the love of liberty succeeded the rage of faction. Ministry after ministry failed—the legal, the corrupt, and the national. The king aimed only to emancipate himself from control, and to gratify his private tastes. Ignorant of affairs and averse to toil, without faith in human virtue, believing that every person was to be bought, promising everything to everybody, and addicted beyond measure to sensual indulgence,—he brought the state by maladministration to the brink of ruin. Retribution was speedy. The defeated Roundheads, passing below the surface, began to reappear; and renouncing their republicanism as impracticable, took up the watchword of constitutional reform.

After fifteen years of dissolute revels, Charles was succeeded by his brother James II, who wished to achieve, at the same time, a triumph for pure monarchy and for Romanism. Again, as at the outbreak of the Civil War, there was a political struggle and a religious struggle, and both were directed against the government. The reaction which had prostrated the Whigs was fol-

<sup>1</sup> Mackintosh.

lowed by one far more violent in the opposite direction; and the revolution of eighty-eight, which enthroned William of Orange, brought the grand conflict of the seventeenth century to a final issue—not in the establishment of a wild democracy, but in the transfer of executive supremacy from the Crown to the House of Commons. The ministers, who were chosen henceforth from the majority of its members, became its natural leaders, capable of being easily set aside and replaced whenever the balance of power shifted from one side of the House to the other.<sup>1</sup>

**Society.**—In the eternal whirl of change, heads were made giddy. Laxity of principle in statesmen became too common to be scandalous. Austerity, too, necessarily produced revulsion. Profligacy became a test of loyalty, and a qualification for office. Devotion and honesty were swept away, and a deep general taint spread through every province of letters. In court circles, it was the fashion to swear, to relate obscene stories, to get drunk, to gamble, to deride Scripture and the preachers. Two nobles, nearly nude, run through the streets after midnight. Another, in open day, stark-naked, harangues a mob from an open window. Another writes poems for the haunts of vice. A duke, blind and eighty, goes to a gambling-house with an attendant to tell him the cards. Charles quarrels with his mistress in public, she calling him an idiot, he calling her a jade. Men and women appear alike depraved. Lords and ladies in festivities smear one another's faces with candle-grease and soot, 'till most of us were like devils.' A duchess disguises herself as an orange-girl, and cries her wares in the street. Another loses in one night twenty-five thousand pounds at play. Says a contemporary:

'Here I first understood by their talk the meaning of company that lately were called *Ballers*; Harris telling how it was by a meeting of some young blades, where he was among them, and my Lady Bennet and her ladies, and their dancing naked, and all the roguish things in the world.'

All this without an attempt to throw even the thinnest veil over the evil everywhere rampant. The regular and decent exterior maintained easily at Versailles, was here troublesome.

<sup>1</sup> Thus terminated in England the contest which even now is raging in Germany. Within a few days of the present writing, Emperor William has asserted his right to dictate the policy of the Prussian government, without regard to the Ministry or the Parliament. A crisis is imminent. Perhaps the time has come for Germany to strike the blow that shall free her from military absolutism. Wise is the ruler who is in sympathy with the prevailing tendency, which, over all Europe, is liberal. The tyrant may disturb or retard, but the industrial organization, in its general course, is beyond his control.

They have, moreover, the violent instincts of barbarians. The republicans were tried with a shamelessness of cruelty. By the side of one was stationed a hangman, in a black dress, with a rope in his hand. While one was being quartered, another was brought up and asked if the work pleased him. Hearts, still beating, were torn out and shown to the people. A speaker in the Commons gives offence to the court, is waylaid by a gang of bullies, and his nose slit to the bone. Bunyan has satirized the mode of conducting state trials—mere forms preliminary to hanging and drawing. *Hategood* is counsel for the prisoner:

*Judge.* Thou runagate, heretic, and traitor, hast thou heard what these honest gentlemen have witnessed against thee?

*Faithful.* May I speak a few words in my own defence?

*Judge.* Sirrah, Sirrah! thou deservest to live no longer, but to be slain immediately upon the place; yet, that all men may see our gentleness to thee, let us hear what thou, vile runagate, hast to say.'

After the rising of Monmouth, gentlemen were admonished to be careful of their ways, by hanging to their park gate the corpse of a rebel. Dynasties of gentry, known by the dreaded names of *Hectors*, *Scourers*, *Mohawks*, were the terror of peaceable citizens. The moral condition at large is fearfully expressed in the fact that in guide-books of the period *gibbets* and *gallows* are referred to as *road-marks*. For example:

'By the *gallows* and three wind-mills enter the suburbs of York.'

'Leaving the forementioned suburbs (Durham), a small ascent, passing between the *gallows* and Crokehill.'

'You pass through Hare street . . . with a *gallows* to the left.'

'You pass by Pen-menis Hall, . . . and ascend a small hill with a *gibbet* on the right.'

'At the end of the city (Wells) you cross a brook, and pass by the *gallows*.'

'At 2·3, leaving the acute way on the right to Towling, Ewel, etc., just at the *gallows*, or place of execution of malefactors, convicted at Southwark. At 8·5 you pass by a *gallows* on the left.' . . .

'A small rill with a bridge over it called Felbridge, separating it from Surrey, whence by the *gallows* you are conveyed to East Grinstead.'

'Leaving Petersborough you pass the *gallows* on the left.'

'You leave Frampton, Wilberton, and Sherbeck, all on the right, and by a *gibbet* on the left, over a stone bridge.'

'Leaving Nottingham you ascend a hill, and pass by a *gallows*.'

'From Bristol . . . you go up a steep ascent, leaving the *gallows* on your right.'

'You cross the River Saint, leaving the *gallows* on your left.'<sup>1</sup>

We must not, however, exaggerate the extent of this reaction. Its more violent forms appear to have been confined to the capi-

<sup>1</sup> Ogilby's *Itinerarium Angliæ*.

tal and the Court. When the frenzy of the Restoration had passed, it was seen that the best portions of the Puritan spirit were never extinguished. The mass of Englishmen, satisfied with getting back their May-poles and mince pies, were essentially unchanged.

Perhaps nothing shows the social state more strikingly than the provisions for locomotion. Often the highway was but a narrow track rising above the quagmire, and that not infrequently blocked up by carriers, neither of whom would yield. In the dusk, it was hardly distinguishable from the open heath and fen on either side. Wheeled carriages were in some districts generally pulled by oxen. On main roads, heavy articles were commonly conveyed, at enormous expense, by stage-wagons, in the straw of which nestled a crowd of passengers who could not afford to travel by coach; on by-roads, by long trains of pack horses. The rich travelled in their own carriages, with from four to six horses. Nor could even six always save the vehicle from being imbedded. Towards the close of the century, 'Flying Coaches' were established—a great and daring innovation. Moving at the rate of thirty to fifty miles a day, many thought it a tempting of Providence to go in them. This spirited undertaking was vehemently applauded—and as vehemently decried. About 1676, a few railways, made of timber, began to appear in the northern coal districts. Wagons were the cars, and horses the engines. But however a journey might be performed, travellers, unless numerous and well-armed, were liable to be stopped and plundered by marauders, many of whom had the manners and appearance of aristocrats. Innumerable inns—for which, since the days of famous Tabard, England had been renowned—gave the wanderer a cheering welcome from the fatigues of travel and the dangers of darkness.

Houses were not numbered. Shops were distinguished by pictorial signs, for the direction of the common people who were unable to read. The streets of the metropolis are thus described:

'The particular style of building in old London was for one story to project over another, with heavy beams and cornices, the streets being paved with pebble stones, and no path for foot passengers but what was common for carriages, scarce a lamp to be seen, and except a few principal streets, they were in general very narrow, and those encumbered with heavy projecting signs, and barber's poles. London must have had a

very gloomy appearance when neighbors in a narrow street might shake hands from the opposite garrets. No wonder the plague was so dreadful in 1665!<sup>1</sup>

After the great fire, which desolated almost a square mile of the city, the streets were widened, and the architecture was improved. Steps were taken to turn its nocturnal shades into noonday. On moonless nights, lanterns glimmered feebly before one house in ten, from six o'clock till twelve. While the ingenious projector was extolled by some as the greatest of benefactors, by others he was furiously attacked. The most fashionable localities bore what would now be considered a squalid appearance. The finest houses in Bath, a celebrated watering-place, would seem to have resembled the lowest of rag-shops. Visitors slept in rooms hardly as good as the garrets which in the next century were occupied by footmen. We may easily imagine what must have been the homes of the rural population.

Hospitality displayed itself in immoderate eating and drinking. The guest had failed in justice to the occasion unless he had gone under the table. Receptions were no solemn ceremonies. King Charles kept open house daily and all day long, for London society, the extreme Whigs excepted. All who had been properly introduced might go to see him dine, sup, dance.

Rural gentry derived their chief pleasures from field sports and coarse sensuality. Their taste in decoration seldom rose above the litter of a farm-yard; and their opinions were imbibed from current tradition. The yeomanry, a manly and true-hearted race, were an important element of the nation. Not less than a hundred and sixty thousand proprietors, comprising, with their families, more than a seventh of the inhabitants, derived their subsistence from small freehold estates. Four-fifths of the peasants were employed in agriculture. Their ordinary wages without board did not exceed four shillings per week, about one-third what they now are. Their chief food was rye, barley, or oats. No journal pleaded their cause. Only in rude rhymes did their distress find utterance.

When authors lay it down as a rule that virtue is only a pretence, the standard of female excellence will be low. At an earlier period, ladies of rank had studied the masterpieces of Greece and Rome; now they were unable to write an English sentence without errors of orthography and grammar. To libertines,

<sup>1</sup> Smith's *Antiquities of London*.



moral and intellectual attainments were far less attractive than ignorance and frivolity.

The post-office might have moved the admiration of Spenser and his contemporaries, but it was a very imperfect institution. Under the Commonwealth, posts were established for the conveyance of letters *weekly* to all parts of the Kingdom. The bags were carried on horseback, day and night, at the rate of about five miles per hour. In the reign of Charles, a penny-post was set up in the capital for the delivery of letters and parcels from four to eight times a day; but the improvement was strenuously resisted by the long-headed and knowing ones, who denounced it as an insidious 'Popish contrivance.' No part of the mail was more important than the *Newsletters*,—weekly epistles of information and gossip, gathered in the coffee-rooms, and anxiously awaited by the rustic magistrate or the man of fortune in the country. Already, in 1662, a new style of chronicle had appeared,—the *Newspaper*. The Civil War was fruitful in bitter and malicious sheets,—*Scotch Doves*, *Parliament Kites*, *Secret Owls*, the *Weekly Discoverer*, quickly rivalled by the *Weekly Discoverer Stripped Naked*. They multiplied greatly in the succeeding reigns, growing less political and more varied. In 1665 appeared the *London Gazette*, a bi-weekly of meagre contents. None was published oftener, and the largest contained less than is now comprised in a single column of a large daily. It had long ago been discovered that the press was dangerous to monopolists and tyrants; and in the arbitrary days of Charles II it was assumed that printing was not a free trade, but always to remain under regulation,—wholly at the disposal of the sovereign. But from 1649, when restrictions on its freedom were removed, the progress of the press as a reflector of public opinion has been steady and sure. Yet the words of Dr. Johnson are as true at this day as at any former period: 'The danger of unbounded liberty, and the danger of bounding it, have produced a problem in the science of government, which human understanding seems unable to solve.'

**Religion.**—The old ecclesiastical polity and the old liturgy were revived. Episcopal ordination became the indispensable condition of preferment. Two thousand ministers, rather than conform, resigned their cures in a single day, though they and

their families had all but to starve. Then came a series of odious statutes against non-conformists. It was criminal to attend a dissenting place of worship. A magistrate might convict without a jury; and for a third offence might pass sentence of transportation beyond the sea. If the offender returned before the expiration of his term of exile, he was liable to be executed. A test was imposed on the ejected divines; and all who refused to take it were prohibited from coming within five miles of any borough, or of any town where they had been wont to preach. In twelve years, twelve thousand Quakers—one of the smallest of the separatist bodies—had found their way to the jails. Many of the expelled clergy preached in fields and private houses, till they were seized and cast into prison, where a great number perished. In Scotland, the prisons were soon filled to overflowing, and when they could hold no more, the victims were transported. The savage mountaineers were let loose upon the people, and spared neither age nor sex. Children were torn from their parents, and threatened to be shot. Adults were banished by wholesale, some of the men first losing their ears, and the women being branded on the hand or cheek. The government, in its arbitrary attempt to enforce a religious system, had not profited by the disastrous experiments of preceding reigns.

The tide of intolerance, however, was slowly ebbing. In the struggle against Romanism, Churchmen and Non-conformists rallied together, and made common cause against the common enemy. The danger over, the union of the two abruptly ceased, it is true; but active persecution was no longer possible, and in 1689 the Toleration Act established forever complete freedom of worship.

A large part of the people remained Puritan in life, though they threw aside many of the outer characteristics of that belief. Purged by oppression, purified by patience, Puritanism ended by winning the public esteem. Gradually it approached the world, and the world it. After all, its essential ideal was what the race demanded. Prosperity had developed pride, and power corruption; but in the moment of its defeat, its real victory began. Its fruits compelled admiration. Cromwell's fifty thousand veterans, suddenly disbanded and without resources, brought not a single recruit to the vagabonds and bandits. 'The Royalists

themselves confessed that, in every department of honest industry, the discarded warriors prospered beyond other men, that none was charged with any theft or robbery, that none was heard to ask an alms, and that if a baker, a mason, or a waggoner attracted notice by his diligence and sobriety, he was in all probability one of Oliver's old soldiers.<sup>1</sup>

The return of the Stuarts was followed, among the gayer classes, by an outburst of the most derisive incredulity. From mocking the solemn gait and the nasal twang of the Puritans, they naturally proceeded to ridicule their doctrines. The higher intellectual influences were tending strongly in the same direction among the learned. Hobbes had created in his disciples an indisposition to believe in incorporeal substances, and a similar feeling was produced by the philosophy of Bacon, which had then acquired an immense popularity. From the endless controversies, the social and religious anarchy, of the period; from the cynicism of writers, and the frivolity of courtiers, a new generation was drinking in the spirit of scepticism, of doubt, of free inquiry. 'Four or five in the House of Commons,' said Montesquieu, 'go to mass or to the parliamentary sermon. . . . If any one speaks of religion, everybody begins to laugh. A man happening to say, "I believe this like an article of faith," everybody burst out laughing.'

A sceptical movement shows an alteration in the character of the age, of the same nature as that which now causes the educated majority to regard with indifference disputes which, little more than a century ago, would have inflamed a kingdom. Scepticism and toleration are related as the antecedent and consequent of progress. A profound change was soon effected in the notion of witchcraft. In 1664, two witches were hung, under a sentence of Sir Mathew Hale, who justified it by the affirmations of Scripture and 'the wisdom of all nations'—irresistible reasoning. Three were executed in 1682. But, while in 1660 the belief was common, in 1688 the sense of its improbability was equally general. In Scotland it passed away much more slowly, and, to the last, found its most ardent supporters among the Presbyterian clergy. In 1664, nine women were burned together, and trials were frequent until the close of the century.

<sup>1</sup> Macaulay.

Revolutions had changed completely the position of ecclesiastics. Once they formed the majority of the Upper House, and rivalled in their imperial pomp the greatest of the barons; now they were regarded, on the whole, as a plebeian class. The fact that a man could read, no longer raised a presumption that he was in orders. Laymen had risen who were able to negotiate treaties, and to administer justice. Prelates had ceased to be necessary, or even desirable, in the conduct of civil affairs; and the priestly office, in losing its worldly motives, lost its attraction for the illustrious. Many divines—especially during the domination of the Puritans—attached themselves to households in the relation of menial servants. A cook was considered the most suitable helpmate for a parson. Not one benefice in fifty enabled him to bring up a family comfortably. Often he fed swine or loaded dung-carts to obtain daily bread. Nor, at the Restoration, did the dissenters fare better. Says Baxter, who was one of them:

‘Many hundreds of these, with their wives and children, had neither house nor bread. . . . Their congregations had enough to do, besides a small maintenance, to help them out of prison, or to maintain them there. Though they were as frugal as possible, they could hardly live; some lived on little more than brown bread and water, many had but little more than eight or ten pounds a year to maintain a family, so a piece of flesh has not come to one of their tables in six weeks’ time, their allowance could scarce afford them bread and cheese. One went to plow six days and preached on the Lord’s day. Another was forced to cut tobacco for a livelihood.’

When at length the Church was reinstated, she had suffered a still further loss of her ancient influence. It was observed, with sorrow, that she ‘recovered much of her temporal possessions, but not her spiritual rule.’ Her cause was never again to be identified with political reaction. The London clergy were always spoken of as a class apart; and it was chiefly they who upheld the fame of their profession for learning and eloquence.

In Scotland, on the contrary, the clergy were supreme. Their very names were sacred. To speak disrespectfully of them was a grievous offence; to differ from them was heresy; to pass them without saluting them was a crime. Their instructions were direct from heaven. When they died, candles were mysteriously extinguished, or stars miraculously appeared in the firmament. Fancy with what rapture each precious word was received! Yet a zealous pastor would discourse for two hours; a vigorous one, five or six. On great occasions, several would be present, in

order that, when one was exhausted, he might be succeeded by another. In 1670, from one pulpit in Edinburgh, thirty sermons were delivered weekly. When sacrament was administered, on Wednesday they fasted, with prayers and preaching for more than eight hours; on Saturday, they listened to two or three sermons; on Sunday, to so many that the congregation remained together more than twelve hours; on Monday, to three or four additional ones by way of *thanksgiving*. Still the people never wearied. Has history any parallel to such eagerness and such endurance?

Meanwhile, dissent had multiplied sects, and the Revolution established them,—Anabaptists, Quakers, Enthusiasts, Seekers, Arians, Socinians, Anti-Trinitarians, Deists,—the list is interminable. No danger henceforward that Protestantism would be only a new edition of Catholicism. Divisions are at once the symptoms and the agents of progress. Uniformity of opinion is the airy good of emperors and popes, whose arguments are edicts, inquisitions, and flames.

**Poetry.**—It is true, in general, of nations as of individuals, that as the reflective faculties develop, the imaginative are enfeebled. Memory, judgment, wit, supply their place. The mind, disciplined, retraces its steps. Criticism succeeds invention. But criticism is a science, and, like every other, is constantly tending towards perfection. It was now in a very imperfect state. The age of inspired intuition had passed; the age of agreeable imitation had not arrived; and the ascendancy was left to an inferior school of poetry—a school without the powers of the earlier and without the correctness of a later—a school which, blending bombasts and conceits, yet expressed a phase in the revolution of taste that was to issue in the neatness and finish of well-ordered periods, in the truth of sentiment and the harmony of versification. Its absorbing care was not for the foundation, but for the outer shape. The prevailing immorality infected it. Gallantry held the chief rank. The literature and manners of polite France led the fashion. We have seen the change foreshadowed. We see it in the occasional rhymes of the palace and the college; in the lewd and lawless **Earl of Rochester**, who wrote a satire against Mankind, then an epistle on Nothing, and songs numberless, whose titles cannot be copied. Two or three are still to be



found in the expurgated books of extracts. A stanza or two will be a sufficient revelation of him:

'When, wearied with a world of woe,  
To thy safe bosom I retire,  
Where love and peace and honour flow,  
May I contented there expire.'

And:

'My dear mistress has a heart  
Soft as those kind looks she gave me;  
When, with love's resistless art,  
And her eyes, she did enslave me;  
But her constancy's so weak,  
She's so wild and apt to wander,  
That my jealous heart would break  
Should we live one day asunder.'

An adept in compliments and salutations. So are the others. **Sedley**, a charming talker, sings thus to Chloris:

'My passion with your beauty grew,  
And Cupid at my heart,  
Still as his mother favoured you,  
Threw a new flaming dart.'

And:

'An hundred thousand oaths your fears  
Perhaps would not remove,  
And if I gazed a thousand years,  
I could no deeper love.'

**Dorset**, at sea, on the eve of battle, addresses a song to the ladies:

'To all you Ladies now at land  
We men at sea indite;  
But first would have you understand  
How hard it is to write;  
The Muses now, and Neptune too,  
We must implore to write to you.'

Then for the sake of speaking:

'While you, regardless of our woe,  
Sit careless at a play,—  
Perhaps permit some happier man  
To kiss your hand or flirt your fan.'

And in the conventional language of the drawing-room:

'Our tears we'll send a speedier way,  
The tide shall waft them twice a day.'

There is courtesy here, but a lack of enthusiasm; elegance, but no weight; smoothness, but no depth. It is correct, or nearly so, but external and cold. It is the style, also, of **Waller**, a fashionable wit, in the front rank of worldlings and courtiers. His verses resemble the little events or little sentiments from which they spring:

‘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. . . .  
 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.’

Most of his verses are addressed to a lady whom he had long wooed. When she had ceased to be beautiful, she asked him if he would write others for her, and he replied, as one accustomed to murmur, with a soft voice, commonplaces which he could not be said to think: ‘Yes, madam, when you are as young and as handsome as you were formerly.’ A purely mechanical versifier, he survives mainly on the credit of a single couplet:

‘The soul’s dark cottage, battered and decayed,  
 Lets in new light through chinks that Time hath made.’

Unlike the amorous poets around him, **Denham** has left not one copy of their vapid effusions. In the midst of insincerity, he is sincere, preoccupied by moral motives. His best poem, *Cooper’s Hill*, is a description of natural scenery, blended with the grave reflections which the scene suggests, and which are fundamental to the English mind:

‘My eye, descending from the hill, surveys  
 Where Thames among the wanton valleys strays;  
 Thames, the most loved of all the Ocean’s sons  
 By his old sire, to his embraces runs,  
 Hasting to pay his tribute to the sea,  
 Like mortal life to meet eternity. . . .  
*O could I flow like thee, and make thy stream  
 My great example, as it is my theme!  
 Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull;  
 Strong without rage; without o’erflowing, full. . . .*  
 But his proud head the airy mountain hides  
 Among the clouds; his shoulders and his sides  
 A shady mantle clothes; his curled brows  
 Frown on the gentle stream, which calmly flows,  
 While winds and storms his lofty forehead beat,  
 The common fate of all that’s high or great.’

The reputation of the piece rests almost entirely upon the famous quatrain in italics. As for the rest, there is little adornment, less ardency, nothing to warm, or melt, or fascinate. It is argument in stately and regular verse, but, as such, is no ordinary perform-

ance, and is nearly the first instance of manly and rhythmical couplets.

It remains for **Dryden** to give to the critical spirit vigorous form, and for Pope to add to it perfection of artifice. Meanwhile, out of season, in penury, pain, and blindness, Milton produces, as we have seen, the greatest of modern epics, himself a benighted traveller on a dreary road. Near him, in sympathy with him, a kind of satellite, is another Puritan, **Marvell**, very unequal, but often melodious, graceful, and impressive. Thus after a badinage of courtesy and compliment to his 'coy mistress,' he adds:

'But at my back I always hear  
Time's winged chariot hurrying near;  
And yonder all before us lie  
Deserts of vast eternity.  
Thy beauty shall no more be found;  
Nor in thy marble vault shall sound  
My echoing song.'

Unhappily, in common with the Cowleyan sect of writers, he is eminently afflicted with the gift of ingenuity:

'Maria such and so doth hush  
The world, and through the evening rush,  
No new-born comet such a train  
Draws through the sky, nor star new slain.  
For straight those giddy rockets fail  
Which from the putrid earth exhale,  
But by her flames in heaven tried  
Nature is wholly vitrified.'

This is a play of the intellectual fancy, in which an extravagant use of words aims to effect the results that living feeling had heretofore produced. The stamp of the age — critical rather than emotional — is visible in his natural description, where he is most animated:

'Reform the errors of the spring:  
Make that the tulips may have share  
Of sweetness, seeing they are fair;  
And roses of their thorns disarm:  
But most procure  
*That violets may a longer age endure.*

But oh, young beauty of the woods,  
Whom nature courts with fruits and flowers,  
Gather the flowers, but spare the buds;  
Lest Flora, angry at thy crime  
To kill her infants in their prime,  
Should quickly make the example yours;  
And, ere we see,  
Nip in the blossom all our hopes in thee.'

And, in the *Garden*:

‘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 delightful solitude.  
 No white nor red was ever seen  
 So amorous as this lovely green.’

This way of treating Nature suits the time,—merely to picture what the eye sees and the ear hears, to produce the forms and colors of things, the movements and the sounds which pervade them. It is the calm, unexcited manner of an inventory. For contrast, take an instance from Keats, when once more, across the next century, it is given to see into the life of things, and seeing, to make us share his insight:

‘Upon a tranced summer night  
 Those green-robed senators of mighty woods,  
 Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,  
 Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,  
 Save from one gradual solitary gust  
 Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,  
 As if the ebbing air had but one wave.’

No eye can see deeply into the meaning of Nature, nor hence interpret her truly, unless it has also looked deeply into the moral heart, and sadly, sweetly, into the mystery of human life and human history.

**Butler's** *Hudibras* exhibits, in buffoonery, the style which Donne and Cowley practiced in its more serious form. Sir Hudibras is a Presbyterian knight who, with his squire, goes forth to redress all wrongs, and correct all abuses. He is beaten, set in stocks, pelted with rotten eggs, a ridiculous object from first to last, but serenely unconscious that he is laughed at. The author desires to make sport for a winning side, and the Puritans are caricatured, the terrible saints,—

‘Who built their faith upon  
 The holy text of pike and gun,  
 Decide all controversies by  
 Infallible artillery,  
 And prove their doctrine orthodox  
 By apostolic blows and knocks.’

We can imagine that the general hatred secured a hearing. No poem in fact rose at once to greater reputation. But fashions

change; what yesterday was apt may be out of date to-morrow. *Hudibras* at present attracts few readers. There is in it no action, no nature; much triviality, much filth. It is pitiless, splenetic, exaggerated, discursive. Besides, wit, continued long, fatigues. Incessant surprises become wearisome. Enough remains, however, to render it notable. It is a very hoard of robust English and sententious dicta, many of which are like coins effaced and smoothed by currency. Here are some of the less familiar:

‘He could raise scruples dark and nice,  
And after solve ‘em in a trice.’

‘For most men carry things so even  
Between this world and hell and heaven,  
Without the least offense to either  
They freely deal in all together.’

‘He that ruus may fight again,  
Which he can never do that’s slain.’

‘Fools are known by looking wise,  
As men tell woodcocks by their eyes.’

**Drama.**—When the Restoration reopened the theatres, they were invested with the externals of French polish—movable decorations, music, lights, comfort. Pepys writes in his diary, January, 1661: ‘To the theatre, where was acted *Beggar’s Bush*, it being very well done, and here, the first time that ever I saw women come upon the stage.’ In the reaction from Puritan proscription, they were thronged. The public, we have seen, was transformed. The animal, broken loose, abandons itself to excess, and the stage imitates the orgie. Comedy, dropping its serious and tender tones, wallows in vulgarity and lewdness. The new characters, gross and vicious, are in the taste of the day. **Dryden**, who still mingles the tragic and humorous, adopts the fashion of society, though not heartily. One of his gallants says: ‘I am none of those unreasonable lovers that propose to themselves the loving to eternity. A month is commonly my stint.’ Another: ‘We love to get our mistresses, and purr over them, as cats do over mice, and let them get a little away; and all the pleasure is to pat them back again.’ And a third:

‘Is not love love without a priest and altars?  
The temples are inanimate, and know not  
What vows are made in them: the priest stands ready  
For his hire, and cares not what hearts he couples.’



**Etherege** is the first to depict manners only—the careless pleasures of the human mass. He defines a gentleman to be one who ‘ought to dress well, dance well, fence well, have a talent for love-letters, a pleasant voice in a room, to be always very amorous, sufficiently discreet, but not too constant.’ But the hero of the libertine outburst is **Wycherley**. His best play is the *Country Wife*. Is it possible that king and nobles, beaux and belles, the *elite* of London, could come and listen to such scenes? What may we extract, that is not at war with beauty and delicacy? Horner, who has returned from France with the cavaliers, is a vile rogue, to whom a lady says: ‘Drink, thou representative of a husband. Damn a husband.’ Another avows: ‘Our virtue is like the statesman’s religion, the quaker’s word, the gamester’s oath, the great man’s honour; but to cheat those that trust us.’ To a third he declares: ‘I cannot be your husband, dearest, since you are married.’ And she replies: ‘O, would you make me believe that? Don’t I see every day at London here, women leave their first husbands, and go and live with other men as their wives? pish, pshaw!’ Viola, in *Plain Dealer*, makes an appointment to meet a friend, but unexpectedly meets her husband, who comes in from a journey; kisses him, and says, aside: ‘Ha! my husband returned! and have I been throwing away so many kind kisses on my husband, and wronged my lover already?’ She sends him off on an improvised errand, and when he is gone, she cries exultingly: ‘Go, husband, and come up, friend: just the buckets in the well; the absence of one brings the other. But I hope, like them too, they will not meet in the way, jostle, and clash together.’ She had already tired of another, defied him, declaring herself to be married. To his question, ‘Did you love him too?’ she had answered: ‘Most passionately; nay, love him now, though I have married him.’ She refused to surrender the diamonds he had given her, and justified the deception she had practised: ‘’Twas his money: I had a real passion for that. Yet I loved not that so well, as for it to take him; for as soon as I had his money I hastened his departure like a wife, who, when she has made the most of a dying husband’s breath, pulls away his pillow.’ If this is the Zenith, judge of the Nadir! Need we analyze these dramas—recount their plots? Their chief merit is the liveliness of their dialogue, and their only originality

is their profligacy. Nothing to raise, console, or purify. In the ten selected by Mr. Hunt from the three hundred and eight *Maxims and Reflections*, written by Wycherley in old age, we find but two which seem to us to be in any degree novel, just, and wise:

*'The silence of a wise man is more wrong to mankind than the slanderer's speech.'*

'Our hopes, though they never happen, yet are some kind of happiness; as trees, whilst they are still growing, please in the prospect, though they bear no fruit.'

**Congreve** is perhaps less natural, but more scholarly, more highly bred, more brilliant, more urbane. Yet French authors are his masters, and experience supplies the colors of his portraits, which display both the innate baseness of primitive instincts, and the refined corruption of worldly habits. In *Love for Love*, Miss Prue is left in the room with a dolt of a sailor, who wants to make love:

'Come, mistress, will you please to sit down? for an you stand astern a that'n, we shall never grapple together. Come, I'll haul a chair; there, an you please to sit I'll sit by you.

*Prue.* You need not sit so near one; if you have anything to say I can hear you farther off; I an't deaf.

*Ben.* Why, that's true, as you say; nor I an't dumb; I can be heard as far as another; I'll heave off to please you. . . .

*Prue.* I don't know what to say to you, nor I don't care to speak with you at all. . . .

*Ben.* Mayhap you may be shamefaced? some maidens, tho' they love a man well enough, yet they don't care to tell'n so to's face: if that's the case, why silence gives consent.

*Prue.* But I am sure it is not so, for I'll speak sooner than you should believe that; and I'll speak truth, though one should always tell a lie to a man; and I don't care, let my father do what he will; I'm too big to be whipped, so I'll tell you plainly I don't like you, nor love you at all, nor never will, that's more: so there's your answer for you; and don't trouble me no more, you ugly thing!

*Ben.* Flesh! who are you? You heard t'other handsome young woman speak civilly to me of her own accord: whatever you think of yourself, gad I don't think you are any more to compare to her than a can of small beer to a bowl of punch.

*Prue.* Well, and there's a handsome gentleman, and a fine gentleman, and a sweet gentleman, that was here, that loves me, and I love him; and if he sees you speak to me any more he'll thrash your jacket for you, he will, you great sea-calf!

*Ben.* What, do you mean that fair-weather spark that was here just now? will he thrash my jacket?—let'n—let'n. But an he comes near me, mayhap I may giv'n a salt eel for's supper, for all that. What does father mean to leave me alone with such a dirty dowdy? Sea-calf! I an't calf enough to lick your chalked face, you cheese-curd you.'

The sweet and handsome man is Tattle, who instructs her, and finds her an apt scholar:

'You must let me speak, miss, you must not speak first; I must ask you questions, and you must answer.

*Prue.* What, is it like the catechism? Come then, ask me.

*Tattle.* D'ye think you can love me?

*Prue.* Ycs.

*Tattle.* Pooh! pox! you must not say yes already; I shan't care a farthing for you then in a twinkling.

*Prue.* What must I say then?

*Tattle.* Why, you must say no, or you believe not, or you can't tell.

*Prue.* Why, must I tell a lie then?

*Tattle.* Yes, if you'd be well-bred; all well-bred persons lie; besides, you are a woman, you must never speak what you think: your words must contradict your thoughts; but your actions may contradict your words. So, when I ask you, if you can love me, you must say no, but you must love me too. If I tell you you are handsome, you must deny it and say I flatter you. But you must think yourself more charming than I speak you: and like me for the beauty which I say you have, as much as if I had it myself. If I ask you to kiss me you must be angry, but you must not refuse me.

*Prue.* O Lord, I swear this is pure! I like it better than our old-fashioned country way of speaking one's mind; and must not you lie too?

*Tattle.* Hum! Yes; but you must believe I speak truth.

*Prue.* O Gemini! well, I always had a great mind to tell lies; but they frightened me and said it was a sin.

*Tattle.* Well, my pretty creature; will you make me happy by giving me a kiss?

*Prue.* No, indeed; I'm angry at you.

[*Runs and kisses him.*]

*Tattle.* Hold, hold, that's pretty well; but you should not have given it me, but have suffered me to have taken it.

*Prue.* Well, we'll do't again.

*Tattle.* With all my heart. Now then my little angel!

[*Kisses her.*]

*Prue.* Pish!

*Tattle.* That's right — again, my charmer!

[*Kisses again.*]

*Prue.* O fy! nay, now I can't abide you.

*Tattle.* Admirable! that was as well as if you had been born and bred in Covent-garden.'

These are the natural instincts of the town. If we would see them transformed into systematic vices, we must look to the *Way of the World*, the mirror of fine artificial society. The heroes are accomplished scoundrels, the heroines are unchecked gossips, who, in their most amiable aspects, veil the animal under genteel airs. Fainall, who has been lavish of his morals, is asked how he is 'affected' towards his wife, and answers:

'Why, faith, I'm thinking of it. Let me see; I am married already, so that's over: my wife has played the jade with me; well, that's over too. I never loved her, or if I had, why that would have been over too by this time: jealous of her I cannot be, for I am certain; so there's an end of jealousy: weary of her I am, and shall be; no, there's no end of that; no, no, that were too much to hope.'

She, whose youth has not rusted in her possession, hates him; complains to Mirabell, a trained expert, who appeases her, and gives her advice:

'You should have just so much disgust for your husband, as may be sufficient to make you relish your lover.'

Lady Wishfort, expecting Sir Rowland, speaks in the style of high life:

'But art thou sure Sir Rowland will not fail to come? or will he not fail when he does come? Will he be importunate, Foible, and push? For if he should not be impor-

tunate, I shall never break decorums: I shall die with confusion, if I am forced to advance. Oh no, I can never advance! I shall swoon if he should expect advances. No, I hope Sir Rowland is better bred than to put a lady to the necessity of breaking her forms. I won't be too coy, neither. I won't give him despair—but a little disdain is not amiss; a little scorn is alluring.'

*Foible.* A little scorn becomes your ladyship.

*Lady Wish.* Yes, but tenderness become me best; a sort of dyingness; you see that picture has a sort of a—ha, Foible! a swimmingness in the eye; yes, I'll look so; my niece affects it; but she wants features. Is Sir Rowland handsome? Let my toilet be removed; I'll dress above. I'll receive Sir Rowland here. Is he handsome? Don't answer me. I won't know; I'll be surprised, I'll be taken by surprise.'

But the perfect model of the brilliant world is Mrs. Millamant, haughty and wanton, witty and scornful, with nothing to hope or to fear, superior to all circumstances, caprice her only law:

*Mrs. Fainall.* You were dressed before I came abroad.

*Mrs. Millamant.* Ay, that's true. O but then I had; Mincing, what had I? why was I so long?

*Mincing.* O mem, your laship stayed to peruse a packet of letters.

*Mrs. Mil.* O ay, letters; I had letters; I am persecuted with letters; I hate letters. Nobody knows how to write letters, and yet one has 'em, one does not know why. They serve one to pin up one's hair.'

Lovers are her creatures, and conquests give her no surprise:

'Beauty the lover's gift! Lord, what is a lover, that it can give? Why, one makes lovers as fast as one pleases, and they live as long as one pleases, and they die as soon as one pleases, and then, if one pleases, one makes more.'

Her airs give way at last to tenderness (?), and she enters into matrimony, on conditions:

'I'll never marry, unless I am first made sure of my will and pleasure. . . . My dear liberty, shall I leave thee! my faithful solitude, my darling contemplation, must I bid you then adieu? Ay-h adieu; my morning thoughts, agreeable wakings, indolent slumbers, all ye *douceurs*, ye *sommeils du matin*, adieu?; I can't do 't, 'tis more than impossible; positively, Mirabell, I'll lie abed in a morning as long as I please.

*Mir.* Then I'll get up in a morning as early as I please.

*Mil.* Ah! idle creature, get up when you will; and d'ye hear, I won't be called names after I'm married; positively I won't be called names.

*Mir.* Names!

*Mil.* Ay, as wife, spouse, my dear, joy, jewel, love, sweetheart, and the rest of that nauseous cant, in which men and their wives are so fulsomely familiar; I shall never bear that; good Mirabell, don't let us be familiar or fond, nor kiss before folks, like my lady Fadler, and Sir Francis; nor go to Hyde-park together the first Sunday in a new chariot, to provoke eyes and whispers, and then never to be seen together again; as if we were proud of one another the first week, and ashamed of one another ever after. Let us never visit together, nor go to a play together; but let us be very strange and well-bred: let us be as strange as if we had been married a great while; and as well-bred as if we were not married at all.'

These demands are reasonable—in fact, trifling, compared with others:

'To write and receive letters without interrogatories. . . . Come to dinner when I please; dine in my dressing room . . . without giving a reason; . . . to be sole empress

of my tea-table, which you must never presume to approach without first asking leave. And lastly, wherever I am, you shall always knock at the door before you come in. These articles subscribed, if I continue to endure you a little longer, I may by degrees dwindle into a wife.'

This is the carnival of fashion—its finery, its chatter, its charming repartee, its foolish affectation, the drapery of the world. You are amused, but what thought do you carry away? Yet sensible and striking passages are not wanting, some of which have become proverbial, and whose origin is unknown to many who quote them:

'Music hath charms to soothe a savage breast,  
To soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak.'

'Heaven has no rage, like love to hatred turn'd,  
Nor hell a fury, like a woman scorned.'

'For blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds;  
And though a late, a sure reward succeeds.'

'If there's delight in love, 'tis when I see  
That heart, which others bleed for, bleed for me.'

'Reason, the power  
To guess at right and wrong, the twinkling lamp  
Of wandering life, that winks and wakes by turns,  
Fooling the follower, betwixt shade and shining.'

**Vanbrugh** is cheerful, confident, robust, easy, natural, various, and, of course, plain-spoken—an impudent dog. Sottishness is still respectable, rakes still scour the streets, ladies are still 'carried off swooning with love from ante-chambers.' Squire Sullen, in *Provoked Wife*, gets drunk, rolls about the room, like a sick passenger in a storm, howls out, 'Damn morality! and damn the watch! and let the constable be married!' Sir John Brute declares there is but one thing he loathes on earth beyond his wife,—'that's fighting.' She would please him, but is tauntingly told that is not her talent. She reflects:

'Perhaps a good part of what I suffer from my husband may be a judgment upon me for my cruelty to my lover. Lord, with what pleasure could I indulge that thought, were there but a possibility of finding arguments to make it good! And how do I know but there may? Let me see. What opposes? My matrimonial vow. Why, what did I vow? I think I promised to be true to my husband. Well; and he promised to be kind to me. But he han't kept his word. Why, then, I am absolved from mine.'

The argument proceeds, but we have to stop. Listen to Lord Toppington in *Relapse*. He is a newly-created pillar of state:

'My life, madam, is a perpetual stream of pleasure, that glides through such a variety of entertainments, I believe the wisest of our ancestors never had the least conception of any of 'em. I rise, madam, about ten a-clack. I don't rise sooner, because it is the worst thing in the world for the complexion; nat that I pretend to be a beau; but a man



must endeavor to looke wholesome, lest he make so nauseous a figure in the side-bax, the ladies should be compelled to turn their eyes upon the play. So at ten a-clack, I say, I rise. Naw, if I find it a good day, I resolve to take a turn in the park, and see the fine women; so huddle on my clothes, and get dressed by one. If it be nasty weather, I take a turn in the chocolate-hanse: where as you walk, madam, you have the prettiest prospect in the world; you have looking-glasses all round you.'

He is to be married to a country heiress, 'a plump partridge,' who has never seen him. His brother, simulating him, arrives instead. Miss Hoyden is overjoyed:

*Nurse.* Oh, but you must have a care of being too fond; for men now-a-days hate a woman that loves 'em.

*Hoyd.* Love him! why do you think I love him, nurse? ecod I would not care if he were hanged, so I were but once married to him! No; that which pleases me, is to think what work I'll make when I get to London; for when I am a wife and a lady both, nurse, ecod I'll flannt it with the best of 'em.'

The true lord comes in at the critical moment, as they think, the imposture is discovered, and her father apologizes:

'My lord, I'm struck dumb, I can only beg pardon by signs; but if a sacrifice will appease you, you shall have it. Here, pursue this Tartar, bring him back. Away, I say! A dog! Oons, I'll cut off his ears and his tail, I'll draw out all his teeth, pull his skin over his head—and—and what shall I do more?'

Toppington marries her, learns that he has married his brother's wife, but covers his aching heart with a serene countenance:

'Now, for my part, I think the wisest thing a man can do with an aching heart is to put on a serene countenance; for a philosophical air is the most becoming thing in the world to the face of a person of quality. I will therefore bear my disgrace like a great man, and let the people see I am above an affront. [*Aloud*] Dear Tain, since things are thus fallen out, prithee give me leave to wish thee jay; I do it *de bon cœur*, strike me dumb! You have married a woman beautiful in her person, charming in her airs, prudent in her conduct, constant in her inclinations, and of a nice morality, split my windpipe!'

**Farquhar** is an artist in stage effect, an Irishman, with the Irish sportiveness, and an agreeable diversity. His best comedy is the *Beaux' Stratagem*. Boniface is still a favorite, one of the extinct race of landlords. The London coach suddenly appears: 'Chamberlain! maid! Cherry! daughter Cherry! all asleep? all dead?'—'Here, here! why d'ye bawl so, father? d'ye think we have no ears?' She deserves to have none, he thiinks, but she redeems herself by a cheering welcome to the guests who are shown to their chambers. Thereupon enter Aimwell and Archer, gentlemen of broken fortunes, travelling, the one as master, the other as servant:

*Bon.* This way, this way gentlemen!

*Aim.* [*To Archer.*] Set down the things; go to the stable, and see my horses well rubbed.

*Arch.* I shall, sir.

*Aim.* You're my landlord, I suppose?

*Bon.* Yes, sir, I'm old Will Boniface, pretty well known upon this road, as the saying is.

*Aim.* O Mr. Boniface, your servant!

*Bon.* O sir! What will your honour please to drink, as the saying is?

*Aim.* I have heard your town of Litchfield much famed for ale; I think I'll taste that.

*Bon.* Sir, I have now in my cellar ten tun of the best ale in Staffordshire; 'tis smooth as oil, sweet as milk, clear as amber, and strong as brandy; and will be just fourteen year old the fifth day of next March, old style.

*Aim.* You're very exact, I find, in the age of your ale.

*Bon.* As punctual, sir, as I am in the age of my children. I'll show you such ale! Here, tapster, broach number 1706, as the saying is. Sir, you shall taste my *Anno Domini*. I have lived in Litchfield, man and boy, above eight-and-fifty years, and, I believe, have not consumed eight-and-fifty ounces of meat.

*Aim.* At a meal, you mean, if one may guess your sense by your bulk.

*Bon.* Not in my life, sir; I have fed purely upon ale; I have eat my ale, drunk my ale, and I always sleep upon ale.

*Enter Tapster with a bottle and glass, and exit.*

Now, sir, you shall see! [*Pours out a glass.*] Your worship's health! Ha! delicious, delicious! fancy it Burgundy, only fancy it, and 'tis worth ten shillings a quart.

*Aim.* [*Drinks.*] 'Tis confounded strong!

*Bon.* Strong! it must be so, or how should we be so that drink it?

*Aim.* And have you lived so long upon this ale, landlord?

*Bon.* Eight-and-fifty years, upon my credit, sir; but it killed my wife, poor woman, as the saying is.

*Aim.* How came that to pass?

*Bon.* I don't know how, sir; she would not let the ale take its natural course, sir; she was for qualifying it every now and then with a dram, as the saying is; . . . the fourth carried her off. But she's happy, and I'm contented, as the saying is.'

One or two higher spirits reach the passions of the other age,—**Dryden** in tragedy; and by his side a younger contemporary, **Otway**, in whose *Venice Preserved* we encounter the sombre imagination of Webster, Ford, and Shakespeare. Jaffier, a youth of merit and promise, but the sport of chance, rescues from a watery grave a senator's daughter, a genuine woman, who from that hour loves him; three years have passed since their vows were plighted; she is his wife, against the wishes of her proud sire; misfortune comes; he has just now left the presence of the offended aristocrat with his curse and his heart is heavy between love and ruin:

'O Belvidera! Oh! she is my wife—  
And we will bear our wayward fate together,  
But ne'er know comfort more.'

She who has been his dependent and ornament in happier hours, proves his stay and solace in calamity:

'My lord, my love, my refuge!  
Happy my eyes when they behold thy face!  
My heavy heart will leave its doleful beating  
At sight of thee, and bound with sprightly joys.  
Oh, smile as when our loves were in their spring,  
And cheer my fainting soul!

- Jaf.* As when our loves  
Were in their spring! Has, then, my fortune changed thee?  
Art thou not, Belvidera, still the same,  
Kind, good, and tender, as my arms first found thee?  
If thou art altered, where shall I have harbour?  
Where ease my loaded heart? Oh! where complain?
- Bel.* Does this appear like change, or love decaying,  
When thus I throw myself into thy bosom,  
With all the resolution of strong truth?  
I joy more in thee  
Than did thy mother, when she hugged thee first,  
And blessed the gods for all her travail past.
- Jaf.* Can there in woman be such glorious faith?  
Sure, all ill stories of thy sex are false!  
*Oh, woman, lovely woman! Nature made thee  
To temper man; we had been brutes without you!  
Angels are painted fair, to look like you.'*

These are but rare notes. For the most part, he moves, like the rest, in the murky waters of the great current. Like them, he is obscene; and from all, we have found it difficult to extract, without revolting decorum, something to suggest the new rhetoric, the sentiments and maxims of polite society, and the abyss from which that society and our literature have since ascended. Even here there were tokens of a more serious and orderly life, signs of a reaction in literary feelings and moral habits. A great reformer arose to accelerate the revolution, Jeremy Collier, a heroic Anglican, who threw down the gauntlet to the champions of the stage, and was victorious.

**Prose.**—The Restoration may be taken as the era of the formation of our present style. Imagination was tempered, transports diminished, judgment corrected itself, artifice began. Among the most agreeable specimens of the new refinement in form are the conversations of the drama. They foreshadow the *Spectator*. The easy and flowing manner of Cowley is continued by the polished **Temple**, a man of the world, a lover of elegance, who, if he assuages grief, must do it with dignity and facility:

‘If you look about you, and consider the lives of others as well as your own; if you think how few are born with honor, and how many die without name or children; how little beauty we see, and how few friends we hear of; how many diseases, and how much poverty there is in the world; you will fall down upon your knees, and instead of repining at one affliction, will admire so many blessings which you have received from the hand of God.’

Observe how the following sentence glides along:

‘I have indeed heard of wondrous pretensions and visions of men possessed with notions of the strange advancement of learning and science, on foot in this age, and the

progress they are like to make in the next; as the universal medicine, which will certainly cure all that have it; the philosopher's stone, which will be found out by men that care not for riches; the transfusion of young blood into old men's veins, which will make them as gamesome as the lambs from which 'tis to be derived; a universal language, which may serve all men's turn when they have forgot their own; the knowledge of one another's thoughts without the grievous trouble of speaking; the art of flying, till a man happens to fall down and break his neck; double-bottomed ships, whereof none can ever be cast away besides the first that was made; the admirable virtues of that noble and necessary juice called spittle, which will come to be sold, and very cheap, in the apothecaries' shops; discoveries of new worlds in the planets, and voyages between this and that in the moon to be made as frequently as between York and London.'

Smoothness was the distinguishing quality of the man, as it is of his manner, which sometimes relaxes into prolixity or remissness. **Dryden** has sounder taste, as well as more vigor. The rest are inferior in point of ornament, but, for the most part, have the same fundamental character—ratiocination. **Hobbes** is surprisingly dry, idiomatic, concise, strong. The most celebrated sermons are instruments of edification rather than models of elegance. Barrow is geometrical, revises and re-revises, then revises again, dividing and subdividing, having only one desire—to explain and fully prove what he has to say. Tillotson has no rapture, no vehemence, no warmth. He wishes to convince, nothing more. South, an apostate Puritan, is colloquial, energetic; more popular than these, because he is more anecdotic, abrupt, pointed,—vulgar, having the plain-dealing and coarseness which belong to the stage, and which his insincerity permits.

These sermons, once so famous, are now hardly read at all. They are outlived, in a far humbler sphere, by the little work of a London linen-draper, **Izaak Walton**, whose *Complete Angler* has what they have not,—the touch of nature which makes the whole world kin. Its natural description, as also its lively dialogue, has seldom been surpassed. A single extract can hardly suggest its abundance of quaint but wise thoughts, its redolence of wild flowers and sweet country air:

'Well, scholar, having now taught you to paint your rod, and we having still a mile to Tottenham High Cross, I will, as we walk towards it in the cool shade of this honey-suckle-hedge, mention to you some of the thoughts and joys that have possessed my soul since we two met together. And these thoughts shall be told you, that you also may join with me in thankfulness to the Giver of every good and perfect gift for our happiness. . . . We have been freed from these and all those many other miseries that threaten human nature: let us therefore rejoice and be thankful. Nay, which is a far greater mercy, we are free from the unsupportable burden of an accusing, tormenting conscience—a misery that none can bear: and therefore let us praise Him for His preventing grace, and say, Every misery that I miss is a new mercy. Nay, let me tell you, there may be many that have forty times our estates, that would give the greatest part

of it to be healthful and cheerful like us, who, with the expense of a little money, have eat and drunk, and laughed, and angled, and sung, and slept securely; and rose next day, and cast away care, and sung, and laughed, and angled again, which are blessings rich men cannot purchase with all their money. Let me tell you, scholar, I have a rich neighbour that is always so busy that he has no leisure to laugh; the whole business of his life is to get money, and more money, that he may still get more and more money; he is still drudging on, and says that Solomon says, "The hand of the diligent maketh rich"; and it is true indeed: but he considers not that it is not in the power of riches to make a man happy: for it was wisely said by a man of great observation, "that there be as many miseries beyond riches as on this side of them." And yet God deliver us from pinching poverty, and grant that, having a competency, we may be content and thankful! Let us not repine, or so much as think the gifts of God unequally dealt, if we see another abound with riches, when, as God knows, the cares that are the keys that keep those riches hang often so heavily at the rich man's girdle, that they clog him with weary days and restless nights, even when others sleep quietly. We see but the outside of the rich man's happiness; few consider him to be like the silkworm, that, when she seems to play, is at the very same time spinning her own bowels, and consuming herself; and this many rich men do, loading themselves with corroding, to keep what they have probably unconscionably got. Let us therefore be thankful for health and competence, and, above all, for a quiet conscience.

Let me tell you, scholar, that Diogenes walked one day, with his friend, to see a country fair, where he saw ribbons, and looking-glasses, and nut-crackers, and fiddles, and hobby-horses, and many other gimcracks; and having observed them, and all the other finnimbruns that make a complete country fair, he said to his friend: "Lord, how many things are there in this world of which Diogenes hath no need!"

**Evelyn**, an amiable cavalier, begins the class of gossiping memoirs, so useful in giving color to history. He writes a *Diary*, with the tone of an educated and reflecting observer. Here is a picture of the court of Charles II:

'I can never forget the inexpressible luxury and profaneness, gaming, and all dissoluteness, and as it were total forgetfulness of God—it being Sunday evening—which this day se'ennight I was witness of,—the king sitting and toying with his concubines, Portsmouth, Cleveland, and Mazarin, etc.; a French boy singing love-songs in that glorious gallery, whilst about twenty of the great courtiers and other dissolute persons were at basset round a large table, a bank of at least £2000 in gold before them, upon which two gentlemen who were with me made reflections with astonishment. Six days after, all was in the dust.'

And a sketch of the Great Fire:

'2d Sept.—This fatal night, about ten, began the deplorable fire near Fish Street, London.

3d Sept.—I had public prayers at home. The fire continuing after dinner, I took a coach with my wife and son, and went to the Bankside in Southwark, where we beheld that dismal spectacle, the whole city in dreadful flames near the water side; all the houses from the bridge, all Thames street, and upwards towards Cheapside, were now consumed; and so returned exceedingly astonished what would become of the rest. . . . The conflagration was so universal and the people so astonished, that from the beginning, feeling I know not what despondency or fate, they hardly stirred to quench it, so that there was nothing heard nor seen but crying out and lamentation, running about like distracted creatures, without at all attempting even to save their goods, such a strange consternation there was upon them, and as it burned in breadth and length, the churches, public halls, exchange, hospital, monuments and ornaments, leaping after a prodigious manner from house to house, and street to street, at great distances one from the other. For the heat, with a long set of fair and warm weather, had even ignited the



air, and prepared the materials to conceive the fire which devoured after an incredible manner, houses, furniture, and everything. Here we saw the Thames covered with goods floating, all the barges and boats laden with what some had time and courage to save, as, on the other side, the carrying out to the fields, which for many miles were strewn with movables of all sorts, and tents erecting to shelter both people and what goods they could get away. O, the miserable and calamitous spectacle! such as haply the world has not seen since the foundation of it, nor can be out-done till the universal conflagration thereof. All the sky was of a fiery aspect, like the top of a burning oven, and the light seen above forty miles round about for many nights. God grant that mine eyes may never again behold the like; who ever saw above 10,000 houses all in one flame? The noise and crackling and thunder of the impetuous flames; the shrieking of women and children, the hurry of people, the fall of towers, houses and churches, was like a hideous storm, and the air all about so hot and inflamed that at the last one was not able to approach it, so that they were forced to stand still and let it burn on, which they did for near ten miles in length and one in breadth. The clouds of smoke also were dismal, and reached upon computation near fifty miles in length. . . . London was, but is no more.\*

Readers who take an interest in the progress of civilization, will be more grateful to the garrulous old **Pepys** for his journal, than to professed historians for the military involutions and political intrigues that fill some of their pages. His memoranda, recorded solely for his own eye, include almost every phase of public and social life. Thus:

'*Aug. 19.*— . . . Home to dinner, where my wife had on her new petticoat that she bought yesterday, which indeed is a very fine cloth and a fine lace; but that being of a light colour, and the lace all silver, it makes no great show.'

'*Nov. 29.*—*Lord's Day.*—This morning I put on my best black cloth suit, trimmed with scarlet ribbons, very neat, with my cloak lined with velvet, and a new beaver, which altogether is very noble, with my black knit silk cannons<sup>1</sup> I bought a month ago.'

'*Dec. 21.*—To Shoe Lane to see a cock-fight at a new pit there, a spot I never was at in my life; but, Lord! to see the strange variety of people, from parliament men, to the poorest 'prentices, bakers, brewers, butchers, draymen and what not, and all these fellows one with another cursing and betting. I soon had enough of it.'

#### Mr. Pepys at divine service:

'*May 26, 1667.*—My wife and I to church, where several strangers of good condition came to our pew. After dinner, I by water alone to Westminster to the parish church, and there did entertain myself with my perspective glass up and down the church, by which I had the great pleasure of seeing and gazing at a great many very fine women; and what with that, and sleeping, I passed away the time till sermon was done. . . .

'*Aug. 18.*— . . . I walked towards Whitehall, but, being wearied, turned into St. Dunstan's Church, where I heard an able sermon of the minister of the place; and stood by a pretty modest maid, whom I did labour to take by the hand; but she would not, but got further and further from me; and, at last, I could perceive her to take pins out of her pocket to prick me if I should touch her again—which, seeing, I did forbear, and was glad I did spy her design. And then I fell to gaze upon another pretty maid, in a pew close to me, and she on me; and I did go about to take her by the hand, which she suffered a little and then withdrew. So the sermon ended.'

#### Tries to admire *Hudibras*:

'*Nov. 28.*—To Paul's Church-yard, and there looked upon the second part of *Hudibras*, which I buy not, but borrow to read, to see if it be as good as the first, which the world

<sup>1</sup> Ornamental tops to silk stockings.

cried so mightily up, though it hath not a good liking in me, though I had tried by twice or three times reading to bring myself to think it witty.'

### At the theatre:

'October 5.—To King's house; and there, going in, met with Knipp, and she took us up into the tiring-rooms: and to the woman's shift, where Nell was dressing herself, and was all unready, and is very pretty, prettier than I thought. And into the scene-room, and there sat down, and she gave us fruit: and here I read the questions to Knipp, while she answered me through all her part of *Flora Figarys*, which was acted to-day. But, Lord! to see how they're both painted would make a man mad, and did make me loath them; and what base company of men comes among them, and how lowly they talk!'

### Makes a great speech at the Bar of the House:

'March 5, 1668.—All my fellow-officers, and all the world that was within hearing, did congratulate me, and cry up my speech as the best thing they ever heard. . . . My Lord Barkeley did cry me up for what they had heard of it; and others, Parliament-men there, about the King, did say that they never heard such a speech in their lives delivered in that manner. . . . Everybody that saw me almost came to me, as Joseph Williamson and others, with such eulogies as cannot be expressed. From thence I went to Westminster Hall, where I met Mr. G. Montagu, who came to me and kissed me, and told me that he had often heretofore kissed my hands, but now he would kiss my lips; protesting that I was another Cicero, and said, all the world said the same of me.'

This, it is true, is not literature, if we insist on finish, imagery, or sentiment; but we may accept it on other ground. How far above price were so minute and living a picture of the age of Bede, or of earlier and later ages that appear only in the haze of general descriptions, dates, numbers, and results!

**Baxter**, an eminent dissenter, a great sufferer, yet a voluminous writer, and an indefatigable pastor, is the author of a well-known manual of devotion,—*The Saint's Everlasting Rest*. It is like the Puritan—fervent, masculine, solid, direct, unadorned, unpolished. Rarely has a book, in its day, aided so many souls to rise in spiritual flights, or to keep the heights which they were competent to gain. However, Milton and Bunyan excepted—the glory of Puritanism is not in its literary remains, but in its moral results. Only once, in this period, does it attain eloquence, and beauty, and then by accident, in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the work of an inspired tinker, a birth of passionate feeling in a time of self-conscious art.

**History**.—Turning to the historical field, we find several industrious collectors of materials, the most prominent of whom are Dugdale, Rymer, and Wood. Fuller's well-known *Worthies* contains sketches of about eighteen hundred individuals. Of compositions original, systematic, and dispassionate, there is a

complete dearth. The most deserving are **Clarendon's** *Great Rebellion*, **Burnet's** *Own Times*, and his *Reformation*. The first, a Royalist, is a professed apologist of one side. His style, often prolix, is on the whole manly; with sometimes a majesty and beauty hitherto unknown. The chief merit of the second is liveliness and perspicuity. His style, though careless and familiar, partakes fairly of the improvements of his time.

The advancing spirit of scepticism was purging history of its falsehoods. We have traced its progress from poetic narration; and ere long we shall see it pass into philosophical interpretation, look beneath the surface of events for the springs of action, search under facts for principles, becoming more humane and democratic as it becomes more critical and just. It is important to understand well the significance of this tendency; for if the historical method advances, it is because general knowledge advances; if the way of contemplating the past is different, it is because the way of contemplating the present is different. Each is a phase of the same vast movement.

**Theology.**—The spirit which Bacon carried into philosophy, Cromwell into politics, and Chillingworth into theology, now culminated in open revolt. Belief in a God, coupled with disbelief in a written revelation, became frequent. **Lord Herbert**, brother of the saintly poet, may be considered the founder of the English school of deists. All religions are by him reduced to one, which is sufficient, he maintains, for all the wants of mankind. This universal system consists of five articles:

1. That there is one supreme God.
2. That He is to be worshipped.
3. That piety and virtue are the principal part of His worship:
4. That man should repent of sin, and that if he does so, God will pardon it.
5. That there are rewards for the good, and punishments for the evil, partly in this life, and partly in the next.

In that political and religious reaction which followed the Cromwellian period, Deism arose in its extreme forms, frequently allied with the democratic, sometimes with the revolutionary, tendencies of the nation. **Hobbes**, however, the greatest living

anti-Christian writer, was a servile advocate of royalty and of the right of the state to coerce individual opinions: 'Thought is free, but when it comes to confession of faith, the private reason must submit to the public, that is to say, to God's lieutenant.' He acknowledges the being of God, but denies that we know any more of Him than that He exists:

'By the visible things of this world and their admirable order, a man may conceive there is a cause of them, which men call God, and yet not have an idea or image of Him in his mind. And they that make little inquiry into the natural causes of things are inclined to feign several kinds of powers invisible, and to stand in awe of their own imaginations. And this *fear* of things invisible is the natural seed of that which every one in himself calleth *religion*.'

He also denies free-will; asserts the materiality of the soul, and teaches that the belief in a future state is merely 'a belief grounded on other men's saying that they knew it supernaturally, or that they knew those, that knew them, that knew others, that knew it supernaturally.' He cuts with remorseless knife at the very heart of the general faith. 'To say God hath spoken to man in a dream, is no more than to say man dreamed that God hath spoken to him.' 'To say one hath seen a vision or heard a voice, is to say he hath dreamed between sleeping and waking.' These statements, one and all, are but applications of his metaphysical theory, which, in connection with its results, will be considered in its proper place.

The common ferment bred an astonishing irruption of deists,—Shaftesbury, Toland, Tindal, Mandeville, Bolingbroke; but, from Hobbes downward, Deism grew more and more materialistic and sensual. As might be expected, its career was transient. Fifty years after the Revolution, it was drowned in forgetfulness. For the system which it proposed to abolish, it could offer, in its highest type, no substitute but lofty and dissolving speculation, impotent—at least in that stage of civilization—to supply motives and means for right conduct.

Free-thinkers roused antagonists: leaders of experimental science, as Boyle and Newton; illustrious scholars, as Bentley and Clarke; popular wits, as Addison and Swift; profound philosophers, as Cudworth and Locke. Apologies, refutations, expositions abounded and multiplied. The character of theological literature, however, had changed. In all this discussion, quotations are comparatively rare. Christians no longer combated by

authority, but by argument. An incessant reference to proof had indisposed the public to receive the traditions that had once enslaved their fathers. It is observable, too, that the progress of Arminianism, as opposed to Calvinism, was changing the face of the English Church. This was displayed among those who, about the epoch of the Restoration, were commonly known as Latitudinarians, distinguished from High Churchmen by their strong aversion to every compromise with Popery,—and from most Puritans as well, by their opposition to dogma, by their insistence upon rightness of life rather than correctness of opinion, by their advocacy of tolerance and comprehension as the basis of Christian unity. The questions most freely discussed or illustrated by divines were ‘The Bible the only rule of faith,’ and ‘Salvation by God’s free mercy through Christ.’

In Scotland, the stronghold of Presbyterianism, induction was unknown, bigotry was undiminished, secular interests were neglected, preaching was harsh and gloomy. The misery of man, the anger of the Deity, the power and presence of Satan, the agonies of hell, were still the constant themes of the pulpit. The preacher delighted to freeze the blood of his hearers with hideous imagery. ‘Boiling oil, burning brimstone, scalding lead,’ says one. ‘A river of fire and brimstone broader than the earth,’ says another. ‘Tongue, lungs, and liver, bones and all, shall boil and fry in a torturing fire,’ says a third. There is no end of such language: ‘Oh! the screeches and yels that will be in hell.’ ‘While wormas are sporting with thy bones, the devils shall make pastime of thy paines.’ ‘There are two thousand of you here to-day, but I am sure fourscore of you will not be saved.’<sup>1</sup> In the absence of scientific knowledge, and of that rationalistic spirit which was liberalizing and enlightening thought elsewhere, all phenomena were referred to the arbitrary will of a passionate and sanguinary God. As long as this continued, as long as religious feelings were chiefly associated with the abnormal and capricious, attention would chiefly concentrate upon disasters, and devotion would be chiefly connected with storm and pestilence, famine and death. These, regarded as penal inflictions, would give a congenial hue to all parts of belief, whose central ideas would be misery, cruelty, and terror. But when habits of

<sup>1</sup> In consequence three persons are said to have dispatched themselves in despair.



investigation acquire the ascendancy, calamities are seen to be the result of general laws, terrorism diminishes, attention is directed chiefly to the evidences of superintending care, the Divine presence is associated with order, and theology wears a more beneficent aspect. This, on the whole, is precisely the change that had been going on in England from the early part of the century. The fact suggests, what must be obvious to every careful student of ideas,—that all theology is progressive: Christianity lives because it is developed. Every age must produce its own doctrines, adapted to its peculiar condition and wants. Those of the present can be retraced to the successive points of time when, one after the other, they reached a definite form. Patristic—Scholastic—Reformative—modern Evangelical—this is the line of advance and the order of growth. The gems alone are unmodified, the eternal verities, the same to-day, yesterday, and forever.

**Ethics.**—Two classes of tendencies, two complexions or styles of mind, contend for empire in the individual and society,—the one holding of animal force, the other of genius; the one of the understanding, the other of the soul; the one deficient in sympathy, the other warm and expansive; the one all buzz and din, the other all infinitude and paradise; the one hating ideas and clinging to a corporeal civilization, the other looking abroad into universality and suggesting the presence of the invisible gods; the one insisting on sensuous facts as the solid finality, the other on Thought and Will as the primal reality, from which as an unsounded centre flow sensuous facts perpetually outward, and of which they are but a manifold symbol. These are the *Materialists* and the *Idealists* of the world. The former think more of the beast than of the seraph in man. The only interests they appreciate are such as are palpable, and can be touched, measured, and weighed. If they survey the rules of conduct, or seek to discover the principles which underlie them, they make much of a good stomach, of strong limbs, of the five senses, and reach the conclusion that the universal motive of every act is the desire of pleasure. In their analysis of moral phenomena, unable to ascend higher than their own level, they stop at self-love. This is precisely what now took place at the birth of moral science. Nor, under the conditions, is it at all surprising. It was natural that

in the hands of a logician and a positivist, driven into exile by rebellion, into weariness and disgust by sectarian violence, attached to a fallen government, and yearning for repose, ethical philosophy should assume a form pleasing to a generation devoted equally to monarchy and to vice; that, written in the midst of an overthrown society and a religious excess, for an audience whose passions and tastes had been sternly repressed, and who mingled duty and fanaticism in a common reproach, it should wipe out noble sentiment and reduce human nature to its merely animal aspect.

Such a theorist was **Thomas Hobbes**,<sup>1</sup> and such the base tone which saturates his system. He has daily observed — as who has not? — that we continually perform acts, because we see that they will issue in pleasure; on the other hand, that we refuse to perform, because we see that they will issue in pain. Preoccupied with favorite ideas, the sight of revolutionary excess confirms him in his principles and attachments. He accordingly declares that a desire to obtain pleasure and to avoid pain is the *only possible* motive to action. None seek or wish for anything but that which is pleasurable:

‘I conceive that when a man deliberates whether he shall do a thing or not do it, he does nothing else but consider whether it be better *for himself* to do it or not to do it.’

With him, as with the courtiers around him, ‘the greatest good is the preservation of life and limb; the greatest evil is death.’ In what, then, does all the good or evil of objects consist? Solely in their property of producing ‘happiness or the opposite. ‘Good and evil are names that signify our appetites and aversions.’ To determine the quality of an act, you have simply to acquaint yourself with its fitness or unfitness to produce pleasure. *Calculate* well, therefore, and you are moral; calculate ill, and you are immoral. All passions are thus resolved into one — love of self. What is *reverence*? ‘The conception we have concerning another that he hath the power to do unto us both good and hurt, but not the will to do us hurt.’ What is *love*? A conception of the utility of the person loved. Why are *friendships* good? ‘Because they are useful; friends serve for defence and otherwise.’

<sup>1</sup> ‘Our Saviour, God-man, had been born one thousand five hundred and eighty years. In Spanish harbors lay anchored the famous hostile fleet soon to perish in our sea. It was early spring-time, and the fifth day of April was dawning. At this time, I, a little worm, was born at Malmesbury.’ He died at the age of ninety-two.

Why do we *pity*? 'Because we imagine that a similar misfortune may befall ourselves.' What is *charity*? The expectation of favors reciprocated. 'No man giveth but with the expectation of good to himself.' Or it is a manifestation of the gratified sense of power:

'There can be no greater argument to a man, of his own power, than to find himself able not only to accomplish his own desires, but also to *assist* other men in *theirs*: and this is that conception wherein consisteth *charity*.'

Parental affection is a specific instance of this, but,—

'The affection wherewith men often bestow their benefits on *strangers*, is not to be called charity, but either *contract*, whereby they seek to purchase friendship; or *fear*, which maketh them to purchase peace.'

Why do we weep? From a sense of weakness:

'Men are apt to weep that prosecute revenge, when the revenge is suddenly stopped or frustrated by the repentance of their adversary; *and such are the tears of reconciliation*.'

Wisdom is desirable; but money, being more serviceable, is worth more. 'Not he who is wise is rich, as the Stoics say; but he who is rich is wise.' Whence the purifying emotions which art inspires?

'Music, painting, poetry, are agreeable as imitations which recall the past, because if the past was good, it is agreeable in its imitation as a good thing; but if it was bad, it is agreeable in its imitation as being past.'

To sum up, nothing is in itself either good or evil, but only as it affects us. Our duties are simply to avoid the disagreeable, and seek the agreeable. Virtue is a judicious, and vice an injudicious, pursuit of self-interest. As we cannot be affected otherwise than we are by the agreeable and disagreeable, our volitions or desires are determined by motives external to us, and we are consequently creatures of mechanism. There is no *liberty* but liberty from physical constraint, as that of a chained prisoner set free. It consists in the power, not of forming resolves, but of doing what we will. The true destiny of man is pleasure. He is by nature inclined and instructed to do whatever will promote this end. The better to secure it, he enters into a civil compact, in which he merges some private rights in the public organization. His law of action, however, is still the greatest degree of personal enjoyment; and *might makes right*.

Does human conduct, profoundly analyzed, confirm this view? Self-love is undoubtedly a spring of activity—the main one, if

you will, but is there no other? The principle of interest exists—has a right to exist; but are there not other principles quite as real? Is intelligence fortuitous and forced? Is man a mere nervous machine, whose wheels go blindly, carried away by impulse and weight, internally responsive to external shocks? Does not entire life, private and public, turn on personal freedom? Is it not involved in esteem and contempt, in admiration and indignation, in punishment and reward? Is it not implicitly admitted by every system that contains a rule or a counsel? When Hobbes advises us to sacrifice the agreeable to the useful, does he not assume that we are free to adopt or reject advice? Fontenelle seeing a man led to punishment, remarked, 'There is a man who has calculated badly.' True, but if he had been more adroit and escaped punishment, would his conduct have been laudable? Is the honest only the useful? Is the genius of calculation the highest wisdom? Must a poor calculator be incapable of virtue? When you have acted contrary to an enlightened self-interest, you may lament your feebleness and your failure, but do you feel remorse? Is the love of beauty nothing but desire? Is there no deeper meaning than this in the view or worship of that subdued fairness of countenance, in sweet child or cultured woman, whose holy reference beyond itself glorifies our visions of heaven; in the prospect of the peaceful hills, with their undulations of forests, rearing themselves aslant their slopes, and waves of greensward, dim with early dew, or smooth in evening warmth of barred sunshine; in the walk by silent, scented paths, beside the pacing brooks that ripple and eddy and murmur in infinite seclusion? Is the mute adoration of a mother, over the cradle of her sleeping innocent, only a foresight of the service which that babe, at some future day, may render? What would you think of a lover whose devotion lay resting on the single feeling that a marriage would conduce to his own comforts? or of a professed patriot who served his country for hire? or of a son who should say, 'Father, on whom my fortunes depend, teach me to do what pleases thee, that I, pleasing thee in all things, may obtain the portion which thou hast promised to obedience?'

Enough. Reason and experience attest that human nature has grander parts and a grander destiny. They tell us that

merit and demerit, duty and right, originate in an absolute good — something good, not from the benefit it brings to one or to all, but from the eternal nature of things; that our obligation is to seek and to do the best which we know; and if happiness come, life will be sweet; if it do not come, life will be bitter — yet to be borne in lowliness of heart and nobleness of purpose.

Few writers have been so uniformly depreciated. ‘Hobbism,’ ere he died, became a synonym for irreligion and immorality; and he has been vilified unsparingly in death. The prejudice has sprung, partly from ignorance, partly from a true sense of his dangerous errors. He is commonly supposed to have been an atheist. On the contrary, he was a theist, though of a modified type. Admitting the existence of spirit, he denied it to be immaterial. Asked what position the Deity occupied in his philosophy, he answered:

‘I believe Him to be a most pure, simple, invisible spirit corporeal. By corporeal I mean a substance that has magnitude, and so mean all learned men, divines and others, though perhaps there be some common people so rude as to call nothing body but what they can see and feel.’

You may call Him incorporeal, if you wish, but,—

‘*Incorporeal* shall pass for a middle nature between *infinitely subtle* and *nothing*, and be less subtle than infinitely subtle, and yet more subtle than a thought.’<sup>1</sup>

After all that you have heard, you may be startled to hear him, not merely profess belief in human immortality, but argue its location — that, too, from Scripture:

‘Of the *world to come*, St. Peter speaks (2 *Pet. iii. 13*). *Nevertheless we according to His promise look for new heavens and a new earth.* This is that *WORLD* wherein Christ coming down from heaven in the clouds, with great power and glory, shall send His angels, and shall gather together His elect from the uttermost parts of the earth, and thenceforth reign over them, under His Father, everlastingly.’<sup>2</sup>

Undoubtedly the speculations of Hobbes, in their tendency and effect, were harmful. It was the perception of their results, that caused Parliament to condemn his two great works—*De Cive* and *Leviathan*. It was this, also, that raised up strong, high-minded foes, like the Platonic Cudworth, to found the intuitive school of ethics, and to assert with the whole force of conviction and learning, above motives of a personal and selfish

<sup>1</sup> The reader will perceive that this must have been, from his theory of creation, substantially the view of Milton.

<sup>2</sup> This sounds oddly in one whom we have seen assail the very theory of Revelation: ‘To say he speaks by supernatural inspiration, is to say he finds an ardent desire to speak, or some strong opinion of himself.’



nature, one which is wholly impersonal, disinterested and *moral*. Let us be liberal enough, however, to acknowledge merit in an adversary. He is original, profound, clear, precise, and weighty. The germs of future systems of thought are in him—metaphysical, philological, political, ethical. In nothing does he deserve greater credit than in having set an example of close observation in speculative inquiries. The very lucidity and boldness with which he exhibits the system of selfishness, make it possible to expose and refute it. We shall see that system reappear in the next century under different forms, all resolvable, however refined or ingenious, into sensual elements. It will be reproduced, in every important era of history, as long as there is a class of thinkers who regard the earth as a stable and its fruit as fodder; who measure all utilities by inches, and denote all profit and loss by dollars and cents. These are they who complacently call themselves ‘practical,’ worthy of much esteem, indeed, and eminently serviceable, yet least calculated of any, by their habits of mind, to distinguish truth from error, nor altogether friendly to progress by the low views which they are accustomed to take of humanity. The useful, according to them, consists in knowing that we have an animal nature, and in making this our chief care. They place the glory of individuals, as of nations, in the world around us, not in the world within us; in the circumstances of fortune, not in the attributes of the soul. Engrossed with the roar of railways, the click of telegraphs, the sounds of the crowded mart, they think they govern the world because they float on the surface, never dreaming that what they imagine to be under their direction is a mighty force that in its movement sweeps them onward.

**Science.**—This suddenly became the fashion of the day. Poets and courtiers, wits and fops, crowded to the meetings of the Invisible College, to which, in token of his sympathy, Charles II gave the title of ‘The Royal Society.’ Almost every ensuing year saw some improvement—some expansion of the circle of knowledge. The Greenwich Observatory was founded. A fresh impulse was given to microscopical research. The careful observation of nature and facts marked an era in the healing art. First light was thrown on the structure of the brain. Boyle, the most eminent of Bacon’s early disciples, first directed attention

to chemistry as the science of the atomic constituents of bodies. The discussion of abstract questions of government began. Hobbes declared (1) that all power originated in the people; and (2) that all power was for the common weal. Locke added (1) that the power thus lodged in the ruler could be taken away; (2) that the ruler is responsible to his subjects for the trust reposed in him; and (3) that legislative assemblies, as the voice of the people, are supreme.

All names in purely physical science are lost in the lustre of one. Kepler had reduced planetary motion to a rule. He and others had sought to reduce it to a cause, and some had stood on the verge of success. **Newton** crossed the barrier, and established the doctrine of Universal Gravitation — that every particle of matter attracts every other particle by one common law of action. To pursue the interminable vista of new facts which it pointed out, was to be the employment of the succeeding century. Born in 1642, so tiny that his mother said ‘she could put him into a quart mug,’ at twenty-two he discovered the Binomial Theorem; at twenty-three, the Method of Fluxions; at twenty-four, the law of planetary motion around the sun; then turning his attention to *Light* and *Color*, laid the foundation of Optics; and in 1687, having resumed his calculations, announced in his famous *Principia* the mutual attraction of celestial bodies. His boyish fondness for constructing little mechanical toys — clocks and mills, carts and dials — as well as the facility with which he mastered Geometry, was the early prelude of his eminence. He possessed in a very high degree the elements of the mathematical talent, — fertility of invention, distinctness of intuition, deliberate concentration, and a strong tendency to generalization. He lived in the trains of thought relating to his character. Complimented on his genius, he replied with modesty that if he had made any discoveries, it was owing to *patient attention* — his ability without fatigue to connect inference with inference in one long series towards a determinate end. ‘I keep the subject of my inquiry constantly before me, and wait till the first dawning opens gradually, by little and little, into a full and clear light.’<sup>1</sup> The higher

<sup>1</sup> Descartes arrogated nothing to the force of his intellect. What he had accomplished more than other men, he attributed to the superiority of his method. ‘Genius,’ says Helvetius, ‘is nothing but a continued attention.’ The great Mrs. Siddons attributed her unrivalled success to the more intense study which she bestowed upon her parts. A habit of abstraction has been manifested almost akin to disease by some of

we ascend, the wider our field of vision, the deeper will be our humility. This chief of scientists said, at the close of life:

‘I know not what the world may think of my labors; but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea-shore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.’

Only false science is lofty in spirit. Only *it* ignores the sphere and limits to which it is confined. Newton did not forget that the discovery of law is no adequate solution of the problem of causes. While he reduced the heavens to the dominion of gravitation, gravitation itself remained an insoluble problem. He could track the course of the comet, and measure the velocity of light, yet was he powerless to explain the existence of the minutest insect or the growth of the humblest plant. Through all his labors he looked reverently up to the great First Cause. Thus ends his *Principia*:

‘We know God only by His properties and attributes, by the wise and admirable structure of things around us, and by their final causes; we admire Him on account of His perfections; we venerate and worship Him on account of His government.’

Kepler, too, had thus opened his sublime views:

‘I beseech my reader that, not unmindful of the divine goodness bestowed on man, he do with me celebrate and praise the wisdom and greatness of the Creator which I open to him.’

In old age and darkness Galileo wrote:

‘Alas! your dear friend and servant has become totally and irreparably blind. These heavens, this earth, this universe, which by wonderful observation I had enlarged a thousand times beyond the belief of past ages, are henceforth shrunk into the narrow space I myself occupy. *So it pleases God*, it shall therefore please me also.’

The piety of Boyle is shown by his literary remains,—*Style of Scripture, Seraphic Love, the Christian Virtuoso*, in which he affirms that ‘a man addicted to natural philosophy is rather assisted than indisposed thereby to be a good Christian.’ In the present day, when the study of the laws of matter has assumed an extraordinary development, it is gratifying to know that the mountain minds which mark the great steps of scientific progress, and which now throw their lengthening shadows over us, bowed their honored heads before the Jehovah of the Bible.

**Philosophy.**—Hobbes’ ethics were the result of his psy-

the greatest thinkers. Archimedes was so absorbed in meditation that he was first aware of the storming of Syracuse by his own death-wound. Plato reports that Socrates, in a military expedition, was seen by the Athenian army to stand for a whole day and a night, until the breaking of the second morning, motionless, with a fixed gaze.

chology. *Good* and *evil* can be nothing else than expressions for pleasure and pain, if *ideas* are nothing else than *sensations*. He says, in general:

‘Concerning the thoughts of man, . . . they are every one a *representation* or *appearance* of some quality or other accident of a body without us, which is commonly called an object. *Which object worketh on the eyes, ears, and other parts of a man’s body*; and by diversity of working, produceth diversity of appearances. The original of them all is that which we call *Sense*, for there is no conception in a man’s mind which hath not at first, totally or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of sense. The rest are derived from that original.’

To be specific, *thought* is an internal movement caused by an external shock:

‘All the qualities called *sensible* are, in the object that causeth them, but so many several *motions* of the matter by which it presseth on our organs diversely. *Neither in us that are pressed, are they anything else but divers motions; for motion produceth nothing but motion.*’

The gradual ceasing of the initial impulse is *imagination*, which he reduces to the power of forming images:

‘When a body is once in motion it moveth, unless something hinder it, eternally; and whatsoever hindereth it, can not in an instant, but in time and by degrees, quite extinguish it; and as we see in the water, though the wind cease, the waves give not over rolling for a long time after: so also it happeneth in that *motion* which is made in the internal parts of man; then, when he sees, dreams, etc.’

The cause of this diminution is the impulse of some succeeding and stronger motion, by which the former is obscured, as the *stars* fade when the *sun* rises. If you wish to denote, not the decay itself, but the *character* of it, as something *old* and *past*, you will call it *memory*. If now you would know how one thought suggests another in a continuous and uninterrupted chain, the explanation is:

‘All fancies (i.e. images) *are motions within us, relicts of those made in sense*; and those motions that immediately succeed one another in the sense continue also together after the sense; insomuch as the former coming again to take place and be predominant, the latter followeth by coherence of the matter moved, in such manner as water upon a plain table is drawn which way any one part of it is guided by the finger.’

Could anything be more candid, clear, and distinct? Sensations, and their traces, form the elements of all knowledge; the various commixtures of these form the intellectual faculties. What we perceive or think, forms part of the material universe. *Matter is the only reality.*

Hobbes, applying the empirical method of Bacon to the investigation of mental and moral phenomena, is thus the precursor of modern Materialism. One of the names that mark an era in the

advancement of knowledge, by creating fresh resources for the development of coming ages, is that of **John Locke**, an Oxford scholar, so profoundly contemptuous of the University<sup>1</sup> studies that he regretted in after-life the waste of so much time on such profitless pursuits, so deeply convinced of the vicious method of college education that he went to the other extreme of thinking self-education the best; devoted himself to medicine, then to politics; incurred the displeasure of the Court by his liberal opinions, and fled to Holland, where he finished his celebrated *Essay on the Human Understanding*; returned to London, after the Revolution, to find security and welcome; wrote much, did much, to strengthen the government; was appointed to a responsible and lucrative office, but failed in health; passed his remaining years in peaceful retirement at the house of his friend Lady Masham, daughter of Cudworth, where he expired in 1704, aged seventy-two, having created, by his ideas on speculative method, civil rule, value of money, and liberty of the press, a new vein of thought for philosophic delvers and political economists. As a man, upright, amiable, and accomplished; as an author, his fame and influence are European; as a thinker, of a practical cast and cautious habit, forbidding himself lofty questions and inclined to forbid them to us. Like Hobbes, he pronounced Psychology to be a science of observation; like him, he resolved to explore the field of intellect as Bacon had explored the field of nature. What is his philosophy?

Its object is to ascertain the origin, certainty, limits, and uses of our knowledge. Its leading doctrine appears to be, that the ultimate source of this knowledge is experience, which, however, is of two kinds,—*sensation* and *reflection*. The first presents no great difficulty. Of the second he says:

‘The other fountain from which experience furnisheth the understanding with ideas, is the *perception of the operations of our own minds within us; as it is employed about the ideas it has got*; which operations, when the soul comes to reflect on and consider, do furnish the understanding with another set of ideas, which could not be had from things without; and such are perception, thinking, doubting, believing, reasoning, knowing, willing, and all the different actings of our own minds, which we, being conscious of, and observing in ourselves, do from these receive into our understandings ideas as distinct as we do from bodies affecting our senses. This *source of ideas every man has wholly in himself, and though it be not sense, as having nothing to do with external objects*, yet it is very like it, and might properly enough be called internal sense. But

<sup>1</sup> Then, as now, attached to the past. To this day, its students are drilled in the philosophy of Aristotle.



as I call the other *sensation* so I call this *reflection*, the ideas it affords being such only as the mind gets by *reflecting* on its own operations within itself.'

No ideas are allowed to be in the mind except those which can be shown to spring from one or other of these inlets:

'When the understanding is once stored with these simple ideas, it has the power to repeat, compare, and unite them, even to an almost infinite variety, and so can make at pleasure new complex ideas. But it is not in the power of the most exalted wit, or enlarged understanding, by any quickness or variety of thought, to invent or frame one new simple idea in the mind not taken in by the ways aforementioned.'

The thing perceived is the idea:

'It is evident that the mind knows not things immediately, but by the intervention of the ideas it has of them. Our knowledge, therefore, is real only so far as there is a conformity between our ideas and the reality of things.'

What assurance have we of such conformity?—The assumption that God would not constitute us with faculties fitted only to deceive:

'Our ideas are not fictions of our fancies, but the natural and regular productions of things without us really operating upon us; and so carry with them all the conformity which is intended, or which our state requires, for they represent things to us under those appearances, which they are fitted to produce in us.'

Whence this idea of God? As a philosopher, he argues that it is not innate, and holds that its absence is a strong presumption against innate ideas generally; as a theologian, he argues that we can prove the existence of God as conclusively as we can prove that the angles of a triangle are together equal to two right angles. The proof upon which he chiefly insists is derived from causation,—that for every effect there must be an efficient cause. *The causal idea he derives from experience.* This would be satisfactory, if by *origin* or *source* were meant, not creation (the sense in which Locke seems to employ either term), but *occasion*. It is allowed that, apart from experience, the mind can have no ideas; still it is not experience which creates or produces our *necessary* ideas, it is merely the occasion of their development. Thus, without the perception of body, there could be no idea of space; but, while the former is chronologically first, the latter is its logical condition, and involves it, since we cannot conceive of body except as in space. Without the observation of an effect, there could be no idea of cause; but, the former being presented, the latter—already potentially in the mind—is ready to spring up. He acknowledges intuition,<sup>1</sup> but over-

<sup>1</sup> 'Sometimes the mind perceives the agreement or disagreement of two ideas immediately by themselves, without the intervention of any other, and this I think we may call intuitive knowledge.'

looks its rules or laws—the primitive cognitions and beliefs included in the exercises with which the mind starts. He acknowledges necessary truth, but it does not form a part of his general theory, and sceptics have shown that he cannot reach it in consistency with his system.

On the whole, it will be clear to the most careless observer that Locke, as a theorist, has a rational side; it will be equally clear that he has a strong sensational side. The latter is conspicuous in his account of moral distinctions, and leaves little behind but ruins. Like Hobbes, he declares that ‘good and evil are nothing but pleasure and pain, or that which occasions or procures pleasure or pain to us.’ The obligations to morality are the Divine rewards and punishments, legal and social penalties; that is, a more or less *far-sighted* love of pleasure, and an aversion to misery. That the beauty of excellence alone should incite us, is the delusion of pagans:

‘If a Christian, who has the view of happiness and misery in another life, be asked why a man must keep his word, he will give this as a reason, because God, who has the power of eternal life and death, requires it of us. But if an Hobbist be asked why, he will answer, because the public requires it, and the Leviathan will punish you if you do not. And if one of the old heathen philosophers had been asked, he would have answered, because it was dishonest, below the dignity of man, and opposite to virtue, the highest perfection of human nature, to do otherwise.’<sup>1</sup>

In opposition to the intuitive moralists who affirm a native power of distinguishing between the higher and lower parts of our nature, he insists at great length on the argument derived from uncivilized life,—that the moral standard is variable in different races and ages. This only recalls the distinction already made between innate ideas *independent* of experience and innate faculties *evolved* by experience. The difference between a savage and Angelo is not one of mere acquisition; it is the difference between the acorn and the oak,—the one is *in* the other as the flower in the bud, or as the grain contains the ear that is to wave in the next summer’s sun, requiring only favorable conditions for the full expansion of its inherent energy.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lewis, in defending Locke’s originality against the critics who assert that he only borrowed and popularized the ideas of Hobbes, says that Locke never alludes to Hobbes but twice—then distantly—and adds, like a warm admirer of his *client*: ‘His second allusion is simply this: “A Hobbist would probably say.” We cannot at present lay our hands on the passage, but it refers to some moral question.’—*History of Philosophy*. The ‘passage,’ had he found it, could hardly have been serviceable to Mr. Lewis as an advocate. It must appear evident from single references and from doctrinal points of resemblance, that, so far from having never read the writings of Hobbes, Locke was familiar with them.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Sedgwick, in criticism of Locke’s notion of the soul being originally like a sheet of white paper, says: ‘Naked man comes from his mother’s womb, endowed

Nevertheless, Locke speaks of the 'eternal and unalterable nature of right and wrong,' and declares that 'morality is capable of demonstration as well as mathematics.' This vacillation which makes moral truth alternately uncertain and demonstrable, is but another instance of his general inconsistency. His style, again, is lacking in precision. In every page we miss the translucent simplicity of Hobbes and the French psychologists. There has been almost endless controversy about his meaning. From him will be drawn the Utilitarianism of Mandeville, who will make virtue a sham; the Idealism of Berkeley; the Scepticism of Hume; the Materialism of Condillac and his school, who, though not accurately representing the doctrines of their master, represent the *general tendency* of his teaching. He learned as he wrote, and, we are disposed to add, has left passages involving the conclusions of all schools. His *Essay* too often suggests what Pope has said of the Bible, and Hamilton has reiterated of Consciousness:<sup>1</sup>

'This is the book where each his dogma *seeks*,  
This is the book where each his dogma *finds*.'

**Résumé.**—English hereditary forces,—moral instinct and practical aptitude,—now worked out their proper results. The revolution, long in accomplishment, was finally completed, by the abolition of feudal tenures and the institution of Habeas Corpus under Charles II, by the establishment of the Constitution, the act of toleration, and the emancipation of the press, under William III.

Literature still sought in the sunshine of royal and aristocratic favor, where it had chiefly sprung and flourished, the warmth and shelter which popular appreciation was not yet sufficiently extended to give. Its spirit therefore was in the main courtly. In its polite forms, it reflected forcibly the social and political characteristics of the Restoration. Manners were gross and trivial. It stooped to be the pander of every low desire. Tragedy, moulded on the tastes of Paris, went out in declamation. The dignity of blank gave way to the sensual effect of rhyme. Com-

with limbs and senses indeed well fitted to the material world, yet powerless from want of use; and as for knowledge, his soul is one unvaried blank; yet has this blank been already touched by a celestial hand, and when plunged in the colors which surround it, it takes not his tinge from accident but design, and comes forth covered with a glorious pattern.'

<sup>1</sup>Of such as resort thither in confirmation of preconceived opinions. The original of this couplet is in the Latin confession of a Calvinist divine.

edy sank into a repertory of viciousness. As the readiest fashion of serving the appetitive life it fed, it clothed its garbage of vulgarity in prose. Striving to assume the sprightly refinement of the French stage, it acquired new corruption. The abasement of the drama consisted, not merely in licentious expression, but in licentious intrigue. The sentimental enshrinement of occasional virtue served only to show how fearfully and shamelessly men had fallen into vice.

Artificial and frigid images replaced sentiment and beauty. The elegant loved but the varnish of truth—compliments and salutations, tender words and insipidities. Poets wrote like men of the world,—with ease, wit, and spirit, but without noble ardor or moral depth. The lyric, chiefly amatory, was cultivated, though not a favorite. Satire was conspicuous. The *Hudibras* presents the best embodiment, perhaps, of the true spirit of the cavalier,—witty, sensual, disconnected, bitter, exaggerated, and radically false.

The literature of a theological and practical cast was largely Puritan. Amid the classical coldness and the social excess, two minds possessed the imaginative faculty in an eminent degree,—Milton, who lingered from the preceding age, and Bunyan, the hero and martyr of this.

As constructive power failed, style improved, becoming more strictly idiomatic, polished, and fluent. Theory and observation sprang forward with emulous energy. Boyle disengaged chemistry from astrology, and Newton shed lustre upon the age by his brilliant discoveries in astronomy. The Royal Society afforded convenient and ornamental shelter to the gathered fruits of science, and gave an impulse to progress by the spirit it excited and diffused.

The bent which philosophy received from Bacon, though in itself excellent, was physical. In Hobbes it became declared materialism. He denied the spontaneity of mind, relaxed the obligations of morality, reduced religion to an affair of state, and resolved right into the assertion of selfishness. The dissenting tendency was represented by Cudworth. Locke was peculiarly influential in his view of the origin of knowledge. The mind, according to him, is a sheet of white paper; the soul a blank sensorium. Its characters, its ideas, its materials, are traceable

directly or indirectly to the senses,—sensible objects, or the states which sensible objects produce.

On the whole, a rocking, revolutionary age, an age of actions and reactions. The waves rushed forward, broke, and rolled back; but the great tide moved steadily on. That movement, in general, was from faith to scepticism, from enthusiasm to cynicism, from the imagination to the understanding. To the creators succeeded the critics. To the impassioned and intuitive minds succeeded the plodding thinkers and the clear logicians. In polite letters, Dryden is chief of the transition, the central nexus between a period of creativeness and a period of preëminent art.

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## BUNYAN.

Ingenious dreamer, in whose well-told tale  
Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail;  
Whose humorous vein, strong sense, and simple style,  
May teach the gayest, make the gravest smile.—*Cowper.*

‘I have been vile myself, but have obtained mercy.’

**Biography.**—Born near Bedford, in 1628, the son of a despised tinker; sent to a free school for the poor, where he learned to read and write; but, idle and vicious, lost in youth what he had learned in childhood; was bred to his father’s trade; enlisted, while yet a boy, in the army of the Parliament; and at nineteen with the advice of friends, married a girl of his own rank, both so poor that they had not a spoon or a dish between them. This was the turning point. She was a pious wife, and had brought to her husband, as her only portion, two volumes bequeathed by a dying parent,—*The Practice of Piety*, and *The Plain Man’s Pathway to Heaven*. Over these she helped him to recover the art of reading, enticed him to remain at home; persuaded him to attend the Baptist church, of which she was a member; and brought him by words of affection to reflect upon his evil ways. Over wild heath and through haunted bog he wandered in the usual gypsy life of his occupation, alone with his own thoughts; now sunk into monomania by the sense of his unregenerate condition and the fear of hell, now ravished with the trances of joy,



then plunging again into 'sin.' Gradually, not without many spiritual conflicts, he was transformed. He was appointed deacon, and presently, after solemn prayer and fasting, began to preach:

'Though of myself, of all the saints the most unworthy, yet I, but with great fear and trembling at the sight of my own weakness, did set upon the work, and did according to my gift, and the proportion of my faith, preach that blessed Gospel that God had showed me in the holy Word of truth; which, when the country understood, they came in to hear the Word by hundreds, and that from all parts, though upon sundry and divers accounts.'

In connection with his ministerial labors, he began to write, and in 1658 published his second work,—*A Few Sighs from Hell*. Two years later, being a dissenter, he was arrested, and committed to prison. He went cheerfully:

'Verily, as I was going forth of the doors, I had much ado to forbear saying to them, that I carried the peace of God along with me, but I held my peace, and blessed be the Lord, went away to prison, with God's comfort in my poor soul.'

Here he passed the time in making tagged laces for the support of his indigent family, in musing and writing on heavenly themes. With a library of only two books,—the *Bible* and the *Book of Martyrs*,—it was the period of his brilliant authorship. Toward the end of his confinement, rigor was relaxed. He was allowed to visit his family, and often preached to a congregation under the silent stars. Released in 1672, he went forth again to proclaim the Gospel publicly, extending his ministrations over the whole region between Bedford and London, with occasional visits to the metropolis itself. He died, of a fever caused by exposure, in 1688, with these last words to the friends around his bedside:

'Weep not for me, but for yourselves. I go to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will, no doubt, through the mediation of His blessed Son, receive me, though a sinner, where I hope we ere long shall meet to sing the new song, and remain everlastingly happy, world without end. Amen.'

**Writings.**—We close our eyes to draw a face from memory. In sleep, illusions are perfect. Poesy quenched the vision of Homer and of Milton before she lifted the veil from their glorious spirits. It was in a dungeon, shut out from the external world, that Bunyan had his immortal dream. There he wrote the first and greatest part of his *Pilgrim's Progress*,—a record of his experience; a record of the soul's struggles, battle-agonies, and victories, in its stages from conversion to glory. *Christian*, dwelling in the City of Destruction, against which a voice from

Heaven has proclaimed vengeance, flees to escape the consuming fire. *Evangelist* finds him in distress, and shows him the right road—through yonder wicket-gate, over a wide plain, across a desolate swamp:

‘Now he had run far from his own door, but his wife and children perceiving it, began to cry after him to return; but the man put his fingers in his ears, and ran on, crying, “Life! life! eternal life!”’

His neighbors jeer and threaten. Some follow, in order to dissuade him. One, *Pliable*, becomes his companion, but sinks in the Slough of Despond, and leaves him. He struggles bravely on, but is met by a treacherous man, *Worldly Wiseman*, who turns him aside:

‘He bid me with speed get rid of my burden, and I told him it was ease I sought. And, said I, I am therefore going to yonder gate, to receive further direction how I may get to the place of deliverance. So he said that he would show me a better way, and shorter, not so attended with difficulties as the way, sir, that you set me in; which way, said he, will direct you to a gentleman’s house that has skill to take off these burdens; so I believed him, and turned out of that way into this, if haply I might be soon eased of my burden. But when I came to this place, and beheld things as they are, I stopped for fear, as I said, of danger: but I now know not what to do.’

Re-directed and admonished by *Evangelist*, whom he again meets, he reaches the Strait Gate, where *Interpreter* points out the Celestial City and instructs him by a series of visible shows, ‘the resemblance of which will stick by me as long as I live’; especially three,—the fire against the wall (the omnipotence of grace), the man in the iron cage (the hopeless excess of sin), and the trembling sleeper rising from his dream (the vision of the Day of Judgment). He passes before a cross, and his burden falls. Slowly, painfully, he climbs the steep Hill of Difficulty, and arrives at a great castle where *Watchful*, the guardian, gives him in charge to his daughters, *Piety* and *Prudence*, who warn and arm him against the foes that imperil his descent into the Valley of Humiliation. He finds his way barred by a demon, *Apollyon*, whom, after a long fight, he puts to flight:

‘In this combat no man can imagine, unless he had seen and heard, as I did, what yelling and hideous roaring Apollyon made all the time of the fight: he spake like a dragon: and on the other side, what sighs and groans burst from Christian’s heart. I never saw him all the while give so much as one pleasant look till he perceived he had wounded Apollyon with his two-edged sword; then, indeed, he did smile, and look upward: but it was the dreadfullest sight that ever I saw.’

Farther on the valley deepens, the shades thicken, ever and anon sulphurous flames reveal the hideous forms of dragons, chains

rattle, fiends howl, and unseen monsters rush to and fro: it is the Valley of the Shadow of Death. He enters with drawn sword:

‘I saw then in my dream, so far as this Valley reached, there was on the right hand, a very deep ditch: that ditch it is, into which the blind have led the blind in all ages, and have both there miserably perished. Again, behold, on the left hand, there was a very dangerous quag, into which, if even a good man falls, he finds no bottom for his foot to stand on. . . .

The pathway was here also exceeding narrow, and therefore good Christian was the more put to it; for, when he sought, in the dark, to shun the ditch on the one hand, he was ready to tip over into the mire on the other: also when he sought to escape the mire, without great carefulness he would be ready to fall into the ditch. Thus he went on, and I heard him here sigh bitterly; for, besides the danger mentioned above, the pathway was here so dark, that oftentimes, when he lifted up his foot to set forward, he knew not where, or upon what, he should set it next.

About the midst of the Valley, I perceived the mouth of hell to be, and it stood also hard by the way-side: Now, thought Christian, what shall I do? And ever and anon the flame and smoke would come out in such abundance, with sparks and hideous noises, . . . that he was forced to put up his sword, and betake himself to another weapon, called All-prayer: so he cried in my hearing, O Lord, I beseech thee deliver my soul! Thus he went on a great while, yet still the flames would be reaching towards him: also he heard doleful voices, and rushings to and fro, so that sometimes he thought he should be torn to pieces, or trodden down like mire in the streets. This frightful sight was seen, and these dreadful noises were heard, by him for several miles together.’

Ahead,—

‘The way was all along set so full of snares, traps, gins, and nets here, and so full of pits, pitfalls, deep holes, and shelvings down there, that had it been dark, as it was when he came the first part of the way, had he had a thousand souls, they had in reason been cast away.’

And at the end ‘lay blood, bones, ashes, and mangled bodies of men, even of pilgrims that had gone this way formerly.’ He passes it, continues straight on till the towers of a distant town appear; and soon he is in the midst of the buyers and sellers, the loungers and jugglers, of Vanity Fair. He walks by with lowered eyes, not wishing to take part in the festivities and deceits. The people beat him, imprison him, condemn him as a traitor, and burn his companion *Faithful*. Escaped from them, he advances by the little hill of the silver mine, through a meadow of lilies, along the bank of a pleasant river which is bordered on either side by fruit trees. Thinking to have easier going, he takes a by-path, and falls into the hands of *Giant Despair*, the keeper of Doubting Castle, the court-yard of which is paved with skulls of pilgrims. The giant beats him, leaves him in a poisonous dungeon without food, finally gives him daggers and cords and advises him to suicide. But Christian suddenly remembers a key in his bosom, called Promise, which will open any lock in the castle. Once more at liberty, he and Hopeful (who joined him

at Vanity Fair) come at last to the Delectable Mountains, from the summit of which they are shown, through a perspective glass, the desired haven. Thence the way lies through the fogs and briers of the Enchanted Ground, with here and there a bed of ease under an arbor of green. Beyond is the land of Beulah, where flowers bloom perpetually, where the songs of birds never cease, and where the sun never sets:

'Here they were within sight of the city they were going to; also here met them some of the inhabitants thereof: for in this land the shining-ones commonly walked, because it was upon the borders of Heaven. . . . Here they heard voices from out of the city, loud voices, saying, "Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold thy salvation cometh!" . . .

Now, as they walked in this land, they had more rejoicing than in parts more remote from the kingdom to which they were bound; and, drawing nearer to the city yet, they had a more perfect view thereof: it was built of pearls and precious stones; also the streets thereof were paved with gold: so that, by reason of the natural glory of the city, and the reflection of the sun-beams upon it, Christian with desire fell sick, Hopeful also had a fit or two of the same disease: wherefore here they lay by it a while crying out, because of their pangs, "If you see my Beloved, tell him that I am sick of love."

But between them and the golden pavements a bridgeless river rolls its cold, black waters:

'At the sight, therefore, of this river, the pilgrims were much stunned; but the men that went with them said, You must go through, or you cannot come at the gate. . . .

The pilgrims then (especially Christian) began to despond in their minds, and looked this way and that; but no way could be found by them by which they might escape the river. . . .

Then they addressed themselves to the waters, and entering, Christian began to sink, and crying out to his good friend Hopeful, he said, I sink in deep waters; the billows go over my head, all the waters go over me.

Then said the other, Be of good cheer, my brother; I feel the bottom, and it is good. Then said Christian, Ah! my friend, the sorrow of death hath compassed me about; I shall not see the land that flows with milk and honey. And with that a great darkness and horror fell upon Christian, so that he could not see before him. Also here in a great measure he lost his senses, so that he could neither remember nor orderly talk of any of those sweet refreshments that he had met with in the way of his pilgrimage.'

Faith sustains them, and they touch the farther shore, divested of their mortal garments:

'They therefore went up here with much agility and speed, though the foundation upon which the city was framed was higher than the clouds; they, therefore, went up through the region of the air, sweetly talking as they went, being comforted, because they had got safely over the river, and had such glorious companions to attend them.

The talk they had with the shining ones was about the glory of the place; who told them that the beauty and the glory of it was inexpressible. There, said they, is "Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect." You are going now, said they, to the Paradise of God, wherein you shall see the tree of life, and eat of the never-fading fruits thereof; and, when you come there, you shall have white robes given you, and your walk and talk shall be every day with the King, even all the days of eternity. . . . There came also out at this time to meet them several of the King's trumpeters, clothed in white and shining raiment, who,

with melodious and loud noises, made even the heavens to echo with their sound. These trumpeters saluted Christian and his fellow with ten thousand welcomes from the world, and this they did with shouting and sound of trumpet.

This done, they compassed them round about on every side; some went before, some behind, and some on the right hand, some on the left (as it were to guard them through the upper regions), continually sounding as they went with melodious noise, in notes on high; so that the very sight was to them that could behold it, as if Heaven itself was come down to meet them. . . . Now were these two men, as it were, in Heaven, before they came at it: being swallowed up with the sight of angels, and with hearing their melodious notes. Here also they had the city itself in view, and thought they heard all the bells therein to ring, to welcome them thereto. But above all, the warm and joyful thoughts that they had about their own dwelling there with such company, and that for ever and ever: Oh! by what tongue or pen can their glorious joy be expressed! . . .

Now I saw in my dream that these two men went in at the gate; and lo, as they entered, they were transfigured; and they had raiment put on that shone like gold. There were also that met them with harps and crowns, and gave to them the harps to praise withal, and the crowns in token of honour. Then I heard in my dream, that all the bells in the city rang again for joy, and that it was said unto them, "Enter ye into the joy of your Lord." I also heard the men themselves, that they sang with a loud voice, saying, "Blessing, honour, and glory, and power, be to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever."

Now, just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them, and beheld, the city shone like the sun: the streets also were paved with gold, and in them walked many men with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps to sing praises withal.

There were also of them that had wings, and they answered one another without intermission, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord." And, after that, they shut up the gates; which, when I had seen, I wished myself among them.<sup>1</sup>

**Style.**—Simple, ingenuous, idiomatic. Ninety-three per cent of his vocabulary, it is estimated, is Saxon. Revealing, in its diction, an intimate acquaintance with Scripture, and, in its imagery, the fulness of supernatural impressions; often picturesque and poetical, and everywhere, like a nursery tale, level to the meanest capacity. The following is representative:

'Prayer is a sincere, sensible, and an affectionate pouring out of the soul to God. O the heat, strength, life, vigor, and *affection*, that is in right prayer! . . . Alas! the greatest part of men make no conscience at all of the duty; and as for them that do, it is to be feared that many of them are very great strangers to a sincere, sensible, and affectionate pouring out of their hearts or souls to God; but even content themselves with a little lip-labor and bodily exercise, mumbling over a few imaginary prayers. When the affections are indeed engaged in prayer, then the whole man is engaged; and that in such sort, that the soul will spend itself to nothing, as it were, rather than it will go without that good desired, even communion and solace with Christ.'

This is rarely beautiful:

'The doctrine of the Gospel is like the dew and the small rain that distilleth upon the tender grass, wherewith it doth flourish, and is kept green.—*Deut. xxxii, 2.* Chris-

<sup>1</sup> *Parts I and II* relate the celestial pilgrimage of Christian's wife and children. *Part III* opens:

'After the two former dreams, . . . I dreamed another dream, and, behold, there appeared unto me a great multitude of people, in several distinct companies and bands, travelling from the city of Destruction, the town of Carnal-policy, the village of Morality, and from the rest of the cities, towns, villages, and hamlets, that belong to the Valley of Destruction.'



tians are like the several flowers in a garden, that have upon each of them the dew of heaven, which being shaken with the wind, they let fall their dew at each other's roots, whereby they are jointly nourished, and become nourishers of one another. For Christians to commune savourily of God's matters one with another, it is as if they opened to each other's nostrils boxes of perfume.'

**Rank.**—In popular celebrity, the greatest name among the theological writers of the age. He has written the noblest example of allegory in English prose, as Spenser had done in English verse. Other allegories please the understanding or amuse the fancy; his alone touches the heart. Dr. Johnson, who hated to read a book through, wished this one longer; and thousands have loved it who were too simple to discern the significance of the fable.

The secret of this unique success is twofold,—the subject and the execution. Few have been so lucid; fewer still have had such power of representation. His abstractions are life-like. His personifications are men. His imaginary objects are as clear and complete as ordinary perceptions. What he describes he has seen vividly, and has the dramatic faculty of making others see.

We go no further. Although, if we apply the test of *general attraction*, the *Pilgrim's Progress* carries off the palm from the *Fairy Queen* and quite as decidedly from *Paradise Lost*, yet between the power which produced them and the power which produced it, there is a great distinction, not unlike that which exists between *Robin Hood* and *Hamlet*. Invention Bunyan undoubtedly has in a high degree; but his adaptation of Scriptural incident and language has caused him to appear more creative than he really is. We do not insist upon the inconsistencies which it requires no careful scrutiny to detect,—notably those passages in which the disguise is altogether dropped, and figurative history is interrupted by religious disquisitions.

**Character.**—A visionary and an artist, poor in ideas, but full of images; ignorant, impassioned, inspired. His distinguishing quality was an ingenious, vivid, and shaping imagination, besieged and absorbed by the terrors of eternal fire.

In youth,—

'Amid a round of vain delights he lived,  
And took his fill of pleasure; never thought  
That life had higher objects, nobler aims,  
Than just to eat, and drink, and pass away  
The precious hours in revelry and mirth.'

He was so profane that the profane were shocked. A wicked woman heard him, and protested:

'She was made to tremble to hear me; and told me farther that I was the ungodliest fellow for swearing that she ever heard in all her life; and that I, by thus doing, was enough to spoil all the youth in the whole town.'

In the strong terms of pious excitement, he says:

'When it pleased the Lord to begin to instruct my soul, He found me one of the black sinners of the world. He found me making a sport of oaths, and also of lies; and many a soul-poisoning meal did I make out of divers lusts, as drinking, dancing, playing—pleasure with the wicked ones of the world.'

When only a child—but nine or ten years old—he had fearful dreams:

'For often, after I had spent this and the other day in sin, I have in my bed been greatly afflicted, while asleep, with the apprehensions of devils and wicked spirits, who still, as I then thought, labored to draw me away with them, of which I could never be rid.'

In a Sunday pastime, he had thrown his ball, and was about to begin again, when he heard a voice, 'Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell?' One of the favorite sports was bell-ringing. When he had given it up, he would go into the belfry to watch the ringers:

'But quickly after, I began to think, "How if one of the bells should fall?" Then I chose to stand under a main beam, that lay overthwart the steeple, from side to side, thinking here I might stand sure: but then I thought again, should the bell fall with a swing, it might first hit the wall, and then rebounding upon me, might kill me for all this beam. This made me stand in the steeple-door; and now, thought I, I am safe enough, for if a bell should then fall, I can slip out behind these thick walls, and so be preserved notwithstanding. So after this I would yet go to see them ring, but would not go any farther than the steeple-door: but then it came into my head, "How if the steeple itself should fall?" And this thought (it may, for aught I know, when I stood and looked on) did continually so shake my mind that I durst not stand at the steeple-door any longer, but was forced to flee, for fear the steeple should fall upon my head.'

Once he saw the heavens on fire. Again, in the midst of a banquet, the earth opened, and tossed up figures of men in bloody flames, falling back with shrieks and execrations, whilst intermingled devils laughed; and just as he was himself sinking, one in shining raiment plucked him from the circling flame. From the City of Destruction, through the Slough of Despond and the Valley of the Shadow, he presses to the fruitful and happy region of Beulah.

'About this time, the state and happiness of these poor people at Bedford was thus, in a dream or vision, represented to me. I saw as if they were set on the sunny side of some high mountain, there refreshing themselves with the pleasant beams of the sun, while I was shivering and shrinking in the cold, afflicted with frost, snow, and dark clouds. Methought also, betwixt me and them, I saw a wall that did compass about this

mountain; now through this wall my soul did greatly desire to pass, concluding that if I could I would go even into the very midst of them, and there also comfort myself with the heat of their sun.

About this wall I thought myself to go again and again, still prying, as I went, to see if I could find some way or passage, by which I might enter therein; but none could I find for some time. At the last, I saw, as it were, a narrow gap, like a doorway, in the wall, through which I attempted to pass; but the passage being very strait and narrow, I made many efforts to get in, but all in vain, even until I was well nigh quite beat out, by striving to get in; at last, with strong striving, methought I at first did get in my head, and after that, by a sidling striving, my shoulders, and my whole body; then I was exceeding glad, and went and sat down in the midst of them, and so was comforted with the light and heat of their sun.'

We see now how this man could write the *Pilgrim's Progress*; how he should be so solicitous to win souls; what would be his pulpit themes,—death, judgment, eternity, the mission and sufferings of Christ; why, though with trembling, he should preach with power. There could be nothing of modern languor in his exhortations. His heart was in them; he was possessed by them. Hell yawned before him; and the burden of his thought was to snatch from destruction the perishing sinners that slumbered, as he had slept, on its brink. Wrath and salvation are thus the essential facts,—all else is but shadowy and dim. This conviction levels inequalities, renders the inflamed brain eloquent and effective. Charles II is said to have asked Dr. Owen how a man of his erudition could 'sit to hear a tinker prate.' 'May it please your Majesty,' was the reply, 'could I possess that tinker's abilities, I would gladly give in exchange all my learning.'

**Influence.**—He was universally esteemed for the beauty of his character and the liberality of his views, while the fame of his sufferings and the power of his discourse drew multitudes to hear him preach. In London, let but a day's notice be given, and the house would not contain the half. Says an eye-witness:

'I have seen, by my computation, about twelve hundred persons to hear him at a morning lecture, on a working day in dark working time. I also computed about three thousand that came to hear him at a town's end meeting house; so that half were fain to go back again for want of room; and there himself was fain at a back door to be pulled almost over people to get up stairs to the pulpit.'

But he has a larger audience now. It is by the *Pilgrim* that he affects the minds and hearts of survivors, more and more widely as generations pass away. The historian will value it as an effect,—a record, in part, of contemporary institutions and ideas, and an expression of the new imaginative force that had been given to common English life by the study of the Bible.

The people will treasure it for its artless story of Christian experience,— for its perpetual narrative of their personal recollections. More than a hundred thousand copies circulated in England and America during his life. Since his death, it has been rendered into every language of Europe, and into more other languages than any book save the Scriptures. The Religious Tract Society alone printed it in thirty different tongues. Seven times, at least, it has been turned into verse. A hundred and fifty years ago, by some alterations and omissions, it was adapted to the creed of the Roman Church.

Did never monarch sit upon a throne so royal ; was never political empire so vast and so enduring. Wherever thought finds expression or there are hearts to be impressed, this tinker of Bedford will shape character and destiny when the chiselled lines of the granite have crumbled, and the headstone shall claim kindred with the dust it commemorates. *'He, being dead, yet speaketh.'*

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## DRYDEN.

The only qualities I can find in Dryden, that are essentially poetical, are a certain ardour and impetnosity of mind with an excellent ear. . . . There is not a single image from nature in the whole of his works.—*Wordsworth.*

**Biography.**—Born in the county of Northampton, in 1631, of good family; studied in Westminster School, and afterwards spent seven years at Cambridge; became secretary to a near relative, a member of the Upper House; turned Royalist, married an earl's daughter, and enjoyed the king's patronage; succeeded Davenant as Poet Laureate, and Howell as Historiographer, with a yearly salary of two hundred pounds; declared himself a Catholic, lost his appointment at the Revolution, and for twelve years, burdened with a family, earned his bread by his pen; long afflicted with gout, then with erysipelas, insulted by publishers whose hireling he was, and persecuted by enemies; died in 1700, of a neglected inflammation in the foot, and was interred in Westminster Abbey, between the tombs of Chaucer and of Cowley.

**Writings.**—Dryden began in fustian and enormity. The

subject was Lord Hastings, who died of small-pox at the age of nineteen:

‘His body was an orb, his sublime soul  
Did move on virtue’s and on learning’s pole.’

The pustules are compared to ‘rose-buds thick in the lily skin about’; and,—

‘Each little pimple had a tear in it  
To wail the fault its rising did commit.’

But he has not yet done his worst:

‘No comet need foretell his change drew on  
Whose corpse might seem a constellation.’

Such excesses announce a literary revolution. Greedy of glory and pressed for money, he pandered to the tastes of a debauched and frivolous audience—the world of courtiers and the idle, who wanted startling scenes, infamous events, forced sentiments, splendid decorations. ‘I confess,’ he says, ‘my chief endeavors are to delight the age in which I live. If the humour of this be for low comedy, small accidents, and raillery, I will *force* my genius to obey it.’ Accordingly, as he writes by calculation, he is only capable of discussions. Of the appropriate excellence of the drama—the power of exhibiting real human beings, he is utterly destitute. His comedies are as false to nature as they are offensive to morality. His tragedies, without depth of feeling or consistency of plot, strive towards superhuman ideals, and attain to bombast.

The *Conquest of Grenada* (1672) owes its celebrity to its extravagance. The *Spanish Friar* (1682) is less exaggerated, but rarely impresses sympathy, and never commands tears. *Sebastian* (1690), though rejecting more of the French alloy, is yet grandiose—more noisy than significant. Lacking the art of dramatic truth, he sought a substitute for illusion sometimes in wit, more frequently in disguises, intrigues, surprising disclosures, smooth versification, and declamatory magnificence. Courtly nerves could best be stirred by shocks, profanity, obscenities, and barbarities—by heroines who were courtesans, indecent, violent, reckless; and by heroes who were drunken savages, or monstrous chimeras, resembling nothing in heaven above or in the earth beneath.

But though bad as wholes, his plays—nearly thirty in number—contain passages which only the great masters have surpassed,



and which no subsequent writer for the stage has equalled. Even in rhyme, which so often forced him to a platitude, and which he so reluctantly abandoned, he is not seldom the genuine poet, a musician and a painter. For example:

'No; like his better Fortune I'll appear,  
With open arms, loose veil, and flowing hair,  
*Just flying forward from her rolling sphere.*'<sup>1</sup>

And this happy comparison, which is surely an 'image from nature':

'As callow birds,  
Whose mother's killed in seeking of the prey,  
Cry in their nest and think her long away,  
And, at each leaf that stirs, each blast of wind,  
Gape for the food which they must never find.'<sup>2</sup>

Or the following, which is vigorous and striking:

'Her rage was love, and its tempestuous flame,  
Like lightning, showed the heaven from whence it came.'<sup>3</sup>

And these verses, which read like maxims, expressed in the finest manner of the new school. They show a reasoner, accustomed to discriminate his ideas:

'When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat;  
Yet, fooled with hope, men favour the deceit,  
Trust on, and think to-morrow will repay.  
To-morrow's falser than the former day;  
Lies worse; and while it says, "We shall be blest  
With some new joys," cuts off what we possessed.  
Strange cozenage! None would live past years again,  
Yet all hope pleasure in what yet remain;  
And from the dregs of life think to receive  
What the first sprightly running could not give.  
I'm tired of waiting for this chemic gold,  
Which fools us young, and beggars us when old.  
'Tis not for nothing that we life pursue;  
It pays our hopes with something still that's new.'<sup>4</sup>

But Dryden, as he himself tells us,—

'Grew weary of his long-loved mistress Rhyme;  
Passion's too fierce to be in fetters bound,  
And Nature flies him like enchanted ground.'

No experiment could be more decisive; for, though he was the best writer of the heroic couplet in our language, yet the plays which, from their first appearance, have been considered finest,

<sup>1</sup>*Conquest of Granada.*

<sup>2</sup>*Indian Emperor.* Wordsworth himself never wrote anything more tenderly pathetic.

<sup>3</sup>*Maiden Queen.*      <sup>4</sup>*Aurungzebe.*

are in blank. Here his diction gets wings. The following alone would vindicate his claim as a poet:

‘Something like  
That voice, methinks I should have somewhere heard;  
But floods of woe have hurried it far off  
Beyond my ken of soul.’<sup>1</sup>

What image could be more delicately exquisite than this? —

‘I feel death rising higher still and higher,  
Within my bosom; every breath I fetch  
Shuts up my life within a shorter compass,  
*And, like the vanishing sound of bells, grows less  
And less each pulse, till it be lost in air.*’<sup>2</sup>

And this:

‘A change so swift what heart did ever feel:  
It rushed upon me like a mighty stream,  
And bore me in a moment far from shore.  
I’ve loved away myself; in one short hour  
Already am I gone an age of passion.  
Was it his youth, his valour, or success?  
These might, perhaps, be found in other men.  
’Twas that respect, that awful homage paid me;  
That fearful love which trembled in his eyes,  
And with a silent earthquake shook his soul.  
But when he spoke, what tender words he said!  
So softly that like flakes of feathered snow,  
They melted as they fell.’<sup>3</sup>

The following is nobly wrought:

‘*Berenice.* Now death draws near; a strange perplexity  
Creeps coldly on me, like a fear to die;  
Courage uncertain dangers may abate,  
But who can bear the approach of certain fate?  
*St. Catherine.* The wisest and the best some fear may show,  
And wish to stay, though they resolve to go.  
*Berenice.* As some faint pilgrim, standing on the shore,  
First views the torrent he would venture o’er,  
And then his inn upon the farther ground,  
Loath to wade through, and loather to go round:  
Then dipping in his staff, does trial make  
How deep it is, and, sighing, pulls it back:  
Sometimes, resolved to fetch his leap; and then  
Runs to the bank, but stops short again.  
So I at once  
Both heavenly faith and human fear obey;  
And feel before me in an unknown way.  
For this blest voyage I with joy prepare,  
Yet am ashamed to be a stranger there.’<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps the best of his dramatic pieces is the tragedy of *All For Love*—the only one, he informs us, written to please himself. It is in this that he recovers most of the old naturalness and energy. In the preface he says:

<sup>1</sup>*Sebastian.*

<sup>2</sup>*Rival Ladies.*

<sup>3</sup>*Spanish Friar.*

<sup>4</sup>*Royal Martyr.*

'In my style I have professed to imitate the divine Shakespcare; which that I might perform more freely, I have disincumbered myself from rhyme. . . . Yet, I hope, I may affirm, and without vanity, that, by imitating him, I have excelled myself throughout the play; and particularly, that I prefer the scene betwixt Antony and Ventidius in the first act, to anything which I have written in this kind.'

Accordingly, it is not difficult to find parts that are Shakespearian. For instance:

'Gone so soon!  
Is Death no more? He used him carelessly,  
With a familiar kindness; ere he knocked,  
Ran to the door and took him in his arms,  
As who should say, "You're welcome at all hours,  
A friend need give no warning."'

These words of Antony are at once noble and natural:

'For I am now so sunk from what I was,  
Thou find'st me at my lowest water-mark.  
The rivers that ran in and raised my fortunes  
Are all dried up, or take another course:  
What I have left is from my native spring;  
I've a heart still that swells in scorn of Fate,  
And lifts me to my banks.'

Seeing him cast down, the veteran Ventidius, who loves his general, weeps:

*Vent.* Look, emperor; this is no common dew;  
I have not wept this forty years; but now  
My mother comes afresh into my eyes;  
I cannot help her softness.

*Ant.* By heaven, he weeps! poor, good old man, he weeps!  
The big round drops course one another down  
The furrows of his cheeks. Stop them, Ventidius,  
Or I shall blush to death; they set my shame,  
That caused them, full before me.

*Vent.* I'll do my best.

*Ant.* Sure there's contagion in the tears of friends;  
See, I have caught it too. Believe me, 'tis not  
For my own griefs, but thine.'

Octavia, come to reclaim her husband, brings Antony a pardon, and is accused of basely begging it. She answers in a style worthy of a lofty soul:

'Poorly and basely I could never beg,  
Nor could my brother grant. . . .  
My hard fortune  
Subjects me still to your unkind mistakes.  
But the conditions I have brought are such,  
You need not blush to take: I love your honour,  
Because 'tis mine; it never shall be said,  
Octavia's husband was her brother's slave.  
Sir, you are free; free, even from her you loath:  
For though my brother bargains for your love,  
Makes me the price and cement of your peace,

I have a soul like yours; I cannot take  
 Your love as alms, nor beg what I deserve.  
 I'll tell my brother we are reconciled;  
 He shall draw back his troops, and you shall march  
 To rule the east: I may be dropt at Athens;  
 No matter where. I never will complain,  
 But only keep the barren name of wife,  
 And rid you of the trouble.'

The drama was not Dryden's true domain. He was too much of a dialectician and a schoolmaster. His muse was happier in the exercise of the critical faculty,—in methodical discussion, well-delivered retort, eloquence and satire. It is therefore as a satirist and a pleader that he is best known. He gives his own receipt for the first:

'How easy it is to call rogue and villain, and that wittily! but how hard to make a man appear a fool, a blockhead, or a knave, without using any of those opprobrious terms! . . . This is the mystery of that noble trade. . . . Neither is it true that this fineness of raillery is offensive: a witty man is tickled while he is hurt in this manner, and a fool feels it not. . . . There is a vast difference between the slovenly butchering of a man and the fineness of a stroke that separates the head from the body, and leaves it standing in its place.'

When he entered into the strife of political parties, he wrote *Absalom* and *Achitophel* against the Whigs. Under these names he describes the pliant and popular Duke of Monmouth, eldest-born of Charles II, and the treacherous Earl of Shaftesbury, who stirs up the son against the father. The latter, 'the false Achitophel' is the hero of the poem:

'A name to all succeeding ages curst:  
 For close designs and crooked counsels fit,  
 Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit,  
 Restless, unfixed in principle and place,  
 In power unpleas'd, impatient of disgrace:  
 A fiery soul, which, working out its way,  
 Fretted the pigmy body to decay,  
 And o'er-informed the tenement of clay. . . .  
 In friendship false, implacable in hate;  
 Resolved to ruin or to rule the state.'

Never was portrait of pen sharper than this of the Duke of Buckingham:

'A man so various that he seemed to be  
 Not one, but all mankind's epitome:  
 Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,  
 Was everything by starts and nothing long;  
 But, in the course of one revolving moon,  
 Was chemist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon;  
 Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,  
 Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.  
 Blest madman, who could every hour employ

With something new to wish or to enjoy!  
 Railing and praising were his usual themes,  
 And both, to shew his judgment, in extremes:  
 So over-violent, or over-civil,  
 That every man with him was god or devil.  
 In squandering wealth was his peculiar art;  
 Nothing went unrewarded but desert:  
 Beggared by fools, whom still he found too late,  
 He had his jest, and they had his estate.'

Poignancy atones for its severity, while discretion renders it more cutting. If he falls into virulent ribaldry, it is less the fault of the man than of the age, which spared no invective however libellous, and no allusion however coarse. His coarsest satire is levelled against attacks which were themselves brutal; as in the case of Shadwell, who is represented, in *Mac Flecknoe*, as heir to the throne of stupidity. Flecknoe,<sup>1</sup> the king of nonsense, deliberating on the choice of a worthy successor, cries:

'Tis resolved, for Nature pleads that he  
 Should only rule who most resembles me.  
 Shadwell alone my perfect image bears,  
 Mature in dulness from his tender years;  
 Shadwell alone of all my sons is he  
 Who stands confirmed in full stupidity.  
 The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,  
 But Shadwell never deviates into sense.  
 Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,  
 Strike through and make a lucid interval;  
 But Shadwell's genuine night admits no ray;  
 His rising fogs prevail upon the day.  
 Besides, his goodly fabric fills the eye,  
 And seems designed for thoughtless majesty.'

When he became a convert to Romanism, he wrote *The Hind and the Panther* in defence of his new creed. Written in the hey-day of exultation, in the interest of what he dreamed to be the winning side, his argumentative talents nowhere appear to so great advantage. The first lines, descriptive of the Romish Church, are among the most musical in the compass of poetry:

'A milk-white hind, immortal and unchanged,  
 Fed on the lawns, and in the forest ranged;  
 Without unspotted, innocent within,  
 She feared no danger, for she knew no sin.'

All the heretical sects, as beasts of prey, worry her. The English Church is—

'The Panther, sure the noblest, next the hind,  
 And fairest creature of the spotted kind;  
 Oh, could her inborn stains be washed away,  
 She were too good to be a beast of prey!'

<sup>1</sup>A scribbler who died in 1678. *Mac*, the Celtic for son.



Then he introduces the bloody Bear, an *Independent*; the quaking Hare, for the *Quakers*; then the bristled *Baptist* Boar. The reader can imagine the bitterness which envenoms the controversy.

Having no personal philosophy to develop, Dryden was soon reduced to the clothing of foreign ideas. He translated Persius, Ovid, Juvenal, Lucretius, Virgil, and Homer; but he could not — perhaps no one can — reproduce their spirit. The dawn of credulous thought can scarcely reappear in the harsh light of a learned and manly age. His version of the *Æneid* was long considered his highest glory. The nation seemed interested in the event. One gave him the different editions, another supplied him with notes, Addison furnished him with the arguments of the several books, great lords vied with one another in offering him hospitality, and, notwithstanding the inherent difficulties of the subject, he produced, says Pope, ‘the most noble and spirited translation that I know in any language.’ He also modernized several tales of the long-neglected Chaucer. But, as he worked under contract, haste availed only to dilute, and the childlike simplicity of the original is smothered in verbiage. Thus:

‘The busy larke, messenger of day,  
Saluteth in her song the morwe gray;  
And fyre Phebus riseth up so bright  
That al the orient laugheth of the light.’

How artless, yet how expressive! Now compare the modernization, which loses at once the freshness of idea and the felicity of phrase:

‘The morning lark, the messenger of day,  
Saluted in her song the morning gray;  
And soon the sun arose with beams so bright  
That all the horizon laughed to see the joyous sight.’<sup>1</sup>

He is too reflective and stringent for the delicacies of his master; too cold and solid for his self-abandoning tenderness and his graceful gossip.

Though he never wrote extensively in prose, his prefaces and dedications, which, to increase their value, usher in each of his poems and plays, have made him famous as a critic. Most of his criticism relates to the drama, with which he was very conversant. To afford a glimpse of his exact and simple manner, as well as of the spirit which he carried into art, we briefly quote from the earliest statement of his critical system. It will be seen that he

<sup>1</sup>*Fables*, consisting of stories from Chaucer and Boccaccio.

was more excellent in theory than he has proved in practice, where he alternately ventures and restrains himself, pushed in one direction by his English bias and drawn in the other by his French rules:

'The beauties of the French poesy are the beauties of a statue, but not of a man, because not animated with the soul of poesy, which is imitation of humour and passions. . . . He who will look upon their plays which have been written till these last ten years, or thereabouts, will find it an hard matter to pick out two or three passable humours amongst them. Corneille himself, their arch-poet, what has he produced except the *Liar?* and you know how it was cried up in France; but when it came upon the English stage, though well translated, . . . the most favourable to it would not put it in competition with many of Fletcher's or Ben Jonson's. . . . Their verses are to me the coldest I have ever read, . . . their speeches being so many declamations. When the French stage came to be reformed by Cardinal Richelieu, those long harangues were introduced, to comply with the gravity of a churchman. Look upon the *Cinna* and the *Pompey*; they are not so properly to be called plays as long discourses of reasons of state; and *Polyeucte*, in matters of religion is as solemn as the long stops upon our organs. Since that time it is grown into a custom, and their actors speak by the hour-glass, like our parsons. . . . I deny not but this may suit well enough with the French; for as we, who are a more sullen people, come to be diverted at our plays, so they, who are of an airy and gay temper, come thither to make themselves more serious.'<sup>1</sup>

He who began in empty mouthing, and who had gradually acquired the energy of satire, ended by acquiring the rapture of the lyric. Amidst the infirmities of age and the greatest sadness, he wrote the brilliant ode of *Alexander's Feast*, in honor of St. Cecilia's day. The hero is on his throne, his valiant captains before him, the lovely Thais by his side. Timotheus, placed on high, sings:

'Of Bacchus ever fair, and ever young.  
The jolly god in triumph comes;  
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums;  
Flushed with a purple grace  
He shows his honest face:  
Now give the hautboys breath; he comes, he comes.  
Bacchus, ever fair and young,  
Drinking joys did first ordain;  
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,  
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;  
Rich the treasure,  
Sweet the pleasure,  
Sweet is pleasure after pain.'

Moved by the stirring sounds, the monarch fights his battles over, madness rises, he defies heaven and earth. A sad air depresses him, then a tender one dissolves him in sighs, and he sinks upon the breast of the fair. Now strike the golden lyre again:

'A louder yet, and yet a louder strain.  
Break his bands of sleep asunder,

<sup>1</sup>*An Essay of Dramatic Poesy.*

And rouse him, like a rattling peal of thunder.  
 Hark, hark, the horrid sound  
 Has raised up his head,  
 As awaked from the dead,  
 And, amazed, he stares around.  
 "Revenge, revenge!" Timotheus cries;  
 "See the Furies arise;  
 See the snakes that they rear,  
 How they hiss in their hair,  
 And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!  
 Behold a ghastly band,  
 Each a torch in his hand!  
 Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain,  
 And unburied remain  
 Inglorious on the plain:  
 Give the vengeance due  
 To the valiant crew.  
 Behold how they toss their torches on high,  
 How they point to the Persian abodes,  
 And glittering temples of their hostile gods."  
 The princes applaud with a furious joy;  
 And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;  
 Thais led the way,  
 To light him to his prey,  
 And, like another Helen, fired another Troy.'

So did the bard realize the saying of his own Sebastian,—

'A setting sun  
 Should leave a track of glory in the skies.'

**Style.**—Harmonious, rapid, and vehement, pointed and condensed, with—

'The varying verse, the full-resounding line,  
 The long majestic march, and energy divine.'

Symmetrical and precise, as of one who studied rather than felt; yet uneven, as of one who was negligent of parts because confident that the good would overbalance the bad. In prose, airy and animated, easy without being feeble, and careless without being harsh; having that conversational elasticity which comes of familiarity with the drawing-room — companionship with men and women of the world.

**Rank.**—Though few eminent writers are so little read, few names are more familiar. By the suffrages of his own and succeeding generations, his place is first in the second class of English poets. Perhaps his fame would have suffered little, if he had written not one of his twenty-eight dramas. He could not produce correct representations of human nature, for his was an examining rather than a believing frame of mind; and he

wrought literature more as one apprenticed to the business than as one under the control of inspiration: he attained, however, the excellences that lie on the lower grade of the satirical, didactic, and polemic. Not to be numbered with those who have sounded the depths of soul, he is incomparable as a reasoner in verse. Pope, his imitator and admirer, has outshone him in neatness, in brilliancy, and finish, but has not approached him in flexible vigor, in fervor, or in sweep and variety of versification. 'His faults,' says Cowper, 'are numberless, and so are his beauties. His faults are those of a great man, and his beauties are such (at least sometimes) as Pope with all his touching and retouching could never equal.' Making a trade of his genius, he wrote too much; as a whole, heavy and tedious, never quite equal to his talent. Says Voltaire of him, 'An author who would have had a glory without a blemish, if he had only written the tenth part of his works.'

If he could not depict artless and delicate sentiments or arouse subtle sympathies, he had, beyond most, the gift of the right word, and this in common with the few great masters,—that the winged seeds of his thought embed themselves in the memory, and germinate there. Few have minted so many phrases that are still a part of our daily currency. For example:

- 'None but the brave deserves the fair.'
- 'Men are but children of a larger growth.'
- 'When wild in woods the noble savage ran.'
- 'Love either finds equality or makes it.'
- 'Passions in men oppressed are doubly strong.'
- 'Few know the use of life before 'tis past.'
- 'Time gives himself and is not valued.'
- 'That's empire, that which I can give away.'
- 'The greatest argument for love is love.'
- 'Why, love does all that's noble here below.'
- 'That bad thing, gold, buys all good things.'
- 'Trust in noble natures obliges them the more.'
- 'Death in itself is nothing; but we fear  
To be we know not what, we know not where.'
- 'The cause of love can never be assigned,  
'Tis in no face, but in the lover's mind.'
- 'The secret pleasure of the generous act  
Is the great mind's great bribe.'

He was the literary lion of his day; and no rustic, of any taste for letters, thought his round of sight-seeing complete without a visit to Will's coffee-house, where in a snug arm-chair, carefully placed in winter by the fireside and in summer on the balcony, sat 'glorious John,' pipe in hand, expounding the law on disputed points in literature and in politics. Happy was the young poet or university student who could boast to his admiring friends that he had got in a word, or extracted a pinch of snuff from the great man's box.

He forms the connecting link between the prose writers of the days of James I and those of Queen Anne. He gave a hand to the age before and to that which followed,—the age of solitary imagination and invention, and the age of reasoning and conversation. Pope saw him, Addison drank with him; he visited Milton, and was intimate with those who could tell him of Jonson from personal recollection.

**Character.**—His manner of life was that of a solid and judicious mind which thinks not of amusing and exciting itself, but of learning, reflecting, and judging. He had no taste for field sports, and felt more pleasure in argument than in landscape, in the rhythm of the epigram than in the melodies of birds. Though he watched the conflict of parties keenly, he did not, as did Milton, mix personally in the turmoil. Without being reserved, he was diffident, and neither would nor could in the circles of fashion cut the brilliant figure which Pope, his great disciple, made. He rose early, spent the morning in writing or reading, dined with his family, and in the afternoon repaired to Will's coffee-house, that common resort of wits, pamphleteers, poets, and critics. Says Congreve, who knew him familiarly:

'He was of a nature exceedingly humane and compassionate, ready to forgive injuries, and capable of a sincere reconciliation with those who had offended him. His friendship, where he professed, went beyond his professions. He was of a very easy, of very pleasing access: but somewhat slow, and, as it were, diffident, in his advances to others; he had that in nature which abhorred intrusion into any society whatever. He was therefore less known, and consequently his character became more liable to misapprehensions and misrepresentations.'

Yet he was conscious of his own value, and 'probably did not offer his conversation because he expected it to be solicited.' His confidence in himself amounted almost to reverence. Of *Alexander's Feast*, he said that an ode of equal merit had never been



produced and never would be. This feeling of easy superiority made him the mark for much jealous vituperation. Of their lampoons and libels, he says: 'I am vindictive enough to have repelled force by force, if I could imagine that any of them had ever reached me.' He was reproached with boasting of his intimacy with the great.

Of himself :

'My conversation is slow and dull, my humour saturnine and reserved: In short, I am none of those who endeavour to break jests in company or make repartees.'

Notwithstanding, he was a rapid composer. He says :

'Thoughts, such as they are, come crowding in so fast upon me, that my only difficulty is to chuse or to reject, to run them into verses, or to give them the other harmony of prose: I have so long studied and practiced both, that they are grown into a habit, and become familiar to me.'

Less fluent, he would have been less slovenly. Fond of splendor, he was indifferent to neatness. Faults of affectation, time in a measure corrected; but faults of negligence, never. To the last, rather than wait for the fittest word, he seized the readiest.

His reading was extensive, and his memory tenacious. Understanding was preponderant. He delighted to talk of liberty and necessity, destiny, and chance.

On the other hand, he was deficient in lofty or intense sensibility. He was a stranger to the transports of the heart. Hence, though he could describe character in the abstract, he could not embody it in the drama.

His genius matured slowly. At thirty-two he had given little, if aught, to warrant an augury of his greatness. But he grew steadily. His imagination quickened as he increased in years, and his intellect was pliable at seventy. Old age yielded, on the whole, the best of him. As every innovator must have, he had many enemies. 'More libels,' he says, 'have been written against me than almost any man now living.' Later:

'What Virgil wrote in the vigour of his age, in plenty and at ease, I have undertaken to translate in my declining years; struggling with wants, oppressed with sickness, curbed in my genius, liable to be misconstrued in all I write; and my judges, if they are not very equitable, already prejudiced against me, by the lying character which has been given them of my morals.'

He would have been less open to attack, had he been less servile to the false taste and corrupt morals of his age. As a writer for the stage, he deliberately adopted the mercantile maxim that

'He who lives to please, must please to live.'

His dedications are nauseous panegyrics. In one, he says to the Duchess of Monmouth:

'To receive the blessings and prayers of mankind, you need only be seen together. We are ready to conclude, that you are a pair of angels, sent below to make virtue amiable in your persons, or to sit to poets, when they would pleasantly instruct the age by drawing goodness in the most perfect and alluring shape of nature. . . . No part of Europe can afford a parallel to your noble Lord in masculine beauty, and in goodness of shape.'

The rest was good, and the land was pleasant. Elsewhere to her 'noble lord,' he says, doubtless with the vision of a purse of gold before him:

'You have all the advantages of mind and body, and an illustrious birth, conspiring to render you an extraordinary person. The Achilles and the Rinaldo are present in you, even above their originals; you only want a Homer or a Tasso to make you equal to them. Youth, beauty, and courage (all which you possess in the height of their perfection) are the most desirable gifts of Heaven.'

His works afford too many examples not only of abject adulation but of dissolute licentiousness. He studied filth as he studied everything, not as a pleasure but as a trade. He committed his offences with his eyes wide open. He sinned against his better knowledge. For the depravity that deliberately makes merchandise of corruption, there is no excuse. The single consolation is, that the offender shall nobly confess his error, and testify his repentance. Of one who had coarsely reprov'd him, in the preface to the *Fables* he says:

'I shall say the less of Mr. Collier, because in many things he has taxed me justly; and I have pleaded guilty to all thoughts and expressions of mine which can be truly argued of obscenity, profaneness, or immorality, and retract them. If he be my enemy, let him triumph; if he be my friend, as I have given him no personal occasion to be otherwise, he will be glad of my repentance.'

Elsewhere:

'My thoughtless youth was winged with vain desires,  
My manhood, long misled by wandering fires,  
Followed false lights; and when their glimpse was gone,  
My pride struck out new sparkles of her own.  
Such was I, such by nature still I am;  
Be Thine the glory, and be mine the shame!'

Conscious that he had been untrue to his finer possibilities, in the end he says:

'I have been myself too much of a libertine in most of my poems, which I should be well contented, if I had time, either to purge or to see them fairly burned.'

He was sceptical, yet superstitious. Like many others, he was a believer in astrology. In a letter to his sons he says:

'Towards the latter end of this month, September, Charles will begin to recover his perfect health, according to his nativity, which, casting it myself, I am sure is true, and all things hitherto have happened accordingly to the very time that I predicted them.'

His fundamental weakness was ethical. He had no unattainable standard of perfection to uplift him. He lacked the central fire of fixed principles and high resolves. Without the firmness and coherence of the moral nature, intellectual powers are as weathercocks. It should be remembered, however, that no man can wholly escape the current of his time.

**Influence.**—Whoever imprints, apparently, a new character on an age, is himself a creature of that age. Formed first by circumstances, he reacts upon them, paying with interest what society has given. So was it with Bacon, who, if born earlier, might have been a Dominican quibbler; and with Luther, who, had he anticipated, would have been lost. The first, standing on an eminence, caught and reflected the light before it was visible to the many far beneath. There would have been a Reformation, though probably later, without the assistance of the second. 'The sun illuminates the hills while it is still below the horizon; and truth is discovered by the highest minds a little before it becomes manifest to the multitude.'

Under these limitations, Dryden may be set down as the founder of a new school of poetry—a school derived chiefly from the ancient Roman, critical rather than creative, classic rather than romantic. The style peculiar to it had already been cultivated. French taste encouraged it. He, as the first autocrat in English letters, improved it, gave it authority. Pope and Johnson, in the direct line of descent, were to carry it to perfection.

He taught us to think naturally and to express forcibly. He refined our metre, and enriched our language. With a true insight into the conditions under which the maker may extend the domain of speech, he says:

'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 Latinize 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 one hand to another. I trade both with the living and the dead. . . . We have enough in England to supply our necessity; but if we will have things of magnificence

and splendor, we must get them by commerce. . . . Therefore, if I find a word in a classic author, I propose it to be naturalized by using it myself, and if the public approve of it the bill passes. But every man cannot distinguish betwixt pedantry and poetry; every man, therefore is not fit to innovate.'

More than any other, he helped to free English prose from the cloister of pedantry, and to give it the conversational suppleness of the modern world.

Finally, he has left no single work which is universally read and approved. That he has not, while he *might* have done so, points a most instructive lesson to men of intellect. Without devotion to something nobler and more abiding than the present, no great or sound literature is possible. Without an unapproachable mirage of excellence, forever receding and forever pursued, no man reaches his full or conceivable stature. A self-reliant independence is the Adam and Eve in the Paradise of duties.

## CRITICAL PERIOD: FIRST PHASE.

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### CHAPTER II.

#### FEATURES.

The literary importance of the eighteenth century lies mainly in its having wrought out a revolution begun in the seventeenth.—*Matthew Arnold.*

**Politics.**—Tory and Whig had laid aside the sword, and though party spirit ran high, were conducting the competition for power by a parley of words and measures; the first the conservative, the second the progressive element; one the steadying, the other the propelling force,—both principles essential to the advance of nations.

France had been humbled, Spain had been all but torn from the house of Bourbon in the War of the Spanish Succession, England and Scotland had been united; and, leaving their country at the height of its material prosperity, the Whigs retired in 1710, to resume their ascendancy in 1715, and to continue it without intermission till the accession of George III.

**Society.**—Authors basked in the sunshine of royal patronage. Literary merit found easy admittance into the most distinguished society and to the highest honors of the state. Servility, however, was less marked than formerly, and the period may be regarded as a transition from the early system of patronage, when books had but few readers, to the later one of professional independence, when the public became the patron.

The Revolution of 1688 had indeed secured to the nation liberty of conscience and the right of property, but public interests were endangered by the low standard of political honor. In politics, weapons were freely employed which we should now regard as in the highest degree dishonorable. The secrecy of the mails was habitually violated. Walpole, writing in 1725, confesses, without scruple, to opening the letters of a political rival.



The rich purchased their seats in Parliament, and Parliament sold its votes to the ministry.

General intelligence was scarcely more than a prophecy. The first daily paper appeared in the reign of Anne. In 1710, the papers, instead of merely communicating news as heretofore, began cautiously to take part in the discussion of political topics.

In the Restoration, the more excellent parts of human nature had disappeared, leaving but the animal; and there still existed a wretched state of public tastes and morals. Steele, who aimed at reform, said that his play of *The Lying Lover* was 'damned for its piety.' The style of speaking and writing on common topics was vitiated by slang and profanity. Literary and scientific attainments were despised as pedantic and vulgar by the fashionable of both sexes. Scandal was almost the sole topic of conversation among the ladies. Three learned words would drive them out of doors for a mouthful of fresh air. Judge of their occupations: 'Young man,' said the wife of Marlborough to Lord Melcombe, 'you come from Italy. They tell me of a new invention there called caricature drawing. Can you find me somebody that will make me a caricature of Lady Masham, describing her covered with running sores and ulcers, that I may send it to the Queen to give her a right idea of her new favorite?'

Bull-baiting was a popular amusement. In Queen Anne's time, it was performed in London regularly twice a week. Cock-fighting was the favorite game of the schoolboys, the teachers taking the runaway cocks as their perquisites. Gambling was the bane of the nobility, and among the ladies the passion was quite as strong as among men.

Fashionable hours were becoming steadily later. 'The landmarks of our fathers,' wrote Steele in 1710, 'are removed, and planted farther up in the day. . . . In my own memory, the dinner hour has crept by degrees from twelve o'clock to three. Where it will fix nobody knows.' Coffee-houses were conspicuous centres of news, politics, and fashion. Their number in 1708, fifty years after the first had been established in the metropolis, was estimated at three thousand. Drunkenness and extravagance went hand in hand among the gentry. Officers of state sat up whole nights drinking, then hastened in the morning, without sleep, to their official business. Addison, the foremost

moralist of his day, was not entirely free from this vice. 'Come, Robert,' said Walpole, the minister, to his son, 'you shall drink twice while I drink once; for I will not permit the son in his sober senses to be witness of the intoxication of his father.' In 1724, the passion had spread among all classes with the violence of an epidemic. Retailers of gin hung out painted boards, announcing that their customers could be made drunk for a penny, dead drunk for twopence, and that cellars strewn with straw would be furnished, without cost, into which they might be dragged when they had become insensible.

Punishments were brutal. In 1726, a murderess was burned alive. Prisoners were still slowly pressed to death by weights of stone or iron, or cut down, when half hung, and disembowelled.

Riots were frequent, and robberies were numerous and bold. Addison's 'Sir Roger,' when he goes to the theatre, arms his servants with cudgels. In 1712, a club of young men of the higher classes were accustomed nightly to sally out drunk into the streets, to hunt the passers-by. One of their favorite amusements, called 'tipping the lion,' was to squeeze the nose of their victim flat upon his face, and to bore out his eyes with their fingers. Among them were 'the sweaters,' who encircled their prisoner, and pricked him with swords till he sank exhausted; and 'dancing masters,' who made men caper by thrusting swords into their legs.

**Religion.**—The belief in witchcraft was still smouldering, but no longer received the sanction of the law. In 1712, the death of a suspected witch, who had been thrown into the water to see whether she would sink or swim, and who perished during the trial, was pronounced murder.

While the town rectors and the great church dignitaries were second to none in Europe in genius and learning, and occupied conspicuous social positions, the rural clergy were cringing, obsequious, and impoverished. While a high conception of duty was not unknown among them, as a whole they were unlettered and coarse, languid in zeal, but using their limited influence chiefly for good.

It was a season of conflict between the High Church party and the Dissenters, who sought to reconstruct and rationalize the theology of the Church. There was also a large amount of formal

scepticism abroad, directed against Christianity itself. But this was not the direction which the highest intellects usually took. The task which occupied them was to lighten the weight of dogma within the Church, to infuse a higher tone into the social and domestic spheres, to make men moderate in pleasure, charitable to the poor, dutiful in the relations of life, and to establish the truth of Christianity upon the basis of evidence—evidence differing in no essential respect from that required in ordinary history or science.

But religious enthusiasm was dying out—I mean that earnest realization which searches the heart and moulds the character of man. The discussion of Christian evidences is generally the sign of defective Christian life. Traces of devotional activity, however, still existed. In 1696 was formed the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge; and in 1701, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Charity schools were established and multiplied rapidly under Anne. ‘I have always looked on the institution of charity schools,’ writes Addison, ‘which of late years has so universally prevailed through the whole nation, as the glory of the age we live in.’ Societies were organized to combat the corruption that had been general since the Restoration, dividing themselves into several distinct groups, and becoming a kind of voluntary police to enforce the laws against blasphemers, drunkards, and Sabbath-breakers.

The separation of theology from politics was proceeding rapidly, and the laymen were becoming increasingly prominent in the state. A high-church writer, in 1712, complains of the efforts that were being made to ‘thrust the churchmen out of their places of power in the government.’

**Poetry.**—When a heartless cynicism is fashionable, when brilliancy is preferred to sobriety, when morality tends to a system of abstract rules, when sermons become diagrams, theorems, and corollaries,—what will be the character of poetry? Evidently, it must express the temper of the age, or it will perish still-born. It will satisfy the intellect, but starve the emotional nature. The poet will become an artist of form. Instead of strong passions, elevated motives, and sublime aspirations, he will give us critical accuracy of thought, elegance of phrase, symmetry of parts, and measured harmonies of sound.

**Pope** was its representative product, and he expresses the peculiarities of his time with singular sharpness and fidelity.

**Drama.**—The drama of the Restoration had been so outrageously immoral that the intellect of the country became ashamed of the stage, and turned its strength to cultivate other branches of literature. **Jeremy Collier**, **Steele**, and **Addison** had shamed it into something like decency, though ladies of respectability and position still hesitated to appear at the first representation of a new comedy. In style, the dramatic literature, like the general poetry of the period, was polished and artificial. Addison's tragedy of *Cato* was too cold and classical to touch the passions. The prevailing taste called for faithful and witty delineations of manners, slight and coarse comedies, gaudy spectacles of rope dancers and ballets. 'I never heard of any plays,' said Parson Adams in a novel of that day, 'fit for a Christian to read, but *Cato* and the *Conscious Lovers*, and I must own in the latter there are some things almost solemn enough for a sermon.'

**Periodical Miscellany.**—Internal repose and national wealth occasioned the rise of that middle class of respectable persons, literary idlers, who have leisure to read and money to buy books, but who wish to be entertained, not roused to think, to be gently moved, not deeply excited. This condition developed a new and peculiar kind of literature consisting of essays on the social phenomena of the time, and scraps of public and political intelligence to conciliate the ordinary readers of news. The pioneer in this department was **De Foe**, who in 1704 began a tri-weekly journal called *The Review*, published on post nights,—Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday.

It was reserved for **Steele** and **Addison**, however, to make the Miscellany a true agent of social improvement. Their object was to popularize and diffuse knowledge, to adapt every question to the capacity of the idlest reader, to characterize men and women humorously, taking minutes of their dress, air, looks, words, thoughts, desires, actions, and thus to hold the mirror up to nature, showing the very age and body of the time. Sermons veiled in pleasantry were preached on every conceivable text, from the brevity of life to the extravagance of female toilets. The end was moral health—the means was sugar-coated pills.

There is evidence that the virtue, decorum, and tone of the patient was much improved.

Light, graceful, and fastidious, as they were required to be, these papers never really probe anything to the bottom, never seek first principles, never contemplate the great darkness of what we are, whence we are, and whither we tend, but aim only to discover moral maxims and motives suitable and sufficient to guide the practical conduct of life, and to enforce those plain duties to God and man which are a pressing anxiety with all strong natures. Perhaps that is better. Metaphysical speculation is empyrean rarity or summer's dust. Devils may dispute of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and Fate.

**The Novel.**—Legends of saints had amused the middle ages, and the romances of chivalry had been popular in the seventeenth century; but a new social form was now developing, in which people desired to see themselves and to talk of themselves. The world of legend and of romantic grandeur had grown dim and unreal, and a fiction was wanted that, continuing the task of the *Miscellany*, should be domestic and practical, telling the story of common life only. This defines the English *Novel*, as the word is now understood. Its precursor was **De Foe**, who in 1719 led the way with his famous *Robinson Crusoe*, a novel of incident, the never-ceasing delight of children.

**Theology.**—Scepticism had shown itself in the seventeenth century, and divines had felt the necessity of justifying their faith. Polemic thought, when it did not assume the form of controversy between rival sects of Christians, was a conflict between Christianity and *Deism*, a doctrine which admits the existence of a Deity and the religious convictions of the moral consciousness, but denies the specific revelation which Christianity affirms. It was sought to prove, on the one hand, that natural religion was sufficient; on the other, that revealed religion was little more than this, accredited by historic proofs and sanctioned by a rational system of rewards and punishments. *Christianity not Mysterious, The Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature*, indicate the tenor of attack. *Reasonableness of Christianity, Evidences of Christianity*, indicate the tenor of defence. The results were an immeasurable overbalance of good.



**Science.**—The national intellect had been turned to the study of physical science with an intensity hitherto unknown. It is to be observed, however, that infidels were not then permitted to consider scientists their natural allies. Newton had devoted himself to the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy. Boyle, the father of chemistry, had established a course of lectures for the defence of Christianity. Nearly all the early members of the Royal Society were ardent believers in revelation. When Collins, a Deist, ascribed the decay of witchcraft to freethinking, Bentley, a devout scientist, retorted that it was due, not to freethinkers, but to the Royal Society and to the scientific conception of the universe which that society had spread.

**Résumé.**—In politics, an age of material eminence; in literature, an age of formal correctness. Philosophy leaned to materialism. The public temper was adventurous, uncertain, unbelieving. Pope was the characteristic product of its poetry; Addison, of its general prose,—the artist of manners; Swift, of its satire,—scorning, hating, and hated. Without pathos or ‘fine frenzy,’ style was neat, clear, epigrammatic. The relative position of prose was never higher than at this date.

The reign of Queen Anne (1702–1714) was long regarded as the *Augustan Age of English Literature*, on account of its supposed resemblance in intellectual wealth to the reign of the Emperor Augustus. It is now accorded a secondary praise, though conceded to be unrivalled perhaps within its own region,—that of clear thinking and accurate expression,—art that is neither inspired by enthusiastic genius nor employed on majestic themes.

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## STEELE.

In speculation, he was a man of piety and honor; in practice, he was much of the rake, and a little of the swindler.—*Macaulay*.

**Biography.**—Born in Dublin, in 1675, but of English parentage. Sent to Charter-House School, London, where he found Addison. Between these two was formed an intimacy the most memorable in literature. After studying at Oxford, enlisted in the Guards as a private, and was in consequence disinherited.

Promoted to the rank of captain, he plunged into the vices and follies of the day, dicing himself into a sponging-house or drinking himself into a fever. Wrote, became a popular man of the town, and was employed by the Whig government to write *The Gazette*. Started a periodical miscellany, lost his appointment by the retirement of his party from office, but continued his character of essayist. Obtained a seat in Parliament, lost it, was knighted by George I, and received a place in the royal household. Always in trouble by his reckless behavior, his pecuniary difficulties increasing, he retired, by the indulgence of the mortgagee, to a seat in Wales left him by his second wife, and there died in 1729.

**Writings.**—His principles were better than his conduct. Punished by conscience, he made an effort to reform himself, and wrote *The Christian Hero*, which contains some noble sentiments, but exercised little influence on the author.

*The Funeral*, *The Tender Husband*, and *The Conscious Lovers* are dramas, all of which were successful. The last is the best, which is far from good, though it brought the author a large sum. These were the first comedies written expressly with a view, not to imitate manners, but to reform them. The characters act less from individual motives than from general rules, and lack the grace of sincerity.

The *Tatler* (1709), suggested by his employment as gazetteer; a tri-weekly sheet devoted in part to foreign intelligence and in part to the manners of the age. The *Spectator* (1711), a daily, and, like the *Tatler*, a news organ, a censor of manners, a teacher of public taste, and an exponent of English feeling; suspended in 1712, and resumed in 1714. The *Guardian*, also a daily, begun in 1712. Of the first, there were two hundred and seventy-one papers; of the second, six hundred and thirty-five; of the third, one hundred and seventy-five. In these enterprises, Steele was very largely assisted by Addison, who furnished for the *Tatler* one-sixth, for the *Spectator* about three-sevenths, and for the *Guardian* one-third, of the whole quantity of matter.

A passage or two will suggest the spirit and manner of these famous papers. From the *Tatler*:

<sup>1</sup>The first sense of sorrow I ever knew was upon the death of my father, at which time I was not quite five years of age; but was rather amazed at what all the house

meant, than possessed with a real understanding why nobody was willing to play with me. I remember I went into the room where his body lay, and my mother sat weeping alone by it. I had my battledoor in my hand, and fell a-beating the coffin, and calling "Papa," for I know not how I had some slight idea that he was locked up there. My mother caught me in her arms, and transported beyond all patience of the silent grief she was before in, she almost smothered me in her embrace, and told me, in a flood of tears, papa could not hear me, and would play with me no more, for they were going to put him under ground, whence he could never come to me again. She was a very beautiful woman, of a noble spirit, and there was a dignity in her grief amidst all the wildness of her transport, which methought struck me with an instinct of sorrow, which, before I was sensible what it was to grieve, seized my very soul, and has made pity the weakness of my heart ever since. The mind in infancy is, methinks, like the body in embryo, and receives impressions so forcible that they are as hard to be removed by reason as any mark with which a child is born to be taken away by any future application.'

### From the *Spectator*:

'M. St. Evremond has concluded one of his essays with affirming that the last sighs of a handsome woman are not so much for the loss of her life as of her beauty. Perhaps this raillery is pursued too far, yet it is turned upon a very obvious remark, that woman's strongest passion is for her own beauty, and that she values it as her favorite distinction. From hence it is that all arts which pretend to improve or preserve it meet with so general a reception among the sex. To say nothing of many false helps and contraband wares of beauty which are daily vended in this great mart, there is not a maiden gentlewoman of a good family in any country of South Britain who has not heard of the virtues of May-dew, or is unfurnished with some receipt or other in favor of her complexion; and I have known a physician of learning and sense, after eight years' study in the University, and a course of travels in most countries in Europe, owe the first raising of his fortunes to a cosmetic wash.

This has given me occasion to consider how so universal a disposition in woman-kind, which springs from a laudable motive, the desire of pleasing, and proceeds upon an opinion not altogether groundless, that nature may be helped by art, may be turned to their advantage. And, methinks, it would be an acceptable service to take them out of the hands of quacks and pretenders, and to prevent their imposing on themselves, by discovering to them the *true art and secret of preserving beauty*.

In order to do this, before I touch upon it directly, it will be necessary to lay down a few preliminary maxims, viz:

That no woman can be handsome by the force of features alone, any more than she can be witty only by the help of speech.

That pride destroys all symmetry and grace, and affectation is a more terrible enemy to fine faces than the small-pox.

That no woman is capable of being beautiful, who is not incapable of being false.

And, that what would be odious in a friend, is deformity in a mistress.

From these few principles thus laid down, it will be easy to prove that the true art of assisting beauty consists in embellishing the whole person by the proper ornaments of virtue and commendable qualities. By this help alone it is that those who are the favorite works of nature, or, as Mr. Dryden expresses it, the porcelain clay of human-kind, become animated, and are in a capacity of exerting their charms, and those who seem to have been neglected by her, like models wrought in haste, are capable in a great measure of finishing what she has left imperfect.

It is, methinks, a low and degrading idea of that sex which was created to refine the joys, and soften the cares of humanity, to consider them merely as objects of sight. This is abridging them of the natural extent of their power, to put them on a level with the pictures at Kneller's. How much nobler is the contemplation of beauty, heightened by virtue, and commanding our esteem and love, while it draws our observation! How faint and spiritless are the charms of a coquette, when compared with the loveliness of Sophronia's innocence, piety, good humor, and truth; virtues which add a new softness

to her sex, and even beautify her beauty! That agreeableness which must otherwise have appeared no longer in the modest virgin is now preserved in the tender mother, the prudent friend, and the faithful wife. Colours artfully spread upon canvas may entertain the eye, but not affect the heart; and she who takes no care to add to the natural graces of her person any excelling qualities, may be allowed to amuse as a picture, but not to triumph as a beauty.'

Estimate the civilization of an individual or a people by the prevailing tone of feeling and opinion with regard to womanhood.

**Style.**—Like the man himself,—easy, familiar, vivacious, and humane, mingling good sense and earnestness with merriment and burlesque.

**Rank.**—He excelled as a satirist, a humorist, and a storyteller, who must, like the poet, be born. He had a knowledge of the world, and a dramatic skill by which the serials profited largely. Some of his papers equal anything Addison ever wrote. Occupying a more elevated plane than many of his contemporaries, he is paled in his powers by the overshadowing presence of his illustrious friend. His writings have been compared to those light wines which, though deficient in body and flavor, are yet a pleasant small drink, if not kept too long or carried too far.

**Character.**—So good-natured that it was impossible to hate him, and difficult to be seriously angry with him; so rollicking and improvident that it was impossible to respect him; of sweet temper, of noble aspiration, but of strong passions and of weak principles; inculcating what was right and doing what was wrong; spending his life in resolving and re-resolving, then dying without carrying into effect his resolution. An irregular thinker, as well an irregular liver.

**Influence.**—His aim in projecting the *Tatler* does not appear to have been higher than to publish a paper containing the foreign news, notices of theatrical representations, the literary gossip of the clubs, remarks on current topics of fashion, compliments to beauties, satires on noted sharpers, and criticisms on popular preachers. He did much to ennoble the prevalent conceptions of female character. While his purpose (more or less vaguely realized) was reformatory and corrective, his service was chiefly indirect, in calling to the support and development of his enterprises Addison, to whom it was reserved to make the periodical a true revolutionary power in literature and society.

What shall we expect of a man who forever gathers the pleasures that lie on the border-land of evil, tearfully casts them away, then recklessly gathers them again?

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## ADDISON.

He lived in abundance, activity, and honors, wisely and usefully.—*Taine*.

**Biography.**—The son of an English dean, born at Milston, in 1672. Learned his rudiments in the schools of his father's neighborhood, and was then sent to Charter-House, London. Entered Oxford at the age of fifteen, where he was distinguished by the delicacy of his feelings, by the shyness of his manners, by the assiduity with which he often prolonged his studies far into the night, by his knowledge of the Latin poets, and by his skill in Latin versification. Leaving the University in the summer of 1699, he travelled long in the two most polished countries in the world,—France and Italy, to prepare himself for the diplomatic service of the Crown, and to perfect his tastes by contact with the elegance and refinements of life and art. His pension stopped by the death of William III, he was obliged to return to England, hard pressed by pecuniary difficulties. But his poem on Blenheim quickly placed him in the first rank of the Whigs, and again started him on a brilliant and prosperous career. Became a member of Parliament, but lacked the ready resource, 'the small change,' as he himself expressed it, of an effective parliamentary orator. Married Lady Warwick in 1716, a beautiful, imperious woman, with more pride of rank than sincerity of character, whom he is said to have first known by becoming tutor to her son. She probably took him on terms like those on which a Turkish princess is espoused, to whom the Sultan is reported to say: 'Daughter, I give thee this man for thy slave.' The marriage neither found nor made them equal, and he was glad to escape from the chilling splendor of Holland House to the more congenial society of the club-room, where he could enjoy a laugh, a smoke, and a bottle of claret. Rose to his highest elevation in 1717, being made Secretary of State,—an elevation due to his popularity, his stainless probity, and his literary fame. Unequal



to the duties of his place by reason of his diffidence and fastidiousness, he was forced to resign, and retired to literary occupations, with a pension of fifteen hundred pounds. In the office, says Pope, he could not issue an order without losing his time in quest of fine expressions. Many years seemed to be before him, and he meditated many works—a tragedy on the death of Socrates, a translation of the Psalms, and a treatise on the evidences of Christianity—but the fatal complaint of asthma, aggravated by dropsy, terminated his life on the 17th of June, 1719. He was buried in the Abbey at dead of night, an eminent Tory leading the procession by torchlight round the shrine of Saint Edward and the graves of the Plantagenets, to the chapel of Henry VII.

**Writings.**—*Address to Dryden* (1694), his first attempt in English verse. The *Campaign, or Victory of Blenheim*, whose chief merit consists in the praise of those qualities which make a general truly great,—energy, sagacity, serene firmness, and military science, a manly rejection of the traditional custom of celebrating, in heroes, strength of muscle and skill in fence. *Cato* (1713), a tragedy, and the noblest production of his genius; a classic play, observing the unities strictly and avoiding all admixture of comedy; applauded by both political parties,—the Whigs cheering the frequent allusions to liberty, as a satire on the Tories; and the Tories echoing the cheer, to show that the satire was unfelt. During a whole month, it was performed to overflowing houses; but its representation was too far removed from any state probable or possible in human life to sustain itself when unsupported by the emulation of factious praise. Exciting neither joy nor sorrow, it is replete with noble sentiments in noble language, such as the reader must wish to impress upon his memory, as in the following lines from Cato's soliloquy:

'The stars shall fade away, the sun himself  
Grow dim with age, and Nature sink in years;  
But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,  
Unhurt amid the war of elements,  
The wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds.'

His *Hymns* are songs of adoration and prayer, fervent, tender, and calm. The serene rapture of his soul's Sabbath shines in these star-like verses:

'Soon as the evening shades prevail,  
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,

And, nightly to the list'ning earth,  
 Repeats the story of her birth:  
 While all the stars that round her burn,  
 And all the planets in their turn,  
 Confirm the tidings as they roll,  
 And spread the truth from pole to pole.  
 What though, in solemn silence, all  
 Move round the dark terrestrial ball?  
 What though no real voice, nor sound,  
 Amid their radiant orbs be found?  
 In Reason's ear they all rejoice,  
 And utter forth a glorious voice;  
 Forever singing as they shine,  
 "The hand that made us is divine."

*Essays*, being contributions to the *Spectator* chiefly, and in part to the *Tatler*, the *Guardian*, and the *Freeholder* (1715), a political journal. Their aim was primarily to instruct; secondarily, to please. For the literary lounge, there were comic sketches of society, exposures of social follies, in letters or allegories; for the novel-reader, stories, portraits of character woven into interesting narratives; for the sage and serious, essays on the *Immortality of the Soul*, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, critical papers on *Paradise Lost*, etc. All subjects were discussed on which party spirit had produced no diversities of sentiment, the object being to render instruction pleasing, to widen the circle of readers, and to accomplish a social regeneration without inflicting a wound. Addison is the *Spectator*.

For the first time, duty was taught without pretension or effort, and pleasure was made subservient to reason. Take his dissection of a beau's brain as an instance of his mode:

"The *pineal* gland, which many of our modern philosophers suppose to be the seat of the soul, smelt very strong of essence and orange-flower water, and was encompassed with a kind of horny substance, cut into a thousand little faces or mirrors, which were imperceptible to the naked eye, insomuch that the soul, if there had been any here, must have been always taken up in contemplating her own beauties.

We observed a large antrum or cavity in the *sinciput*, that was filled with ribbons, lace, and embroidery. . . . There was a large cavity on each side of the head, which I must not omit. That on the right side was filled with fictions, flatteries, and falsehoods, vows, promises, and protestations: that on the left, with oaths and imprecations. There issued out a duct from each of these cells, which ran into the root of the tongue, where both joined together, and passed forward in one common duct to the tip of it. We discovered several little roads or canals running from the ear into the brain, and took particular care to trace them out through their several passages. One of them extended itself to a bundle of sonnets and little musical instruments. Others ended in several bladders which were filled either with wind or froth. But the large canal entered into a great cavity of the skull, from whence there went another canal into the tongue. This great cavity was filled with a kind of spongy substance, which the French anatomists call *gallimatias*, and the English nonsense. . . .

We did not find anything very remarkable in the eye, saving only, that the *musculi*

*amatorii*, or, as we may translate it into English, the *ogling muscles*, were very much worn and decayed with use; whereas, on the contrary, the elevator, or the muscle which turns the eye towards heaven, did not appear to have been used at all.'

Or his instructions on the manipulation of a fan:

'The ladies who carry fans under me are drawn up twice a day in my great hall, where they are instructed in the use of their arms, and exercised by the following words of command: Handle your fans, Unfurl your fans, Discharge your fans, Ground your fans, Recover your fans, Flutter your fans. When my female regiment is drawn up in array, with every one her weapon in her hand, upon my giving the word to Handle their fans, each of them shakes her fan at me with a smile, then gives her right-hand woman a tap upon the shoulder, then presses her lips with the extremity of her fan, then lets her arms fall in easy motion, and stands in readiness to receive the next word of command. All this is done with a close fan, and is generally learned in the first week.

The next motion is that of unfurling the fan, in which are comprehended several little flirts and vibrations, as also gradual and deliberate openings, with many voluntary fallings asunder in the fan itself, that are seldom learned under a month's practice. This part of the exercise pleases the spectators more than any other, as it discovers, on a sudden, an infinite number of cupids, garlands, altars, birds, beasts, rainbows, and the like agreeable figures, that display themselves to view, whilst every one in the regiment holds a picture in her hand.

Upon my giving the word to Discharge their fans, they give one general crack that may be heard at a considerable distance when the wind sits fair. This is one of the most difficult parts of the exercise, but I have several ladies with me, who at their first entrance could not give a pop loud enough to be heard at the farther end of the room, who can now discharge a fan in such a manner, that it shall make a report like a pocket-pistol. I have likewise taken care (in order to hinder young women from letting off their fans in wrong places, or on unsuitable occasions) to show upon what subject the crack of a fan may come in properly: I have likewise invented a fan, with which a girl of sixteen, by the help of a little wind, which is enclosed about one of the largest sticks, can make as loud a crack as a woman of fifty with an ordinary fan.

When the fans are thus discharged, the word of command, in course, is to Ground their fans. This teaches a lady to quit her fan gracefully when she throws it aside in order to take up a pack of cards, adjust a curl of hair, replace a falling pin, or apply herself to any other matter of importance. This part of the exercise, as it only consists in tossing a fan with an air upon a long table (which stands by for that purpose), may be learned in two days' time as well as in a twelvemonth.

When my female regiment is thus disarmed, I generally let them walk about the room for some time; when, on a sudden (like ladies that look upon their watches after a long visit), they all of them hasten to their arms, catch them up in a hurry, and place themselves in their proper stations upon my calling out, Recover your fans. This part of the exercise is not difficult, provided a woman applies her thoughts to it.

The fluttering of the fan is the last, and indeed the master-piece of the whole exercise; but if a lady does not mis-spend her time, she may make herself mistress of it in three months. I generally lay aside the dog-days and the hot time of the summer for the teaching this part of the exercise; for as soon as ever I pronounce, Flutter your fans, the place is filled with so many zephyrs and gentle breezes as are very refreshing in that season of the year, though they might be dangerous to ladies of a tender constitution in any other.

There is an infinite variety of motions to be made use of in the flutter of a fan. There is the angry flutter, the modest flutter, the timorous flutter, the confused flutter, the merry flutter, and the amorous flutter. Not to be tedious, there is scarce any motion in the mind which does not produce a suitable agitation in the fan; insomuch, that if I only see the fan of a disciplined lady, I know very well whether she laughs, frowns, or blushes.'

This gaiety is grave. Addison, who could rail so charmingly,

was penetrated by the presence of the Invisible. He often chose for his promenade gloomy Westminster Abbey, with its many reminders of final dissolution and the dark future:

‘I entertained myself with the digging of a grave; and saw in every shovelful of it that was thrown up, the fragment of a bone or skull, intermixt with a kind of fresh mouldering earth, that some time or other had a place in the composition of an human body.

When I look upon the tombs of the great, every emotion of envy dies in me; when I read the epitaphs of the beautiful, every inordinate desire goes out; when I meet with the grief of parents upon a tombstone, my heart melts with compassion; when I see the tomb of the parents themselves, I consider the vanity of grieving for those whom we must quickly follow. When I see kings lying by those who deposed them, when I consider rival wits placed side by side, or the holy men that divided the world with their contests and disputes, I reflect with sorrow and astonishment on the little competitions, factions, and debates of mankind. When I read the several dates of the tombs, of some that died yesterday, and some six hundred years ago, I consider that great day when we shall all of us be contemporaries, and make our appearance together.’

He had the grand imagination of the Northern races, which can be satisfied only with the sight of what is beyond. The noble *Vision of Mirza* is an epitome of his poetry and his prose:

‘On the fifth day of the moon, which, according to the custom of my forefathers, I always keep holy, after having washed myself and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hills of Bagdat, in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer. As I was here airing myself on the tops of the mountains, I fell into a profound contemplation on the vanity of human life; and passing from one thought to another, “Surely,” said I, “man is but a shadow, and life is a dream.” Whilst I was thus musing, I cast my eyes towards the summit of a rock that was not far from me, where I discovered one in the habit of a shepherd, with a little musical instrument in his hand. As I looked upon him, he applied it to his lips, and began to play upon it. The sound of it was exceedingly sweet, and wrought into a variety of tunes that were inexpressibly melodious, and altogether different from anything I had ever heard. They put me in mind of those heavenly airs that are played to the departed souls of good men upon their first arrival in paradise, to wear out the impressions of the last agonies, and qualify them for the pleasures of that happy place. My heart melted away in secret raptures.

I had been often told that the rock before me was the haunt of a genius, and that several had been entertained with music who had passed by it, but never heard that the musician had before made himself visible. When he had raised my thoughts by those transporting airs which he played, to taste the pleasures of his conversation, as I looked upon him like one astonished, he beckoned to me, and by the waving of his hand, directed me to approach the place where he sat. . . .

He then led me to the highest pinnacle of the rock, and placing me on the top of it, “Cast thine eyes eastward,” said he, “and tell me what thou seest.” “I see,” said I, “a huge valley, and a prodigious tide of water rolling through it.” “The valley that thou seest,” said he, “is the vale of misery, and the tide of water that thou seest, is part of the great tide of eternity.” “What is the reason,” said I, “that the tide I see rises out of a thick mist at one end, and again loses itself in a thick mist at the other?” “What thou seest,” said he, “is that portion of eternity which is called Time, measured out by the sun, and reaching from the beginning of the world to its consummation. Examine now,” said he, “this sea that is bounded with darkness at both ends, and tell me what thou discoverest in it.” “I see a bridge,” said I, “standing in the midst of the tide.” “The bridge thou seest,” said he, “is Human Life: consider it attentively.” Upon a more leisurely survey of it, I found it consisted of threescore and ten entire arches, with several broken arches, which, added to those that were entire, made up the number to



about a hundred. As I was counting the arches, the genius told me that this bridge consisted at first of a thousand arches, but that a great flood swept away the rest, and left the bridge in the ruinous condition I now beheld it. "But tell me further," said he, "what thou discoverest on it." "I see multitudes of people passing over it," said I, "and a black cloud hanging on each end of it." As I looked more attentively, I saw several of the passengers dropping through the bridge into the great tide that flowed beneath it; and upon further examination, perceived there were innumerable trap-doors that lay concealed in the bridge, which the passengers no sooner trod upon but they fell through them into the tide and immediately disappeared. These hidden pitfalls were set very thick at the entrance of the bridge, so that throngs of people no sooner broke through the cloud, but many of them fell into them. They grew thinner toward the middle, but multiplied and lay closer together towards the ends of the arches that were entire.

There were indeed some persons, but their number was very small, that continued a kind of hobbling march on the broken arches, but fell through one after another, being quite tired and spent with so long a walk. . . . My heart was filled with a deep melancholy to see several dropping unexpectedly in the midst of mirth and jollity, and catching at everything that stood by them to save themselves. Some were looking up towards the heavens in a thoughtful posture, and, in the midst of a speculation, stumbled and fell out of sight. Multitudes were very busy in the pursuit of bubbles that glittered in their eyes and danced before them; but often when they thought themselves within the reach of them, their footing failed, and down they sank. . . .

I here fetched a deep sigh. "Alas," said I, "man was made in vain!—how is he given away to misery and mortality!—tortured in life, and swallowed up in death!" The genius being moved with compassion towards me, bade me quit so uncomfortable a prospect. "Look no more," said he, "on man in the first stage of his existence, in his setting out for eternity, but cast thine eye on that thick mist into which the tide bears the several generations of mortals that fall into it." I directed my sight as I was ordered, and,—whether or no the good genius strengthened it with any supernatural force, or dissipated part of the mist that was before too thick for the eye to penetrate,—I saw the valley opening at the former end, and spreading forth into an immense ocean, that had a huge rock of adamant running through the midst of it, and dividing it into two equal parts. The cloud still rested on one half of it, insomuch that I could discover nothing in it, but the other appeared to me a vast ocean planted with innumerable islands that were covered with fruits and flowers, and interwoven with a thousand little shining seas that ran among them. I could see persons dressed in glorious habits, with garlands upon their heads, passing among the trees, lying down by the sides of fountains, or resting on beds of flowers, and could hear a confused harmony of singing-birds, falling waters, human voices, and musical instruments. Gladness grew in me upon the discovery of so delightful a scene. I wished for the wings of an eagle that I might fly away to those happy seats, but the genius told me there was no passage to them except through the Gates of Death that I saw opening every moment upon the bridge. "The islands," said he, "that lie so fresh and green before thee, and with which the whole face of the ocean appears spotted as far as thou canst see, are more in number than the sands on the sea-shore; there are myriads of islands behind those which thou here discoverest, reaching further than thine eye, or even thine imagination, can extend itself. These are the mansions of good men after death, who, according to the degree and kinds of virtue in which they excelled, are distributed among these several islands, which abound with pleasures of different kinds and degrees, suitable to the relishes and perfections of those who are settled in them. Every island is a paradise accommodated to its respective inhabitants. Are not these, O Mirza! habitations worth contending for? Does life appear miserable, that gives thee opportunities of earning such a reward? Is death to be feared, that will convey thee to so happy an existence? Think not man was made in vain, who has such an eternity preserved for him." I gazed with inexpressible pleasure on these happy islands. At length, said I: "Shew me now, I beseech thee, the secrets that be hid under those dark clouds which cover the ocean on the other side of the rock of adamant." The genius making me no answer, I turned about to address myself to him a second time, but I found that he had left me. I then turned again to the



vision which I had been so long contemplating, but instead of the rolling tide, the arched bridge, and the happy islands, I saw nothing but the long hollow valley of Bagdat, with oxen, sheep, and camels grazing upon the sides of it.'

**Style.**—Luminous, graceful, vivid, elegant, familiar, and even, never blazing into unexpected splendor; the exact words, the clear contrasts, the harmonious periods, of classical refinement and finish, happy inventions threaded by the most amiable irony. His poems — *Cato* and the *Hymns* excepted — regular and frigid, like the rule-and-compass poetry of Pope.

**Rank.**—A public favorite, an unrivalled satirist. The most charming of talkers, an unsullied statesman, a model of pure and elegant English, a consummate painter of human nature, and the greatest of English essayists, occupying a place in English literature only second to that of its great masters. A polished shaft in the temple of thought, whose workmanship is more striking than the weight supported.

**Character.**—Without taint of perfidy, of cowardice, of cruelty, of ingratitude, or of envy; satirical without abuse, tempering ridicule with a tender compassion for all that is frail, and a profound reverence for all that is sublime. The greatest and most salutary reform of public morals and tastes ever effected by any satirist, he accomplished without a personal lampoon.

Himself a Whig, he was described by the bitterest Tories as a gentleman of wit and virtue, in whose friendship many persons of both parties were happy, and whose name ought not to be mixed up with factious squabbles.

In the heat of controversy, no outrage could provoke him to a retaliation unworthy of a Christian and a gentleman. With a boundless power of abusing men, he never used it. His modesty amounted to bashfulness. He once rose in debate, in the House of Commons, but could not conquer his diffidence, and ever after remained silent. As an Oxford student, he was gentle and meditative, loving solitary walks under the elms that fringe the banks of the Cherwell. Is it not prophetic — a commentary in itself — that he loved the quietness of nature? May we not hence expect the music of long cadenced and tranquil phrases, the measured harmonies of noble images, and the grave sweetness of moral sentiments?

He stood fast by the altar of worship. God was his loving

friend, who had tenderly watched over his cradle, who had preserved his youth, and richly blessed his manhood. His favorite psalm was that which represents the Deity under the endearing image of a Shepherd. On his death-bed, he called himself to a strict account, sent for Gay, and asked pardon for an injury which it was not even suspected that he had committed; sent for young Warwick, to whom he had been tutor, and whom he had vainly endeavored to reclaim from an irregular life; told him, when he desired to hear his last injunction, 'I have sent for you that you may see how a Christian can die.'

**Influence.**—Seen best in the purpose which inspired his papers. 'The great and only end of these speculations,' says Addison, in a number of the *Spectator*, 'is to banish vice and ignorance out of the territories of Great Britain.' He was a successful reformer. He made morality fashionable, and it remained in fashion. The Puritans had divorced elegance from virtue—he reconciled them; genius was still thought to have some natural connection with profligacy—he divorced them; pleasure was subservient to passion—he made it subservient to reason:

'It was said of Socrates that he brought Philosophy down from heaven to inhabit among men; and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me, that I have brought Philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables, and in coffee-houses.'

His essays are, directly or indirectly, moral—rules of propriety, precepts on when to speak, when to be silent, how to refuse, how to comply; reprimands to thoughtless women, raillery against fashionable young men, a portrait of an honest man, attacks against the conceit of rank, epigrams on the frivolity of etiquette, advice to families, consolations to the sorrowing, reflections on God, the future life.

A good and happy man, he scattered freely the blessings of a kind and generous nature. His satire, always directed against every form of social offence, was of that genial kind which, wooing the reader along a sunny path, awakens attention to his faults without friction or irritation. He was the first to make of prose a fine art, and elegant culture has ever since found constant expression in prose.

Human immortality is of three kinds: objective in God—the immortality of conscious existence; subjective in the minds of

men—the immortality of fame; subjective in the life of the world—the immortality of energy, energy that expends itself in good works, and, by the natural transmission of force, lives to perish never. These three were the inheritance of Addison, and are possible to few; the last is the privilege of all. No particles of him will ever be lost. Ever since he died there has been a growth of the Christ-like. The seeds he dropped took root in the soul of man, have grown apace, flowering every spring, fruiting every autumn, spreading in the very air the odor of the bloom and the flavor of the fruit. No good thing is lost. Forty-four years after his death, the Council of Constance ordered the bones of Wycliffe to be dug up and burned. The vultures of the law took what little they could find, burned it, and cast the ashes into the Swift, a little brook running hard by, and thought they had made away with both his bones and his doctrines. How does it turn out? The historian says: ‘The brook took them into the Avon, the Avon into the Severn, the Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean; and thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblems of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over.’<sup>1</sup>

You and I may not have much intellectual power, our thought may never fill the world’s soul; but, if we have stimulated a generous wish or a noble aspiration, if we have ever furnished a medium in which handsome things may be projected and performed,—if we have added one leaf to the tree of humanity, one blossom to its wealth of bloom, or aught to its harvest of fruit, we may rely upon the eternal law that neither things present nor things to come can deprive these outgoing particles of their immortality. More fitting and enduring epitaph than this Addison could not have: ‘He lived wisely and usefully.’

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I, p. 203.

## DE FOE.

His imagination was that of a man of business, not of an artist, crammed, and as it were jammed down with facts. He tells them as they come to him, without arrangement or style, like a conversation. . . . \*Never was such a sense of the real before or since.—*Taine*.

**Biography.**—Born in 1661, the son of a London butcher named Foe. Disliking the family name, he added a prefix to suit his own taste. Studied five years, at a Dissenters' academy, for the Presbyterian ministry. Joined the Monmouth insurrection, and escaped hanging or transportation. Became a hosier, and failed. Became a merchant-adventurer, visiting Spain and Portugal, and absconded from his creditors in 1692. Subsequently paid their entire claims, when legally relieved of the obligation to do so. Became an accountant under William III, but lost his appointment in 1699 by suppression of the Glass Duty. Became a tile-maker, and lost three thousand pounds in the undertaking. Explains in 1705, 'How, with a numerous family and no help but his own industry, he had forced his way with undiscouraged diligence through a sea of misfortunes.' Writes a pamphlet against the High Church party, is misunderstood, fined, pilloried, his ears cut off, imprisoned two years,—charity preventing his wife and six children from dying of hunger during his imprisonment. Caricatured, robbed, and slandered, he withdrew from politics, and at fifty-five, poor and burdened, turned to fiction. Wrote in prose, in verse, on all subjects, in all two hundred and fifty-four works! and, struck down with apoplexy, died in 1731, penniless, insolvent, immortal.

**Appearance.**—Under order of arrest on the charge of sedition, he was described by the *Gazette* of January, 1702, as 'a middle-sized spare man, about forty years old, of a brown complexion, and dark brown hair, though he wears a wig, having a hook nose, a sharp chin, grey eyes, and a large mole near his mouth.'

**Writings.**—*True-born Englishman* (1701), a poetical satire on the foreigners, and a defence of King William and the Dutch. Its sale was almost unexampled; eighty thousand pirated copies were sold on the streets. Tuneless and homely, it shows the

ability of its author to reason forcibly in rhyme. The opening lines are characteristic:

‘Wherever God erects a house of prayer,  
The devil always builds a chapel there;  
And ’twill be found upon examination,  
The latter has the largest congregation.’

*The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (1702), a work wherein he, ‘himself a Dissenter,’ ironically recommends the stake and the gallows. Neither Whig nor Tory could understand De Foe’s irony; it was too subtle or obscure, and the work was voted a libel on the nation. The author was condemned to pay a fine, was set in the pillory, and imprisoned. Confined in Newgate, he commenced the *Review*, designed to treat of news, foreign and domestic; of politics, English and European; of trade, particular and universal. Realizing that the age, naturally averse to anything serious, would not read unless it could be diverted, he skilfully instituted a Scandal Club, which discussed questions in divinity, morals, war, trade, poetry, love, marriage, drunkenness, and gaming. Thus it is easy to see that the *Review* pointed the way to the *Tatler*.

*Robinson Crusoe*, a novel of adventure. Perhaps the most widely diffused and the most eagerly read of English productions. As long as there are boys and girls, it will continue to find devoted readers. ‘Nobody,’ observed Johnson, ‘ever laid it down without wishing it were longer.’

*Journal of the Great Plague in London*, a description of sights, incidents, and persons, as observed by an assumed shop-keeper. Dr. Mead, a famous physician, appealed to it for medical purposes, and it has more than once passed for a genuine history.

*The Memoirs of a Cavalier*, so plausible, so natural, so real, that Lord Chatham was deceived into recommending it as the most authentic account of the Civil War.

*True Relation of the Apparition of Mrs. Veal*, a narrative of facts seemingly as true and indubitable as any that ever passed before our eyes. It was prefixed to a religious book *On Death*, and not only sold the whole edition of an otherwise unsalable work, but excited extensive inquiries into the alleged facts. One of his works has the curious title of: *Mars stript of his armor; a lashing caricature of the habits and manners of all kinds of*



*military men, written on purpose to delight quiet tradespeople, and cure their daughters of their passion for red-coats.*

Judge, from two or three examples, of his wonderful gift of 'forging the handwriting of nature,' and how near are we to the present anti-romantic reading of observers and moralists. We quote from the *Journal*:

'As I went along Houndsditch one morning about eight o'clock, there was a great noise. . . . A watchman, it seems, had been employed to keep his post at the door of a house which was infected, or said to be infected, and was shut up. He had been there all night, for two nights together, as he told his story, and the day watchman had been there one day, and was now come to relieve him. All this while no noise had been heard in the house, no light had been seen, they called for nothing, had sent him no errands, which used to be the chief business of the watchman; neither had they given him any disturbance, as he said, from Monday afternoon, when he heard a great crying and screaming in the house, which, as he supposed, was occasioned by some of the family dying just at that time.

It seems, the night before, the dead-cart, as it was called, had been stopped there, and a servant-maid had been brought down to the door dead, and the buriers, or bearers, as they were called, put her into the cart, wrapped only in a green rug, and carried her away.

The watchman had knocked at the door, it seems, when he heard that noise and crying, as above, and nobody answered a great while; but at last one looked out and said, with an angry, quick tone, and yet a kind of erying voice, or a voice of one that was crying, "What d'ye want, that you make such a knocking?"

He answered, "I am the watchman. How do you do? What is the matter?" The person answered, "What is that to you? *Stop the dead-cart.*"

Again:

'Much about the same time I walked out into the fields towards Bow, for I had a great mind to see how things were managed in the river and among the ships. . . .

Here I saw a poor man walking on the bank, or sea-wall, as they call it, by himself. I walked awhile also about, seeing the houses all shut up; at last I fell into some talk, at a distance, with this poor man. First I asked him how people did thereabouts. "Alas! sir," says he, "almost desolate; all dead or sick. Here are very few families in this part, or in that village,"—pointing at Poplar,—"where half of them are dead already, and the rest sick." Then he, pointing to one house: "There they are all dead," said he, "and the house stands open; nobody dares go into it. A poor thief," says he, "ventured in to steal something, but he paid dear for his theft, for he was carried to the churchyard too, last night." Then he pointed to several other houses. "There," says he, "they are all dead—the man and his wife and five children. There," says he, "They are shut up; you see a watchman at the door; and so of other houses." "Why," says I, "what do you here all alone?" "Why," says he, "I am a poor desolate man: it hath pleased God I am not yet visited, though my family is, and one of my children dead." "How do you mean then," said I, "that you are not visited?" "Why," says he, "that is my house,"—pointing to a very little low-boarded house,—"and there my poor wife and two children live," said he, "if they may be said to live; for my wife and one of the children are visited, but I do not come at them." And with that word I saw the tears run very plentifully down his face; and so they did down mine too, I assure you.

"But," said I, "why do you not come at them? How can you abandon your own flesh and blood?" "O, sir," says he, "the Lord forbid. I do not abandon them; I work for them as much as I am able; and blessed be the Lord, I keep them from want." And with that I observed he lifted up his eyes to heaven with a countenance that presently told me I had happened on a man that was no hypocrite, but a serious, religious, good man: and his ejaculation was an expression of thankfulness, that, in such a condition as he

was in, he should be able to say his family did not want. "Well," says I, "honest man, that is a great mercy, as things go now with the poor. But how do you live then, and how are you kept from the dreadful calamity that is now upon us all?" "Why, sir," says he, "I am a waterman and there is my boat," says he; "and the boat serves me for a house; I work in it in the day, and I sleep in it in the night; and what I get I lay it down upon that stone," says he, shewing me a broad stone on the other side of the street, a good way from his house; "and then," says he, "I halloo and call to them till I make them hear, and they come and fetch it." . . .

"Do you see there," says he, "five ships lie at anchor?"—pointing down the river a good way below the town,—“and do you see,” says he, “eight or ten ships lie at the chain there, and at anchor yonder?”—pointing above the town. "All those ships have families on board, of their merchants and owners, and such like, who have locked themselves up, and live on board, close shut in, for fear of the infection; and I tend on them to fetch things for them, carry letters, and do what is absolutely necessary, that they may not be obliged to come on shore; and every night I fasten my boat on board one of the ship's boats, and there I sleep by myself; and blessed be God, I am preserved hitherto." . . .

"Hark thee, friend," said I, "come hither, for I believe thou art in health, that I may venture thee;" so I pulled out my hand, which was in my pocket before. "Here," says I, "go and call thy Rachel once more, and give her a little comfort from me; God will never forsake a family that trust in Him as thou dost": so I gave him four other shillings, and bid him go lay them on the stone, and call his wife. I have not words to express the poor man's thankfulness, neither could he express it himself, but by tears running down his face. He called his wife, and told her God had moved the heart of a stranger, upon hearing their condition, to give them all that money; and a great deal more such as that he said to her. The woman, too, made signs of the like thankfulness, as well to Heaven as to me, and joyfully picked it up; and I parted with no money all that year that I thought better bestowed.'

Crusoe, cast alone on a desert island, is terrified by the discovery of a human footmark:

'It happened one day about noon, going towards my boat, I was exceedingly surprised with the print of a man's naked foot on the shore, which was very plain to be seen in the sand: I stood like one thunderstruck, or as if I had seen an apparition: I listened, I looked around me, I could hear nothing, nor see anything; I went up to a rising ground to look farther: I went up the shore, and down the shore, but it was all one, I could see no other impression but that one: I went to it again to see if there were any more, and to observe if it might not be my fancy; but there was no room for that, for there was exactly the very print of a foot, toes, heel, and every part of a foot. How it came thither I knew not, nor could in the least imagine. But after innumerable fluttering thoughts, like a man perfectly confused, and out of myself, I came home to my fortification, not feeling, as we say, the ground I went on, but terrified to the last degree, looking behind me at every two or three steps, mistaking every bush and tree, and fancying every stump at a distance to be a man; nor is it possible to describe how many various shapes an affrighted imagination represented things to me in; how many wild ideas were formed every moment in my fancy, and what strange, unaccountable whimsies came into my thoughts by the way.

When I came to my castle, for so I think I called it ever after this, I fled into it like one pursued; whether I went over by the ladder, at first contrived, or went in at the hole in the rock, which I called a door, I cannot remember; for never frightened hare fled to cover, or fox to earth, with more terror of mind than I to this retreat.'

Perhaps the devil left it:

'I considered that the devil might have found out abundance of other ways to have terrified me, . . . that, as I lived quite on the other side of the island, he would never have been so simple to leave a mark in a place where it was ten thousand to one whether

I should ever see it or not, and in the sand too, which the first surge of the sea upon a high wind would have defaced entirely. All this seemed inconsistent with the thing itself, and with all notions we usually entertain of the subtlety of the devil.'

**Style.**—Pure, simple, clear, vigorous, colloquial, idiomatic.

**Rank.**—Unrivalled in the invention and relation of incidents. 'Never was such a sense of the real before or since.' The grand secret of his art—if that may be called art which is nature itself—consists in an astonishing minuteness of details and an unequalled power of giving reality to the incidents which he relates. He deceives not the eye, but the mind, and that literally, as we have noticed. The preface to an old edition of *Robinson Crusoe* says:

'The story is told . . . to the instruction of others by this example, and to justify and honor the wisdom of Providence. The editor believes the thing to be a just history of facts; neither is there any appearance of fiction in it.'

He sat in his closet, travelled round the world in idea, saw with the distinctness of natural vision, then narrated so plausibly as to deceive the most intelligent.

His fields of power were: national convulsions, by war, by pestilence, or by tempest; magic, ghost-seeing, witchcraft, and the occult sciences; thieves, rogues, vagabonds, swindlers, buccaneers, and pirates. The courage, the wonderful and romantic adventures, and the hairbreadth escapes of pirates seem to have had for him an infinite charm.

**Character.**—A poet, a novelist, and a polemic; born a writer, as other men are born generals and statesmen. Without the idea of beauty, he is good and religious, too good and religious to forget the distinctions between virtue and vice. Though his subjects are low, his aims are moral. In this respect, he is entitled to a much higher praise than is generally awarded him. His heroes and incidents are made the frequent occasion of inculcating the fundamental truths of religion, the being of God, the superintendency of Providence, the certainty of Heaven and Hell, the one to reward, the other to punish. *Crusoe* is De Foe,—honest, open, confidential, laying his inmost thoughts and feelings before us; patient and invincible in difficulty, in disappointment, in toil; sanguine, combating, conquering.

Of his habits, little can now be told more than he confessed:

'God, I thank Thee I am not a drunkard, or a swearer, or a busybody, or idle, or revengeful; and though this be true, and I challenge all the world to prove the contrary.'

I must own I see small satisfaction in the negatives of the common virtues; for though I have not been guilty of any of these vices, nor of many more, I have nothing to infer from thence but, *Te Deum laudamus.*'

**Influence.**—His moral teaching, as indicated above, is generally unexceptionable. Good and evil are carefully discriminated. Knowing life better than the soul, the course of the world better than the motives of men, his best drawn characters are less instructive and salutary than greater delicacy and profounder insight would have rendered them.

His writings, though they did not save him from want, gained him a renown that will descend the stream of time to the remotest generation of men.

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## SWIFT.

The most unhappy man on earth.—*Archbishop King.*

**Biography.**—Born in Dublin, in 1667, but of English parentage. Instructed by his nurse, at three he could spell, and at five could read any chapter in the Bible. Passed eight years in the school of Kilkenny, and at fifteen, poorly supported by the charity of an uncle, entered Dublin University. Odd, awkward, proud, and friendless, irregular and desultory as a student, he incurred in two years no less than seventy penalties, meditated *An Account of the Kingdom of Absurdities*, to show his disgust for the routine of scholastic training, and provoked the pitying smiles of the professors for his feeble brain. Failed to take his degree, on account of 'dulness and insufficiency' in logic. Presented himself for examination a second time, without having condescended to read logic. Refused to answer the questions propounded, desired to know what he was to learn from 'those books,' and was asked how he could expect to reason well without rules; retorted that he did reason without them, and that, so far as he had observed, rules taught men to wrangle rather than to reason. Obtained his degree at last by *special favor*, a term used in that university to denote want of merit.

At twenty one, left without subsistence, he was received into the house of Sir William Temple as secretary, at twenty pounds

a year and his board; dined at the second table, and smothered his rebellion. Studied eight hours a day to correct his former idleness, and ran up and down a hill every two hours to correct a giddiness he had contracted in Ireland. Wrote bad verses to flatter his master, hoped he was a poet, and perpetually hated Dryden, who said of them, 'Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet.'

Ambitious of preferment, sick of hopes deferred, and galled by his servitude, he attempted independence, and took orders in the Irish church in 1694, at a hundred pounds a year, in a distant, secluded, and half civilized place. Found it a lower deep, to which the hell he had suffered seemed a heaven; was forced to accept Temple's cordial invitation to return, from which time the two appear to have lived in mutual confidence and esteem.

Upon Temple's death (1698), who had left him a legacy and his manuscripts, he edited the works of his patron, dedicated them to William III, to remind him of promised advancement, got nothing, and accepted the post of secretary to a nobleman; was circumvented, then promised the rich Deanery of Derry, saw it bestowed on somebody else, and fell back on the post of prebendary.<sup>1</sup>

Constrained to reside in a country which he detested, and longing for the promotion that would enable him to return to England, near the centre of literary and political activity, he launched into politics, advocated Whig principles, received fine promises from party leaders, and was neglected. In 1710, lured by false hopes till his patience was exhausted, and insulted without redress, he abandoned the Whigs, who were now to be driven from office, joined the Tories, levelled at his former friends the blasting lightning of his satire, was feared as a powerful and unscrupulous pamphleteer, became the familiar associate and adviser of the rich and titled, stretched out his hands for an English bishopric, and received,—what he professed to regard as an honorable exile,—only the Deanery of St. Patrick's, Dublin; for though favored by the ministers of state, by the Queen and High Church dignitaries, whose party he had espoused, he was

<sup>1</sup>In the county of Meath, northwest of Dublin. While here, he appointed the reading of prayers on Wednesdays and Fridays. On the first Wednesday, after the bell had ceased ringing for some time, finding that the congregation consisted only of himself and his clerk, Roger, he began: 'Dearly beloved Roger, the Scripture moveth you and me in sundry places,' etc.; and then proceeded regularly through the whole service.



disliked as an uncertain friend and a doubtful Christian. He had been the author of a religious lampoon (*Tale of a Tub*) that was fatal to his eminence in the church. To Ireland he repaired in bitterness of spirit. There he was exiled by the return of the Whigs to power under George I; and there he was confined, contrary to his expectations, by their continued supremacy under George II. Isolated, even pelted by the populace in the streets, stung by the designations of renegade, traitor, and atheist, conscious of superiority and soured by the feeling of his own impotence, he vented his pent-up rage in torturing, crushing satires against theologians, statesmen, courtiers, society. In 1724, by delivering Ireland from a fraudulent and oppressive measure, from being an object of hatred he became an object of idolatry; and the popularity he thus acquired, he was diligent to keep, by continuing attention to the public, and by various modes of beneficence. But power almost despotic could not reconcile him to himself or his environment, and in 1728 he writes:

‘I find myself disposed every year, or rather every month, to be more angry and revengeful; and my rage is so ignoble that it descends even to resent the folly and baseness of the enslaved people among whom I live.’

Sometimes wished to visit England, but the fire was burning low, and he seems to have had a presentiment that he never would. Tells Pope he hopes once more to see him; ‘but if not,’ he says, ‘we must part as all human beings have parted.’

Subject to giddiness from his youth, the attacks grew more frequent with advancing age. He desisted from study. Deafness came on, making conversation difficult. Having vowed never to wear spectacles, he was unable to read.

Memory left him, reason deserted him,<sup>1</sup> and he became first a maniac, then an idiot. After a year of total silence, his house-keeper, on the 30th of November, told him that the usual bonfires and illuminations were preparing to celebrate his birthday. An interval of reason flashed its light across his midnight sky, and he answered, ‘It is all folly; they had better let it alone.’ Sunk again into a silent idiocy, he expired in the ensuing October, 1744. When his will was opened, it was found that he had left

<sup>1</sup> I remember as I and others were taking with Swift an evening walk, about a mile out of Dublin, he stopped short; we passed on; but perceiving he did not follow us, I went back and found him fixed as a statue; and earnestly gazing upwards at a noble tree, which, in its upper branches, was much withered and decayed. Pointing at it, he said, ‘I shall be like that tree; I shall die at the top.’—*Dr. Young*.

his fortune to build an asylum for idiots and madmen. His morning rose in clouds, and his evening went down in eclipse.

**Loves.**—Never was genius more fatal in its influence, nor friendship more blighting, nor unprosperous love more widely famed. While a student in the university, he formed an attachment to Jane Waring, sister of his college companion, and poetically termed ‘Varina.’ In a letter of April, 1696, Swift complains of her formality and coldness, tells her that he has resolved to die as he has lived—all hers. She signifies, at last, her desire to consummate their union; but the vision that had made the morning and the evening varied enchantments, was passing. A second letter of May, 1700, is written in the altered tone of one who is anxious to escape from a connection which he regrets ever to have formed. Time had perhaps estranged him by its unequal development of their characters, and the superior charms of another had begun to weave their spell around the lover’s heart.

In Temple’s family, he met a very pretty, dark-eyed, modest young girl of fifteen, a waiting-maid,—Esther Johnson. Seventeen years her senior, he became her instructor; found pleasure in cultivating her talents; became her companion and friend, though he could little have thought how closely and tragically their fortunes and their fame were hereafter to be united. She loved and revered him only; and he immortalized her as ‘Stella,’ or ‘Star that dwelt apart.’ To reconcile himself to an obscure retirement, he invited her with her friend Mrs. Dingley to reside in Ireland. They lived in the parsonage when he was away, and when he returned, removed to a lodging, or to the house of a near clergyman. From London, during the period of his political struggles (1710–1713), he wrote to her twice a day, a journal of his daily life, familiarly, playfully, and endearingly; records, for her gratification, his slightest actions; tells where he goes, where he dines, whom he meets, what he spends.

His letters are his last occupation at night, and his first in the morning:

‘I can not go to bed without a word to them (Stella and Mrs. Dingley); I can not put out my candle till I bid them good night.’

He had met in London yet another girl, eighteen, beautiful, rich, lively, graceful, and fond of books, a merchant’s daughter,—

Esther Vanhomrigh. Twenty-six years her senior, he offered to direct her in her choice of studies. She esteemed him, thanked him, then loved him, unacquainted with the peculiar situation in which he stood related to another. 'Vanessa'—for so he had poetically named her—avowed her passion, and received in return, first raillery, then the cold proffer of everlasting friendship. Thinking to possess her love without returning it, he had encouraged her feelings, to disappoint her just expectations. With an irrepressible devotion, she followed him to Dublin, hoping, waiting, remonstrating, entreating,—so impassioned, so unhappy, so agonized, when all her offerings had failed, that her letters of love and complaint are sadder than wails above the dead:

'If you continue to treat me as you do, you will not be made uneasy by me long. . . . I am sure I could have borne the rack much better than those killing, killing words of you. The reason I write to you is because I cannot tell it to you, should I see you. For when I begin to complain, then you are angry; and there is something in your looks so awful that it strikes me dumb. Oh, that you may have so much regard for me left, that this complaint may touch your soul with pity! I say as little as ever I can. Did you but know what I thought, I am sure it would move you to forgive me, and believe that I cannot help telling you this and live.'<sup>1</sup>

Discovering the gulf he had incautiously approached, he sought to alleviate the perils he could no longer avert, tried to turn her mind to other objects and interests, but in vain. She refused to mingle in society, rejected two advantageous offers of marriage, and in 1717 withdrew to a country retreat, to nurse in seclusion her melancholy and hopeless attachment. Here she received occasional visits from Swift, each of which she commemorated by planting with her own hand a laurel in the garden where they met.

Meanwhile, the familiar power of pleasing, which Stella had long possessed, suffered a partial eclipse. The altered tone of his London letters betrayed a divided affection, and Vanessa's arrival in Dublin—whose name he had all but suppressed—developed the cause, while it increased the apprehensions of Stella. Sensibility to his late indifference, and jealousy neither unreasonable nor dishonorable, were preying upon her health. The bloom and beauty of youth had faded away in the midst of hopes and wishes unfulfilled, while she was bitterly conscious that her reputation was clouded by her mysterious connection

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Vanessa, Dublin, 1714.

with Swift, though her conduct was irreproachable. She had an undoubted claim, however, over the affections of his heart, and he married her at last from a sense of duty, in 1716, secretly, in the garden of the Deanery, with the understanding that she should be his wife only in name. On his public days, she regulated the table, but appeared at it as a mere guest. Their relations continued as before, and they lived on opposite banks of the Liffey. Tardy, poor, and feeble reparation! Immediately after the ceremony, he was gloomy and agitated. Delany, his biographer, called upon Archbishop King, to mention his apprehensions; met Swift rushing by with a countenance of distraction, found the Archbishop in tears, and inquired the reason: 'Sir,' said the prelate, 'you have just met the most unhappy man upon earth; but on the subject of his wretchedness you must never ask a question.'

The tragedy deepens as it draws to a close. Without explaining his conduct, he continued his visits to Vanessa—with more reserve, let us hope, and with increased anxiety to direct her passion into other channels. Eight years she had cherished that passion in solitude. By the death of her younger sister in 1720, whose failing health she had nursed, yet another sorrow was added. Her affection for Swift redoubled its energy. Driven almost to madness by suspense and suspicion, she wrote at last to Stella to ascertain the nature of her connection with the Dean, and was informed, in reply, of the marriage. Stella gave the letter to Swift for explanation. In a rage he carried it to the unhappy Vanessa. His countenance, as he entered the room, struck terror into her soul, and she could scarcely invite him to a seat. Without a word, he flung a letter on the table before her, and instantly left. Opening the packet, she found only her own communication to Stella,—the death-warrant to her hopes and to her life. She languished a few weeks and died, in 1723, a victim to the cruelty and duplicity of him on whom she had lavished in vain life's warmest and purest affections, who had suffered her to pine and sink in hopeless affliction, because at first he would not, and afterwards dared not, avow his double dealing, and his incapability of accepting the heart she offered. Judge of the rare gift and the costly sacrifice, from the *Ode to Spring*, in which she alludes to her unhappy attachment. Never was harp tuned more touchingly to the pathetic eloquence of woe:

'Hail, blushing goddess! beauteous Spring!  
 Who in thy jocund train dost bring  
 Loves and graces—smiling hours—  
 Balmy breezes—fragrant flowers;  
 Come with tints of roseate hue,  
 Nature's faded charms renew!  
 Yet why should I thy presence hail?  
 To me no more the breathing gale  
 Comes fraught with sweets, no more the rose  
 With such transcendent beauty blows,  
 As when Cadenus<sup>1</sup> blest the scene,  
 And shared with me those joys serene,  
 When unperceived, the lambent fire  
 Of friendship kindled new desire;  
 Still listening to his tuneful tongue,  
 The truths which angels might have sung,  
 Divine imprest their gentle sway,  
 And sweetly stole my soul away.  
 My guide, instructor, lover, friend,  
 Dear names, in one idea blend;  
 Oh! still conjoined, your incense rise,  
 And waft sweet odours to the skies!'<sup>1</sup>

Swift made a tour of two months in the south of Ireland, a prey to remorse; returned to Dublin, and received Stella's forgiveness. Poor Stella, married when on her part all but life had faded away, was twelve years dying. Living desolately on, in hope that he would in time own and receive her, she sank into the grave in 1728, without any public recognition of the tie. It is said that Swift never mentioned her name without a sigh. That he felt distress and contrition, there is no doubt. His misanthropy increased, and his malady grew more malignant. Perhaps, in the case of Vanessa, dreading her grief, and watching for a favorable moment, he had delayed a disagreeable discovery till too late. Aware that insanity lurked in his frame, he may have felt, in the case of Stella, that he had no right to marry. But no plea could efface the blot on his character, that, without any intention of marrying either, he attached to himself two of the loveliest women of his time, encouraged their friendship for his own content, and tortured them by hopes deferred, till the grave closed upon their piteous accents, as despair upon their hearts.

**Appearance.**—Tall, strong, and well made; of dark complexion, blue eyes, black and bushy eyebrows, hooked nose, and features sour and severe, seldom softened by any appearance of gaiety.

<sup>1</sup> 'Cadenus' = *Decanus* = the Dean.



**Writings.**—*Tale of a Tub*<sup>1</sup> (1704); a powerful satire, whose object was to ridicule the Romanists and Presbyterians, with the view of defending and exalting the Church of England. A father had three sons,—Peter (Church of Rome), Martin (Church of England), and Jack (Presbyterians, or Protestant Dissenters). Upon his deathbed he bequeathed to each of the lads a coat (Christianity), warning them to wear it plain.

'Sons, because I have purchased no estate nor was born to any, I have long considered of some good legacies to leave you, and at last, with much care, I have provided each of you with a good coat. With good wearing the coats will last you as long as you live, and will grow in the same proportion as your bodies, lengthening and widening of themselves, so as to be always fit.'

They were expressly forbidden to add to or diminish from their coats one thread. After a time, however, they came to a town, adopted its manners, fell in love with some stylish ladies, and, to gain their favors, began to live as gallants. Embarrassed by the extreme simplicity of their clothes, they longed for a more fashionable attire. An adroit interpretation of the will (Bible) admitted shoulder-knots. Silver fringe was soon in fashion:

'Upon which the brothers consulting their father's will, to their great astonishment found these words: "Item, I charge and command my said three sons to wear no sort of silver fringe upon or about their said coats," etc.'

Peter, however, who was a skilful critic, had found in a certain author, which he said should be nameless,—

'That the same word, which in the will is called fringe, does also signify a broomstick; and doubtless ought to have the same interpretation in this paragraph. This another of the brothers disliked, because of that epithet silver, which could not, he humbly conceived, in propriety of speech be reasonably applied to a broomstick; but it was replied upon him that this epithet was understood in a mythological and allegorical sense. However, he objected again, why their father should forbid them to wear a broomstick on their coats, a caution that seemed unnatural and impertinent; upon which he was taken up short, as one who spoke irreverently of a mystery, which doubtless was very useful and significant, but ought not to be over-curiously pried into, or nicely reasoned upon.'

By similar evasions, gold lace, embroidery, and flame-colored satin linings were added to their coats. The will was at length locked up, and utterly disregarded. Peter, claiming the supremacy, styled himself My Lord Peter, and discarded from the house his brothers, who reopened the will and began to understand it. To return to primitive simplicity, Martin tore off ten dozen yards

<sup>1</sup> Explained by Swift to mean, that, as sailors throw out a tub to a whale to keep him amused and prevent him from running foul of their ship, so in this treatise, his object is to divert the freethinkers of the day (who draw their arguments from the *Leviathan* of Hobbes) from injuring the state by their wild theories in politics and religion.

of fringe and a huge quantity of gold lace, but kept a few embroideries, which could not be got away without damaging the cloth; Jack, in his enthusiasm, stripped away everything, reduced himself, in the operation, to tatters, and, envious of Martin, joined the Æolists, or inspired worshippers of the wind:

'First it is generally affirmed or confirmed that learning puffeth men up; and secondly they proved it by the following syllogism: words are but wind; and learning is nothing but words; *ergo* learning is nothing but wind. . . . This, when blown up to its perfection, ought not to be covetously hoarded up, stifled, or hid under a bushel, but freely communicated to mankind. Upon these reasons, and others of equal weight, the wise Æolists affirm the gift of belching to be the noblest act of a rational creature. At certain seasons of the year, you might behold the priests among them in vast numbers, . . . linked together in a circular chain, with every man a pair of bellows applied to his neighbor . . . by which they blew each other to the shape and size of a tun; and for that reason, with great propriety of speech, did usually call their bodies their vessels.'

The work, though admired, was widely condemned. To a later edition was prefixed an apology, in which the author declared that his meaning had been misconceived. Perhaps so. A very peculiar person, like Swift, might so write without any ill intention. But what shall we say of the *spirituality* of him who treats with pompous merriment and witty buffoonery questions that rest with the weight of worlds on the human spirit? Voltaire praised it, recommended his disciples to read it; by many it was thought to be a covert attack upon Christianity. What church or creed does it not profane? Even the High Church, which he seems to defend, is a political cloak:

'Is not religion a cloak; honesty a pair of shoes worn out in the dirt; self-love a sur-tout; vanity a shirt; and conscience a pair of breeches? . . . If certain ermines and furs be placed in a certain position, we style them a judge; and so an apt conjunction of lawn and black satin, we entitle a bishop.'

After such ribaldries, what reason had he to be astonished that a Christian princess declined to place him upon a clerical throne?

*Drapier Letters* (1724). A series of letters against an English patent for supplying the Irish market with copper coinage; inserted in a Dublin newspaper, and signed *M. B. Drapier*. Small change was wanted in Ireland. The English ministers, without consulting the Irish government, granted a patent to coin one hundred and eight thousand pounds of copper money. Swift considered the metal base, and, by stirring appeals to the pride and patriotism of the people, roused them against the measure. The English government bowed to the storm, and withdrew the coin. These letters are distinguished by artful and trenchant argument, vast passion and pride, bitter and terrible

rancor. *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), a satire of man; the most original, most carefully finished, and most characteristic of his works; a production entirely unique in English literature. It is the journal of a voyager, who, like De Foe in *Crusoe*, describes in cool, sensible, and simple faith the events and sights which he has seen. In his first voyage, he is carried to the empire of the Pygmies, where the people are but six inches high, and surrounding objects correspondingly diminutive; in his second, he is carried to the empire of Giants, where the people are sixty feet high or upwards, and other existences proportionately vast; in his third, he is taken to several fantastic countries, of which one, a flying island, is inhabited by philosophers and mathematicians, another by wretches who, without intellects or affections, are doomed to a bodily immortality; in his fourth, he is carried to a region whose people are hardly distinguishable from brutes:

'At last I beheld several animals in a field, and one or two of the same kind sitting in trees. Their shape was very singular and deformed. . . . They climbed high trees as nimbly as a squirrel, for they had strong extended claws before and behind, terminating in a sharp point, and hooked. . . . Upon the whole, I never beheld in all my travels so disagreeable an animal, or one against which I naturally conceived so great an antipathy.'

How ridiculous are human interests and passions when mirrored in the littleness of the Pigmy world! How vain are our desires, how insignificant our pursuits, when tried by the standard of a mightier race! What is a lawyer but a hired liar, who perverts the truth if he is an advocate, and sells it if he is a judge? What is a legislator but a compound of idleness and vice? What is a noble but a diseased rake and rascal? What is sentiment but folly and weakness? What are science, art, and religion, but cloaks which veil the ugliness of human nature? Brutes that tear each other with their talons, that howl, and grin, and chatter, and wallow in the mud,—these are the final abstract of man—of his instincts, of his ambitions, of his hopes. Nay, they are better, for our species 'is the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl on the face of the earth.' This book is the expression of Swift,—the assembly of all his talent and all his passion; so picturesque, so romantic, so melancholy, so mocking and fiendish at last, yet so coolly and simply told, that criticism was for a time lost in wonder.

*A Modest Proposal* (1731); a scheme to prevent the children of the Irish poor from becoming a burden to their parents or

country, and to make them beneficial to the public. The scheme is, that the children should be sold and eaten as food!

'I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child, well nursed, is, at a year old, a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked or boiled.'

He enters gravely into calculation:

'A child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends, and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish, and seasoned with a little pepper or salt will be very good boiled on the fourth day. . . . I believe no gentleman would repine to give ten shillings for the carcass of a good fat child, which, as I have said, will make four dishes of excellent nutritive meat.'

This hideous treatise, so shudderingly calm, seems fit to have been the expiring cry of his genius and his despair.

*Thoughts on Various Subjects*, of which the following are characteristic and suggestive specimens, models of form and nuggets of wisdom:

'We have just religion enough to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another.'

'When a true genius appeareth in the world, you may know him by this infallible sign, that the dunces are all in confederacy against him.'

'The reason why so few marriages are happy, is because young ladies spend their time in making nets, not in making cages.'

'No wise man ever wished to be younger.'

'A *nice* man is a man of nasty ideas.'

'Complaint is the largest tribute Heaven receives, and the sincerest part of our devotion.'

'The stoical scheme of supplying our wants by lopping off our desires, is like cutting off our feet when we want shoes.'

'The common fluency of speech in many men and most women is owing to a scarcity of matter and scarcity of words: for whoever is a master of language, and hath a mind full of ideas, will be apt, in speaking, to hesitate upon the choice of both; whereas common speakers have only one set of ideas, and one set of words to clothe them in, and these are already at the mouth. So people come faster out of a church when it is almost empty, than when a crowd is at the door.'

**Style.**—Simple, plain, pure, rugged, vigorous, Saxon. Without ornament, it is rich in the variety of its words and phrases. Always understanding himself, he was always understood by others. He illustrates admirably an important principle of composition,—that, when a man has stamped upon his mind all the parts and joints of his subject, and is confident of his cause, he has only to resist the temptation to write finely, in order to write effectively.

**Rank.**—In originality and strength he has no superior, and in irony no equal. He had the genius of insult, as **Shakespeare**

of poetry. Unscrupulous sarcasm and vituperation, crushing logic, knowledge of men and life, vehement expression, made him the most formidable pamphleteer that ever lived. He was deficient in refinement of taste and loftiness of imagination, and lacked the nobility of nature to become a true poet, philosopher, or reformer. The grandeurs of the human spirit escaped him. Palpable and familiar objects, common words, common things, were the sources of his inspiration. Several peculiarities contributed to produce his effect,—skilful minuteness of narrative; power to give to fiction the air of truth; the habit of expressing sentiments, the most absurd or atrocious, as sober commonplaces; of relating the most ludicrous and extravagant fancies with an invincible gravity.

As a man, he is the most tragic figure in our literature.

**Character.**—Haughty and magisterial, with an overwhelming sense of superiority, seeming to consider himself exempt from the necessity of ceremony, and entitled to the homage of all, without distinction of sex, rank, or fame. While a simple journalist, he demanded an apology of the prime minister, received it, and wrote: ‘I have taken Mr. Harley into favor again.’ Warned the Secretary of State never to appear cold to him, for he wouldn’t be treated like a school-boy. Invited to dine with the Earl of Burlington, he said to the mistress of the house: ‘Lady Burlington, I hear you can sing; sing me a song.’ The lady resented his freedom, and he said she should sing or he would make her. ‘Why, madam, I suppose you take me for one of your poor English hedge-parsons; sing when I bid you!’ Unable to control her vexation, she burst into tears and retired. Meeting her afterward, he inquired: ‘Pray, madam, are you as proud and ill-natured now as when I saw you last?’ Writing to the Duchess of Queensbury, he says:

‘I am glad you know your duty; for it has been a known and established rule about twenty years in England, that the first advances have been constantly made me by all the ladies who aspired to my acquaintance, and the greater their quality, the greater were their advances.’

Tells Stella, with a vengeful joy:

‘I generally am acquainted with about thirty in the drawing-room, and am so proud that I make all the lords come up to me. One passes half an hour pleasantly enough.’

Possibly he expected this to be received as his peculiar mode



of jocularly. Pope, one of his few friends, has preserved us a specimen of his humor:

'Tis so odd, that there's no describing it but by facts. I'll tell you one that first comes into my head. One evening Gay and I went to see him; you know how intimately we were all acquainted. On our coming in, "Heyday, gentlemen" (says the Doctor), "what's the meaning of this visit? How came you to leave the great lords that you are so fond of, to come hither to see a poor Dean!" "Because we would rather see you than any of them." "Ay, anyone that did not know you so well as I do might believe you. But since you are come, I must get some supper for you, I suppose." "No, Doctor, we have supped already." "Supped already? that's impossible! why, 'tis not eight o'clock yet. That's very strange; but if you had not supped, I must have got something for you. Let me see, what should I have had? A couple of lobsters; ay, that would have done very well: two shillings—tarts, a shilling; but you will drink a glass of wine with me, though you supped so much before your usual time only to spare my pocket?" "No, we had rather talk with you than drink with you." "But if you had supped with me, as in all reason you ought to have done, you must then have drank with me. A bottle of wine, two shillings—two and two is four, and one is five; just two and sixpence apiece. There, Pope, there's half a crown for you, and there's another for you, sir; for I won't save anything by you, I am determined." This was all said and done with his usual seriousness on such occasions; and in spite of everything we could say to the contrary, he actually obliged us to take the money.'

He was minutely critical and exacting. Once when he dined alone with the Earl of Orrery, he said of a waiter in the room: 'That man has, since we sat to the table, committed fifteen faults.'

He was constitutionally incapable of religion—incapable from a vulgar temperament. Joy is wanting, save the joy of tearing. The idea of the beautiful seldom or never enters.

He delights in images that repel a refined taste. But, though coarse, he is never licentious; his grossness is repulsive, not seductive. He spent his days in discontent, in a rebellion of wounded pride and unsatisfied desire. All suffering seems colorless beside the deep, long agony of his soul.

**Influence.**—He agitated kingdoms, stirred the laughter and rage of millions, and left to posterity memorials (*Gulliver* and *Tale of a Tub*) that will perish only with the English language. His satire will furnish food for profitable reflection; his romance will continue to amuse, doing the good that mere pleasure can do; but anything beyond? Did he give any impulse to holiness? Did he feel the burden of souls? Do his writings breathe a wish or prayer for personal perfection? In his philosophy of life were two fundamental evils, either of which must, at the outset, prove fatal to the highest order of influence,—a vulgar materialism, and a bitter misanthropy. He never rose above the

mercenary practical — his views were always directed to what was *immediately* beneficial, which is the characteristic of savages; man, to him, was a knave and a fool. Perhaps, therefore, his chief service to us, as his chief legacy to the race, is indirect, — the warning spectacle of his powerful and mournful genius, with its tempest of hopes and hatreds. It is a theme on which the lightest heart might moralize. Over his grave, as in the sigh of the wailing wind, we hear the words: *Knowledge uninspired by universal love, unleavened by religious depth and earnestness, serves only to inflate with an insolent self-sufficiency and to dry up with a sensual pride; knowledge whose paramount or final end is to gratify curiosity, to flatter vanity, to push for precedence, to minister to ambition, is vanity and vexation of spirit.*

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## POPE.

He was the poet of personality and of polished life.—*Hazlitt.*

**Biography.**—Born in London, in 1688, the memorable year of the Revolution. His father was a linen-merchant, who, with a moderate fortune, retired in a few years to a small estate in Windsor Forest. He learned very early to read, and by copying from printed books, taught himself to write. Both parents were Papists. For such trivial elements of a schoolboy's learning as he possessed at all, he was therefore indebted to private tuition. At eight, he was instructed by the family priest in the rudiments of Greek and Latin. Was next sent to a Romanist seminary, where he lampooned his teacher, was whipped, and removed by his indignant parents. From the scene of his disgrace, he passed under the tuition of several other masters in rapid succession, but with little profit. Scarcely twelve, he resolved to direct himself, formed a plan of study, and executed it with little other incitement than the desire of excellence. His father, though unable to guide him, proposed subjects, obliged him to correct his performances by frequent revisals, and, when satisfied, would say, 'These are good rhymes.' His early passion was to be a poet; and he used to say that he could not remember the time when he began to make verses.

‘Why did I write? What sin to me unknown  
 Dipp’d me in ink, my parents’ or my own?  
 As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,  
 I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came.  
 I left no calling for this idle trade,  
 No duty broke, no father disobey’d:  
 The muse but served to ease some friend, not wife,  
 To help me through this long disease, my life.’

At this tender age he wrote a tragedy, which he persuaded his schoolmates to act, and an *Ode on Solitude*. From thirteen to fifteen, he composed an epic of four thousand verses. His time was now wholly spent in reading and writing. He studied books of poetry and criticism, English, French, Greek, and Latin authors, with such assiduity that he nearly died. Of all English poets, his favorite was Dryden, whom he held in such veneration that he persuaded some friends to take him to a coffee-house which Dryden frequented, to delight himself with a glimpse of his model and master. Who can bound the possibilities of one that so early feels the power of harmony and the zeal of genius, and who does not regret that the master died before he learned the value of the homage paid him by his admiring pupil?

His life as an author is computed from the age of sixteen. For choice words and exquisite arrangement, his poetry already surpassed Dryden’s. At seventeen he was asked to correct the poems of a reputable author of sixty-nine, and corrected them so well that the author was mortified and offended. Wits, courtiers, statesmen, and the brilliant of fashion caressed and honored him. His known devotion to letters and his promise of future excellence had from earliest boyhood won the flattering attentions of the most accomplished men of the world.

In 1715, he persuaded his parents to remove to Chiswick, where two years later his father died suddenly, in the seventy-fifth year of his age. The poet, with his now aged mother, shortly removed to Twickenham, a spot to which his residence afterwards procured such classic celebrity. His grounds (five acres in all) he tastefully embellished with those designs of vine, shrub, and tree, which his verses mention. For convenient admission to a garden across the highway, he cut a subterraneous passage, adorned it with fossil forms, and called it a grotto, into whose silence and retreat care and passion might not enter. ‘Vanity produced a grotto where necessity enforced a passage.’ Here, in poetic ease,

he continued to live in the smiles of fortune and to bask in the favors of the great. His domestic relations were always the happiest—one placid scene of parental obedience and of gentle filial authority. In spirit and inclination, his parents, we imagine, would have subscribed themselves, 'Yours dutifully.' However petulant and acrimonious his disposition as displayed to others, to them he never intermitted the piety of a respectful tenderness. Aware that his mother lived upon his presence or by his image, he long denied himself all excursions that could not be accomplished within a week; and to the same cause must be ascribed the fact that he never went abroad,—not to Italy, not to Ireland, not even to France. His life was always one of leisure, and, but for his strange mixture of discordant parts, must have been like a dream of pleasure,—a condition more conducive to effeminacy than to strength, more favorable to elegance of thought than to grandeur.

'A tart temper never mellows with age, and a sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener with constant use.' Pope's increasing pride and irritability, his supercilious contempt of struggling authors, raised around him a swarm of enemies animated by envy or revenge. His later years were agitated by the asperities of personal dispute and the loss of genial companionships. In 1732, he was deprived of Atterbury and Gay, two of his dearest friends. From Addison he had been estranged. Swift, sunk in idiocy, he had virtually lost forever. In 1733 occurred the death of his mother, then ninety-three years old. She had for some time been in her dotage, unable to recognize any face but that of her son. Three days after, writing to a painter, with the view of having her portrait taken before the coffin was closed, he says:

'I thank God her death was as easy as her life was innocent; and as it cost her not a groan nor even a sigh, there is yet upon her countenance such an expression of tranquillity that it would afford the finest image of a saint expired that ever painting drew. Adieu, may you die as happily.'

It is a pleasing reflection that the parents who idolized him, who had fondly watched his spark of genius fanned into flame, lived to see him the idol of the nation. He now complains bitterly that, if he would have friends in the future, he must seek them amongst strangers and another generation. Henceforward he was chiefly engaged in satires,—his satire doubtless rendered

more intense by his sense of desolation,—and was entangled in feuds of various complexions with people of various pretensions. In 1742 he became sensible that his vital powers were rapidly declining. His complaint was a dropsy of the chest, and he knew it to be incurable. With a behavior admirably philosophical, he discontinued original composition, and employed himself in revising and burnishing those former works on which he must rely for his reputation with future ages.

A few days before his death, he was delirious, and afterwards mentioned the fact as a sufficient humiliation of human vanity. In his closing hours he complained of inability to think; saw things as through a curtain, in false colors, and inquired at one time what arm it was that came out from the wall. He dined in company two days before he died; and a few mornings before, during a fit of delirium, he was found very early in his library, writing on the immortality of the soul. Asked whether a priest should not be called, he answered, 'I do not think it essential, but it will be very right and I thank you for putting me in mind of it.' In the morning, after the last sacraments had been given, he said, 'There is nothing that is meritorious but virtue and friendship; and indeed friendship itself is only a part of virtue.' He died on a summer's evening, in the month of flowers, in 1744; so quietly that the attendants could not distinguish the exact moment of his dissolution.

**Appearance.**—A dwarf, four feet high, hunch-backed, thin, and sickly; so crooked that he was called the 'Interrogation Point'; so weak that he had constantly to wear stays, scarcely able to hold himself erect till they were laced; so sensitive to cold that he had to be wrapped in flannels, furs, and linen, and had his feet encased in three pairs of stockings; so little that he required a high chair at the table; so bald, after the middle of life, that, when he had no company, he dined in a velvet cap. He could neither dress nor undress without help. His vital functions were so much disordered that his life was 'a long disease.' He had a large, fine eye, and a long, handsome nose. His voice, when a child, was so sweet that he was fondly styled 'The little Nightingale.' He was fastidious in his dress, and elegant in his manners. We are willing to believe that his bodily defects were advantageous to him as a writer. 'Whosoever,' says Bacon,



‘hath anything fixed in his person that doth induce contempt, hath also a perpetual spur in himself to rescue and deliver himself from scorn.’

**Peculiarities.**—We are prepared to find him whimsical, fretful, punctilious, and exacting. Persons and occasions were expected to be indulgent of his humor. When he wanted to sleep, he nodded in company; and once dozed while the Prince of Wales was discoursing of poetry. Often invited, he was a troublesome guest. The attentions of the whole family were needed to supply his numerous wants. His errands were so many and frivolous that the footmen were soon disposed to avoid him, and Lord Oxford had to discharge several for their resolute refusal of his messages. The maids were wont to justify a neglect of duty by the plea that they had been attending to the demands of Mr. Pope. He loved highly seasoned dishes, and would eat till his stomach was oppressed. Often, without a word, capriciously, unaccountably, he would quit the house of the Earl of Oxford, and must be courted back. He was sometimes sportive with servants or inferiors, but was himself never known to laugh.

**Method.**—By his own account, from fourteen to twenty he read for amusement, from twenty to twenty-seven for improvement and instruction: in the first period, desiring only to know; in the second, endeavoring to judge. In his multifarious reading, he was diligently selective; appropriated all poetic ornaments, graceful contrasts, noble images, and stored them away in his memory as his literary wardrobe; combined and classified into a mental dictionary, so as to be ready at his call, the materials which might serve to round his periods or illuminate his ideas. What he heard, he was attentive to retain. If conversation offered anything, he committed it to paper. If a thought or word, happier than usual, occurred to him, he wrote it down. He required his writing-box to be placed upon his bed before he rose. Lord Oxford’s domestic is said to have been called from her bed four times, of a winter’s night, to supply him with paper lest he should lose a thought.

Having written, he examined and polished long; amplifying, adorning, and refining. When he had completed a manuscript—his first thoughts in his first words—he kept it two years under

his inspection; invited the criticism of his friends, took counsel of his enemies; retouched, line by line, with a diligence that never wearied; sometimes recast till the original could not be recognized in the final revision. The only pieces which he wrote with an appearance of haste, were written, almost every line, twice over. 'I gave him a clean transcript,' says the publisher, 'which he sent some time afterwards to me for the press, with almost every line written twice over a second time.' A work, when once it had passed the press, continued to receive improvements in new editions.

We need not inquire what will be the distinctive character of the product. Method, leisure, independence of fortune, freedom from turmoil, consecration that makes poetry the lodestar of life,—this is the school of training for brilliant and perfect art.

**Writings.**—*Essay on Criticism* (1711); a judicious selection of precepts from Horace, Shakespeare, and other critics of the poetic art. Composed two years before publication, when Pope was only twenty-one. The first poem that fixed his reputation, and commonly regarded as one of his greatest, though one of his earliest, efforts. In arrangement, novel; in illustration, happy; in principle, just; in expression, terse and vigorous; in thought, for so young a man, marvellous; in harmony, uniform; in rhyme, defective. One of the most remarkable of its particular beauties is the comparison of a student's progress in science with the journey of a traveller in the Alps,—a simile that at once aids the understanding and elevates the fancy.

*Rape of the Lock* (1712); the finest, most brilliant, mock-heroic poem in the world. Lord Petre cut a lock of hair from the head of a fashionable beauty. A quarrel ensues. To laugh the estranged lovers together again, Pope writes an epic in gauze and silver spangles. Invocations, apostrophes, councils, fatal catastrophes, fearful combats between beaux and belles, spirits of the air—sylphs, gnomes, nymphs, and salamanders, form the poetic mechanism and action. The loftiness of style contrasts with the frivolous nature of the events. The history of a trifle is given with the pomp of heraldry, and the meanest things are set off with stately phrase and profuse ornament. A game at cards is a mimic Waterloo, whose hosts are marshalled by the king and queen of hearts:

'Behold four kings, in majesty revered,  
 With hoary whiskers and a forky beard;  
 And four fair queens whose hands sustain a flow'r,  
 Th' expressive emblem of their softer power;  
 Four knaves in garb succinct, a trusty band;  
 Caps on their heads, and halberds in their hand;  
 And parti-colored troops, a shining train,  
 Drawn forth to combat on the velvet plain.'

We confess to a feeling of impatience at this abuse of talent, this triumph of utter insignificance, and seek for some worthier employment of the artist's skill, as in the exquisite description of the guardian sylphs which flutter around his heroine:

'But now secure the painted vessel glides,  
 The sunbeams trembling on the floating tides  
 While melting music steals upon the sky,  
 And softened sounds along the waters die;  
 Smooth flow the waves, the zephyrs gently play, . . .  
 The lucid squadrons round the sails repair;  
 Soft o'er the shrouds the aerial whispers breathe,  
 That seemed but zephyrs to the train beneath.  
 Some to the sun their insect wings unfold,  
 Waft on the breeze or sink in clouds of gold;  
 Transparent forms, too fine for mortal sight,  
 Their fluid bodies half dissolved in light.  
 Loose to the wind their airy garments flew,  
 Thin glitt'ring textures of the filmy dew,  
 Dipped in the richest tincture of the skies,  
 Where life disports in ever mingling dyes:  
 While ev'ry beam new transient colors flings,  
 Colors that change whene'er they wave their wings.'

The new race of supernatural agents,—first given a poetical existence by Pope,—were a happy substitute for the classic deities of ancient writers, and the personified abstractions of the romantic school. Though unsuccessful in its office of mediation, the poem added greatly to the fame of the author, and probably deserved well of the public for its humorous satire of current foppery and folly.

*Windsor Forest* (1713); a descriptive poem of much variety and elegance, in which the picturesque, however, is made subservient to sketches of life and morals. Composed in his earlier years, when the heart is more keenly receptive of natural influences, it shows a warmer sympathy with the sights of earth and sky than any of his other productions. In diction, neat, often rich; in versification, smooth and harmonious. Fragments of it are admirable. The features are given in phrase so exact, so

copious, that the imagination, as in the flight of the dying pheasant, must see the reality in the painting:

‘See from the brake the whirring pheasant springs,  
And mounts exulting on triumphant wings;  
Short is his joy; he feels the fiery wound,  
Flutters in blood and panting beats the ground.  
Ah! what avail his glossy varying dyes,  
His purple crest and scarlet-circled eyes;  
The vivid green his shining plumes unfold,  
His painted wings, and breast that flames with gold?’

But Pope is never so much a child in the presence of nature, that he forgets his business; never so riveted by the vision of beauty, that he forgets to count his syllables, to round his periods, to finish his picture; and so the lily of the field becomes, in his hand, a hot-house plant, and the living rose is transformed into a flower of diamonds.

*The Dunciad* (1728), or *Iliad* of the dunces; written to avenge himself on his literary enemies. Public games are instituted, and the authors of the time contend for the palm of stupidity. Theobald, Pope’s successful rival in editing Shakespeare, wins, mounts the throne of Dulness, but is subsequently deposed from his preëminence to make room for Cibber, an actor and dramatic scribbler, whose chief distinction is, that he has been thus embalmed in the lava of Pope’s volcanic wrath. This savage satire had the desired effect,—it blasted the characters it touched. Some were in danger of starving, as the booksellers had no longer any confidence in their capacity. On the day the book was first put upon the market, a crowd of writers besieged the shop, endeavoring by entreaties and threats to suppress the sale. Pope was executed in effigy.

The ‘Dunces,’—as they were now known,—held weekly clubs to determine plans of retaliation. A surreptitious edition was printed, with an owl in the frontispiece. For distinction, the true one adopted, instead, an ass laden with authors.

The work displays fertility of invention, variety of illustration, force of diction; but is often indelicate, oftener unjust, and without general interest. Insipid and heavy as a whole, it is splendid in parts, as in the closing sketch of the decline and eclipse of learning and taste before the darkening empire of advancing Dulness:

‘She comes! she comes! the sable throne behold  
Of night primeval, and of Chaos old!’

Before her Fancy's gilded clouds decay,  
 And all its varying rainbows die away.  
 Wit shoots in vain its momentary fires,  
 The meteor drops, and in a flash expires.  
 As one by one, at dread Medea's strain,  
 The sick'ning stars fade off th' ethereal plain;  
 As Argus' eyes, by Hermes' wand oppressed,  
 Closed one by one to everlasting rest;  
 Thus, at her felt approach and secret might,  
 Art after art goes out, and all is night.'

*Essay on Man* (1733), the noblest of his works, the most influential, and the surest guarantee of his immortality. The essay consists of four 'Epistles.' The first considers man in his relation to the universe; the second, his relation to himself; the third, his relation to society; the fourth, his relation to happiness. The design is to reconcile, on principles of human reason, the contradictions of human life; to vindicate the ways of God to man, by representing evil, moral and physical, to be a part of the Divine scheme for the government of the world. But what is more ridiculous than a musician in the chair of wisdom? For once, Pope was not master of his subject, and undertook to teach what he had not learned, and could not comprehend. He aspired to harmonize conflicting systems of thought, and succeeded in making a chaos. Why approve or condemn at every step, if,—

'One truth is clear: *Whatever is, is right*!'

What becomes of moral responsibility, if,—

'Who heaves old ocean, and who wings the storms,  
 Pours fierce ambition in a *Cæsar's* mind'?

What becomes of Godward aspirations, if God, withdrawn into the far depths of an eternal silence, never touches the circle of human interests? Go ask the pestilence to excuse your frailties, and the earthquake to forgive your sins! Eat, drink, and be merry, for you are shut up in the prison-house of Fate!

Bolingbroke, whom Pope apostrophized as his genius, guide, and friend, privately ridiculed him, as having adopted and applied principles of which he did not perceive the consequence, and as blindly propagating opinions contrary to his own. The principles of the *Essay* were not immediately examined, and so little was any evil tendency at first discovered, that by many it was read as a manual of piety. We do not look for vipers in a bouquet of flowers. Criticism, however, soon revealed that its provisions, for the most part, terminated fatally to the highest hopes and



interests of mankind, and Pope was under the ban of rejecting Revelation and favoring Atheism. He begins to distrust himself, to doubt the tendency of his teachings, shrinks back from his conclusions appalled, and writes his gratitude to the man who has sought to give to the obnoxious parts an innocent and consistent interpretation:

‘You have made my system as clear as I ought to have done, and could not. It is indeed the same system as mine, but illustrated with a ray of your own, as they say our natural body is the same still when it is glorified. I am sure I like it better than I did before, and so will every man else. I know I meant just what you explain, but I did not explain my own meaning so well as you. You understand me as well as I do myself, but you express me better than I could express myself.’

Aware of his weakness, brought face to face with the inscrutable enigma, he turns his back upon the infinite, abandons the problem, and writes *The Universal Prayer*, as a compendious exposition of the meaning which he desired to be attached to the *Essay*,—the forgetful, genuine cry of a soul that once, if never again, feels the sadness of the universe, and sinks in a sense of divine mystery:

‘FATHER of all! in every age, In ev’ry clime ador’d, By saint, by savage, and by sage, Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!	Yet gave me, in this dark estate, To see the good from ill; And binding nature fast in fate, Left free the human will.
Thou great First Cause, least understood, Who all my sense confin’d	What conscience dictates to be done Or warns me not to do,—
To know but this, that Thou art God, And that myself am blind;	This teach me more than hell to shun; That more than heaven pursue.’

Again it is to be observed, here as elsewhere, that, while the whole is unsatisfactory, the details are admirable,—less admirable, indeed, for the ideas, than for the art of expressing them. That we see but little; that God is wise, though we are fools; that self-interest, well understood, will produce social concord; that mutual benefits are a mutual gain; that our true honor is, not to have a great part, but to act it well; that evil is made subservient to good; that happiness lies in virtue and in submission to the Divine Will;—these, though salutary truths, are common property: but splendor of imagery, inimitable workmanship, give to these commonplaces a potent charm, and secure for them an abiding place in the gallery where beauty garners immortally her own. What gives to the *Essay on Man* the perpetuity of its thought is the marvellous expression. Never was familiar knowledge expressed in words more effective, in style more condensed,

in melody more sweet, in contrasts more striking, in embellishments more blazing. Mark the multiplied treasures in the following,—nearly every line an antithesis and an abstract:

‘Know then thyself, presume not God to scan.  
The proper study of mankind is man.  
Plac’d on this isthmus of a middle state,  
A being darkly wise, and rudely great;  
With too much knowledge for the sceptic side,  
With too much weakness for the stoic’s pride,  
He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest,  
In doubt to deem himself a God, or beast,  
In doubt his mind or body to prefer,  
Born but to die, and reas’ning but to err;  
Alike in ignorance, his reason such,  
Whether he thinks too little or too much;  
Chaos of thought and passion, all confus’d;  
Still he himself abus’d or disabus’d;  
Created half to rise, and half to fall;  
Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;  
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl’d,  
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world.’

With what luxuriance and care he amplifies his thought in the noble but vain attempt to define the Deity without subjecting him to the limitations of matter:

‘All are but parts of one stupendous whole,  
Whose body nature is, and God the soul;  
That, chang’d through all, and yet in all the same,  
Great in the earth, as in th’ ethereal frame,  
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,  
Glowes in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;  
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,  
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;  
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,  
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;  
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,  
As the rapt seraph that adores and burns:  
To Him no high, no low, no great, no small,  
He fills, He bounds, connects, and equals all.’

In lines like the following, he speaks with a dignity which perhaps has never been exceeded among the sons of men:

‘Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutor’d mind  
Sees God in clouds, or hears Him in the wind;  
His soul proud science never taught to stray  
Far as the solar walk, or milky way;  
Yet simple nature to his hope has given,  
Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heaven:  
Some safer world, in depth of woods embrac’d,  
Some happier island in the watery waste,  
Where slaves once more their native land behold,  
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.  
To be, contents his natural desire;  
He asks no angel’s wing, no seraph’s fire;

But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,  
His faithful dog shall bear him company.'

Superior excellence of form explains why no English poet—Shakespeare excepted—has supplied to our current literature and conversation a larger number of apt and happy quotations. His maxims, as the following from the *Essay*, have become proverbs:

'An honest man's the noblest work of God.'

'Reason's whole pleasure, all the joys of sense,  
Lie in three words, health, peace, and competence.'

'Hope springs eternal in the human breast:  
Man never is, but always to be blest,  
The soul, uneasy and confined from home,  
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.'

'For forms of government let fools contest;  
Whate'er is best administered, is best.  
For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;  
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.  
In faith and hope mankind may disagree,  
But all the world's concern is charity.'

**Style.**—Refined, ornate, antithetical, pointed, terse, regular, graceful, musical.

**Rank.**—In every literary work there are two constituents,—the substance and the form. These two, while they exist in and by each other, may be given different degrees of prominence. If the attention is bent chiefly to thought and feeling, the result is preëminently substantial or creative merit; if to expression, the result is preëminently formal or critical merit. Corresponding to these two attitudes of the mind, there are two classes of poets,—the creative, and the critical; the sublime, and the beautiful; the powerful and free, and the painstaking and constrained;—the natural and the artificial. The first charm more by their massive grandeur of thought, the second by their careful finish of detail; the first please rather the earnest, the second the elegant; the first view nature and man through telescopes, the second through microscopes; the first give us, for our field of vision, a natural landscape, with its diversities of mountain and valley, of forest and meadow,—the second 'a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe, and levelled by the roller.'

In the age of Pope, the critical spirit was uppermost, and he was its best embodiment. His rank, therefore, is not in the first order of poets, but in the second; and here he is the equal of Dryden.

He proposed at the start to make correctness the basis of his fame. A friend had told him that only one way of excelling was left. 'We had several great poets,' said Walsh, 'but we never had one great poet that was correct; and he advised me to make that my study and aim.' Correct poetry, then, was a business from which he was never diverted. His first study was to make verses — his last, to mend and adorn them. With what nice regard he fabricates his verse! 'The fourth and fifth syllables,' he says, 'and the last but two, are chiefly to be minded; and one must tune each line over in one's head, to try whether they go right or not.' Far and wide he searched, not for passions, but for style; not for great ideas, but for colors. To this career of cold, outside scrutiny he was born. Of the fine frenzy in which we lose thought of words, he was by nature incapable. In him were no sovereign sympathies, no impetuous images, no tormenting convictions, no internal tempests, no sombre madness, which urge forward a Shakespeare, a Milton, a Bunyan, a Byron, and move them to write from an overcharged soul; but the calm reasonings, the self-command, which box up a subject in a regular plan, divide it by rule and compass, and dispose the ideas in files mathematically exact. In religion, he was lukewarm; in politics, indifferent; in everything, studious of his own tranquillity:

'In my politics, I think no further than how to prefer the peace of my life, in any government under which I live; nor in my religion, than to preserve the peace of my conscience in any church with which I communicate. I hope all churches and governments are so far of God, as they are rightly understood and rightly administered: And where they err, or may be wrong, I leave it to God alone to mend or reform them.'

His emotion is always slight, his fancy usually sportive; he shuns the heroic and the tragic; they could take no abiding root in a hothouse regulated by a thermometer. To a heroine floating in her boat on a shoreless sea, he prefers one,—

'Launched on the bosom of the silver Thames.'

A ravished lock of hair is a more fitting subject for his poetry than the real loss that makes the heart with sleepless sorrow ache. He sees in the moon, not the pageant of the universe, but the chandelier of the drawing-room. A gewgaw in a lady's head-dress inspires his muse more than the one white flower among the rocks. Occasional gleams there are, as we have seen, from the deeps of feeling and the heights of thought, but they are meteoric. We read, and are instructed—if we read slowly, and are

not dazed by the shower of sparkles or entranced by the wonder-working sounds that roll so nimbly and brilliantly along; but he touches no chord of the heart, lifts us into no region of high aspiration, wraps us in no dream of the infinite. He moved and felt within a retired and narrow circle. The men and women of fashion, their opinions and customs, their oddities and vanities, his own loves and hatreds, were his favorite themes, which he treats without the enthusiasm or depth of greatness. It is said that he never tried to be pathetic but twice. He has somewhere given a receipt for making an epic. It would be a phenomenal cook whose pudding should give us a deep insight into the workings of the heart, or inspire us with cravings after the ideal! He was a sceptic in poetry, as Hume in religion. The age required it. He wrote for a finical society, which preferred raillery, compliments, and epigrams, to the beautiful, the grand, and the impassioned. In all things he displayed the same critical taste and exactness,—in his letters, in his dress, in his surroundings. As a landscape gardener, he was famous. From him the Prince of Wales took the design of his garden. From him, Kent, the improver and embellisher of pleasure grounds, received his best lessons.

Without the universality of Shakespeare or the sublimity of Milton, he is, among the poets of artificial life and manners, the most brilliant and accomplished.

**Character.**—A collection of contradictions. Professing contempt of the world, he lived upon its pleasure. Pretending to neglect fame, he courted it. Affecting to ignore the critics, he writhed under their attacks. Scorning the great, he loved to enumerate the men of high rank with whom he was acquainted. Tells his friends that ‘he has a heart for all, a house for all, and, whatever they may think, a fortune for all,’ yet entertained scantily; as when he would set a single pint upon the table, and, having himself drunk two small glasses, would retire, and say, ‘Gentlemen, I leave you to your wine.’ Avowing benevolence, he was guilty of meanness which it is impossible to defend. Secretly or openly, he pursued, with an implacable vengeance, all who questioned or slighted his poetical supremacy; and still he could write:



‘Teach me to feel another’s woe,  
To hide the faults I see;  
That mercy I to others show,  
That mercy show to me.’<sup>1</sup>

Dennis, who had been wantonly assailed, speaks of him as a ‘little affected hypocrite, who had nothing in his mouth at the same time but truth, candour, friendship, good-nature, humanity, and magnanimity.’ In social intercourse he delighted in artifice, and was always an actor. If he wanted a favor, he contrived to obtain it indirectly, by unsuspected hints at its general convenience. It is said that he hardly drank tea without a stratagem, and used to play the politician about cabbages and turnips. He resembles a coquette, who,—

‘In hopes of contradiction oft will say,  
“Methinks I look most horrible to-day.”’

He has left us an account of a rehearsal before Lord Halifax, which, if it be not duplicity, lies on the border-land, and is characteristic:

‘The famous Lord Halifax was rather a pretender to taste than really possessed of it. When I had finished the two or three first books of my translation of the “*Iliad*,” that Lord desired to have the pleasure of hearing them read at his house. Addison, Congreve, and Garth, were there at the reading. In four or five places, Lord Halifax stopped me very civilly, and with a speech each time of much the same kind, “I beg your pardon, Mr. Pope; but there is something in that passage that does not quite please me. Be so good as to mark the place, and consider it a little at your leisure. I am sure you can give it a little turn.” I returned from Lord Halifax’ with Dr. Garth, in his chariot; and as we were going along, was saying to the Doctor, that my lord had laid me under a great deal of difficulty by such loose and general observations; that I had been thinking over the passages almost ever since, and could not guess at what it was that offended his lordship in either of them. Garth laughed heartily at my embarrassment: said, I had not been long enough acquainted with Lord Halifax to know his way yet; that I need not puzzle myself about looking those places over and over when I got home. “All you need do (says he) is to leave them just as they are; call on Lord Halifax two or three months hence, thank him for his kind observations on those passages, and then read them to him as altered. I have known him much longer than you have, and will be answerable for the event.” I followed his advice; waited on Lord Halifax some time after; said I hoped he would find his objections to those passages removed; read them to him exactly as they were at first; and his lordship was extremely pleased with them, and cried out, “Ay, now they are perfectly right; nothing can do better.”’

In religion, as we have seen, he was a man of easy, somewhat elastic, piety. A worldly poet must be such. Like Swift, but with less excuse, he found pleasure in filthy images. His verse is often the receptacle of dirt. Some of his passages Swift alone might have seemed capable of writing.

With all his literary vanity, he is said never to have flattered,

<sup>1</sup> *Universal Prayer.*

in print, those whom he did not love, nor to have praised those whom he did not esteem. Certainly, his independence secured him from the servile drudgery of offering praise and congratulations for sale. He was a fond and faithful friend to the chosen few. 'I never in my life,' said Bolingbroke, 'knew a man that had so tender a heart for his particular friends, or a more general friendship for mankind.' It may be remembered, against many faults, that, while resentful and irritable to others, he was uniformly gentle and reverential to his venerable parents:

'Me let the tender office long engage,  
To rock the cradle of reposing age;  
With lenient arts extend a mother's breath,  
Make languor smile and soothe the bed of death;  
Explore the thought, explain the asking eye,  
And keep at least one parent from the sky.'

His generous sentiments would seem to have been the colors of his better and present moments. He had the feeling and the admiration of moral excellence, and has described it admirably; but the wingless brute was stronger than the winged seraph, and was constantly dragging him down.

**Influence.**—To Pope the English language will always be indebted. He, more than any other before or since, discovered its power of melody, enriched it with poetical elegances, with happy combinations of words, and developed its capacities for terse and brilliant expression. In the *form* of his verse,—the rhymed decasyllabic line, which he made for a time supreme,—his influence is no longer felt; but in the taste he created for correct diction and polished versification, his influence will never cease.

By his satires, he was a public benefactor. The poet may influence the mind by virtue directly, by warnings and exhortations; or indirectly, by scourging vice and exposing folly. The latter is the method of the satirist, who is the Judge Lynch of civilized society. The case-hardened, with whom serious admonition is vain, he exposes to the public gaze for the public sport, not to effect any improvement in *them*, but, by showing their example to be intrinsically contemptible, to prevent the communication of their disease to others. Thus Pope was serviceable to his generation by satirizing its false taste, false virtue, false happiness, false life; and, in the character of satirist, may claim a moral purpose:

'Hear this and tremble, *you who escape the laws*;  
 Yes, while I live, no rich or noble knave  
 Shall walk the world in credit to his grave.'<sup>1</sup>

We must acknowledge his service to us in reflecting, with curious completeness, the thoughts of his day. He resembles a plastic material, which has taken, with singular sharpness and fidelity, the main peculiarities of the time. A semi-Deist, without well knowing what Deism meant, he exhibits in the *Essay on Man* the religious creed of the age,—a creed which, by refining the Deity into an abstraction, leaves religion soulless,—a bare skeleton of logic. In his translation of *Homer's Iliad*, he exemplifies in its utmost excellence the theory of artificial poetry. His various satires are significant of the social structure.

In spiritual interests, his influence will ever be one of mixed good and evil. The reason is simple,—he had not spiritual healthfulness. No man can inspire and sustain his fellow-beings with high and happy emotions, who has not religious realization, and a just sense of the dignity of human nature. Here is his characteristic view of human life:

'Behold the child, by nature's kindly law,  
 Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw:  
 Some livelier plaything gives his youth delight,  
 A little louder, but as empty quite;  
 Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his riper age,  
 And beads and prayer-books are the toys of age;  
 Pleased with this banble still, as that before,  
 Till tired he sleeps, and life's poor play is o'er.'

The 'rattle,' the 'straw,' the 'beads,' and the 'prayer-books' are equally baubles, and end alike in weariness and death. This is deliberate and final,—the sum of 'life's poor play'! The greatest men have indeed had a sense of the pettiness of our lives; no great soul could ever be without it; but mark the difference: life is a brief dream, vanishing into the vast abyss of ever-present mystery,—be humble; it is a shifting scene, but Heaven is behind the veil of phenomena,—be of good cheer amid your frailties; you are gifted with an immortal spirit, but you stand in the shadow of the great darkness,—be lowly wise. We would have it considered well, that he who would give enduring and efficient utterance to those echoing sentiments which search the heart, and in virtue of which poetry fulfils its

<sup>1</sup> Pope's *Imitations of Horace*.

truest mission of soothing and elevating the soul; he who would gain the orbit of the high, the holy, and the real, see them in their eternal beauty, feel them in their universal interest, and exert the measure of their power on the minds of his readers,—must have first a profound reverence for the divine, and a profound sympathy for the human,—its hopes and its sorrows, its infirmities and its aspirations.

What we would commend to the student's careful remembrance, as of practical moment, is Pope's admirable unity of method. He searched the pages of Dryden for the best fabric of verse, and, having found it, used it habitually. He read, first to know, then to judge,—always with reference to a fixed object. As he read, he possessed himself of the beauties of speech, gleaned what he thought to be brilliant or useful, and preserved it all in a regular collection. His intelligence was perpetually on the wing. Not content with well-done, he endeavored to do better. In his highest flights, he wished to go higher. Having written, he revised often, retouched every part with an unsparing hand and an attentive eye. Here is a specimen indicative of his continual corrections and critical erasures :

'The wrath of Pelens' son, the direful spring  
Of all the Grecian woes, O Goddess, sing;  
That wrath which hurl'd to Pluto's gloomy reign  
The souls of mighty chiefs untimely slain.'<sup>1</sup>

'The stern Pelides' *rage*, O Goddess, sing,  
wrath  
Of all the woes of *Greece* the fatal spring,  
Grecian  
That strewed with *warriors* dead the Phrygian plain,  
heroes  
And *peopled the dark hell with heroes* slain.'<sup>2</sup>  
fill'd the shady hell with chiefs untimely

Milton, Addison, Tasso, Balzac, Pascal, felt similar anxieties. The first was solicitous after correct punctuation, the second after the minutiae of the press. The manuscripts of the third, still preserved, are illegible from the vast number of corrections. Balzac, dissatisfied with his first thoughts, would expend a week on a single page, and Pascal frequently occupied twenty days on one

<sup>1</sup> *Iliad*,—as printed.

<sup>2</sup> Corresponding lines of the original manuscript, the words in italics being erased, and those under them adopted instead. Between this copy and the printed page, was, of course, an intermediate manuscript.

of his *Provincial Letters*. They realized that posterity will respect only those who—

‘File off the mortal part  
Of glowing thought with Attic art.’

‘A little thing gives perfection,’ said an ancient philosopher,  
‘but perfection is not a little thing.’



## CRITICAL PERIOD: SECOND PHASE.

### CHAPTER III.

#### FEATURES.

What do we look for in studying the history of a past age? Is it to learn the political transactions and characters of the leading public men? Is it to make ourselves acquainted with the life and being of the time? . . . I take up a volume of Dr. Smollet, or a volume of the 'Spectator,' and say the fiction carries a greater amount of truth in solution, than the volume which purports to be all true. Out of the fictitious book I get the expression of the life of the time; of the manners; of the movement, the dress, the pleasures, the ridicules of society; the old times live again, and I travel in the old country of England. Can the heaviest historian do more for me?—*Thackeray.*

**Politics.**—A period of Whig supremacy. Pressed by the people and abandoned by the crown, the Tories were unable to take any share in the government. Strong in numbers and in property, they had scarcely a single man of distinguished talents in business or debate. The preponderance of intellect was Whig.

Internally—with the exception of one or two ineffectual attempts to disturb the tranquillity—a time of political torpor. Faction had sunk into repose.

Two ministers give lustre to the administrative policy, Robert Walpole and William Pitt. The first loved peace, and made his country prosperous; the second loved war, and made her glorious.

**Society.**—For literary merit, a dark night between two sunny days. The age of princely patronage had passed; that of general intelligence had not arrived. A poet was a wild ass wedded to his desolate freedom; a ragged, squalid fellow who lodged in a garret up four flights of stairs, dined in a cellar on musty pudding among footmen out of place, wore dirty linen and a greasy coat, stood at restaurant windows snuffing the scent of what he could not afford to taste; slept, like Savage, amid the ashes of a glass-house in December, died in a hospital, and was buried, not in Westminster Abbey, but in a parish vault. Such was the fate of many a writer who, had he lived thirty years earlier, might have sat in Parliament; and, had he written in our day, would

have lived in comfort by the mere sale of his writings. A few eminent authors were more fortunate. Pope, raised above want by his legacy, and the patronage which, in his youth, both parties extended to his *Iliad*, lived calm and admired in his villa. Upon Young, Walpole had bestowed his only pension as the reward of literary excellence. Thomson, by attaching himself to the opposition, had obtained, after much severe suffering, the means of subsistence. Richardson depended less upon his novels than upon his shop. Johnson and Fielding, two of the ablest men of the period, were hunted by bailiffs, and arrested for debt.

The change in the position of writers was injurious to society, as well as to literature. The government, by helping only those who would employ their talent in the lowest forms of political libel, gave society a frivolous and material tone which it has never wholly lost.

Moral revolutions are slow. As in the preceding period, we see corruption in high places, and brutality in low. In the House of Commons, members were notoriously at the command of the highest bidder, formed combinations, and extorted large wages by threatening to strike. Here is a man of the world doing business: ‘He (Walpole) wanted to carry a question . . . to which he knew there would be great opposition. . . . As he was passing through the Court of Requests, he met a member of the contrary party, whose avarice, he imagined, would not reject a large bribe. He took him aside, and said, “Such a question comes on this day; give me your vote, and here is a bank-bill of two thousand pounds,” which he put into his hands. The member made him this answer: “Sir Robert, you have lately served some of my particular friends; and when my wife was last at court, the king was very gracious to her, which must have happened at your instance. I should therefore think myself very ungrateful (putting the bank-bill into his pocket) if I were to refuse the favor you are now pleased to ask me.”’

Private manners were not more estimable than public. ‘Money,’ wrote Montesquieu, ‘is here esteemed above everything, honor and virtue not much.’ The coarseness of fashionable life, prevailing in the first years of the century, was but little mitigated. The novels of Richardson, attaining at once an extraordinary popularity, did something to refine the tone of

society, but there was no very perceptible improvement till the reign of George III. The professor of whist and quadrille was a regular attendant at the levees of fashionable ladies. Wrote Chesterfield to his son: 'It seems ridiculous to tell you, but it is most certainly true, that your dancing-master is at this time the man in all Europe of the greatest importance to you.' Among the entertainments in London, in 1730, we find 'a mad bull to be dressed up with fire-works and turned loose in the game place, a dog to be dressed up with fire-works over him, a bear to be let loose at the same time, and a cat to be tied to the bull's tail, a mad bull dressed up with fire-works to be baited.' Such amusements were mingled with prize-fighting, and boxing-matches between women.

Gin had been discovered in 1684; in 1742, England consumed annually seven millions of gallons. Nine years later it was declared to be 'the principal sustenance (if it may so be called) of more than one hundred thousand people in the metropolis,' and that, 'should the drinking of this poison be continued at its present height during the next twenty years, there will, by that time, be very few of the common people left to drink it.'<sup>1</sup> A tax was imposed to stop the madness, but the minister, finding himself threatened with a riot, repealed it, declaring that 'in the present inflamed temper of the people, the Act could not be carried into execution without an armed force.'

The general level of humanity was little, if any, higher than that of the preceding generation. Executions, if not a public amusement, were at least a favorite public spectacle. In 1745, a ghastly row of rebel heads lined the top of Temple Bar. When Blackstone wrote, one hundred and sixty offences were punishable with death, and not infrequently ten or twelve culprits were hung on a single occasion. In every important quarter of the city were gallows, and on many of them corpses were left rotting in chains. Often the criminals were led to their doom intoxicated, and some of the most distinguished were first exhibited by the turnkeys at a shilling a head. Women convicted of murdering their husbands were publicly burned. Both men and women were still whipped at the tail of a cart through the streets.

<sup>1</sup> Fielding: *On the Late Increase of Robbers.*

The impunity with which outrages were yet committed in London, it is difficult now to realize. Thieves organized with officers, a treasury, a commander-in-chief, and multiplied, though every six weeks they were carried to the gallows by the cart-load. 'One is forced to travel,' it was said in 1751, 'even at noon, as if one were going to battle.' Perhaps no portion of English history has contributed so much to the romance of crime.

**Religion.**—Among the educated classes the main thing was to imitate the French,—their grace and dexterity, their sustained elegance, their glitter, their fine drawing-room polish. English literature has no sadder sentence than that in which Butler, in 1736, declares: 'It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry; but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment; and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world.' In 1751, he speaks of the general decay of religion 'in this nation, which is now observed by every one, and has been for some time the complaint of all serious persons'; and adds that 'the deplorable distinction of our age is an avowed scorn of religion in some, and a growing disregard of it in the generality.' Warburton mourned that he had 'lived to see the fatal crisis when religion had lost its hold on the minds of the people.' Religion, like literature, was cold and unspiritual. Preachers were more eager to denounce an absent adversary than to save the souls of those who heard them. Not enthusiasm and extravagance, but sobriety and good sense were the qualities most valued in the pulpit. 'Discourses,' said Voltaire, 'aiming at the pathetic and accompanied with violent gestures, would excite laughter in an English congregation. . . . A sermon in France is a long declamation, scrupulously divided into three parts, and delivered with enthusiasm. In England, a sermon is a solid but sometimes dry dissertation, which a man reads to the people without gesture and without any particular exaltation of the voice.' We remember that Tillotson, the most authoritative of divines in his time, talked

like a demonstrator of anatomy. Mark the style of his first sermon,—*The Wisdom of being Religious*:

‘These words consist of two propositions, which are not distinct in sense; . . . So that they differ only as cause and effect, which by a metonymy, used in all sorts of authors, are frequently put one for another. . . . Having thus explained the words, I come now to consider the proposition contained in them, which is this: That religion is the best knowledge and wisdom. This I shall endeavor to make good these three ways:

1st. By a direct proof of it.

2d. By showing on the contrary the folly and ignorance of irreligion and wickedness.

3d. By vindicating religion from those common imputations which seem to charge it with ignorance or imprudence. I begin with the direct proof of this.’

Expositions, apologies, moral essays, while they supply rational motives to virtue, rarely kindle a living piety, and are utterly unable to reclaim the depraved. The heart is not touched by the dust that settles on the countenance. But between the dregs at the bottom and the foam at the top quietly coursed the genuine sap of the national life. Under the smoke, burning in silence, glowed the simple faith that never dies, soon to give evidence of its powerful vitality. The revival began with a small knot of Oxford students, whose master spirit was **John Wesley**. Their methodical regularity of life gained them the nick-name of *Methodists*. Breaking away from the settled habits of the clerical profession, they avoided all polemical and abstract reasoning, and preached, as they were moved by the spirit, the lost condition of every man born into the world; the eternal tortures which are the doom of the unconverted; justification by faith; free salvation by Christ; the necessity of personal regeneration; the imminence of death—doctrines which were now seldom heard from a Church of England pulpit. These they regarded as the cardinal tenets of the Christian religion, and taught them with a vehemence and fire that started the smouldering piety of the nation into flame. Their unstudied eloquence and their complete disregard of conventionalities contrasted with the polished and fastidious sermons that were the prevailing fashion of the time. Wesley, relying upon the Divine guidance, frequently opened the Bible at random for a text. He believed in the devil, saw God in the commonest events, heard supernatural noises. His father had been thrice pushed by a ghost. He declared that ‘a string of opinions is no more Christian faith than a string of beads is Christian holiness.’ Such convictions are able to turn emotion into madness, and render the madness contagious. At



his death, he had eighty thousand disciples; now he has a million. The oratory of **Whitefield**, another of the Oxford society, was so impassioned that at times he was overcome by his tears, while half his audience were convulsed with sobs. His first sermon, as a bishop complained, 'drove fifteen people mad.' He instituted itinerant preaching, became a roving evangelist, sought the haunts of ignorance and vice, to deal out to their half-savage populations the 'bread of life.' His rude auditors, numbering five, ten, fifteen, or even twenty thousand, were electrified. A few incidents will exemplify his peculiarities, and at the same time illustrate the characteristics of this reaction against the colorless, marble polish of the age. On one occasion, seeing the actor Shuter, who was then attracting much attention in the part of Ramble in the *Rambler*, seated in a front pew of the gallery, he turned suddenly towards him, and exclaimed: 'And thou, too, poor Ramble, who hast rambled so far from Him, oh! cease thy ramblings and come to Jesus.' 'God always makes use of strong passions,' he was accustomed to say, 'for a great work,' and it was his object to rouse such passions to the highest point. Sometimes he would reproduce the condemnation scene as he had witnessed it in a court of justice. With tearful eyes and a trembling voice, he would begin, after a momentary pause: 'I am now going to put on the condemning cap. Sinner, I must do it. I must pronounce sentence upon you.' Then, with a dramatic change of tone, he thundered over his awe-struck hearers the solemn words: 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!' On another occasion, to illustrate the peril of sinners, he described an old blind man deserted by his dog, tottering feebly over the desolate moor, vainly endeavoring to feel his way with the staff, drawing nearer and nearer to the verge of an awful precipice; and drew the picture so vividly that the urbane Chesterfield lost all self-possession, and was heard to exclaim, 'Good God! he is gone.' Preaching before seamen at New York, he adopted the familiar symbols of their occupation: 'Well, my boys, we have a clear sky, and are making fine headway over a smooth sea before a light breeze, and we shall soon lose sight of land. But what means this sudden lowering of the heavens, and that dark cloud arising from beneath the western horizon? Hark! don't you hear distant thunder? Don't you see those flashes of lightning?

There is a storm gathering. Every man to his duty! How the waves arise and dash against the ship! The air is dark! the tempest rages! Our masts are gone! The ship is on her beam-ends! What next?' 'The long boat! take to the long boat!' shouted the excited crowd. His favorite maxim was, that 'a preacher, when he entered the pulpit, should look upon it as the last time he might preach, and the last time his people might hear.'

In this burning fervor of realization, began the revival of popular religion,—a revolt against the frigid and formal teaching, the easy-going indifference of the dominant church; and this reactionary movement, communicating its impulse to contemporary thought, is premonitory of the general return to rapture and imagination, the grand and the tragic.

**Poetry.**—To arrange words in decasyllabic couplets so that the accents may fall correctly, that the rhymes may strike the ear strongly, that the lines may flow in unbroken cadence, is an art as mechanical as that of mending a shoe, and may be learned by any dunce who will never blunder on one happy thought or expression. Dryden suggested the art; Pope mastered it, and his brilliant success produced a host of dull imitators. His well chosen sounds and symmetrical rhythms were adopted as fashion and fine manners, wherein the point of excellence was not to alter the pattern, but to vary its details of color. Without his powers, they affected his livery, till it became trite, then offensive. In their devotion to form, they forgot the spirit that warms it. Sense was —

‘Sacrificed to sound,  
And truth cut short to make the period round.’

Poetry, impoverished, soulless, and hollow, was waiting for a new development.

A few assert their freedom, strike the key-note of a higher strain, and seem to give signs that the human mind is turning on its hinges,—that external are not the true concern of the poet, that a pink doll is not a woman, that gallantry is not love, that amusement is not happiness, that —

‘Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
And simple faith than Norman blood.’

Four poems mark the change,—Thomson’s *Seasons*, Young’s

*Night Thoughts*, Akenside's *Pleasures of the Imagination*, and Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*. Their main current runs in the direction of sentimental reflection.

**Thomson** was contemplative, affectionate, sympathetic, and artless. He loved nature with those fresh feelings and glad impulses which all would wish to cherish, and he painted his love, in its smallest details, without being ashamed. His lines on the robin in *Winter* are in his best vein:

‘The fowls of heaven,  
Tamed by the cruel season, crowd around  
The winnowing store, and claim the little boon  
Which Providence assigns them. One alone,  
The redbreast, sacred to the household gods,  
Wisely regardful of the embroiling sky,  
In joyless fields and thorny thickets leaves  
His shivering mates, and pays to trusted man  
His annual visit. Half afraid, he first  
Against the window beats; then, brisk, alights  
On the warm hearth; then, hopping o'er the floor,  
Eyes all the smiling family askance,  
And pecks, and starts, and wonders where he is;  
Till, more familiar grown, the table-crumbs  
Attract his slender feet.’

A passage at the end of *Spring* contains a well-known line, and is characteristic:

‘Delightful task! to rear the tender thought,  
To teach the young idea how to shoot,  
To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,  
To breathe the enlivening spirit, and to fix  
The generous purpose in the glowing breast.’

In his mode of thinking and of expressing his thought, he was original.

**Young** was a clergyman and a courtier, who had aspired in vain to a seat in Parliament, then to a bishopric in the Church; married, lost his wife and children, but made use of his disappointments and sufferings to write meditations on *Life, Death, Immortality, Time, Friendship*, and similar themes. He was a lover of gloom, of the imagery of the grave, of the awful mysteries of life. When he was writing a tragedy, Grafton sent him a human skull, with a candle in it, as a lamp; and he used it. His poem is a wilderness of reflection, through which his fertile fancy scatters flowers of every hue and odor. Its strength is in the vast number of noble and sublime passages, maxims of the highest practical value, everlasting truths,—

'The glorious fragments of a fire immortal,  
With rubbish mixed, and glittering in the dust.'

The following may suggest its general complexion:

'Too low they build, who build beneath the stars.'

'Procrastination is the thief of time.'

'In human hearts what bolder thought can rise  
Than man's presumption on to-morrow's dawn?'

'Shall man be proud to wear his livery,  
And souls in ermine scorn a soul without?  
Can place or lessen us, or aggrandize?  
Pygmies are pygmies still, though perched on Alps,  
And pyramids are pyramids in vales.'

'Look nature through, 'tis revolution all!  
All change, no death; day follows night, and night  
The dying day; stars rise and set, and set and rise;  
Earth takes the example. See, the Summer gay,  
With her green chaplet and ambrosial flowers,  
Droops into pallid autumn: Winter gray,  
Horrid with frost and turbulent with storm,  
Blows Autumn and his golden fruits away,  
Then melts into the Spring: soft Spring, with breath  
Favonian, from warm chambers of the south,  
Recalls the first. All, to reflowerish, fades;  
As in a wheel, all sinks to reascend;  
Emblems of man, who passes, not expires.'

**Akenside**, earnest and severe, believed he had a message to deliver to mankind, and wrote in blank verse a philosophical poem on the pleasures of the purified intellect, as it contemplates flourishing groves, murmuring streams, calm seas under moonlight, autumn mists slumbering on the gray sky, noble architecture, music, sculpture, painting. We look, if not for a vision, for something that suggests an element of progress,—at least, a disposition to cease chiselling, and to quarry the living rock:

'Say, why was man so eminently raised  
Amid the vast creation; why ordained  
Through life and death to dart his piercing eye,  
With thoughts beyond the limit of his frame;  
But that the Omnipotent might send him forth  
In sight of mortal and immortal powers,  
As on a boundless theatre, to run  
The great career of justice; to exalt  
His generous aim to all diviner deeds? . . .  
Who that, from Alpine heights, his labouring eye  
Shoots round the wide horizon, to survey  
Nilus or Ganges rolling his bright wave  
Through mountains, plains, through empires black with shade,  
And continents of sand, will turn his gaze  
To mark the windings of a scanty rill  
That murmurs at his feet? . . .

For from the birth  
 Of mortal man, the sovereign Maker said,  
 That not in humble nor in brief delight,  
 Not in the fading echoes of Renown,  
 Power's purple robes, nor Pleasure's flowery lap,  
 The soul should find enjoyment; but from these  
 Turning disdainful to an equal good,  
 Through all the ascent of things enlarge her view,  
 Till every bound at length should disappear,  
 And infinite perfection close the scene.'

**Gray**, a man of vast and varied acquirements, felt, with a melancholy sweetness, the mystery of the world in its relation to universal humanity, and gave voice to his musings in verse whose audience-chamber is capacious as the soul of man; for it reflects, as in peaceful stream, images in which every mind has an interest, and expresses sentiments which find in every bosom an echo. On the eve of a decisive battle, silently gliding along the St. Lawrence, in view of the hostile heights pencilled upon the midnight sky, Wolf repeated the *Elegy*, in low tones, to the other officers in his boat. 'Now, gentlemen,' said he, at the close of the recitation, 'I would rather be the author of that poem than take Quebec!' One stanza, one noble line, must have been fraught with a mournful meaning:

'The boast of Heraldry, the pomp of Power,  
 And all that Beauty, all that Wealth e'er gave,  
 Await alike th' inevitable hour:  
*The paths of glory lead but to the grave.*'

All four, however, while they denote a transition era, show the influence of the artificial school. The intellect triumphs over the emotions; their emotion is formal, their tears are academical. Thomson's muse is often dainty, formal, cold. He saw correctly what was before him; the outward show of things, but had no glimpse of —

'The light that never *was* on sea or land,  
 The inspiration, and the poet's dream.'

Young lashes himself into a never-ending series of antitheses, strikes attitudes, and assumes theatricals. Akenside is stiffly classical in manner, and gives us too much foliage for the fruit. He helps on his age chiefly by his subject. Gray cannot shake off the classical drapery. He is fastidious, scrupulously delicate and exact, rather than fiery, tender, or inventive.

Before any aspect of nature or fact of life is capable of poetic treatment, it must have passed inward,—out of the mere region



of intellect into the warmer atmosphere of imaginative feeling,—there have flushed into glowing color, and kindled the soul to ‘a white heat.’

**Drama.**—Of slight literary importance. In 1732, **Gay** brought society upon the stage, held up the mirror of nature, in which men and women could see themselves as others saw them,—see vice made vulgar,—see their most striking peculiarities and defects pass in gay review before them, then learn either to avoid or to conceal them. The *Beggar's Opera* was acted in London without interruption for sixty-three days. The characters are highwaymen, who wear,—such was the similitude between high and low,—the manners and morality of fine gentlemen. Hear people of quality converse:

“If any of the ladies chuse gin, I hope they will be so free as to call for it.”  
 “Indeed, sir, I never drink strong waters but when I have the colic.” “Just the excuse of the fine ladies! Why, a lady of quality is never without the colic.”

Tragedy was marked rather by cold correctness and turgid declamation than by the freedom and warmth which lead captive the feelings and the imagination. As a reflection of the movement in literature, Shakespeare, who had been banished from the stage, began slowly to reappear. In 1741, the *Merchant of Venice* was produced in its original form, after an eclipse of one hundred years. In October of this year, **Garrick** appeared, for the first time on the London stage, in *Richard III.* It is worthy of notice that this great actor produced a revolution in the art of acting. He displaced the habit of slow, monotonous declamation, of unnatural pomp, by a more various and rapid intonation, and a more careful regard for the truth of nature and history. ‘If,’ said Quin, ‘the young fellow is right, I and the rest of the players have been all wrong’; and he added, ‘Garrick is a new religion,—Whitefield was followed for a time,—but they will all come to church again.’ Garrick replied in a happy epigram, ‘that it was not heresy but reformation.’

**Periodical.**—The daily miscellany, which Addison’s singular humor had made so popular, passed into inferior hands, and fell into disrepute. Johnson, in 1750, and again in 1760, vainly attempted to revive it.

The period is remarkable as the era of the commencement of

magazines and reviews. In 1731, appeared the *Gentleman's Magazine*; and in 1749, the *Monthly Review*, devoted to criticism. These periodicals are evidence of the large increase of readers, and they show, by their contents, that authors had begun to 'intermeddle with all knowledge,'—criticism, politics, philosophy, poetry, fiction.

The press was now, for the first time in the history of the world, the exponent of public opinion. Said a member of Parliament in 1738:

'The people of Great Britain are governed by a power that never was heard of as a supreme authority in any age or country before. . . . It is the government of the press. The stuff which our weekly newspapers are filled with, is received with greater reverence than Acts of Parliament, and the sentiments of one of these scribblers have more weight with the multitude than the opinion of the best politician in the kingdom.'

Said Johnson in 1758:

'No species of literary men has lately been so much multiplied as the writers of news. Not many years ago the nation was content with one Gazette, but now we have not only in the metropolis, papers of every morning and every evening, but almost every large town has its weekly historian.'

**Novel.**—Prose fiction, we first observe, is not a wandering maze of fancy, but a tale with more or less loftiness of style, fulness of detail, and unity of action. If the interest turns on supernatural, improbable, or marvellous incidents, the story is called a *romance*; if on pictures of life, showing the web and texture of society as it really exists, or has existed, it is called a *novel*. If the novel recreates the events and characters of history, putting us into living contact with a given phase of national life, it is *historical*; if it paints human nature and facts, with a moral effect or design, it is *ethical*. The ethical novel may convey its lesson in two principal ways,—it may inflict morality, or insinuate it; it may wall up the heart with discipline, subjecting its impulses uniformly to a severe ideal, or, less exacting, may adopt expansive and liberal measures, allowing a generous supply of air and sunshine. The first was the method of **Richardson**, the second, of **Fielding**. The one represents noble dreams, enthusiastic elevation; the other, noisy hilarity and frank benevolence. The heroine of the one is studious, loving, and pious; of the other, modest, loving, and — an excellent cook. Each is the complement of the other, and both are artists. In a literary, artistic view, the novels of Richardson and Fielding are the freshest feature of the period, and the most interesting. Few works yield richer profit

or delight. In them we see veritable men and manners, imbibe our notions of virtue and vice from practical examples, and see life translated into a spiritual language. Where should we go for so satisfactory an account of the general state of society as the standard productions in this species of composition afford? History gives us names and dates, we see the panoramic splendor of kings, and hear the sonorous sounds of war, but cannot see the many-hued daily life, the mad menagerie of passions, which they conceal. We see the dance and sparkle of the rose-colored waters, but think not of the hidden skeletons of death.

**History.**—The historical literature of a people is developed by successive stages. Falling at first, like the mind itself, under the absolute dominion of the imagination, its earliest expression is legendary, and its form is metrical,—songs, epics, and ballads. These are the groundwork. They preserve the stock of oral traditions, and thus mark the dim beginnings of national life. We have listened to the impassioned war-chant of the Anglo-Saxons, which exhibits beforehand the flower in the bud:

‘The army goes forth; the birds sing, the cricket chirps, the war-weapons sound, the lance clangs against the shield. Now shineth the moon, wandering under the sky. Now arise deeds of woe, which the enmity of this people prepares to do. . . . Then in the court came the tumult of war-carnage. They seized with their hands the hollow wood of the shield. They smote through the bones of the head. The roofs of the castle resounded, until Garulf fell in battle, the first of earth-dwelling men, son of Guthlaf. Around him lay many brave men dying. The raven whirled about dark and sombre, like a willow leaf. There was a sparkling of blades, as if all Finsburg were on fire. Never have I heard of a more worthy battle in war.’<sup>1</sup>

Such productions are a source of amusement in time of peace, of inspiration in time of war; and the minstrels who sing them rise to the dignity of final umpires in disputed questions.<sup>2</sup> It will be found that the first rudiments of knowledge consist always of poetry. In the absence of authentic records, this is the form best calculated to assist the memory.

This sort of hero-worship, as a means of perpetuating public memories, is at length succeeded by annals or chronicles, with bare dates; a diary of passing experience—a kind of historical almanac in prose or verse. We have seen how the monks with

<sup>1</sup> Composed before the beginning of the emigrations to England.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Ellis, a missionary in the South Sea Islands, says of the inhabitants: ‘Their traditional ballads were a kind of standard, or classical authority, to which they referred for the purpose of determining any disputed fact in their history.’ And when doubts arose, ‘as they had no records to which they could at such times refer, they could only oppose one oral tradition to another; which unavoidably involved the parties in protracted and often obstinate debates.’—*Polynesian Researches*.

monotonous dryness gather up and take note of the great visible events:

‘A.D. 788. This year there was a synod assembled at Fingal in Northumberland, on the fourth day before the nones of September; and Abbot Albert departed this life.

A.D. 788. Here Elwald, King of the Northumbrians, was slain by Siga, on the 11th day before the calends of October; and a heavenly light was often seen there, where he was slain. He was buried in the church of Hexam; and Osred, the son of Alred, who was his nephew, succeeded to him in the government. This year there was synod assembled at Acley.

A.D. 790. Here Archbishop Eanbert died, and Abbot Ethelherd was chosen archbishop the same year, and Osred, King of the Northumbrians, was betrayed, and banished from his kingdom, and Ethelred, the son of Ethelwald, succeeded him.’

We have heard the dull babbling of Robert Mannyng, as he turns the fabulous history of England into prosaic rhymes.<sup>1</sup>

These are the infant attempts at regular narrative — mere pegs without tapestry to cover them. The narrator, however, in telling his story of the present or past, has thus far no choice of materials. Like the society for which he has written, he has a natural appetite for the marvellous, sharpened by the mystery which hangs over what is distant. Nothing is too absurd for his or the general belief. The legends of the bard and the superstitions of the monastic — omens, prodigies, apparitions, monstrous appearances in the heavens — are recounted with grave minuteness of detail, and copied from book to book as if they were the choicest treasures of human wisdom. Thus in 1483, the pedigree of the London bishops was traced back to the migration of Brutus from Troy, even to Noah and Adam. The *History of the Britons*, composed in 1147, and professing to take a comprehensive view of the subject, relates how Brutus, having slain the giants who peopled England, built London; how, during a succeeding government, it rained blood three consecutive days; how the coasts were infested by a horrid sea-monster, which, having devoured multitudes, swallowed the reigning king; how a giant, more terrible than the others, clothed himself in furs made entirely from the beards of kings he had killed, but fell himself a victim to the prowess of Arthur. The reputation of this work procured for its author a bishopric, and for several centuries but two or three critics ventured to question its accuracy.

As the bounding boyhood of fancy merges into the sober manhood of reason, as the roseate hues of morning fade into the calm

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I, p. 181.

uniformity of noon, so the poetical legend and the simple chronicle, with their mingled truth and fiction, advance to the dignity of genuine history, whose aim is to paint the past as it really was; to reconstruct the external picture of objects and the internal picture of soul; to reveal the living man, in his voice, gesture, and dress, eating, feeling, suffering, fighting, toiling; to verify tradition, to rectify dates and texts, to reproduce the unity and drift of events by the motion and chain of ideas. This is history proper, as distinguished from mere annals on the one hand and philosophical history on the other—a linking together of causes and effects. It had its beginning nobly signalized by Raleigh's *History of the World* (1641). Though full of that uncritical sort of learning which now provokes only an incredulous smile, the eloquent strain of reflection to which it sometimes rises, is prophetic of the coming master:

“I have considered,” saith Solomon, “all the works that are under the sun, and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit”; but who believes it till Death tells it us? . . . O eloquent, just, and mighty Death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and, whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised; thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet!*’

But the first work to acquire literary preëminence in this department was **Hume's** *History of England*. In the charm of its narrative, in its endeavor to construct an organic whole, it is an enduring monument. Increased attention to history, under improved methods, is a most important characteristic of the period.

**Theology.**—Theological composition was the continuous, central current of prose literature. The Baconian method, an appeal to observation and experience, had unsettled received opinions in matters of physical science. Locke, applying this method to the science of mind, had led men with increasing zeal to examine the principles of ethics and of religion, and to exalt reason against authority—the reason of later inquirers against that of earlier. Like the preceding, it was a rationalizing age. In the two previous centuries, the anti-Christian attacks had been met on grounds more or less arbitrary. The obligation of religious belief had been based, to a large extent, upon the dictum of the Church; but, it was replied, if that principle were admitted, it would be impossible to justify the separation from Rome. The



old-school Puritans had made the Scriptures themselves the final court of appeal, but this was discredited by the interminable differences of interpretation. Others imagined they had found an infallible oracle in a certain inward light residing in the souls of believers; but this expedient—too mystical and extravagant to be of any force in argument—had also to be abandoned. The orthodox party were thus forced to defend themselves by logic. Is the Bible a forgery, or the word of the living God? Is Christianity an imposture, or the light which alone can lighten the world? Such were the questions that broadly define the struggle. The Deists urged that the Christian doctrines were irrational, and proposed to substitute for revealed religion the religion of nature. The divines replied that a revelation was an antecedent probability, and was supported by evidence, internal and external, so weighty and conclusive that prudence and common sense compelled its acceptance.

The series of Deistical writings in this age closed with the posthumous publications of **Bolingbroke**, in 1752. Admitting the existence of God, he denies His providence; admitting the possibility of a revelation, he denies the fact; admitting that miracles, if wrought, prove a Divine revelation, he maintains that the canonical books belong to a later age than the events they describe.

**Middleton**, a most insidious and powerful assailant, first opened out the whole question of the historical evidence of miracles by his attacks, in 1748, on the miraculous narratives of the Fathers.

The complete development of the scepticism of this period, however, is represented by **Hume**, whose teachings and influence will be considered hereafter.

The orthodox position was given most fully and philosophically by **Bishop Butler**—incomparably the greatest of Christian advocates. In 1736, appeared his *Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature*. Its aim was to present the leading points in the controversy; to show that every objection urged against the Christian faith may be urged equally against the economy of the natural world, and is equally valid for the disproof of truths which are universally believed; to find in outward and visible things the type and

evidence of those within the veil; to explain that the difficulties of revealed religion have their likeness in that part of the Divine proceedings which comes under our view in the daily business of life. Thus, as the rose suspends its vital current but dies not, losing its grace and loveliness but springing forth afresh; as the insect languishes, withdraws into its silken shroud, motionless and powerless, yet bursts its tomb and enters into a new world, rejoicing in the possession of new and enlarged powers,—so the spirit of man may be renewed through the dust and ashes of his dissolution, though our straining eyes may not follow it into the dark beyond. True, we may not reach demonstration. Here we see through a glass darkly—let probability be our guide. This is the principle on which he retires, sensible to the sad discords of the universe. Who that has gone deep enough into the conditions of knowledge to feel the weary burden of ‘this unintelligible world’ is not inclined to consider this a wise conclusion? The *Analogy*, in spite of its faulty style, is destined, by its very solidity and moral earnestness, to be the eternal heritage of mankind.

About the middle of the century, Deism, as a creed or constructive system to live and die by, vanquished and languishing from internal decay, fell into disrepute.

Amid this dust of debate, we may hear now and then the voice of ecstatic meditation, ‘sore sick’ of the long din, convinced of its futility to arrest religious decadence or quicken the ordinary soul, and calling men to the birth of a heavenly life. Perhaps the writer who exercised the deepest influence in the revival of the eighteenth century was **William Law**, who, almost alone among his contemporaries, might stand for a primitive Christian come to revisit a strangely altered scene. To his rapt contemplation, we are pilgrims filing swiftly across the stage of action, tarrying an instant, yet in that instant on the road for eternity. ‘The whole race of mankind are a race of fallen spirits that pass through this world as an arrow passes through the air.’ With such convictions, he was a fit messenger sent to Vanity Fair, to order its inhabitants to put on sackcloth and ashes. Religion, from being historical and rational, becomes subjective and emotional. The appeal is to the heart. The Christian must separate himself altogether in life and feelings from the world that is about him:

‘All worldly attainments, whether of greatness, wisdom, or bravery, are but empty sounds. . . . There is nothing wise or great or noble in a human spirit but rightly to know, and heartily to worship and adore the great God who is the support and life of all spirits, whether in heaven or earth.’

Christianity is reduced to a single point,—redemption from the earthly to the divine; and the proof, as against the infidel, lies in each man’s consciousness:

‘I had frequently a consciousness rising up within me that the debate was equally vain on both sides, doing no more real good to the one than to the other; not being able to imagine that a set of scholastic, logical opinions about history, facts, doctrines of the Church, or a set of logical objections against them, were of any significancy toward making the soul of man either an eternal angel of heaven or an eternal devil of hell.’

His *Serious Call* is one of the most solemn and powerful works of its kind in any literature. Wesley even dates the rise of Methodism from its appearance in 1730.

**Science.**—The history of optics and astronomical observation is marked in this age by the important correction of the Newtonian views as to the dispersion of refracted light, and by the invention of the achromatic telescope. Franklin, by his famous experiment of 1752, discovered the identity of electricity and lightning, which was followed by his invention of lightning-rods. In general chemistry were announced many new and valuable facts illustrative of the phenomena of respiration and combustion. But the literature of Physical Science is valued more for its content than for its literary character, and the subject is here noticed only as it indicated and assisted that critical tone of thought which was setting at jar the two elements of creation, the natural and the supernatural.

**Ethics.**—This, in common with theology, was showing the spirit fostered by the *Organum*. Bacon, directing attention to facts rather than to established opinions, had produced a feeling of scepticism in the study of matter. His disciples, it has been seen, naturally applied this method to the study of morals, and the controversy which they sprung has continued down to our own day. We possess the idea of *right* and of its opposite, *wrong*. What is the origin of these ideas? We feel that we ought to do the right as known, and to avoid the wrong as known. Whence this feeling of obligation? The answers as before explained may be reduced to two rival theories,—the intuitive and the utilitarian. By the first, the moral idea is a part of

our native intelligence, a portion of the mind's original furniture, in the light of which it sees and understands; by the second, it is derived from experience,—from an observation of the course of life which is conducive to our own and the general interest. The first teaches that we must do right for the sake of right, 'in scorn of consequence'; the second, that we must do it because it tends to promote the good of others, and hence our own. In the view of the utilitarian, 'ought' and 'ought not' mean the prospect of gaining or losing pleasure. Ask him why you should be benevolent.—Because others will reciprocate your kindness. Why keep your promise?—Because it is useful. Why be charitable?—To secure the esteem of those around us, and a return of favors bestowed. Whence the pleasure of being loved?—The prospective services we anticipate from those who love us. Whence the pleasure of piety?—The expectation of the favor of God in this life and another. Of these antagonistic schools, the first may in this age be represented by **Butler**, the second by **Hartley**.

**Philosophy.**—Here we find theories of a similar kind. The source of knowledge was taken as the central idea. For example, I have the idea of *space*:—the idea of a real, though invisible, fact. I know that it denotes a reality independent of myself,—that it would exist if I were otherwise constituted,—exist though the Omnipotent were not,—uncreated, for it is no object of creation,—indestructible, for it is no object of destruction. I am equally sure that every effect must have a cause; that the whole is greater than a part; that if equals be added to equals, the sums will be equal. Such ideas are distinguished as necessary truths, axioms, necessary laws of thought,—born with us, not derived from observation. Observed events are only the occasion of their being evoked. I also have the idea of *bitter*; but, on reflection, I discover that this idea represents, not an independent reality, but something relative to my present constitution, and hence contingent. Differently constituted, I should have a different sensation, and therefore a different idea; and the supposed bitterness would cease to be. To admit the existence of these two classes of ideas, together with their correspondent external objects, is *Realism*; to reject the first and retain the second, is *Materialism*; to deny the physical facts which corre-

spend to our sensations, or to affirm that the sensation is no proof of anything without, is *Idealism*. The first divides the mental from the physical, and believes that the mind has proof of both; the second resolves the mental into the physical; the third resolves the physical into the mental. The first is the underlying philosophy of religion and daily life; the second is the prevailing drift of English speculation; the third is a reaction against the second,—a noble but mistaken endeavor to rescue the hopes and beliefs of men.

**Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, and Hume** make up the line of materialistic succession. The first made seeing and hearing the conditions of thinking, and thus gave English thought a material bent. The second made this tendency excessive and one-sided. The third was peculiarly influential at one point,—the origin of ideas. He asserted that the sole ground of knowledge was experience. The mind contributed nothing,—it was simply paper, on which the images of outward things, and the states they occasioned, were received. The fourth carried the views of his predecessor to startling consequences.

**Résumé.**—A new form of landscape gardening was introduced. Symmetry of design, so popular in the reign of Anne, was discarded for the variety and freedom of nature. Hogarth cultivated the taste for portrait-painting, as yet 'the only flourishing branch of the high tree of British art.' He translated the inward into the outward, exhibiting manners, with deep and various meaning, in color and form. The impulse given to sacred music, and the origin of the English opera, are the capital events in musical history. These facts indicate the tendencies of taste.

Both literature and government were given a more popular turn. Instead of the vices, miseries, and frivolities of the great, the people now saw, in what they read, an account of themselves.

The critical spirit of the age was at once formal and substantial,—increasingly the latter.

Prose was preëminent, and spread far and wide into many realms. History was a favorite study. No literary labor was more remunerative, nor did any other so readily raise to distinction those who excelled in it.

The prevailing style was still classical; but to the nimble move-



ment of Pope and the graceful pace of Addison, was now added the ponderous and stately gait of Johnson.

Poetry, open to petty and superficial criticism, conformed to the rules and proprieties, but was divorced from living nature.

Formalism and rationalism provoked reactionary efforts, disclosing far-off forces at work, promises of the coming spontaneity in which poetry should flow as lava from volcanoes, light from stars, or perfume from flowers.

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## RICHARDSON.

His power was his own in the strictest sense; not borrowed from books, little aided even by experience of life, derived almost solely from introspection of himself and communion with his own heart.—*Craik*.

**Biography.**—Born in Derbyshire, in 1689, son of a poor carpenter. Received a common-school education, and at the age of sixteen was apprenticed to a printer in London—a calling to which he was determined by its prospective opportunities for reading. Advanced rapidly by industry and good conduct, was taken into partnership, and ultimately became the head of an extensive business. At fifty, became an author, writing during his leisure moments in his shop parlor. Delicate, nervous, often ill, his disorders terminated fatally on the 4th of July, 1761.

**Writings.**—Known from his youth as a fluent letter-writer, he had been engaged to prepare a manual of familiar letters on useful subjects, and it occurred to him, while executing the task, that the work would be greatly enlivened if the letters were made to tell a connected story. The result was *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740); published in order to cultivate the principles of virtue and religion in the minds of the young.

*Pamela* is an artless and lovely child of fifteen, half servant and half favorite, who finds herself exposed to the wickedness of a rich and aristocratic young master, a justice of the peace, a sort of divinity to her. He insults her, but she is always timid and humble:

‘It is for you, sir, to say what you please, and for me only to say, God bless your honor!’

Again he is kind, and she is confused:

'To be sure I did think nothing but cur'sy and cry, and was all confusion at his goodness.'

He confines her for several months with a 'wicked creature'; threatens her, tries money, then gentleness. Everything is against her—even her own heart, for she loves him secretly. The toils close around her, and she seems lost; but a grand sentiment saves her. Distinctions of soul are the only ones that will live in Heaven:

'My soul is of equal importance to the soul of a princess, though my quality is inferior to that of the meanest slave.'

He learns to respect her, wishes now to marry her, and she answers him in a timid, troubled way:

'I fear not, sir, the grace of God supporting me, that any acts of kindness would make me forget what I owe to my virtue; but . . . my nature is too frank and open to make me wish to be ungrateful; and if I should be taught a lesson I never yet learnt, with what regret should I descend to the grave, to think that I could not hate my undoer; and that at the last great day, I must stand up as an accuser of the poor unhappy soul that I could wish it in my power to save.'

She is happy now, for she may trust him; and day by day her letters joyously and gratefully record the preparations for their marriage. For her wedding present, she obtains the pardon of those who have ill-treated her. As a wife, she prays to God that she may be enabled to discharge her duty; hopes her husband will be indulgent to the overflowings of her grateful heart; resolves to read in his absence, that she may polish her mind, and make herself worthier of his company and conversation.

*Clarissa Harlowe* (1748), his masterpiece. Like the other, a novel of conflict, but in which virtue, subjected to a severer test, is given its greatest prominence. The heroine is of noble mind, saintly purity, and never-failing sweetness of temper. A despotic father, with an ambition to found a house, wishes to marry her to a coarse and heartless fool; she rebels, is importuned by her mother, urged by a furious brother, stung by a venomous sister, growled at by two uncles, hounded by the whole family—*aunt and nurse included*. She offers to give up her property, never to marry at all, concedes, begs, implores, weeps, faints, but in vain. True, they are afraid of her tears, but the torture is obstinate, incessant. It is the sort of parental tyranny and stupidity that drives the victim to madness, dishonor, or death. When, at the last moment, she thinks to escape them, she is chased by another

more dangerous, a splendid and accomplished, a gay and smiling villain, who desires to possess her, only because she is hard to conquer: 'I always considered opposition and resistance as a challenge to do my worst.'

He spares no expense, scruples at no treachery, invents stories, forges letters, even gives the Harlowes servants of his own. Duty, humanity, prayers, entreaties, his own remorse, stay not the hand of the cruel executioner. She is vigilant, lives in the shadow of present and final judgment. Her life has been entrenched by precepts and principles. She reasons upon them, examines herself, and is conscientious where others are enthusiastic. With philosophic composure, she takes an inventory of character:

'That such a husband might unsettle me in all my own principles, and hazard my future hopes. That he has a very immoral character to women. That, knowing this, it is a high degree of impurity to think of joining in wedlock with such a man.'

Though gentle, she has pride; defends every inch of ground, renews the struggle each day and loses,—breaks, but bends not. Pamela had too little dignity, Clarissa has too much; the former was too submissive, the latter is too sublime.

*Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), designed to represent the ideal of a perfect man, in whom the elegance of fashion combines with the virtues of piety. The hero is courteous, gallant, generous, delicate, good, irreproachable—through a thousand pages. His mild and gracious wife, whose tears are the 'dew-drops of heaven,' says so:

'But could he be otherwise than the best of husbands, who was the most dutiful of sons, who is the most affectionate of brothers, the most faithful of friends; who is good upon principle in every relation of life?'

**Style.**—Epistolary, prolix, realistic, plain, business-like. He seems to have written utterly without artifice, using, on all occasions, the first words and the first incidents.

**Rank.**—De Foe had painted adventures rather than manners. To Richardson belongs the honor of having constructed the first epic of real life—the novel of character. Yet he was not of the world. He drew his inspiration less from observation than from introspection. Given the idea of a simple country girl, her ordinary situation, a fact or two from nature, he makes out all the rest by the mere force of reasoning imagination, as if nothing existed beyond the little room in which he writes. He describes

objects and events with the literal minuteness of a common diary, spinning the web and texture of his story from a myriad gossamer threads; yet never distracted, never forgetful of the single end; twining and linking the innumerable fibres to bring out a figure, an action, a lesson. While he twines, he colors. Unlike De Foe, who sees only the plain literal truth of things, he sees through an atmosphere of ideal light, sees things beautified, elevated above nature. His best paintings are pictures of the heart, expressions of the motives and feelings that make fellowship between man and man. Hence, apart from the story, a large element of the interest is in the sentiments uttered, in motives of action rather than modes.

We could wish that his characters were less circumspect, less calculating, less conscious. They preach too much. Pamela is a little too tame, Clarissa almost too heavenly. Sir Charles is proper as a wax figure—he never did a mean thing, nor made a wrong gesture. But we must not forget that idealization was Richardson's real excellence, as it was his necessity.

**Character.**—As a writer he possessed original genius. He held in his hand almost all the moving strings of humanity, and made them vibrate in harmony. In the duties of morality and piety, regular and exemplary. Conscience, with its auxiliaries, religion, law, education, proprieties, was an armed sentinel guarding the way of life. Gentle, benevolent, and—vain. His vanity grew by what it fed upon,—the flattery of female friends. He was always partial to female society. At thirteen he was the confidant of three young women; conducted their love correspondence, without betraying to one the fact that he was secretary and adviser to the others.

'As a bashful and not forward boy, I was an early favorite with all young women of taste and reading in the neighborhood. Half a dozen of them, when met to work with their needles, used, when they got a book they liked, and thought I should, to borrow me to read to them; their mothers sometimes with them; and both mothers and daughters used to be pleased with the observations they put me upon making.'

He has portrayed himself in his novels. The following sentences are characteristic:

'The power of doing good to worthy objects is the only enviable circumstance in the lives of people of fortune.'

'Nothing in human nature is so God-like as the disposition to do good to our fellow-creatures.'

'A good person will rather choose to be censured for doing his duty than for a defect in it.'

‘Neither a learned nor a fine education is of any other value than as it tends to improve the morals of men, and to make them wise and good.’

‘The most durable ties of friendship are those which result from a union of minds formed upon religious principles.’

‘All our pursuits, from childhood to manhood, are only trifles of different sorts and sizes, proportioned to our years and views.’<sup>1</sup>

‘A good woman is one of the greatest glories of the creation.’

‘It is a most improving exercise, as well with regard to style as to morals, to accustom ourselves early to write down everything of moment that befalls us.’

‘There is a docile season, a learning-time in youth, which, suffered to elapse, and no foundation laid, seldom returns.’

**Influence.**—When a man of ideas is a good man, and uses his strength for a noble purpose, he carries out the great thought of God; idealizes and beautifies life; multiplies humanity, justice, love, piety; increases the desire for excellence of manhood, of womanhood; and the powers of goodness which he sets afloat go on with the irresistible gravitation of the universe, for the Infinite is behind them. The ethical novelist is such a benefactor. He unfolds the soul of things to our eye, translates morality from the language of theory into that of practice, brings the higher and lower principles of action into striking antithesis, and prompts our affection to the good, sharpens our antipathy to the bad. Hence Pope praised the *Pamela* as likely to do more good than twenty volumes of sermons, and an eminent divine recommended it from the pulpit. When we consider how readers had yawned themselves to sleep over the old school of chivalric fable, with what delight they turned to this first ‘romance of real life,’ how fashionable circles made it the theme of their enthusiasm, we cannot doubt that Richardson opened up a spring of moral health,—a fountain which, beginning to flow, should never dry. Men and women looked in, became acquainted with the best things in them, saw the unsummed gold which slept unseen, saw of what manner of spirit they were, and this new light changed them. Thus old Grecian story relates how Narcissus went about among the rude, ill-mannered swains of Attica, and thought himself but one of them, till one day by accident he saw in the water a face more beautiful than Aphrodite’s or Apollo’s, and was astonished to learn that it was his own, and that he too belonged to the handsome kindred of the gods. Henceforth he went another

<sup>1</sup> What great man, looking upon the everlasting ebb and flow of mortal things, snatching a kind of solemn joy from the giddiness which follows his gaze into the infinite, has not felt the same sense of pettiness—that the world, at best, is but a melancholy place, full of wasted purposes and fading images?



man, driving the swine a-field as if he were himself a god, scorning all unseemly and all ungodly conduct.

Perhaps the vice which Richardson chose to delineate does not admit, under modern taste, the slow anatomizing with which he exposes it. Owing, also, to their prolixity and poverty of style, his works have continually decreased in popularity. So essential is excellence of form to permanence of interest.

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## FIELDING.

Truth to English nature, and sympathy with manly quality, perform in Fielding, to a degree, the work of morality.—*Bascom*.

**Biography.**—Born in Somersetshire, in 1707; educated at Eton; studied law at Leyden, but quit ‘money-bound’ before completing his course; returned to England, and at twenty commenced writing for the comic stage; had abundance of health, plunged into jovial excess, took mischances easily; married at twenty-eight, adored his wife, retired to a small estate left him by his mother, feasted, gave dinners, kept fine horses, a pack of hounds, a magnificent retinue of servants in yellow livery, and in three years spent his inheritance and his wife’s fortune; speculated in the Haymarket Theatre, and failed; finished his law studies, was admitted to the Bar in 1740, but was unsuccessful; continued to write for the support of his family, engaged actively in political controversy, always maintaining liberal principles; became a magistrate, destroyed bands of robbers, and earned the ‘dirtiest money on earth’; lost his wife while they were struggling on in their worldly difficulties, was almost broken-hearted, and found no relief but in weeping, in concert with her maid-servant, ‘for the angel they mutually regretted’; naturally ended by marrying the maid; departed for Lisbon in the summer of 1754,<sup>1</sup> to restore his failing health, and there died on the 8th of the ensuing October. He had sown to the wind, and he reaped to the whirlwind.

<sup>1</sup> *Wednesday, June 23, 1754.*—On this day the most melancholy sun I had ever beheld arose, and found me awake at my house at Fordhook. By the light of this sun I was, in my own opinion, last to behold and take leave of some of those creatures on whom I doted with a mother-like fondness, guided by nature and passion, and uncured and unhardened by all the doctrine of that philosophical school where I had learned to bear pains and to despise death.—*A Voyage to Lisbon*.

**Writings.**—*Joseph Andrews* (1742), conceived with the design of turning *Pamela* into ridicule. Joseph is Pamela's brother, and resists the advances of his mistress, as Pamela had resisted those of her master. Pamela herself is degraded from her moral elevation, and is represented as Lady Booby, whom the parson is compelled to reprove for laughing in church. The strength of the novel is Parson Adams, who is learned, amiable, innocent. He is unsuspectingly simple, absent-minded; declares that he would willingly walk ten miles to fetch his sermon on vanity, merely to convince Wilson of his thorough contempt for the vice; consoles himself for the loss of a Greek author by suddenly recollecting that he could not read it if he had it, because it is dark. He drinks beer, smokes pipes, moralizes, and, when necessary, uses his fists with effect and relish. He is Joseph's friend, and both are models of virtue and excellence. They give and receive many cuffs, have basins flung at their heads, their clothes rent by dogs, their horse stolen, never have any money, are threatened with imprisonment; yet they go merrily on, with thick skins, keen appetites, and potent stomachs. Rude jests, tavern brawls, ludicrous situations, combine to turn the tragic of Richardson into the grotesque.

*Jonathan Wild* (1743), an account of a famous thief, who turns thief-catcher, and ends his career at the gallows. Its best character is the prison chaplain, who exhorts the condemned man to repent, accepts from him a bowl of punch, because 'it is nowhere spoken against in Scripture,' then resumes his ghostly admonitions.

*Tom Jones* (1749), the history of a foundling; his masterpiece. It was written during the first year of his magistrate life, and contains a vast variety of lifelike characters (most of whose faces are red), drawn chiefly from the daily experience of the police-bench. Western is a country squire, rich, fond of drink, ignorant, boorish, impatient of contradiction, and given up to every gust of passion; yet he has tenderness and tears, and when the wind changes, can be led like a child. Tom dares to fall in love with his daughter Sophy, who is 'the joy of my heart, and all the hope and comfort of my age.' Immediately Tom must be thrashed, and Sophy shall be turned out to 'starve and rot in the streets.' She reasons, he storms; she changes her tactics to

obedience and prayer, he is conquered, but would conceal his submission by blustering :

‘I am determined upon this match, and ha him you shall, damn me, if shat unt.’

Now he cannot rest till they are married:

‘To her, boy, to her, go to her. That’s it, little honeys, that’s it. Well, what, is it all over? Hath she appointed the day, boy? What, shall it be to-morrow, or next day? I shan’t be put off a minute longer than next day, I am resolved. . . . Zoodikers! she’d have the wedding to-night with all her heart. Would’st not, Sophy?’

The novel abounds in incidents and situations that are used only to bring out character. Thus, when Tom’s arm is broken, Square, the philosopher, tries to console him with the stoical doctrine that ‘pain was the most contemptible thing in the world,’ but, in doing so, bites his tongue, and lets slip an oath. Again, the profound Square becomes the lover of Molly Seagrim, discovers that he was preceded by Tom Jones, who finds that he himself had succeeded to the accomplished Will Barnes, who still holds the first claim on her affections. The elder Blifil is grateful to his brother for assisting him to obtain the fortune of Miss Alworthy by marriage. A highwayman robs Western’s sister of her jewels, while he compliments her beauty. That lady appeals to her niece in pride of remembered charms, that have glided into the abyss and rearward of Time:

‘I was never so handsome as you, Sophy; yet I had something of you formerly. I was called the cruel Parthenissa. Kingdoms and states, as Tully Cicero says, undergo alteration, and so must the human form!’

Partridge, of proverbial humor, engages in Latin dialogues with his maid, and during one of these is assaulted by his wife. He is Tom’s faithful attendant, half barber, half schoolmaster, shrewd, yet simple as a child. He goes to the theatre for the first time, to witness the representation of Hamlet. In the account of his impressions, mark the accurate observer of human nature, and see the flesh and blood of other days:

‘In the first row, then, of the first gallery, did Mr. Jones, Mrs. Miller, her youngest daughter, and Partridge, take their places. Partridge immediately declared it was the finest place he had ever been in. When the first music was played, he said: “It was a wonder how so many fiddlers could play at one time without putting one another out.” While the fellow was lighting the upper candles, he cried out to Mrs. Miller: “Look, look, madam; the very picture of the man in the end of the common prayer book, before the gunpowder treason service.” Nor could he help observing, with a sigh, when all the candles were lighted: “That here were candles enough burnt in one night to keep an honest poor family for a whole twelvemonth.”

As soon as the play, which was *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, began, Partridge was all attention, nor did he break silence till the entrance of the ghost; upon which he asked Jones: “What man that was in the strange dress; something,” he said, “like what I

have seen in a picture. Sure it is not armour, is it?" Jones answered: "That is the ghost." To which Partridge replied, with a smile: "Persuade me to that, sir, if you can. Though I can't say I ever exactly saw a ghost in my life, yet I am certain I should know one, if I saw him, better than that comes to. No, no, sir; ghosts don't appear in such dresses as that neither." In this mistake, which caused much laughter in the neighbourhood of Partridge, he was suffered to continue till the scene between the ghost and Hamlet, when Partridge gave that credit to Mr. Garrick which he had denied to Jones, and fell into so violent a trembling that his knees knocked against each other. Jones asked him what was the matter, and whether he was afraid of the warrior upon the stage. "O la! sir," said he, "I perceive now it is what you told me. I am not afraid of anything, for I know it is but a play, and if it was really a ghost, it could do one no harm at such a distance, and in so much company; and yet if I was frightened, I am not the only person." "Why, who," cried Jones, "dost thou take to be such a coward here beside thyself?" "Nay, you may call me a coward if you will; but if that little man there upon the stage is not frightened, I never saw any man frightened in my life. Ay, ay; go along with you! Ay, to be sure! Who's fool, then? Will you? Lud have mercy upon such foolhardiness! Whatever happens, it is good enough for you. Follow you! I'd follow the devil as soon. Nay, perhaps it is the devil—for they say he can put on what likeness he pleases. Oh! here he is again. No further! No, you have gone far enough already; further than I'd have gone for all the king's dominions." Jones offered to speak, but Partridge cried: "Hush, hush, dear sir; don't you hear him?" And during the whole speech of the ghost, he sat with his eyes fixed partly on Hamlet, and with his mouth open; the same passions which succeeded each other in Hamlet, succeeded likewise in him. . . .

The grave-digging scene next engaged the attention of Partridge, who expressed much surprise at the number of skulls thrown upon the stage. To which Jones answered, that it was one of the most famous burial-places about town. "No wonder, then," cried Partridge, "that the place is haunted. But I never saw in my life a worse grave-digger. I had a sexton when I was clerk that should have dug three graves while he is digging one. The fellow handles a spade as if it was the first time he had one in his hand. Ay, ay, you may sing. You had rather sing than work, I believe." Upon Hamlet's taking up the skull, he cried out: "Well! it is strange to see how fearless some men are: I never could bring myself to touch anything belonging to a dead man on any account. He seemed frightened enough too at the ghost, I thought. *Nemo omnibus horis sapit.*"

Little more worth remembering occurred during the play; at the end of which Jones asked him which of the players he had liked best. To this he answered, with some appearance of indignation at the question: "The king without doubt." "Indeed, Mr. Partridge," said Mrs. Miller, "you are not of the same opinion with the town: for they are all agreed that Hamlet is acted by the best player who ever was on the stage." "He the best player!" cried Partridge, with a contemptuous sneer; "why, I could act as well as he myself. I am sure if I had seen a ghost I should have looked in the very same manner, and done just as he did. And then, to be sure, in that scene, as you called it, between him and his mother, where you told me he acted so fine, why, Lord help me! any man—that is, any good man—that had such a mother, would have done exactly the same. I know you are only joking with me; but, indeed, madam, though I was never at a play in London, yet I have seen acting before in the country; and the king for my money; he speaks all his words distinctly, half as loud again as the other. Anybody may see he is an actor."

Thus ended the adventure at the playhouse, where Partridge had afforded great mirth, not only to Jones and Mrs. Miller, but to all who sat within hearing, who were more attentive to what he said than to anything that passed on the stage. He durst not go to bed all that night for fear of the ghost; and for many nights after, sweated two or three hours before he went to sleep with the same apprehensions, and waked several times in great horrors, crying out: "Lord have mercy upon us! there it is."

*Amelia* (1751), a character sketched from his own wife. Captain Booth, *Amelia's* husband, is irregular, extravagant, a bad

manager, a victim to temptation, but a sincere penitent; is instinctively generous, as a dog is instinctively affectionate; has a woman's heart in his soldier's body; is devoted to his wife, weeps at thought of her, treasures her words, loves her supremely, with a perennial warmth:

'If I had the world, I was ready to lay it at my Amelia's feet; and so Heaven knows, I would ten thousand worlds.'

Amelia is, according to Fielding's idea, the assembly of domestic virtues. She is tender, forgiving, and excessively modest; says: 'Dear Billy, though my understanding be much inferior to yours'; receives a love-letter, throws it away, and says:

'I would not have such a letter in my possession for the universe; I thought my eyes contaminated with reading it.'

**Style.**—Fresh, vigorous, easy, idiomatic, exhibiting a care and refinement altogether unknown to that of Richardson.

**Rank.**—A masterly observer and painter of human nature as he witnessed it. What he has given us is for the most part his actual experience, illuminated, of course, by his own genius. He declares that if he imagines a feature, it is because he has seen it. He lived through the scenes and characters he has described; saw the world in its hilarity, coarseness, and brutality; saw natural impulse unveiled; saw the turmoil of vanities, follies, lusts, and rancors, naked and uncloaked; saw men of nerve and muscle, full of warmth and force, with overflowing instincts, jostling and violent, yet liberal, loyal, and joyous. *Of what he saw, he drew living pictures.* Here lies his preëminence. He announced that his object was faithfully to paint real life. But in doing so, he gathered the harvest and forgot the flowers. Life has its poetry, as well as its prose; its moral heroism, as well as its physical valor; its visions, as well as its bread. Of these less solid and loftier constituents, he had but slight appreciation. Hence his characters are strongly built rather than refined. As a mere observer, he was superior to Richardson and little inferior to Shakespeare, though without any of the poetical qualities of either. Width of sympathy, delicacy of perception, high cast of thought, are wanting. He is the novelist of the lower million; Richardson, of the upper ten thousand. He teaches morality indirectly, in the comic style, which, he maintained, disposes men to be 'more full of good humor and benevolence'; Richardson,



directly, in the serious, tragic style, for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.

If the novel be held to include love, satire, humour, observation, genuine portrayal of facts, of living, veritable persons, and skill in the arrangement of plot and incident, he surpasses Richardson, and perhaps is unsurpassed by any other; if, more justly, the ethical tendency, the predominance of character, is the leading index of power in the novelist, to Richardson must be assigned the seat of honor.

**Character.**—Sanguine, affectionate, extravagant, careless, jolly; a drinker, a roisterer, acquainted with the lower orders of all classes, and familiar with the ups and downs of life. His views were those which commend themselves to a man who sees the world as it is, who has no visionary dreams or passionate aspirations, and who has a thoroughly generous nature. Morality, with him, was not a law; yet in his way, he was a moralist. He satirizes vice, excuses, condemns, suggests moral conclusions. His hero is neither a libertine nor an ascetic; he is a full-blooded healthy animal, with respect for the Church so long as it does not break with common sense, but without exaltation or poetic rapture. The novelist, preëminently of authors, records himself in his writings. Not more decisively does a Chinese drawing reveal its nationality than do the works of his imagination reveal the experience and observation out of which that imagination has grown. His heroes and heroines are his ideals, and these must be built of the idealized materials of his actual life and history. Perhaps he had all the best parts of a man, except delicacy and moderation.

**Influence.**—Probably his only legacy to mankind, certainly his chief one, is the picture he has set before us of English society in his generation. We see pretty much what we should have seen as lookers-on. In vindicating the novel against the loftier pretensions of professed historians, he asserted that ‘in their productions nothing is true but the names and dates, whereas in mine everything is true but the names and dates.’ Without going so far, still, as the novel embodies substantially the remarks of the ablest observers upon their contemporaries, we may admit his claim to be a writer of history, who, more

faithfully than many historians proper, has given us the very form and presence of the times.

In his own age, when coarseness was less offensive, he did, as a humorist, the good that mere pleasure can do. His humor, however, is in this age situated where those who are refined or well-dressed will not care to enter. In this direction, as in others, his influence has ceased to be felt. This is the criterion of a truly great man,—that his life has been deepened and chastened by sorrow, enabling him to discern the inner heart of things, so that there rises out of him a kind of universal Psalm; his thought is in our thoughts, and the fruit of his genius scatters its seed across continents and centuries.

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## HUME.

Upon the whole, I have always considered him, both in his lifetime and since his death, as approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man as perhaps the nature of human frailty will permit.—*Adam Smith.*

**Biography.**—Born in Edinburgh, in 1711, and educated at Edinburgh University; was designed for the law, studied, but never practised. He had an insurmountable aversion to everything but literature:

‘While they (the family) fancied I was poring upon Voet and Vinnius, Cicero and Virgil were the authors which I was secretly devouring.’

His slender fortune and impaired health—the result of a too ardent application—forced him to try mercantile life, but in a few months he found this employment equally uncongenial. He then went to France, studied three years in retirement, living with the utmost frugality, and returned in 1737. His patrimony hardly sufficient for his support, he became tutor one year to a young nobleman of deranged mind; next became a candidate for the professorship of moral philosophy in the university of his native town, but was unsuccessful:

‘I am informed that such a popular clamor has been raised against me in Edinburgh, on account of scepticism, heterodoxy, and other hard names, which confound the ignorant, that my friends find some difficulty in working out the point of my professorship, which once appeared so easy.’

He then acted as secretary, two years, to General St. Clair,

attending him first in an expedition against Canada, afterwards in an embassy to the courts of Vienna and Turin:

‘These two years were almost the only interruptions which my studies have received during the course of my life: I passed them agreeably, and in good company: and my appointments, with my frugality, had made me reach a fortune which I called independent, though most of my friends were inclined to smile when I said so: in short, I was now master of near a thousand pounds.’

Wrote industriously, as had been his habit; published, was neglected, but pressed on:

‘On my return from Italy (1749), I had the mortification to find all England in a ferment on account of Dr. Middleton’s *Free Inquiry*, while my performance was entirely overlooked and neglected. A new edition which had been published in London, of my Essays, moral and political, met not with a much better reception.

Such is the force of natural temper, that these disappointments made little or no impression on me.’

In 1752, he was chosen librarian to the Faculty of Advocates, and, placed in command of a large library, struck into the path of historical writing. In 1763, he attended Lord Hertford on his embassy to Paris, where he was received with marked distinction. Three years later, he returned to his native city, with the view of burying himself in a philosophical retreat, but was induced to accept the office of Under Secretary of State, which he held for two years:

‘I returned to Edinburgh in 1769, very opulent (for I possessed a revenue of one thousand pounds a year), healthy, and, though somewhat stricken in years, with the prospect of enjoying long my ease, and of seeing the increase of my reputation.’

Here he lived in the tranquil enjoyment of his fame, and in the affection of his personal friends. In the spring of 1775, he was struck with what he knew to be a mortal disease, and, with the utmost composure, awaited his speedy dissolution. While his person declined, his spirits were unabated. He possessed the same assiduity in study, and the same gayety in company:

‘I consider, besides, that a man of sixty-five, by dying, cuts off only a few years of infirmities; and though I see many symptoms of my literary reputation’s breaking out at last with additional lustre, I know that I could have but few years to enjoy it. It is difficult to be more detached from life than I am at present.’

Sensible that he was sinking, he diverted himself with the revision of his works, with books of amusement, with an occasional game of whist in the evening. His cheerfulness was so great, that many could not believe he was dying. He was perfectly resigned, free from anxiety or impatience. Reading, shortly before his death, Lucian’s *Dialogues of the Dead*, he said

that, of all the excuses alleged to Charon<sup>1</sup> for not entering readily into his boat, he could find none that fitted himself: he had no house to complete, no daughter to provide for, no enemies to be revenged upon:

'I could not well imagine what excuse I could make to Charon in order to obtain a little delay. I have done every thing of consequence which I ever meant to do; and I could at no time expect to leave my relations and friends in a better situation than that in which I am now likely to leave them: I, therefore, have all reason to die contented.'

He invents jocular excuses, which he supposes may be made to Charon, and imagines the very surly answers which it may suit the character of the grim ferryman to return:

'Upon further consideration, I thought I might say to him, "good Charon, I have been correcting my works for a new edition. Allow me a little time, that I may see how the public receives the alterations." "There will be no end of such excuses; so, honest friend, please step into the boat." But I might still urge, "Have a little patience, good Charon: I have been endeavoring to open the eyes of the public. If I live a few years longer, I may have the satisfaction of seeing the downfall of some of the prevailing systems of superstition." But Charon would then lose all temper and decency. "You loitering rogue, that will not happen these many hundred years. Do you fancy I will grant you a lease for so long a term? Get into the boat this instant, you lazy, loitering rogue."'

On the 26th of August, 1776, his physician wrote to Adam Smith:

*'Dear Sir:*—Yesterday about four o'clock, afternoon, Mr. Hume expired. The near approach of his death became evident in the night between Thursday and Friday, when his disease became excessive, and soon weakened him so much that he could no longer rise out of his bed. He continued to the last perfectly sensible, and free from much pain or feelings of distress. He never dropped the smallest expression of impatience; but when he had occasion to speak to the people about him, always did it with affection and tenderness. I thought it improper to write to bring you over, especially as I heard that he had dictated a letter to you, desiring you not to come. When he became very weak, it cost him an effort to speak; and he died in such a happy composure of mind, that nothing could exceed it.'

Men who have formed a high conception of duty, who have bridled the tumult of passion, who pass their lives in a calm sense of virtue and of dignity, are little likely to be assailed by the superstitious fears that are the nightmare of weaker minds. 'Ask,' said Seneca, 'for a brave soul unscared by death.' On the last night in which Antoninus Pius lived, the tribune came to ask

<sup>1</sup> The ferryman in Greek mythology, who for a halfpenny carries across the Stygian lake the souls of the dead that flock to its shores:

'There Charon stands, who rules the dreary coasts;  
A sordid god: down from his hoary chin  
A length of beard descends, uncomb'd, unclean;  
His eyes like hollow furnaces on fire;  
A girdle foul with grease binds his obscene attire.  
He spreads his canvas, with his pole he steers;  
The freights of flitting ghosts in his thin bottom bears.  
He look'd in years, yet in his years were seen  
A youthful vigor, an autumnal green.'

for the pass-word of the night. 'Æquanimitas,' answered the dying emperor. A wise man, who has studied how to live, has learned how to die.

**Writings.**—*Inquiry Concerning the Human Understanding* (1748). In this he recast the first part of an earlier work, *Treatise on Human Nature* (1737), which, he says, 'fell dead-born from the press.' Nor did his speculations now attract much more attention, though they proved eventually to be the most exciting and productive that have been promulgated in modern times. To derive any profit from the consideration of his metaphysical views, the student should remind himself,—

1. That the aim of Philosophy is to ascertain the nature and essence of things.

2. Locke was allowed to have established,—

(1) That we could have no knowledge not derived from experience.

(2) That experience was of two kinds, namely, of external objects and of internal operations; therefore, it had two distinct sources,—sensation and reflection.

(3) That all knowledge could consist only in the agreement or disagreement of ideas.

(4) Finally, that we could never know things in themselves, but only as they affect us; that is, we could know only our ideas.

He supposes the mind to begin its acts of intelligence with *impressions*; by which is meant the lively sensations we have when we hear, see, feel, love, hate, desire, will. When we reflect on any impression, as in acts of memory or imagination, the result is an *idea*. An idea is, then, the faint image or copy of an impression. Thus, when I see a picture, there is an impression; when I think about this picture in its absence, there is an idea. The difference between impressions and ideas is one of degree merely—the former are stronger, the latter weaker; the first are the originals, the second are the vestiges. When, in reasoning, a thing is said to exist, we are to search for an impression (new or old) corresponding to the word used. If no such impression is found, the word, so far as our human faculties are concerned, has no meaning at all. Whether there is any existence corresponding to its meaning, no one can tell—there may or may not be. Hence, whether there be an infinite mind behind the veil of phe-



nomena, no mortal may presume to say. That idea is reached by magnifying the human attributes of wisdom and goodness. If it be asked what knowledge we have of an external world, the answer is, that there are certain impressions and ideas which we suppose to relate to it; further we know not. If we look into ourselves, and, watching the figures as they come and go, seek for assurance of our identity and continuity, we find but a string of separate entities, a procession of shadows, called in one view impressions, in another ideas; not something self-existent, which was, is, and shall continue:

‘Pain and pleasure, grief and joy, passions and sensations, succeed each other, and never exist at the same time. It cannot, therefore, be from any of these impressions, or from any other, that the idea of self is derived; and consequently there is no such idea. . . . For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some 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 perception, and can never observe anything but the perception.’

Hume’s philosophical significance is connected chiefly with his speculations concerning causality. No sooner is an event perceived than we conclude at once that it is an effect, and begin to inquire the cause. Between these two terms he could see no other connection, than that the former immediately follows the latter, as in the melting of wax before the flame of a taper. When they are seen to be conjoined repeatedly, we learn to expect that, when the one accustomed to precede makes its appearance, the other will follow; and this expectation strengthens as repetitions multiply. If now the unsatisfied investigator demands a *power* in the one, which enables it to produce the other, the answer is, such a thing may be; we have no clue to it—no impression of it—by which its existence or non-existence may be argued. Our belief in the maxim that like causes produce like effects is based not on any knowledge of the hidden force through which the one thing brings the other into being, but on habit:

‘When we look about us towards external objects, and consider the operation of causes, we are never able in a single instance to discover any power or necessary connection, any quality, which binds the effect to the cause, and renders the one an infallible consequence of the other. The impulse of one billiard-ball is attended with motion in the second. This is the whole that appears to the outward senses. The mind feels no sentiment or inward impression from this succession of objects; consequently there is not, in any single instance of cause and effect, any thing which can suggest the idea of power or necessary connection.’

The mind cannot perceive any necessary connection between

events, but only an invariableness of antecedence and sequence. The ground of our belief that some power is involved in every causal act is custom. If I believe that the sun will rise tomorrow, it is merely because it has always risen. If I believe that fire will burn, it is merely because it has always burned:

‘When many uniform instances appear and the same object is always followed by the same event, we then begin to entertain the notion of cause and connection. We then feel a new sentiment, to wit, a customary connection in the thought between one object and its usual attendant; and this sentiment is the original of that idea which we seek for.’

Hence, the causal idea, owing to its origin in habit, admits of use only within the field of experience; and our pains are vain, if we attempt to ascend from data given empirically, to that which lies beyond the whole range of experience,—God and immortality. Again, if we cannot infer the exercise of power in a material cause, neither can we in an immaterial one. As in the world of matter, so in the world of spirit, events are merely conjoined. Impulses and motives, which date their origin from sensation only, impressed by matter and material law, chase each other through the corridors of the unresisting mind like boulders and pebbles in a river bed. Man, receptive to the ever-shifting train of ‘impressions,’ is bound fast in fate. Once more, where experience teaches that two things are related by an invariable sequence, if we hear of an instance in which this has not been the case, we ought to doubt the truth of the narrative. Which is the more probable,—that men should make false statements, designedly or otherwise, or that an event should have occurred which contradicts all previous authenticated experience? Therefore, to prove a miracle is impossible, if by miracle is meant an interference with the usual order of nature; for it is simpler to believe that the evidence is mistaken than that the course of nature is not uniform.

It is not here proposed to inquire whether these views, with their quiet and indifferent, yet momentous, applications, will bear close scrutiny. The present business is neither to impugn nor to defend, but to describe.

*Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751), ‘which, in my own opinion (who ought not to judge on that subject), is of all my writings, historical, philosophical, or literary, incomparably the best.’ The work is a full development, so far as made by Hume, of the utilitarian system. Actions are virtuous, if they

tend to increase the pleasures or diminish the pains of mankind; vicious, if they have, or tend to have, the opposite effect. The motive to virtue is an enlightened self-interest. Temperance and chastity should be encouraged, not because they are right and obligatory in themselves, but for the mutual benefit of the individual and the public. The leading principle of his system was very explicitly given ten years earlier, in a letter to Hutcheson:

‘Now, I desire you to consider if there be any quality that is virtuous without having a tendency either to the public good or to the good of the person who possesses it. If there be none without these tendencies, we may conclude that their merit is derived from sympathy.<sup>1</sup> I desire you would consider only the *tendencies* of qualities, not their actual operations, which depend on chance. *Brutus* riveted the chains of Rome faster by his opposition; but the natural tendency of his noble dispositions—his public spirit and magnanimity—was to establish her liberty.’

But what reveals to us the beauty and obligation of benevolence? A special sense. Why do we approve an action performed in the interest of the common welfare? Because we are so constituted:

‘The final sentence, it is probable, which pronounces characters and actions amiable or odious, praiseworthy or blamable, . . . depends on some internal sense or feeling which nature has made universal in the whole species. As virtue is an end, and is desirable on its own account without fee or reward, merely for the immediate satisfaction it conveys, it is requisite that there should be some sentiment which it touches, some internal feeling, or whatever you please to call it, which distinguishes moral good and evil, and which embraces one and rejects the other.’

Moral decisions, consequently, are complex, involving a judgment of the reason and an emotion of the heart—an intuition:

‘Reason instructs us in the several tendencies of actions, and humanity makes a distinction in favor of those which are useful and beneficial.’

It may be questioned whether his admission of a moral sense can be reconciled with his metaphysical theory of impressions and ideas, though with much ingenuity he endeavors to rank it among the impressions. So referred, morality becomes a floating fancy. Virtue and vice, like color and taste, bitter and sweet, lie merely in our sensations.

*Natural History of Religion* (1755), which drew upon him the enmity of many. Its object is to ascertain the origin and process of religious ideas. The conclusion is, that the worship of many Gods must, everywhere, have preceded the worship of one God. Man, in his earliest state, is a savage. As such, he feels no interest in ordinary events of nature, no desire to study the principles which govern them; and therefore his attention is

<sup>1</sup> That is, from our natural sympathy with the person benefited.

confined to those which are extraordinary, startling, terrible, or deadly,—famine and pestilence, the blast of the gathered lightning, the blaze of the comet, the solemn gloom of the eclipse, the wild echoes of the mountain gorge. Powerless to control the causes, he reckons them superior to himself. Cowering before what he cannot measure nor comprehend, he turns them into deities, and propitiates them with gifts. Terror, issuing in polytheism, is thus the beginning of religion:

‘The primary religion of mankind arises chiefly from an anxious fear of future events. By degrees, the active imagination of men, uneasy in this abstract conception of objects, about which it is incessantly employed, begins to render them more particular, and to clothe them in shapes more suitable to its natural comprehension. It represents them to be sensible, intelligent beings, like mankind; actuated by love and hatred, and flexible by gifts and entreaties, by prayers and sacrifices. Hence the origin of religion. And hence the origin of idolatry, or polytheism. It seems certain, that, according to the natural progress of human thought, the ignorant multitude must first entertain some grovelling and familiar notion of superior powers, before they stretch their conception to that perfect Being who bestowed order on the whole frame of nature. We may as reasonably imagine, that men inhabited palaces before huts and cottages, or studied geometry before agriculture, as assert that the Deity appeared to them a pure spirit, omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent, before he was apprehended to be a powerful though limited being, with human passions and appetites, limbs and organs. The mind rises gradually from inferior to superior. By abstracting from what is imperfect, it forms an idea of perfection; and slowly distinguishing the nobler parts of its own frame from the grosser, it learns to transform only the former, much elevated and refined, to its divinity.’

It may be observed, in passing, that Hume has only wrought into more plausible form a theory propounded by Lucretius nineteen hundred years ago:

‘Whate’er in heaven,  
In earth, man sees mysterious, shakes his mind,  
With sacred awe o’erwhelms him, and his soul  
Bows to the dust; the cause of things concealed  
Once from his vision, instant to the gods  
All empire he transfers, all rule supreme,  
And doubtful whence they spring, with headlong haste  
Calls them the workmanship of power divine.’

*History of England (1754–1762)*, an exquisite production of art, that will never cease to be admired as long as taste remains. It procured for its author what the genius and originality of his philosophical works could never have done,—a popular reputation. The general reader found in it elegant and animated narrative; the statesman and thinker, profound and original views. The doctrine of necessity, applied to historical observation, now bore its practical fruits,—a propensity to disbelieve narratives of great and remarkable deeds; a disposition to find all men pretty

much upon a level, none in a marked manner better or worse than their neighbors; an inclination to regard human society as a corporate part of the mechanism of the universe, whose movement is regulated by eternal and irresistible law.

**Style.**—Remarkably clear and flowing, simple, graceful, and vivacious, often impregnated with a vein of the quietest yet truest and richest humor. A finished expression was his studious care. Content to take his authorities at second hand, he was constantly subjecting the *History* to revision in point of style. Defending himself against the charge of coldness in the cause of virtue, he says, with the evident anxiety to be thought innocent:

‘Though I am much more ambitious of being esteemed a friend to virtue than a writer of taste, yet I must always carry the latter in my eye, otherwise I must despair of ever being serviceable to virtue.’

**Character.**—From his earliest years he had a genuine love of letters and philosophy, and consecrated himself to their pursuit:

‘I resolved to make a very rigid frugality supply my deficiency of fortune, to maintain unimpaired my independency, and to regard every object as contemptible, except the improvement of my talents in literature.’

His supreme motive was the desire of greatness—not the greatness of circumstance or the blazonry of power, but the higher and more lasting distinction of mental empire:

‘Such a superiority do the pursuits of literature possess over every other occupation, that even he who attains but a mediocrity in them, merits the preëminence above those that excel the most in the common and vulgar professions.’

He was generous, yet frugal; gentle, yet firm; modest, yet self-respectful. Pleasantry was tempered with delicacy. Railery was without the asperity of wit,—the effusion of good nature, light, and sometimes elegant as that of Addison. Its peculiar type is most finely illustrated in his correspondence, as in the reference, in a letter of 1751, to his brother’s marriage:

‘*Dear Madam*.—Our friend at last plucked up a resolution, and has ventured on that dangerous encounter. He went off on Monday morning; and this is the first action of his life wherein he has engaged himself, without being able to compute exactly the consequences. But what arithmetic will serve to fix the proportion between good and bad wives, and rate the different classes of each? Sir Isaac Newton himself, who could measure the course of planets, and weigh the earth as in a pair of scales,—even he had not algebra enough to reduce that amiable part of our species to a just equation; and they are the only heavenly bodies whose orbits are yet uncertain.’

Possibly this will explain why he never ventured upon ‘that untried state,’ preferring rather to bear the ills he had than fly to others that he knew not of. Whether a great man has loved, is



no unimportant feature of his history; but unhappily, in the present instance, little or no light can be shed upon the question. He frequently discusses the passion of love, divides it into its elements as systematically as if he were subjecting it to a chemical analysis; lays down rules regarding it as if it were a system of logic: but the mood of mind in which passions are analyzed is not that in which they are strongly felt. We suspect that, while he had a superficial admiration of women in general, he had not the depth of emotional power to be profoundly influenced by any in particular; and the suspicion is strengthened by his own declaration on hearing of the infatuation of a nobleman, whose eyes, withdrawn from severe study, had opened in a fatal moment upon the charms of a merchant's daughter of sixteen:

'They say many small fevers prevent a great one. Heaven be praised that I have always liked the persons and company of the fair sex! for by that means I hope to escape such ridiculous passions.'

Gayety of temper, which is usually accompanied with frivolous qualities of mind, was in him coupled with extensive learning, profound thought, severe application, and a general earnestness of spirit. In his last illness, a spectator of the past, facing the infinite Silence, he communed with himself:

'I am, or rather was, . . . a man of mild disposition, of command of temper, of an open, social, and cheerful humor, capable of attachment, but little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions. Even my love of literary fame, my ruling passion, never soured my temper, notwithstanding my frequent disappointments. My company was not unacceptable to the young and careless, as well as to the studious and literary; and as I took a particular pleasure in the company of modest women, I had no reason to be displeased with the reception I met with from them. In a word, though most men, anywise eminent, have found reason to complain of Calumny, I never was touched, or even attacked, by her baleful tooth; and though I wantonly exposed myself to the rage of both civil and religious factions, they seemed to be disarmed in my behalf of their wonted fury.'

**Rank.**—An accomplished reasoner, an original, profound, and fearless thinker, more remarkable for depth than for erudition. As a philosopher, the greatest in the school of materialism; as a historian, the first to treat the sequence of historical events in a philosophical manner; as a man, one of the leaders of the race.

Locke had shown that all knowledge is the product of experience. Berkeley, admitting the truth of the statement, had shown that since we can know nothing but our own ideas, matter, as unknown and unknowable, must be pronounced a figment. Hume, taking up the line where Berkeley had cast it, flung it once more

into the deep sea, and found that mind was a figment also. If the 'substratum' in which material phenomena are supposed to inhere could be denied, because not founded on experience, so, for the same reason, the substratum (mind) which supports the 'impressions' might be denied. Substance is an aggregate of impressions and ideas. Belief is nothing but a strong and lively idea derived from a present impression related to it. Nothing is a subject of belief, that is not at the moment vividly impressed, and everything that chances to be so impressed is worthy of acceptance.

Hume, then, concluding from admitted premises, logically reduced philosophy to the singular dilemma of either refuting the sceptical arguments or of declaring itself to be vain and baseless. He tried the strength of human reason, and exposed its feebleness:

'The observation of human blindness and weakness is the result of all philosophy, and meets us at every turn, in spite of our endeavors to elude or avoid it.'

Do not essay the incomprehensible. You know all that directly concerns you, with a certainty sufficient for all your wants; but if you push your speculations farther, and attempt to fathom the mysteries of being, you end in that soundless and shoreless gulf which yawns as the terminal road of all consistent metaphysics,—*Scepticism*, belief in nothing, doubt in all. With how wise a sadness does Plato say of such ambitions: 'In these things, we must reach one of two results: either learn and discover how the fact really stands; or else, should this be impossible, at least take up with the best and most incontrovertible belief respecting it; and then, borne upon this as in a skiff, venture the voyage of life,—unless we can find a securer and less hazardous passage on the firm support of some Divine Word.'

What, it may still be asked, was Hume's real belief? He explicitly declares that we do believe, and cannot help believing, though in the last analysis we can give no reason for our belief:

'The sceptic still continues to reason and believe, even though he asserts that he cannot defend his reason by reason.'

But what points of support had this traveller with his fatal unrest? Did he carry his theoretical scepticism into his inner life? It must be confessed that while seeking an answer to this question, we have more than once been reminded of the famous

saying attributed to Humboldt: 'What is your religion?—The religion of all sensible men. And what is the religion of all sensible men?—Sensible men never tell.' Hume has been talked at, shrieked at, and vanquished 'with a grin.' Let us hear him as now and then he gives us admission into the audience-chamber of his thoughts:

'I have long entertained a suspicion with regard to the decisions of philosophers upon all subjects, and found in myself a greater inclination to dispute than assent to their conclusions.'

See the solitary student, who has to combat the feelings and sympathies of his fellow creatures, cannot wholly ignore his moods, wavers, but immures himself, and faces the great Darkness:

'Before I launch out into those immense depths of philosophy which lie before me, I find myself inclined to stop a moment in my present station, and to ponder that voyage which I have undertaken, and which undoubtedly requires the utmost art and industry to be brought to a happy conclusion. Methinks I am like a man who, having struck on many shoals, and having narrowly escaped shipwreck in passing a small frith, has yet the temerity to put out to sea in the same leaky, weather-beaten vessel, and even carries his ambition so far as to think of compassing the globe under these disadvantageous circumstances. My memory of past errors and perplexities makes me diffident for the future. The wretched condition, weakness, and disorder of the faculties I must employ in my inquiries, increase my apprehensions. . . . The intense view of these manifold contradictions and imperfections in human reason has so wrought upon me, and heated my brain, that I am ready to reject all belief and reasoning, and can look upon no opinion even as more probable or likely than another. Where am I, or what? From what causes do I derive my existence, and to what condition shall I return? Whose favour shall I court, and whose anger must I dread? What beings surround me? and on whom have I any influence, or who have any influence on me? I am confounded with all these questions, and begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable, environed with the deepest darkness, and utterly deprived of the use of every member and faculty. . . . I cannot forbear having a curiosity to be acquainted with the principles of moral good and evil, the nature and foundation of government, and the cause of those several passions and inclinations which actuate and govern me. I am uneasy to think I approve of one object, and disapprove of another; call one thing beautiful, and another deformed; decide concerning truth and falsehood, reason and folly, without knowing upon what principles I proceed. I am concerned for the condition of the learned world, which lies under such a deplorable ignorance in all these particulars. I feel an ambition to arise in me of contributing to the instruction of mankind, and of acquiring a name by my inventions and discoveries. These sentiments spring up naturally in my present disposition: and should I endeavor to banish them, by attaching myself to any other business or diversion, I feel I should be a loser in point of pleasure; and this is the origin of my philosophy.'

Was he a sceptic, and a sceptic only,—an uncertain, troubled voyager on a limitless sea of doubt?—

'Should it be here asked me whether I sincerely assent to this argument which I seem to take such pains to inculcate, and whether I be really one of those skeptics who is not in *any* thing possessed of *any* measures of truth and falsehood, I should reply that this question is entirely superfluous, and that neither I nor any other person was ever sincerely and constantly of that opinion. Nature, by an absolute and uncontrollable

necessity, has determined us to judge as well as to breathe and feel; nor can we any more forbear viewing certain objects in a stronger and fuller light upon account of their customary connection with a present impression, than we can hinder ourselves from thinking as long as we are awake, or seeing the surrounding bodies when we turn our eyes towards them in broad sunshine. Whoever has taken the pains to refute the cavils of this *total* skepticism, has really disputed without an antagonist, and endeavored by arguments to establish a faculty which *Nature has antecedently implanted in the mind and rendered unavoidable*. But as experience will sufficiently convince any one that, although he finds no error in my arguments, yet he still continues to believe and think and reason as usual, he may safely conclude that his reasoning and belief is some sensation or peculiar manner of conception, which 'tis impossible for mere ideas and reflections to destroy.'

Was he an *Atheist*? Is there a God? Is there, behind the veil, some power analogous to human intelligence?—

'Though the stupidity of men, barbarous and uninstructed, be so great that they may not see a Sovereign Author in the more obvious works of nature to which they are familiarized; yet it scarcely seems possible that any one of good understanding should reject that idea when once it is suggested to him. A purpose, an intimation, a design, is evident in everything, and when our comprehension is so far enlarged as to contemplate the first rise of this visible system, we must adopt with the strongest conviction the idea of some intelligent cause or author.'

Yes, we must believe, though our belief cannot be imprisoned in formulæ or condensed into demonstrations. At the end of all discussions we come to the inscrutable:

'The whole is a riddle, an enigma, an inexplicable mystery. Doubt, uncertainty, suspense of judgment, appear the only result of our most accurate scrutiny concerning this subject.'

We must have a standard of achievement, too; one great object to be kept forever in view. Domitian may chase flies, Rufus may hunt wild beasts, Alexander may conquer kingdoms, but the student is inspired by another ideal, not a dream of conquest nor the palling pleasures of sense, but a reality of character; stoical, severe, reaching above the storm-line into the heaven of calm dominion:

'In vain do you seek repose from beds of roses. In vain do you hope for enjoyment from the most delicious wines and fruits. Your indolence itself becomes a fatigue. Your pleasure itself creates disgust. The mind, unexercised, finds every delight insipid and loathsome; and ere yet the body, full of noxious humours, feels the torment of its multiplied diseases, your nobler part is sensible of the invading poison, and seeks in vain to relieve its anxiety by new pleasures, which still augment the fatal malady.' 'As much as the wildest savage is inferior to the polished citizen, who, under the protection of laws, enjoys every convenience which industry has invented; so much is this citizen himself inferior to the man of virtue and the true philosopher, who governs his appetites, subordinates his passions, and has learned from reason to set a just value on every pursuit and enjoyment.'

One capital defect narrowed Hume's field of vision,—a cold, unimaginative temperament. It appears in his sentiments; in

the mechanism of his language, polished as marble, cold as marble, too; in Philosophy, where he works with human nature as an anatomist, who feels that his minute examinations might be injured by any burst of feeling or eloquence; in History, where, naturally opposed to turbulence and enthusiasm, he as naturally leans toward despotism, intolerant of liberty among actors, though he wished it to be fearless and unrestrained among thinkers. No hatred of oppression burns in his pages, no yearning love of man glows there, no stirring sympathy with the restless human soul, no just appreciation of the religious instinct in directing the course of public events. A second defect was his disregard of facts, a negligence which proceeded not from an indifference to truth, for he was an ardent lover of it, nor from a 'constitutional indolence,' which is the usual account, but from his devotion to *ideas*.

**Influence.**—He was a nettle, and aroused thinkers to unwonted activity.

In Philosophy, before submitting to be gored by either horn of the dilemma to which Hume had reduced it, men looked about to see if there were any possible avenue of escape. The result was the birth of two great schools of thought,—the Common Sense, and the Transcendental: the first an appeal, for guidance, to the consciousness of mankind; the second, an attempt to ascertain whether we have any ideas independent of experience, ideas which may be called universal, necessary, and certain.

In Theology, he produced expansion. The foundations of Christianity were deepened and broadened. Its spirit became more liberal and enlightened.

In Ethics, he was the first to give to the utilities the aspect of a theoretical system which to-day is so extensively applied to the successful guidance of daily life, though it discovers not the far-reaching light of eternity.

In Political Economy, he was the first to declare the principles of Free Trade. He told—what the politicians of his time despised, but what those of our time are teaching<sup>1</sup>—that all commodities are bought by labor, that the question for international legislation was one, not of rivalry, but of coöperation.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hume is, beyond all doubt, the author of the modern doctrines which now rule the world of science.—*Lord Brougham*.



In History, he was the first to divert attention from the pomp of historic events to the deep under-currents which float them and reveal the living progress of the people. Moreover, the *History of England*, by provoking a host of controversial attacks, was the means of throwing new and important light on portions of British history.

Thus has Hume, by forcing men to doubt and inquire, rendered inestimable service to the cause of truth. The movement of civilization describes the spiral of the calculus—progressive but revolutionary. The disturbance at the outset is uncomfortable; but as the frame-work of affairs adjusts itself to the new truth, the good effects become apparent, and at length prevail:

‘For I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widened by the process of the suns.’

After all, his greatest service may be the incidental one of teaching human reason its weakness, of showing how the noblest fabric may be undermined by a destructive force not greater than the constructive one which has raised it. ‘Man,’ says Goethe, ‘is not born to solve the mystery of Existence; but he must nevertheless attempt it, in order that he may learn how to keep within the limits of the knowable.’

And now, Mr. Hume, we cannot refrain from wishing that, along with your incisive intellect, you possessed more heart and soul; along with your self-reliant majesty, more reverence and trust. The noblest natures among men have been devout ones, whose hearts have been centrally dedicated, whose sympathies have gone out to the struggling and the sorrowing. Sometimes the sadness of the universe bows you; sometimes a sense of God comes to you, and changes the hue and expression of things before you; once in a while, the cloud of scepticism breaks, and you know in that vision what it is to believe in immortality: but we regret that you have not sensibilities strong enough to see the heights, nor fine enough to feel the depths, of this world mystery and grandeur. You carry in your bosom no sheaves of sun-beams, no carols of birds, nor plaintive cadence of Æolian harp. You bring no real joy to the troubled, no inspiration to the indifferent, nothing to console the suffering or to dry the mourner’s tear. But we do not forget that you are a metaphysician, living in an age neither aglow with conviction nor alive to the hopes and fears of life.

## SAMUEL JOHNSON.

The characteristic peculiarity of his intellect was the union of great powers with low prejudices.—*Macaulay*.

**Biography.**—Born in Litchfield, in 1709. Entered Oxford in 1728. At the expiration of three years, the financial distress of his father obliged him to quit the University without his degree. Tried to support himself by teaching in a grammar-school, but failed. At twenty-five, married a widow, fat and fifty, who had children as old as himself. As a means of subsistence, opened a boarding-school, and failed. Went to London in 1737, to earn his bread, resolved, against want, disease, and the world, to live by his pen without patronage or party; climbing, by toilsome stairs, slowly but manfully up to eminence and command. Placed above want by a royal pension in 1762. Died in 1784, having struggled from childhood against scrofula, melancholy, indolence, and the fear of insanity, and, during the greater part of his life, having passed the morning in doubt that he should have food for the afternoon.

**Appearance.**—Large, robust, corpulent, shabby, and slovenly, with the outward signs of a voracious appetite.

**Manners.**—Eccentric and boorish. In company he would retire to a window or corner, and mutter a Latin verse or a prayer. Again, he would roll his head, sway his body to and fro, stretch out, and then convulsively draw back his leg. It was his constant anxiety to go in and out of a door in a particular way. When he had gone wrong, he would go back, put himself in the proper posture, and start anew. At table, he stoops suddenly, seizes the foot of a lady, and draws off her shoe. Dinner served, he darts at the food, with eyes riveted to his plate, refusing to speak, and eating till he perspires, and the veins of his forehead stand out. Having gorged himself, he is ready for a sparring-match at debate. ‘Why, sir!’ ‘What then, sir?’ ‘No, sir!’ ‘You don’t see your way through the question, sir!’ ‘Sir, I perceive you are a vile Whig!’ ‘My dear lady, talk no more of this; nonsense can be defended but by nonsense.’ ‘One thing I know, which you don’t seem to know, that you are very uncivil.’

At the end of a period, in dispute, he would blow out his breath like a whale, and swallow several cups of tea. He had a trick of touching the posts as he walked, and a practice of treasuring up scraps of orange-peel. Pensioned by the king, he indulged his natural indolence, lying in bed often till mid-day and later. In a pretty drawing-room, among elegant philosophers, he would be regarded as a strange animal, into whose history people would inquire with wondering caution.

**Writings.**—The *Rambler* (1750–1752), and the *Idler* (1758–1760),—attempts to revive the periodical miscellany, sunk into disrepute at the death of Addison. Sage, sensible, moral, and pious, they wanted the ease, grace, pleasantry, and variety, to make them popular. The happy sketches of prevailing manners, which contributed so much to the popularity of former essayists, found no place in his serious pages. His essays have rather the character of sermons, teaching solid and profitable truths in an earnest and impressive way. Here is an example which will give some idea of their dignified strain:

‘To lessen that disdain with which scholars are inclined to look on the common business of the world, and the unwillingness with which they condescend to learn what is not to be found in any system of philosophy, it may be necessary to consider, that though admiration is excited by abstruse researches and remote discoveries, yet pleasure is not given, nor affection conciliated, but by softer accomplishments, and qualities more easily communicable to those about us. He that can only converse upon questions about which only a small part of mankind has knowledge sufficient to make them curious, must lose his days in unsocial silence, and live in the crowd of life without a companion. He that can only be useful on great occasions may die without exercising his abilities, and stand a helpless spectator of a thousand vexations which fret away happiness, and which nothing is required to remove but a little dexterity of conduct and readiness of expedients.

No degree of knowledge attainable by man is able to set him above the want of hourly assistance, or to extinguish the desire of fond endearments and tender officiousness; and, therefore, no one should think it unnecessary to learn those arts by which friendship may be gained. Kindness is preserved by a constant reciprocation of benefits or interchange of pleasures; but such benefits only can be bestowed as others are capable to receive, and such pleasures only imparted as others are qualified to enjoy.’

*A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755); the first of the kind in English literature, and eminently successful; imperfect in its etymologies, but accurate in its definitions, and happy in its illustrative quotations. He was never able to divest himself entirely of prejudice, and a few of the definitions, which betray his personal feelings and peculiarities, are somewhat amusing. As a Tory, hating Walpole and the Whig Excise Act, he defines *excise* as ‘a hateful tax levied upon commodities, and

adjudged, not by the common judges of property, but by wretches hired by those to whom excise is paid.' *Pension* is 'an allowance made to any one without an equivalent. In England, it is generally understood to mean pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country.' Johnson, it will be remembered, had not yet been pensioned, and it is not surprising that he should have had some 'compunctious visitings' at his subsequent acceptance of one. He mortally offended the Scotch by defining *oats* to be 'a grain which, in England, is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people.' Lord Chesterfield, hoping to secure its dedication to himself, extolled it; but his favor, once sought and refused, now so tardily bestowed, was disdained, and Johnson addressed him a letter whose keen sarcasm, condensed vigor, and chiselled diction are admirably typical of the writer and his style:

'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 honor which, being very little accustomed to favors 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 uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well 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 favor. 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 the ground, encumbers him with help?

The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labors, 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 favorer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long awakened from that dream of hope in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation.'

*Rasselas* (1759), a novel written in eight nights to pay for his mother's funeral; a series of dialogues and reflections on art,

literature, society, philosophy, the state of departed souls, the probability of the reappearance of the dead, etc. The scene is laid in the East, but the characters talk exactly as Johnson had talked in the club for twenty years. Its gloomy eloquence, born of a saddening experience and a sombre imagination, sometimes rises to the height of poetry, as in the apostrophe to the river Nile:

'Answer, thou great Father of waters! thou that rollest thy floods through eighty nations, to the invocations of the daughter of thy native king. Tell me if thou waterest through all thy course a single habitation from which thou dost not hear the murmurs of complaint.'

*Lives of the Poets* (1781), his greatest work; pronounced by Byron to be 'the finest critical work extant,' and by Macaulay to be 'as entertaining as any fairy tale.' A serious defect is the injustice done to some of our greatest masters. He accepted blank verse under protest; the drum-and-fife music of rhyme was his delight. The higher order of imaginative poetry, moreover, was too ethereal for his rugged, ponderous grasp.

**Style.**—Heavy, antithetical, rolling, and pompous. He was classical in prose, as Pope in poetry; and gave to all subjects the same balanced, artificial tone. Its peculiar character is derived, not so much from the use of unfamiliar words, as from the ponderous quality of his mind. 'Dr. Johnson,' said Goldsmith, 'if you could make little fishes talk, they would talk like whales.' Weighty thoughts, he maintained, required weighty words. He was a whale. Here is a portrait of 'Squire Bluster:

'He is weighty without followers; he is magnificent without witnesses; he has birth without alliance, and influence without dignity. His neighbors scorn him as a brute; his dependants dread him as an oppressor; and he has the gloomy comfort of reflecting that if he is hated, he is likewise feared.'

This is the manner in which he attempts to destroy that immortal enigma,—Junius. Mark the exact poise of ideas, and the correspondence of considerations:

'Junius burst into notice with a blaze of impudence which has rarely glared upon the world before, and drew the rabble after him as a monster makes a show. When he had once provided for his safety by impenetrable secrecy, he had nothing to combat but truth and justice, enemies whom he knows to be feeble in the dark. Being then at liberty to indulge himself in all the immunities of invisibility,—out of the reach of danger, he has been bold; out of the reach of shame, he has been confident. As a rhetorician, he has had the art of persuading when he seconded desire; as a reasoner, he has convinced those who had no doubt before: as a moralist, he has taught that virtue may disgrace; and as a patriot, he has gratified the mean by insults on the high. Finding sedition ascendant, he has been able to advance it; finding the nation combustible,



he has been able to inflame it. . . . Junius is an unusual phenomenon, on which some have gazed with wonder and some with terror; but wonder and terror are transitory passions. He will soon be more closely viewed, or more attentively examined; and what folly has taken for a comet, that from his flaming hair shook pestilence and war, inquiry will find to be only a meteor formed by the vapors of putrefying democracy, and kindled into flames by the effervescence of interest struggling with conviction; which, after having plunged its followers into a bog, will leave us inquiring why we regard it.'

**Rank.**—By the weight of his thoughts, the immense stores of his reading and observation, the power and brilliancy of his conversation,—the central figure in the second half of the eighteenth century. Chesterfield proposed to assign him, on every word in the language, the authority of dictator. He was the law of criticism, and the arbiter of style.

**Character.**—Conservative in politics and religion. He was called the Hercules of Toryism, and declared that the first Whig was the devil. He thought Rousseau to be the prince of felons, and could hardly settle the proportion of iniquity between him and Voltaire. He was not afraid to be thought antiquated, could give respectful audience to the peeping and chatter of ghosts, and went to a church, at one o'clock in the morning, to interrogate a tormented spirit that had promised to give a token of her presence there by a knock upon her coffin.

For severe distress, he had pity; but for the suffering which a harsh word inflicts, he had none. He could carry home on his shoulders a sick and starving girl from the streets, turn his house into a refuge for homeless ingrates; but all that could be expected of him in the presence of wounded sensibilities was, as a rule, not to laugh. 'Poh, ma'am,' he exclaimed to Mrs. Carter, 'who is the worse for being talked of uncharitably?' But we do not forget how he had lived.

A Christian from conviction, the service of God was the actuating principle of his life. If he was intolerant in matters of opinion, it was because spiritual interests were his supreme concern.

A stranger to artifice, he could neither personate another nor disguise himself. His characters always move with an elephant tread. Garrick remarked of the females that they were only Johnsons in petticoats. A deliberate, cautious manner was the normal movement of his mind. He will not marry till he has weighed the virtues and vices in antithesis, reduced them to an equation, and found the value of the unknown quantity:

'I lived in a state of celibacy beyond the usual time. In the hurry, first of pleasure and afterward of business, I felt no want of a domestic companion; but becoming weary of labor, I soon grew weary of idleness, and thought it reasonable to follow the custom of life, and to seek some solace of my cares in female tenderness, and some amusement of my leisure in female cheerfulness.

The choice which is long delayed is commonly made at last with great caution. My resolution was to keep my passions neutral, and to marry only in compliance with my reason. I drew upon a page of my pocket-book a scheme of all female virtues and vices, with the vices which border on every virtue, and the virtues which are allied to every vice. I considered that wit was sarcastic, and magnanimity imperious; that avarice was economical, and ignorance obsequious, and having estimated the good and evil of every quality, employed my own diligence and that of my friends to find the lady in whom nature and reason had reached that happy mediocrity which is equally remote from exuberance and deficiency.'

As an author, he loved strong moral painting. He saw more knowledge of the heart in a page of Richardson than in all Fielding. 'The end of writing,' he says, 'is to instruct.' The end of poetry is to instruct by pleasing; hence his criticism of Shakespeare:

'He sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose. . . . His precepts and axioms drop casually from him; he makes no just distribution of good or evil, nor is always careful to show in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked.'

His mind was analytic rather than comprehensive. His thoughts on national manners are the thoughts of one who saw little—only London. Everybody who lives in the country is either stupid or miserable. When he judged compositions fashioned on his own principles, the canons of the artificial school, he succeeded splendidly; when a deeper philosophy was required, to estimate those which yield 'homage only to eternal laws,' he failed ignominiously. His powers appeared to the best advantage in the free methods of conversation. When he talked, his wit and sense were forcible, natural; when he wrote, they were fettered and artificial. It was in spirited, personal intercourse, that his arguments were weapons, and Goldsmith could say of him, 'There's no getting along with Johnson; if his pistol misses fire he knocks you down with the butt of it.' Writing to Mrs. Thrale from the Hebrides, he says: 'When we were taken up stairs, a dirty fellow bounced out of the bed on which one of us was to lie.' Published, this incident was translated, 'out of one of the beds on which we were to repose, started up, at our entrance, a man black as a Cyclops from the forge.' '*The Rehearsal*,' he said, 'has not wit enough to keep it sweet';

then, after a pause, 'It has not vitality enough to preserve it from putrefaction.'

In a word, a man of powerful mind, of surly independence, of stern integrity, of deep piety, of offensive manners, and eccentric habits; generous, reverent, and sincere,—an illustrious blending of narrowness and strength, of noble and of boorish traits.

**Influence.**—In morals and criticism, it will ever be to his praise that he has assailed all sentimentalism and licentiousness. His wit, eloquence, and logic were always enlisted on the side of revealed religion, to deepen and extend, in heart and practice, the human faith in God. In the fields of literature, which were now beginning to be cultivated on all sides, he did more than any of his contemporaries to create a pure and invigorating atmosphere.

His balanced pomp of antithetic clauses soon had for others, as it had for him, an irresistible charm, and caused a complete revolution, for a time, in English style. Unhappily, it was too often imitated by inferior writers, who had not the glow to kindle the massive structure—little fishes talking like whales. There has been no English prose writer, onward to the present day, whose style has not been influenced by that of Johnson.

The reputation of his writings is every day fading, but his peculiarities are immortal.

Let us remember that Johnson came to London in what was for authors a period of famine; that, all unknown, ill-dressed, and ungainly, he began his long, toilsome ascent in squalor and misery; that he pressed forward amid calamities, and hopes deferred, eating behind a screen because he was ashamed to show his ragged clothes; that he emerged at length from garrets and cellars into the society of the polished and the opulent—the last survivor of a race of hacks; that in his old age, such men as Burke, Gibbon, Fox, Goldsmith, and others, yielded to him, in literature, a quiet supremacy. Surely here was a man who, in one sense the product of his 'environment,' was yet a final law to much that was around him.

## SECOND TRANSITION PERIOD.

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### CHAPTER IV.

#### FEATURES.

The resemblance between fashions in literature, and heresies in religion, holds good in several points; most of them, as they passed away, left something behind them. But there is this difference, that in literature nothing was ever retained except the little that was good.—*Southey*.

**Politics.**—The death of George II terminated the ministerial ascendancy of Pitt, as well as the undisputed supremacy of the Whig party. After about ten years of feeble government and party anarchy, there was formed a Tory ministry of commanding strength, whose dominion, with an unimportant interval, became as absolute as that of the Whigs had ever been, and lasted without break to the end of the century. In 1783 the younger Pitt, second son of Lord Chatham, began his long and eventful career as Prime Minister.

The reaction was aided by the personal character of the king, who, without taste or education, was narrow and ignorant. Despotic, as well as superstitious, he steadily resisted the spirit of reform. But no man can stop the march of destiny. The result, in a few years, was a nation convulsed by faction, a throne assailed by the fiercest invective, a House of Commons hated and despised. So complete had been the change in political affairs, that, when a bill was introduced to tax the Americans without even the form of asking their consent, not the least difficulty was found in passing a measure which no minister of the preceding reign had been bold enough to propose. The policy of the government bore its legitimate fruit—the American Revolution, which emphasized the questions of right, and embodied the spirit of the age, in the memorable sentence:

'Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.'

The fire started in the Colonies kindled those latent tendencies

which wildly flamed out first in France, then in Ireland, spreading commotion everywhere. Questions of government and social organization became the topics of most urgent and varied consideration. The leading minds were roused to fresh activity, and literature, reflecting the ardent desire for freedom, was influenced profoundly.

**Society.**—Literature began to be addressed to the common miscellaneous public, and became in consequence more simple and independent. Authors, relying upon the patronage of the people, advocated the claims of their new allies with unusual boldness. Having previously assailed public men by their initials only, they now attacked them by name. The demand for amusement and instruction was increasing, and democratic principles were spreading. The year 1769 witnessed the first public meeting ever assembled in England to enlighten Englishmen respecting their political rights. Nothing more clearly indicates the prevalence of the spirit of inquiry than the bitter war which the government carried on against every kind of free discussion. Men were fined, imprisoned, transported, for the use of language such as in our time is employed with perfect impunity. In 1795, a law was passed conferring upon any common magistrate the power to dissolve a public gathering. If the meeting should consist of twelve persons, or upwards, a refusal to disperse one hour after being ordered to do so was punishable with death. But liberal opinions had taken root in the popular mind, and it was impossible either to stifle them or to prevent their increase. While the political movement went back, the intellectual movement went on, and eventually produced those legislative reforms which signalize the present century.

More effective police measures were adopted for the preservation of order. While the country highways were still infested with robbers, Browne, writing in 1757, was able to say that 'the reigning evil of street robberies has been almost wholly suppressed.'

The law which condemned a prisoner, who refused to plead on a capital charge, to be slowly pressed to death, was repealed in 1771; and in 1790, that which condemned women to be publicly burned for the murder of their husbands.



The improvement in the moral tone of society at the end of the century, is happily illustrated by a well-known anecdote of Sir Walter Scott. His grand-aunt assured him that, when led by curiosity to turn over the forgotten pages of a novel in which she had delighted in her youth, she was astonished to find that, sitting alone at the age of eighty, she was unable to read without shame a book which sixty years before she had heard read out for amusement in large circles consisting of the best society in London.

**Religion.**—Methodism created a higher regard for spiritual matters. The movement begun by Wesley and Whitefield was essentially a popular one, exercising its deepest influence over the lower and middle classes. But the seed cast here germinated largely among the upper. It produced many forms of charity, many holy lives, many triumphant deaths. It implanted a fervid and enduring religious sentiment amid brutality and neglect; it imparted a warmer and more energetic tone to the devotion and philanthropy of every denomination.

**Poetry.**—In **Burns** and **Cowper**, poetry returned to the paths she had long deserted, to —

‘Thoughts that voluntary move  
Harmonious numbers,—

and to some it had never traversed. After many years, a man speaks as men speak, without premeditation, whose voice is the echo of nature, whose verse is full of personal emotions genuinely felt. Stars and clouds, streams and forests, blossoming vine and mantling green, joy and sorrow, hope and despair, love and kindness, higher beauty and ideal happiness,—these become the inspiration of the poet. We no longer listen, but sympathize. Poetry, from being artificial, has become natural.

**Drama.**—Only here and there do we meet with a name, eminent in literary art, that is at all associated with the stage. The dramatic literature consists chiefly of comedies and farces of modern life, all in prose. Much was written, but the only addition to the classic comedy of Congreve was **Sheridan’s** *School for Scandal* (1777). It is a continual discharge of malice and witticism, a brilliant fire-work, skilfully constructed of society materials. Hear Mrs. Candour:

'Yesterday Miss Prim assured me that Mr. and Mrs. Honeymoon are now become mere man and wife, like the rest of their acquaintance. She likewise hinted that a certain widow in the next street had got rid of her dropsy, and recovered her shape in a most surprising manner.'

Again:

*Mrs. Candour.* Well, I will never join in the ridicule of a friend; so I tell my cousin Ogle, and ye all know what pretensions she has to beauty.

*Crab.* She has the oddest countenance — a collection of features from all the corners of the globe.

*Sir Benjamin.* She has, indeed, an Irish front.

*Crab.* Caledonian locks.

*Sir B.* Dutch nose.

*Crab.* Austrian lips.

*Sir B.* The complexion of a Spaniard.

*Crab.* And teeth *à la Chinoise*.

*Sir B.* In short, her face resembles a *table d'hôte* at Spa, where no two guests are of a nation.

*Crab.* Or a congress at the close of a general war, where every member seems to have a different interest, and the nose and chin are the only parties likely to join issue.'

Sheridan himself was a lucky adventurer, clever, amiable, irregular, seductive, brilliant. He rose and descended like a rocket. At one time in the House of Commons opposing Pitt, at another he was picked up in the street by the watch. Bailiffs were at his death-bed, and lords at his funeral.

**Periodical.**—The manufacture of newspapers was beyond all former example. This, with the increase of magazines and reviews, proves the large increase of readers, and the miscellaneous activity of writers. The *British Critic*, thus far the chief periodical devoted to criticism, appeared in 1793.

**Novel.**—It is doubtful whether the best novels of the preceding reign could be read aloud in any family circle, they contain so many passages of needless and offensive coarseness. The heroes are often profane and gross. The heroines take part in conversations which no modest woman would consent to hear. Yet these novels were the delight of their generation, not so much because that generation was less chaste, as because it was less delicate and refined. Words now considered indecent were then in common and daily use. But the moment approaches when the novel becomes natural without being indelicate. Purified manners give to it its final impress and character. In the noble hands of Goldsmith, it becomes in every respect moral.

**History.**—The ablest representative in this department is the

illustrious **Gibbon**. His work, by its critical spirit and finished style, evinces the upward progress.

It should be observed, also, that this period witnessed the first approach to histories of literature; as in **Percy's** *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* (1765), destined to exert an important influence upon youthful genius, and in **Warton's** *History of English Poetry* (1774), valuable for research and appreciative criticism.

**Theology.**—The religious revival created a demand for devotional literature; and the sermons of the period exemplify the increasing inclination of men's minds to serious thought and sentiment.

'Who born within the last forty years,' asked Burke in 1790, 'has read one word of Collins, and Toland, and Tindal, and Chubb, and Morgan, and that whole race who called themselves freethinkers? Who now reads Bolingbroke? Who ever read him through?' Oblivion had settled upon the Deists; and Deism, though not dead, slept.

Controversies about the Trinity preceded and accompanied the controversy with the Deists; and, in the latter half of the century, Unitarianism was the prevailing creed of the most intelligent Dissenters. It regards the Bible as the record of God's successive revelations, but interpreting that record in a special sense, denies the divinity of Christ. Where the Trinitarian says there are three distinct and equal persons in the Godhead,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,—the Unitarian says there is but one.

The scepticism of Hume, Gibbon, and Voltaire, produced a multitude of answers in defence of religion both natural and revealed. The method of discussion was twofold—internal and external. The internal evidence of Christianity was its spiritual excellence; the external evidence was its history. The historical view, mainly corroborating the New Testament from independent sources, was now the dominant one. Most of these performances survive only in their wisdom, in their effect. The works themselves, having served each its temporary purpose, are either forgotten or are fast passing into forgetfulness,—seed returned to the soil as the condition of further increase.

Not so, however, with **Paley's** *Natural Theology* (1802); or, appearances of nature applied to the proof of an intelligent

Creator. So wonderful for its beauty, for its skilful statement, for its common sense, so valuable as a logical basis for the Christian faith, that the world will not willingly let it die.

If we do not believe in a God, it is utterly impossible to believe in a Revelation. There must be somebody to speak before a message can come. Hence the question, whether there be a God, is not only the sublimest that can employ the mind, but is one of transcendent import, to Christians as well as to others.

What evidence have we of the being of God as a real existence essentially distinct from other beings? Evidence, says Paley, of the same kind and degree as that by which we conclude that a given piece of machinery must have had an intelligent maker. We must infer a designing mind wherever, in any object, we see fitness and use:<sup>1</sup>

‘In crossing a heath, suppose I pitched my foot against a *stone*, and were asked how the stone came to be there; I might possibly answer, that, for anything I knew to the contrary, it had lain there forever; nor would it perhaps be very easy to show the absurdity of this answer. But suppose I had found a *watch* upon the ground, and it should be inquired how the watch happened to be in that place; I should hardly think of the answer which I had before given, that, for anything I knew, the watch might have always been there. Yet why should not this answer serve for the watch as well as for the stone? Why is it not as admissible in the second case, as in the first? For this reason, and for no other, viz: that, when we come to inspect the watch, we perceive (what we could not discover in the stone) that its several parts are framed and put together for a purpose, *e. g.* that they are so formed and adjusted as to produce motion, and that motion so regulated as to point out the hour of the day; that if the different parts had been differently shaped from what they are, or placed after any other manner, or in any other order than that in which they are placed, either no motion at all would have been carried on in the machine, or none which would have answered the use that is now served by it. . . . This mechanism being observed, . . . the inference, we think is inevitable; that the watch must have had a maker; that there must have existed, at some time, and at some place or other, an artificer or artificers, who formed it for the purpose which we find it actually to answer, who comprehended its construction, and designed its use.’

Now, to apply the argument:

‘Every indication of contrivance, every manifestation of design, which existed in the watch, exists in the works of nature; with the difference, on the side of nature, of being greater or more, and that in a degree which exceeds all computation. . . .

I know no better method of introducing so large a subject, than that of comparing a single thing with a single thing; an eye, for example, with a telescope. As far as the examination of the instrument goes, there is precisely the same proof that the eye was made for vision, as there is that the telescope was made for assisting it. They are made upon the same principles; both being adjusted to the laws by which the transmission and refraction of rays of light are regulated. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Once more we are reminded of the ever recurring circle of human science. In the *Memorabilia*, Xenophon has preserved a conversation of Socrates with Aristodemus, in which he develops this proof at great length:

‘Canst thou doubt, Aristodemus, whether a disposition of parts like this (in the human body) should be the work of chance, or of wisdom and contrivance?’

The resemblance between the two cases is still more accurate, and obtains in more points than we have yet represented, or than we are, on the first view of the subject, aware of. In dioptric telescopes there is an imperfection of this nature. Pencils of light, in passing through glass lenses, are separated into different colors, thereby tingeing the object, especially the edges of it, as if it were viewed through a prism. To correct this inconvenience had been long a desideratum in the art. At last it came into the mind of a sagacious optician, to inquire how this matter was managed in the eye; in which there was exactly the same difficulty to contend with as in the telescope. His observation taught him that, in the eye, the evil was cured by combining lenses composed of different substances, *i. e.* of substances which possessed different refracting powers. Our artist borrowed thence his hint, and produced a correction of the defect by imitating, in glasses made from different materials, the effects of the different humours through which the rays of light might pass before they reach the bottom of the eye. Could this be in the eye without purpose, which suggested to the optician the only effectual means of attaining that purpose?

But animal anatomy is an accumulation of such instances. Indeed, they may be seen on every hand; in the structural plan of the whole solar system,—for every orb moves forever in its calculated track, which is shaped by the joint action of the sun and each planet, all of which act constantly by their law of motion; in the formation of crystals, in the growth of plants. What wisdom in the structure of a leaf, how admirable its architecture, how nice its frame-work, how exquisite its finish, how wonderful the chemistry by which it assimilates the particles of earth, air, and water,—a little mason, building up the stem of the tree, and preparing the substance of its flower and fruit! No city government could get a steam-engine to pump water with such economy! Yet, if there were but one watch in the world, we must infer a human artisan. So from natural contrivances, singly or jointly considered, we must by the same reasoning infer a divine one. The proofs of divine agency are separately supplied by every separate example. This, then, is the argument:

Whatever is by its constitution adapted to a particular end supposes contrivance, and hence a contriver.

Natural objects, and especially organized creatures, are adapted to certain ends; and must, therefore, be the product of a Being who contrived them for the ends to which their adaptation points.

Furthermore, as the means by which those ends are effected far surpass all human power and skill, their contriver is a Being whose power and skill are infinite. The cause must be adequate to the effect.

If now the sceptic tells me that the order of nature is fixed, I am able to ask him, By whom or by what is it fixed? By an



iron fate?—by an inflexible necessity? Turning against you your own weapon—induction—and ascending from particulars, have we not seen that nature bears the signature of an intelligent Cause? Does not the universe, the more it is explored, bear increasing testimony to a Being superior to itself? Then the order of nature is fixed by a Will which can reverse it. Then a power equal to miracles exists. Then miracles are not incredible. It may be replied, God indeed *can* work miracles, but He *will* not. Will not? How have you ascertained this? Has God so told you? Does it become you, who have exposed to poor human reason its impotence, to make laws for the Creator, and to restrict His agency to particular modes?

If, finally, the believer should say, after considering the proofs of a divine existence, that he leaves off only where he began, that he was not ignorant of this truth, never doubted it, that therefore he has gained nothing by his researches, the answer is, You have at least illuminated your instinct; you have confirmed and justified your God-idea; more, you have converted it into a living, available power:

‘By *investigation*, the following points are always gained, . . . viz: stability and impression. Occasions will arise to try the firmness of our most habitual opinions. And upon these occasions, it is a matter of incalculable use to feel our foundation; to find a support in argument for what we have taken up upon authority. . . .

Secondly, what is gained by research in the stability of our conclusion, is also gained from it in *impression*. Physicians tell us that there is a great deal of difference between taking a medicine, and the medicine getting into the constitution. A difference, not unlike which, obtains with respect to those great moral propositions which ought to form the directing principles of human conduct. It is one thing to assent to a proposition of this sort; and another, and very different thing, to have properly imbibed its influence. I take the case to be this: Perhaps almost every man living has a particular train of thought, into which his mind glides and falls, when at leisure from the impressions and ideas that occasionally excite it; perhaps, also, the train of thought here spoken of, more than any other thing, determines the character. It is of the utmost consequence, therefore, that this property of our constitution be well regulated. Now it is by frequent or continued meditation upon a subject, by placing a subject in different points of view, by induction of particulars, by variety of examples, by applying principles to solution of phenomena, by dwelling upon proofs and consequences, that mental exercise is drawn into any particular channel. It is by these means, at least, that we have any power over it. The train of spontaneous thought, and the choice of that train, may be directed to different ends, and may appear to be more or less judiciously fixed, according to the purpose in respect of which we consider it; but, in a *moral view*, I shall not, I believe, be contradicted when I say that, if one train of thinking be more desirable than another, it is that which regards the phenomena of nature with a constant reference to a supreme intelligent author. To have made this the ruling, the habitual sentiment of our minds, is to have laid the foundation of everything which is religions. The world thenceforth becomes a temple, and life itself one continued act of adoration. The change is no less than this: that whereas formerly God was seldom in our thought, we can now scarcely look upon anything without perceiving its relation to Him.’

A piece of triangular glass is utterly valueless in itself, but becomes a precious treasure to the reverent student, when he finds that with it he can paint his walls with rainbow hues, and untwist the charming tints that are braided into a beam of light. A loadstone is no other than a fragment of common rock, till it is discovered to be alive with magnetic qualities that girdle the globe. A piece of common quartz is worth nothing by market estimates, but, by the philosopher, is more prized than a lump of gold, when it is seen to hold the secret of the force of crystallization. So the wonder and beauty of the world are not apparent, till we understand the principles with which the Infinite Mind has intrusted its material forms. God is not truly manifest in His works, till we read His thought, which they enshrine, and see the great uses in the power of things, the great wisdom in the meaning of things. Then is He revealed in every fibre of the human body, in every lichen that scars the rock, in every rose that flings out its loveliness; in the blade of grass as in the star, in the single wild flower of the woods as in the arch flower of creation. Look up, and revere; bow down, and trust.

**Science.**—Medical science owes much to **John Hunter**, who, by his researches in animal and vegetable Physiology, made a vast number of discoveries, which, considered singly, are curious, but which, collectively, constitute an invaluable body of new truths. His museum, at the time of his death, contained upwards of ten thousand preparations illustrative of the phenomena of nature. His great object was to show that nature is a vast and united whole, that nothing is irregular, that nothing is perturbed, that in every change there is order, that all things are done according to never-failing law.

Astronomy was enriched, and its field was greatly enlarged, by the labors of **Sir William Herschel**.

**Watt's** discovery that water, instead of being an element, is a compound of two gases, was a considerable step in the history of chemical analysis.

Geology was coming to life. Geologists were conducting their investigations without regard to the doctrines hitherto received. **Sir William Jones**, writing in 1784, says with regret that he lived in 'an age when some intelligent and virtuous persons are inclined to doubt the authenticity of the accounts delivered by

Moses concerning the primitive world.' For the first time, the earth's crust was represented as divided into strata, and **Hutton's** *Theory of the Earth* (1795) was the first attempt to explain its formation by natural agents:

'The doctrine, therefore, of our Theory is briefly this: That whatever may have been the operation of dissolving water, and the chemical action of it upon the materials accumulated at the bottom of the sea, the general solidity of that mass of earth, and the placing of it in the atmosphere above the surface of the sea, has been the immediate operation of fire and heat melting and expanding bodies.'

These facts indicate the spread of the scientific spirit, the excitement of a lively curiosity; and suggest that the 'conflict of studies' was beginning to put on something of its modern form.

**Ethics.**—The utilitarian view was defended by Paley :

'Virtue is the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, for the sake of everlasting happiness.'

This definition characterizes the man, the age, and his profession. It expresses essentially every form which the doctrine of utility has assumed, yet contains as many errors as it contains clauses. As to the doing good, practically, of course, there can be nothing better; but, as a principle to define the essence of virtue, it is faulty. For virtue of various kinds may be exercised where no man exists to be the object of our benevolence. Again, while the pursuit of public interest,—works of charity and brotherly kindness,—is undoubtedly one form of virtue, there are forms of virtue which, even if beneficial to mankind, do not become virtuous on that account, but have an intrinsic excellence in no way dependent on their utility. In the second place, as to the will of God, that it could be the sole rule of morals is inconceivable. The square upon the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares upon the two remaining sides, and the will of Infinite Power could no more change the equation than the will of infinite impotence. As little, it would appear, could any decree change ingratitude into virtue and gratitude into vice. They subsist by their own inherent natures, being what they are, eternally, as a triangle or a circle is what it is. Moreover, it is meaningless to speak of the Divine attributes as deserving of our admiration, unless there be already such a quality as goodness, to which the Divine acts conform. Then, too, in this view of everlasting happiness lies the greatest blunder of all. The prospect of eternal reward is no part of virtue, or rather it annihilates

the very idea of virtue. To give away ten dollars to-day with the sure expectation of receiving ten thousand for it to-morrow, is hardly an act of generosity. To refrain from indulgence here, only that a richer banquet may be enjoyed hereafter, is merely a systematic selfishness, and to such conduct we must deny the character of genuine goodness. Still, the happiness principle, while it does not constitute virtue, may be appealed to for the purpose of leading men to virtue. A benevolent course, though pursued with an interested motive, is better than an indifferent or malevolent one. A moral code denotes the height of the collective life in its hour; and the moral teacher, for the enforcement of the moral law, yet finds it expedient or necessary to appeal, by the joys and sufferings of another life, to the vivid and mobile passions of hope and fear. Only the stoics, the sages, the self-poised and self-collected,—the ‘heights and pinnacles of the human mind,’—can immolate the desire of happiness, the hope of all reward, human or divine, to the abstract idea of good; only they can do right for the sake of right, in ‘scorn of consequence’; but that they can do so, is the highest proof of the divine within us, and the highest augury of the future before us. We regret, therefore, that Paley, instead of treating ethics practically, in its application to the duties of daily life, sought to lay its foundations.

**Philosophy.**—If the idealist or sceptic denies the existence of matter, or affirms that we have no grounds for our belief in its existence, let him walk over a precipice or run his head against a post. If ideas are nothing but *impressions*, the idea of an inch must itself be an inch long. If, therefore, I am in a room of one thousand cubic feet, I may introduce into it an idea of St. Paul’s, say, which may contain a million cubic feet, or I can transport a mountain as big as the Peak of Teneriffe in a post-chaise! Such was a popular method of confuting Berkeley and Hume,—the argument from consequences, a kind of *reductio ad absurdum*. It proceeded upon a crude interpretation of the systems it professed to confute, but clearly enough indicates that the reaction against scepticism in speculative truth was assuming the form of an appeal to common sense. The belief of the mass is more reliable than the judgment of the philosopher who loses his head among the clouds. This reaction found its highest

expression in **Thomas Reid**, whose aim, as he frequently asserts, was to justify the ordinary beliefs of mankind. Alarmed by the conclusions at which philosophy had arrived, he took his appeal to the common consciousness of the race, and asserted anew the intuitive power of the mind. The ideas of beauty, of right and wrong; belief in our personal identity, in the existence of the material world, that design implies a designer, that every effect must have an efficient cause,—these, and others like them, are not derived from observation or experience, but are prior and necessary to such experience. They *do not admit of proof*, there being nothing more certain which can be brought in evidence of them; and *the denial of them involves us in absurdity*:

‘All reasoning must be from first principles; and for first principles no other reason can be given but this, that, by the constitution of our nature, we are under a necessity of assenting to them.’

To attempt an account of them is foolish, for all reasoning is grounded on them, as the science of Geometry is built upon axioms and postulates. If the sceptic will call an inexplicable belief a fiction, because he cannot give a reason for it,—why, even so he must, at least we must let him; we, says Reid, will call it a divine instinct. Said blunt old Johnson, ‘We know that we are free, and there’s an end on’t.’

**Political Science.**—The Greek philosophers had regarded money-getting with contempt; later philosophers had looked upon *luxury* as the foe of morals, and so were little disposed to inquire into the sources of that material prosperity which made luxury possible. The clergy of the middle ages were the sole educators of society, and were not likely to engage in studies which lay so entirely out of their sphere of thought and action. To these causes may be ascribed the late rise of political science. A more general intelligence and active curiosity, however, now furnished the conditions of its appearance; and now it was that the first successful attempt was made to raise Political Economy into a science, by discovering the laws which regulate the creation and distribution of wealth.

The principles of trade, it is true, had received scattering attention in the preceding century; and Hume, as we have seen, had given the lights of which economists to-day are largely



reflective; but the science was first comprehensively treated and organized by **Adam Smith** in his celebrated *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. At the beginning, he lays down two propositions: first, that all wealth is derived, not from land, but from labor; and, second, that the amount of wealth depends, partly on the skill of the laborer, and partly on the proportion between the number of those who labor and the number of those who do not labor. These two principles are applied, in the rest of the work, to explain the growth and mechanism of society. In applying them, he assumes that the great moving power of all men, in all ages and in all countries, is selfishness. Yet, considering society as a whole, it usually happens that men in promoting their own interest, will unintentionally promote the interest of others. Selfishness, therefore, should not be suppressed, but enlightened:

‘Parsimony, and not industry, is the immediate cause of the increase of capital. Industry, indeed, provides the subject which parsimony accumulates; but whatever industry might acquire, if parsimony did not save and store up, the capital would never be the greater. . . . But the principle which prompts to save, is the desire of bettering our condition; a desire which, though generally calm and dispassionate, comes with us from the womb, and never leaves us till we go into the grave.’

As long as the wealth of a country was supposed to consist of its gold, the sole object of trade was to increase the influx of the precious metals. This, however, could be done, only by draining other countries, repressing trade in one direction and encouraging it in another. Hence, every commercial treaty was an attempt by one nation to outwit another, a reciprocal desire of injuring and impoverishing; and thus what should be the most peaceable of pursuits became the frequent cause of war. But the commercial spirit became invariably pacific, as soon as it was clearly understood that gold and silver are not wealth, but merely the representatives of wealth; that wealth itself consists in the value which skill and labor can add to the raw material; that in the absence of monopoly, the benefits of trade must be reciprocal; that these benefits arise simply from the facility with which a nation exports those commodities which it can produce most cheaply, and imports those which it can produce only at great expense, but which the other, from the bounty of nature or superior skill in production, can afford to supply at a lower rate.

This result, among others, making its way year by year, is

mainly due to the researches of Adam Smith. So has the solitary thinker contributed more to the happiness of man than all the statesmen and legislators of whom history gives us record. He persuaded his own generation and governs ours, as he will govern those unborn. All men revolve about the thinker, albeit they know it not. He makes no noise, his voice is not heard in the stir of the street, perhaps nobody knows him, and there is no looker-on; but sitting in his little room, he constructs institutions which are to mould the destinies of coming millions, and endure when politicians, merchants, ships, and factories have vanished into silence and night. The traffic of Athens is hushed, its pride is faded, its rich men all forgotten; but Socrates still sways the counsels of the thoughtful all around the world. When he left off stone-cutting, to teach philosophy, his townsmen, if they noticed him at all, pitied him; but he set up great statues of thought to inspire the ages. When Archimedes spent his days drawing figures in the sand, circles and spheres, sines and cosines, the fishermen in the bay thought him an idler, but when Syracuse was besieged, that man was the hero-king of the nation. When Galvani hung up the leg of a frog on an iron fence, his servants considered him a dreamer and a fool; but that was the first step in the discovery which now flashes thought from Scotia to Orleans. The pomp of Herod's glory, the High Priest's solemn grandeur, have passed away; only the beatitudes of the Nazarene peasant live, larger and brighter through the mists of eighteen hundred years. The invisible mind is the great workshop of the race.

**Oratory.**—This was the age of English Eloquence. Perhaps the world has never seen such a galaxy of orators. Chatham, Fox, Burke, Erskine, Pitt, Sheridan and Grattan form a group unequalled before or since. To this development, the conditions were peculiarly favorable; for the period was one of aroused thought, of exacting style, of new political principles, of pressing, practical, yet national interests. Additional stimulus was given by the increased facility of circulating speeches. For the first time, the people were studying the proceedings of the national legislature, the right of publishing parliamentary debates having been substantially established in 1772. The winged words had henceforth for their audience the great public beyond the walls. Parliamentary reporting was beneficial to oratory in two ways,—

it immeasurably extended the influence of parliamentary speaking, and did much to purify it from extravagance and bombast, thus promoting its literary excellence. The orator knew that language may exercise a thrilling effect in delivery, which would be insufferable if submitted the next day to the cold criticism of unimpassioned readers.

The principal figure of this group was **Burke**. Born in Dublin, in 1730, he came to London in 1750, a poor and unknown adventurer; rose by dint of work and merits, and entered Parliament at the age of thirty-five, trained in law, history, philosophy, and literature; lifted himself into fame by his speeches on the Stamp Act and the American War, and won the crown of his glory as an orator when in the great Hall of Westminster, in the presence of the fairest and most gifted of the land, he voiced the thunders of his eloquence in the impeachment of Warren Hastings. His reading was extensive and varied, his intellect broad, his imagination fertile and precise, his emotions warm and abundant. 'I have learned more from him,' exclaimed Fox, 'than from all the books I ever read.' His style is the outpouring of a great heart and a deep mind, rolling and impetuous, broad as the sea, brilliant with color. Take an example:

'It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the queen of France, then the dauphiness, at Versailles; and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in,—glittering like the morning star, full of life, and splendor, and joy. Oh! what a revolution! and what an heart must I have to contemplate without emotion that elevation and that fall! Little did I dream, when she added titles of veneration to that enthusiastic, distinct, respectful love, that she should ever be obliged to carry the sharp antidote against disgrace concealed in that bosom; little did I dream that I should have lived to see such disasters fallen upon her in a nation of gallant men, in a nation of men of honour and of cavaliers. I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult. But the age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, economists, and calculators has succeeded, and the glory of Europe is extinguished forever. Never, never more shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise is gone! It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil by losing all its grossness.'

In advanced years, he had reluctantly accepted a pension, and was reproached by the Duke of Bedford, to whom he answered:

<sup>1</sup>*Reflections on the Revolution in France.*

‘The grants to the house of Russell were so enormous, as not only to outrage economy, but even to stagger credibility. The Duke of Bedford is the leviathan among all the creatures of the crown. He tumbles about in his unwieldy bulk; he plays and frolicks in the ocean of the royal bounty. Huge as he is, and whilst “he lies floating many a rood,” he is still a creature. His ribs, his fins, his whalebone, his blubber, the very spiracles through which he spouts a torrent of brine against his origin, and covers me all over with the spray,—everything of him and about him is from the throne.’<sup>1</sup>

In the September election of 1780, he was rejected for the part he had taken in a recent mitigation of the penal laws against the Romanists. His address to the electors of Bristol has this noble conclusion :

‘Gentlemen, I have had my day. I can never sufficiently express my gratitude to you for having set me in a place wherein I could lend the slightest help to great and laudable designs. If I have had my share in any measure giving quiet to private property, and private conscience; if by my vote I have aided in securing to families the best possession, peace; if I have joined in reconciling kings to their subjects, and subjects to their prince; if I have assisted to loosen the foreign holdings of the citizen, and taught him to look for his protection to the laws of his country, and for his comfort to the good-will of his countrymen; if I have thus taken my part with the best of men in the best of their actions; I can shut the book: I might wish to read a page or two more, but this is enough for my measure. I have not lived in vain.

And now, gentlemen, on this serious day, when I come, as it were, to make up my account with you, let me take to myself some degree of honest pride on the nature of the charges that are brought against me. I do not here stand before you accused of venality or of neglect of duty. It is not said, that, in the long period of my service, I have in a single instance sacrificed the slightest of your interests to my ambition, or to my fortune. It is not alleged that, to gratify any anger or revenge of my own, or of my party, I have had a share in wronging or oppressing any description of men, or any one man of any description. No! the charges against me are all of one kind;—that I have pushed the principles of general justice and benevolence too far; further than a cautious policy would warrant, and further than the opinions of many would go along with me. In every accident which may happen through life, in pain, in sorrow, in depression, and distress—I will call to mind this accusation, and be comforted.’

Long before he retired from the House, he stood almost alone; for the length of his speeches, the profundity of his argument, the profusion of his imagery, his want of temper and discretion, wearied and perplexed the squires and merchants about him. Too philosophical, he —

‘Still went on refining,  
And thought of convincing when they thought of dining.’

But if his eloquence flew over the heads of those to whom it was addressed, it was to be the admiration of future ages. Few speeches can be read with profit when the hearer and speaker have long been turned to dust; but ‘the immortality of Burke is that which is common to Cicero or to Bacon—that which can never be interrupted while there exists the beauty of order or

<sup>1</sup>A Letter to a Noble Lord.

the love of virtue; and which can fear no death except what barbarity may impose on the globe.'

Through the trials of obscurity and the seductions of splendor, he preserved a pure reputation and an unscathed conscience, fighting nobly for noble causes, the friend of the afflicted, the champion of principle, and the persecutor of vice:

'His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal;  
Nor number nor example with him wrought  
To swerve from truth or change his constant mind.'

**Résumé.**—The closing years of the period were marked by a revival of interest in early English poetry, by political and social conflicts. Physical science was rapidly enlarging its acquisitions. The scepticism of Hume was calling forth a new school of metaphysicians, who emphasized the intuitive nature of man, and thus helped to deepen its spiritual impulses. Political Economy formed a new intellectual movement of vast importance to the interests of peace, and therefore of civilization. Able and devout men were giving proof of the practical control of Christian truth, as well as of its theoretical force. Cowper and Burns ushered in a new school of poetry, natural, spontaneous, and sincere. It was preëminently an age of historical inquiries and historical methods of investigation; wakeful, speculative, germinant.

The century developed, in prose, two distinct modes of literary expression,—the colloquial elegance of Addison, and the impressive pomp of Johnson. The first is English, the second is Latinistic. Both contribute to the formation of modern style, in which poetry combines polish with nature and feeling, and prose becomes at once vigorous and easy.

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## G I B B O N .

Pardon me, sir, but, as much as I admire your abilities, I cannot bear without indignation your sarcastic slyness upon Christianity, and cannot see without pity your determined hostility to the Gospel.—*Whitaker*.

**Biography.**—Born in the village of Putney, in the county of Surrey, in 1737.

'Nor can I reflect without pleasure on the bounty of Nature, which cast my birth in a free and civilized country, in an age of science and philosophy, in a family of honorable rank, and decently endowed with the gifts of fortune.'



He was succeeded by five brothers and one sister, all of whom died in infancy. He was himself so frail that the most tender assiduity was scarcely sufficient to rear him:

'As soon as the use of speech had prepared my infant reason for the admission of knowledge, I was taught the arts of reading, writing, and arithmetic.'

In his ninth year he was sent to Kingston, whence he was recalled, after a residence of two years, by the death of his mother:

'I was too young to feel the importance of my loss; and the image of her person and conversation is faintly imprinted in my memory. My poor father was inconsolable. I can never forget the scene of our first interview, some weeks after the fatal event; the awful silence, the room hung with black, the mid-day tapers, his sighs and tears; his praises of my mother, a saint in heaven; his solemn adjuration that I would cherish her memory, and imitate her virtues; and the fervor with which he kissed and blessed me as the sole surviving pledge of their loves.'

At fifteen he was sent to Oxford, carrying there a stock of erudition that would have puzzled a doctor, and a degree of ignorance of which a school-boy would have been ashamed. His reading was extensive, but desultory; and his education without direction or discipline. Hence, as he himself states, he spent fourteen months at college idly and unprofitably. While here, he read himself into Romanism.

'Youth is sincere and impetuous, and a momentary glow of enthusiasm had raised me above all temporal considerations.'

To reclaim him, he was immediately sent to Lausanne, to be under the care of a Calvinist minister, whose prudent management, in the absence of opposing influences, effected his return to Protestantism. It is more than probable, however, that he was now indifferent to either faith, and the change was a mere matter of form; since we are told that for the rest of his life he was a 'philosopher,' as the eighteenth century understood the term; in other words, a disbeliever in revealed religion. His disorders had wonderfully vanished, and he was able to pursue, with astonishing success, a regular and severe system of study in the Latin and French languages, and in general literature. During his residence here, he became the devoted admirer of a charming girl, refined by education and exalted by piety. It is curious to speculate on the effect of such a union upon his character and opinions, but he was to be one of the illustrious men who have felt keenly the disappointment of their affection.

'I need not blush at recollecting the object of my choice; and though my love was disappointed of success, I am rather proud that I was once capable of feeling such a pure

and exalted sentiment. . . . The wit, the beauty, and erudition of Mademoiselle Curchod were the theme of universal applause. The report of such a prodigy awakened my curiosity; I saw and loved. I found her learned without pedantry, lively in conversation, pure in sentiment, and elegant in manners; and the first sudden emotion was fortified by the habits and knowledge of a more familiar acquaintance. She permitted me to make her two or three visits at her father's house. I passed some happy days there, in the mountains of Burgundy; her parents honorably encouraged the connection. In calm retirement the gay vanity of youth no longer fluttered in her bosom; she listened to the voice of truth and passion: and I might presume to hope that I had made some impression on a virtuous heart. At Crassy and Lausanne I indulged my dream of felicity; but on my return to England I soon discovered that my father would not hear of this strange alliance, and that without his consent I was myself destitute and helpless. After a painful struggle, I yielded to my fate; I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son; my wound was insensibly healed by time, absence, and the habits of a new life. My cure was accelerated by a faithful report of the tranquillity and cheerfulness of the lady herself; and my love subsided in friendship and esteem. The minister of Crassy soon afterwards died; his stipend died with him, his daughter retired to Geneva, where, by teaching young ladies, she earned a hard subsistence for herself and her mother; but in her lowest distress, she maintained a spotless reputation and a dignified behavior. A rich banker from Paris, a citizen of Geneva, had the good fortune and good sense to discover and possess this inestimable treasure; and in the capital of taste and luxury she resisted the temptations of wealth, as she had sustained the hardships of indigence. The genius of her husband has exalted him to the most conspicuous station in Europe. In every change of prosperity and disgrace he has reclined on the bosom of a faithful friend; and Mademoiselle Curchod is now the wife of M. Necker, the minister, and perhaps the legislator, of the French monarchy.'

In 1758 he returned to England, spent two years and a half in the unpromising occupation of a militia captain; travelled and studied in France and Italy, his indiscriminate appetite having subsided by degrees into the historic line. While at Rome, his long cherished desire to write some historical work took definite shape from a romantic incident:

'As I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the temple of Jupiter, the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started in my mind.'

Some years elapsed, however, before he was seriously engaged in the execution of his scheme. In 1778 he settled in London. Once seated in his library, he began the composition of his history:

'At the outset all was dark and doubtful,—even the title of the work, the true era of the Decline and Fall of the Empire, the limits of the introduction, the division of the chapters, and the order of the narrative,—and I was often tempted to cast away the labor of seven years.'

Entered Parliament, where, through eight sessions, he was 'a mute member,' for the great speakers filled him with despair, and the bad ones with terror. Finding it necessary to retrench, and disappointed of a lucrative place for which he had hoped from ministerial patronage, he retired to Lausanne, the paradise of his

early recollections. Here he lived happily, devoting his mornings to composition, and his evenings to the enlightened and polished society which had gathered in that city and neighborhood. He died tranquilly, of a long-standing complaint, during a visit to London, in 1794.

**Writings.**—*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–1788). It begins with the reign of Trajan, A.D. 98, and closes with the fall of the Eastern Empire, in 1452. These limits include the irruption of the barbarians, the establishment of the Byzantine power, the reorganization of Europe, the foundation of the Mahometan system, and the Crusades. Much of the material had to be patiently gathered from the rubbish of annalists and the wild stories of chroniclers. To reproduce the sequence and connection of events through this long and obscure period, he had to study, with laborious diligence, philosophy, theology, science, jurisprudence, geography, war, manners, and opinions, in the principal countries of Europe and Asia. All this done, he had to set it forth in a clear and attractive manner. When we consider the vast sweep of his subject, his long and solitary confinement to study and meditation, we can appreciate his feelings when the task was ended:

‘It was on the day, or rather night, of the 27th of June, 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page, in a summer-house in my garden. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on the recovery of my freedom, and perhaps the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion; and that, whatsoever might be the future fate of my history, the life of the historian must be short and precarious.’

**Style.**—In keeping with the formal rhetorical tendency of his time,—stately and ornate, elaborate and antithetical, clear and cold, everywhere supported by a profusion of learning:

‘The style of an author should be the image of his mind, but the choice and command of language is the fruit of exercise. Many experiments were made before I could hit the middle tone between a dull tone and a rhetorical declamation: three times did I compose the first chapter, and twice the second and third, before I was tolerably satisfied with their effect. In the remainder of the way I advanced with a more equal and easy pace.’

The verses of Pope accustomed his ear to the sound of poetic harmony.

**Rank.**—‘Few men,’ says Guizot, ‘have combined, if we are not to say in so high a degree, at least in a manner so complete and well regulated, the necessary qualifications for a writer of history.’ His chief defect is coldness of feeling, disqualifying him for that dramatic animation which, with his solid and bright acquirements, would entitle him to be pronounced the first of English historians. A second fault, nearly allied to the first, is a sensuous imagination, leading him to dwell upon material grandeur with a fonder enthusiasm than he could feel for spiritual beauty or the moral sublime. More accurate, erudite, and comprehensive than Hume, he is less philosophical,—fonder of splendor and display.

The faults of the artist are the faults of his art. Its brilliancy, sustained throughout, is metallic; its splendor, though imposing, is artificial; its descriptions are luminous rather than warm. It regards all creeds, political and religious, from the outside. Facts are examined with judicial severity; but the passions of which those facts are the outward symbols, are not appreciated. Hence Christianity, that school of tranquil heroism, is disparaged. The zeal of the early Christians, we are told, was earthly; their doctrine of a future life, subordinated to worldly ends; their legends of miracles, so many proofs of their credulity; their morality, suited to popular prejudices; their contempt of ambition, a mere covering to ambition of a different kind; their sufferings, not to be compared to those which have been voluntarily encountered by other men without supernatural support. Julian the Apostate is idolized, but a bishop or a religious king is under the suspicion of enthusiasm, superstition or roguery. The successes of barbarous energy receive more embellishment than the triumphs of Christian faith and benevolence. The former are treated with fervid eloquence; the latter, with frigid apathy. This is the famous method of attack,—insidious, though unequivocal. Covert sneers are substituted for distinct assertions. Without an open avowal of disbelief, Revelation is insinuated to be a poetical fable. Without an explicit denial of its Divine origin, we are asked calmly to consider whether the phenomenon is really such as to imply the intervention of the Deity.

Thus the fidelity of the *Decline and Fall*, as a historical

picture, is greatly marred; yet, whatever its faults, it is a monumental work, not yet, if it ever will be, superseded.

**Character.**—He was born a student. His love of reading was early and invincible; and he would not have exchanged it, he said, for the treasures of India:

‘My father could never inspire me with his love and knowledge of farming. I never handled a gun, I seldom mounted a horse; and my philosophic walks were soon terminated by a shady bench, where I was long detained by the sedentary amusement of reading or meditation.’

Industry must be incorporated with our treasures to give them value,—industry that occupies itself in useful dreams by night, and when the morning rises, flies to its unfinished labors:

‘By the habit of early rising, I always secured a sacred portion of the day, and many scattered moments were stolen and employed by my studious industry.’

He was a historian by predilection:

‘After his oracle, Dr. Johnson, my friend Sir Joshua Reynolds denies all original genius, any natural propensity of the mind to one art or science rather than another. Without engaging in a metaphysical, or rather verbal dispute, I *know*, by experience, that from my early youth I aspired to the character of an historian.’

In religion he was a Deist. His attitude is suggested indirectly by his general estimate of the religions of the Roman Empire:

‘The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true, by the philosopher as equally false, and by the magistrate as equally useful.’

If he was an infidel, he was such from conviction, from temperament, from environment. A lover of order, he abhorred controversy; and those who aspired to break a lance upon his shield were treated, as a rule, with calm contempt. Only once was he vexed into a defence; and then by imputations of bad faith. Let us hear the conclusion of his *Vindication*:

‘It is not without some mixture of mortification and regret, that I now look back to the number of hours which I have consumed, and the number of pages which I have filled, in vindicating my literary and moral character from the charges of wilful *misrepresentations*, gross *errors*, and servile *plagiarisms*. I cannot derive any triumph or consolation from the occasional advantages which I may have gained over those adversaries whom it is impossible for me to consider as objects either of terror or esteem. The spirit of resentment, and every other lively sensation, have long since been extinguished; and the pen would long since have dropped from my weary hand, had I not been supported in the execution of this ungrateful task by the consciousness, or at least by the opinion, that I was discharging a debt of honor to the public and to myself. I am impatient to dismiss, and to dismiss **FOREVER**, this odious controversy, with the success of which I cannot surely be elated; and I have only to request that, as soon as my readers are convinced of my innocence, they would forget my vindication.’



A man of vast erudition, of comprehensive intellect, of upright purpose, of dignified self-respect; but deficient in moral depth and elevation of sentiment.

Past his fiftieth year, he estimated the value of his existence in the threefold division of mind, body, and estate:

'The first and indispensable requisite of happiness is a clear conscience, unsullied by the reproach or remembrance of an unworthy action. . . . I am endowed with a cheerful temper, a moderate sensibility, and a natural disposition to repose rather than to activity; some mischievous appetites and habits have perhaps been corrected by philosophy or time. The love of study, a passion which derives fresh vigor from enjoyment, supplies each day, each hour, with a perpetual source of independent and rational pleasure; and I am not sensible of any decay of the mental faculties.

Since I have escaped from the long perils of my childhood, the serious advice of a physician has seldom been requisite. . . .

I am indeed rich, since my income is superior to my expense, and my expense is equal to my wishes. My friend Lord Sheffield has kindly relieved me from the cares to which my taste and temper are most adverse: shall I add that, since the failure of my first wishes, I have never entertained any serious thoughts of a matrimonial connection?'

This solitude, however, at first a necessity, then a pleasure, seems not to have been borne without repining:

'I feel, and shall continue to feel, that domestic solitude, however it may be alleviated by the world, by study, and even by friendship, is a comfortless state, which will grow more painful as I descend in the vale of years.'

Afterwards he writes to a friend:

'Your visit has only served to remind me that man, however amused and occupied in his closet, was not made to live alone.'

**Influence.**—Great intellects are both representative and creative; mirroring the tendencies of their own time, they also modify them, spontaneously evolving events and ideas which, passing into the life of the world, become the originating cause of subsequent developments. Designedly or not, their energies bear us on. As a conspicuous factor in the sceptical movement of the eighteenth century, Gibbon has aided the march of the English mind. Scepticism, which to the ignorant is an abomination, is yet the necessary antecedent of progress. Intellectual content means intellectual stagnation. Without doubt, there would be no investigation; without investigation, no knowledge; without knowledge, no progress. To scepticism is due that spirit of inquiry which, during the last two centuries, has encroached on every possible subject. To it we owe, primarily, the correction of the three fundamental errors of the past,—intolerance in religion, credulity in science, and despotism in politics. To examine the basis on which its opinions are built, is the duty

of every thoughtful mind. When the Apostle says 'Prove all things,' he implicitly commands us to doubt all things. 'He,' says Bacon, 'who would be a philosopher, must commence by repudiating belief.' Absolute certainty would be the paralysis of study. Unless we feel the darkness, we do not seek the light. True, scepticism forms temporarily a crisis—a period of mental distress; but it is still the fire by which the gold must be purged before it can leave its dross in the pot of the refiner. As a permanent state of mind, nothing could be more calamitous. It is a mean, not an end. We are to doubt, that we may rationally believe,—doubt, not from fancy, or from the very wish to doubt, but from prudence, and through penetration of mind,—doubt, that we may reach the divine realities beyond the Slough of Despond and the Valley of Death.

Thus it is chiefly in this indirect way, as if blindly executing a trust, that Gibbon has added to the stature of humanity. He has left no track of benevolence. He serves us, not by holy thoughts, which invite us to resist evil and subdue the world, but by the reflective power which compels us to ask whether things are as they are commonly supposed. Perhaps he has helped us also by his method. At least he has furnished a new idea in the art of reading. We ought not, he says, to attend to the order of our *books* so much as of our *thoughts*:

'The perusal of a particular work gives birth perhaps to ideas unconnected with the subject it treats; I pursue these ideas, and quit my proposed plan of reading.'

Thus, in the midst of Homer he read Longinus; a chapter of Longinus led to an epistle of Pliny; and he followed the train of his ideas in Burke's *Inquiry Concerning the Sublime and Beautiful*. He offers an important advice to a writer engaged on a particular subject:

'I suspended my perusal of any new book on the subject till I had reviewed all that I knew, or believed, or had thought on it, that I might be qualified to discern how much the authors added to my original stock.'

Of all our popular writers, he was the most experienced reader; and his precepts, as well as example, are valuable hints to students:

'Let us read with method, and propose to ourselves an end to which all our studies may point. Detached parcels of knowledge cannot form a whole. . . .

While we propose an end in our reading, let not this end be too remote; and when once we have attained it, let our attention be directed to a different subject. Inconstancy weakens the understanding; a long and exclusive application to a single object hardens and contracts it. . . .

To read with attention, exactly to define the expressions of our author, never to admit a conclusion without comprehending its reason, often to pause, reflect, and interrogate ourselves; these are so many advices which it is easy to give, but difficult to follow.'

Yet we must deplore the bias of his mind which disqualified him to translate our human nature. During fifteen centuries he has *Gibbonized* it, denying to it any pure and exalted experience which could not be verified by his own. That he was honest in his researches does not prove that we can see in his pages the real truth of persons and events. He who has not an aspiring reverence—an anxiety of conscience—who does not realize the thirst of men for the Unknown—who cannot sympathize with moral enthusiasm and trembling delicacy—who feels not a warm desire to be a free and helpful man, a lover and doer of good,—can render life and character but partially. Suppressing the religious instinct, he ties the right arm of human strength and puts out the right eye of human light. He is himself a fraction, however great his intellect. Without this commanding affection, his soul may breathe this or that rich tone, but it is a lyre without its chief string—an organ with its central octave dumb.

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## GOLDSMITH.

Where eminent talent is united to spotless virtue, we are awed and dazzled into admiration, but our admiration is apt to be cold and reverential; while there is something in the harmless infirmities of a good and great, but erring individual, that pleads touchingly to our nature; and we turn more kindly towards the object of our idolatry, when we find that, like ourselves, he is mortal and is frail.—*Washington Irving.*

**Biography.**—Born in the small village of Pallas, Ireland, in 1728. His father was a clergyman, whose whole income did not exceed forty pounds:

'And passing rich with forty pounds a year.'

Tradition says that his birthplace, a half rustic mansion in a lonely part of the country, was haunted ground. In after years, when it had fallen into decay, fairies held in it their midnight revels. Vain were the attempts to repair it. A huge goblin bestrode the house every evening, and with an immense pair of jack-boots kicked to pieces all the work of the preceding day.

About two years after his birth, his father removed to the pretty hamlet of Lissoy, which became the little world of his boyhood. It was the pride and boast of a good old motherly dame, when ninety years of age, that she taught Goldsmith his letters. At six, he passed into the hands of the village school-master, an old soldier, who, when he ought to have been teaching his pupils their lessons, told them marvellous stories of his wanderings in foreign lands, tales of ghosts and pirates. The fruit of this tuition was an unconquerable passion for everything that savored of romance, fable, and adventure. His motley preceptor had also a disposition to dabble in poetry, and before he was eight years old, Goldsmith had contracted a habit of scribbling verses on scraps of paper. A few of these were conveyed to his mother, who read them with a mother's delight, and saw at once that her son was a poet. A trifling incident soon induced a general concurrence in this opinion. While executing a hornpipe at an evening's social, the musician, making merry at his rather ludicrous figure, dubbed him his little *Æsop*. Nettled by the jest, he stopped short, and exclaimed:

‘Our herald hath proclaimed this saying,  
See *Æsop* dancing and his monkey playing.’

This was thought wonderful for a boy of nine years, and it was resolved to give him an education suitable to his talents, several of the relatives agreeing to contribute towards the expense.

To prepare him for the university, he was transferred to schools of a higher order, where he was the leader of all boyish sports, and was foremost in all mischievous pranks. In his seventeenth year he entered Trinity College, Dublin, as a sizar;<sup>1</sup> lodging in one of the top rooms, where it is said his name may still be seen, scratched by himself upon a pane of glass. The sense of his inferior station was very annoying, and he became at times moody and despondent. He was known, however, as a boon companion, a lover of convivial pleasures. Fond of classics, he had, naturally, a positive aversion to mathematics, ethics, and logic. The death of his father, in 1747, put him to great straits. In the intervals between occasional remittances from friends at home, he would borrow from his college associates; and when these supplies had

<sup>1</sup>A student of this class was taught and boarded gratuitously; and, in return for these advantages, was expected to be diligent, and to make himself useful in a variety of ways, several of which were derogatory and menial.

failed, he would pawn his books. Again he would scribble a street-ballad, dispose of it for five shillings, then stroll privately through the streets at night to hear it sung, listening to the comments and criticisms of bystanders. His first distinction was the winning of a minor prize, amounting to but thirty shillings. This influx of success and wealth proved too much. He forthwith gave a supper and a dance at his chamber, in direct violation of rules. The sound of the unhallowed fiddle reached the ears of his tutor, who rushed to the scene of festivity, chastised the 'father of the feast,' and turned the astonished guests, male and female, out of doors. Unable to endure this humiliation, the next day he sallied forth upon life, resolved to bury his disgrace in some foreign land. For three whole days he subsisted on a shilling, then parted with some of the clothes from his back; then, starved into submission, as well as soothed by the gentle counsel of his brother, retraced his steps to the university. Nearly two years later he received his degree, and gladly took his final leave.

Returning to Lissoy, he spent two years idly among his relatives, most of whom shook their heads and shrugged their shoulders when they spoke of him. Ostensibly a period of probation for the clerical office, it was in reality a period of miscellaneous reading, of rural sports and careless enjoyments, on which he was wont to look back as one of the few sunny spots of his cloudy life. On the solemn occasion of ordination, he presented himself luminously arrayed in scarlet breeches! The bishop rejected him,—whether on account of deficient preparation, reports of irregularities, or his gay colors, is not determined.

A year's tutoring put him in possession of what seemed a fabulous sum of money; and immediately procuring a good horse, without a word to his friends, with thirty pounds in his pocket, he made a second sally in quest of adventures, but came back to his home, after the lapse of several weeks, forlorn as the prodigal son, mounted on a sorry creature, which he had named Fiddleback.

It was then decided that he should be sent to London for the study of law. The necessary funds were advanced by his uncle, but he was beguiled into a gambling house, and lost the whole amount before quitting Dublin.

A second contribution was raised, and in the autumn of 1752



he proceeded to Edinburgh, where he spent two winters in the study of medicine. Setting out, as usual, with the best intentions, he soon fell into convivial and thoughtless habits. He now prepared to finish his medical studies on the Continent, though his true motive was probably his long-cherished desire to see foreign parts. Accordingly he is next found at Leyden, where he was put to many a shift to meet his expenses. He thence determined to go to Paris, and was furnished by a fellow-student with money for the journey—all of which he spent for tulips, having unluckily rambled into the garden of a florist just before his departure. Too proud to recede, too shamefaced to make another appeal to his friend, he set out to make the tour of Europe on foot, with but one spare shirt, a flute, and a guinea:

‘I had some knowledge of music, with a tolerable voice; I now turned what was once my amusement into a present means of subsistence. I passed among the harmless peasants of Flanders, and among such of the French as were poor enough to be very merry, for I ever found them sprightly in proportion to their wants. Whenever I approached a peasant’s house towards nightfall, I played one of my merriest tunes, and that procured me not only a lodging, but subsistence for the next day; but in truth I must own, whenever I attempted to entertain persons of a higher rank, they always thought my performance odious, and never made me any return for my endeavors to please them.’<sup>1</sup>

His ramblings took him into Germany, Switzerland, France, and Italy. At Padua, where he remained some months, he is said to have taken his medical degree. After two years of pilgrimage, ‘pursuing novelty,’ as he said, ‘and losing content,’ he reached England in 1756, penniless and without any definite plan of action, yet buoyed up by visions of hope and fame. In the gloomy month of February we find him, a houseless stranger, adrift in the streets of London at night. Long afterwards he startled a polite circle by humorously dating an anecdote from the time he ‘lived among the beggars of Axe Lane.’ After acting as general drudge to a chemist, he commenced the practice of medicine, in a small way, among the poor. There he might have been seen, at one time, dressed in tarnished finery of green and gold, laughing and talking with an old schoolmate whom he had met; at another, in second-hand velvet, with cane and wig, adroitly covering a patch in his coat by pressing his old three-cornered hat fashionably against his side, while he resisted the courteous efforts of his patient to relieve him of the encumbrance. His next shift was as reader and corrector of the press to

<sup>1</sup>The ‘Philosophic Vagabond’ in the *Vicar of Wakefield*.

Richardson the novelist, an occupation which he alternated with his medical duties. Discouraged by the slow growth of his reputation and practice, he accepted the charge of an academy, where he soon became a favorite with the scholars, mingling in their sports, diverting them with stories, amusing them with his flute, and treating them to sweetmeats. Changing once more his mode of life, he began to write miscellaneous for reviews and other periodicals, but without making any decided hit; writing only on the spur of the moment, and at the urgent importunity of his employer. A letter of this date, after indulging in visions of future magnificence and wealth, concludes:

'Let me, then, stop my fancy to take a view of my future self,—and, as the boys say, light down to see myself on horseback. Well, now that I am down, where . . . *is I?* Oh gods! gods! here in a garret, writing for bread, and expecting to be dunned for a milk score!'

In 1758 he presented himself at Surgeons' Hall for examination as hospital mate, but was rejected as unqualified. That he might make a respectable appearance, he obtained a new suit of clothes, which were to be either returned or paid for as soon as the temporary purpose was served. Four days after his defeat, in response to a piteous tale of distress, he *pawned the clothes*. His security threatened, and he replied:

'I know of no misery but a jail, to which my own imprudence and your letter seem to point. I have seen it inevitable these three or four weeks, and, by heaven! request it as a favor—as a favor that may prevent something more fatal. I have been some years struggling with a wretched being—with all that contempt that indigence brings with it—with all those passions which make contempt insupportable. What, then, has a jail that is formidable?'

Bishop Percy says of his squalid apartment:

'I called on Goldsmith at his lodgings in March 1759, and found him writing his *Inquiry*, in a miserable, dirty-looking room, in which there was but one chair; and when, from civility, he resigned it to me, he himself was obliged to sit in the window.'

While in less forlorn quarters, suffering under extreme depression of spirits, he wrote to his brother:

'I must confess it gives me some pain to think I am almost beginning the world at the age of thirty-one. Though I never had a day's sickness since I saw you, yet I am not that strong, active man you once knew me. You scarcely can conceive how much eight years of disappointment, anguish, and study have worn me down.'

Henceforward his career was that of a man of letters. As he rose in the world, he sought to improve his style of living, took chambers in the Temple, began to receive visits of ceremony, and to entertain his literary friends. In 1766, from being partially

known as the author of some clever anonymous writings and a tolerated member of the Johnson circle, he had risen to fame, and become one of the lions of the day. Difficulty and distress, however, still clung to him. His finances were often at very low ebb, owing to his imprudent hospitality, to his extravagance in dress, to his liability to be imposed upon, and his irresistible propensity to give to any who asked. Much of the time he lived literally from hand to mouth, by the forced drudgery of his pen. A gleam of prosperity plunged him into heedless gayety—fine rooms, fine furniture, fine dress, fine suppers. When his purse gave out, he drew upon futurity, obtaining advances from booksellers and loans from friends. Some of his works, before they were finished, were paid for and the money spent. Thus his literary tasks outran him, and he began to ‘toil after them in vain.’ The autumn of 1772 found him ‘working with an overtaxed head and weary heart to pay for pleasures and past extravagance, and at the same time incurring new debts to perpetuate his struggles and darken his future prospects.’

He expired in April, 1774, of a nervous fever induced by close study, irregular habits, and depressing cares. ‘Your pulse,’ said his physician, ‘is in greater disorder than it should be from the degree of fever which you have; is your mind at ease?’ ‘No, it is not,’ was his last sad reply. Burke, on hearing of his death, burst into tears. Reynolds threw by his pencil for the day. Johnson wrote to Boswell three months afterwards: ‘Of poor Dr. Goldsmith there is little to be told more than the papers have made public. He died of a fever, made, I am afraid, more violent by uneasiness of mind. His debts began to be heavy, and all his resources were exhausted. . . . Was ever poet so trusted before?’ His remains were interred in the Temple burying-ground, and the Literary Club erected a monument to his memory in Westminster Abbey.

**Appearance.**—In stature, about five and a half feet; in build, strong but not heavy; in features, plain but not repulsive; in manners, simple and natural; in mirth, often boisterous. His face was pock-marked, rather fair in complexion; his hair, brown enough to be distinguished from the wig which he always wore.

**Writings.**—*The Traveller* (1764); the first of his works to which he prefixed his name, and the first to lift him into celebrity.

Johnson pronounced it a poem to which it would be difficult to find anything equal since the death of Pope. It opens with an allusion to his lone wanderings, the forsaken delights of his youth, and the fond remembrance of a brother's protecting kindness. A homeless vagrant, his heart turns with longing recollection to that brother's happy fireside and sheltering care:

'Eternal blessings crown my earliest friend,  
 And round his dwelling guardian saints attend;  
 Blest be that spot, where cheerful guests retire  
 To pause from toil, and trim their evening fire:  
 Blest that abode, where want and pain repair,  
 And every stranger finds a ready chair:  
 Blest be those feasts with simple plenty crowned,  
 Where all the ruddy family around  
 Catch at the jest or pranks, that never fail,  
 Or sigh with pity at some mournful tale;  
 Or press the bashful stranger to his food,  
 And learn the luxury of doing good.'

With how much of truth and graceful melancholy he adds:

'But me, not destined such delights to share,  
 My prime of life in wandering spent and care;  
 Impelled with steps unceasing, to pursue  
 Some fleeting good that mocks me with the view;  
 That, like the circle rounding earth and skies,  
 Allures from far, yet, as I follow, flies;  
 My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,  
 And find no spot of all the world my own.'

The plan is noble and simple. A roaming stranger, seated upon an Alpine crag, looks down on three converging countries, searches for some spot of bliss without alloy, reviews his long pilgrimage, recalls the varieties of scenery, of government, of religion, of character, which he has observed, and comes to the conclusion that our happiness depends far less upon political institutions than upon the temper and regulation of our minds:

'How small, of all that human hearts endure,  
 That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!  
 Still to ourselves in every place consigned,  
 Our own felicity we make or find.'

The predominant impression of the poem is of its naturalness; that it is built, not upon fantastic unreality, but upon nature, dealing with the world which the poet has himself lived in and known, and appealing to our sympathies by its fact of experience, by its humanity, by its lovely images of various life, by the serene graces of its style, and the mellow flow of its verse.

*Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), sold to save its author from arrest.<sup>1</sup> The scenes and characters are taken from the originals of his own motley experience, but he has set them forth with the colorings of his amiable nature. The Primrose family, like the Goldsmiths, are remarkable for their worth, but of no cleverness in the ways of the world; their hearts always right, but their heads often wrong. Mrs. Primrose can read without much spelling, is an excellent cook, and at dinner gives the history of every dish. She has a motherly vanity to appear genteel, and her daughters, imbibing the spirit of elegance, 'make a wash for the face over the fire.' Her son Moses gets cheated at the fair, and sells a colt for a box of green spectacles, that makes him sweat to carry it. Their cousins, 'even to the fortieth remove,' come to eat dinner, and sometimes to borrow a pair of boots. Dr. Primrose, husband and father, is a country clergyman; a good, easy-going soul, whose only adventures have been by the fireside. 'He writes pamphlets, which no one buys, against second marriages of the clergy; writes his wife's epitaph, while she is still living, stating that 'she was the only wife of Dr. Primrose'; has it elegantly framed and placed over the chimney-piece.

He loses a fortune and migrates,—his family with him on horseback,—easing the fatigues of the journey with philosophical disputes. Though his fortune is diminished, his happiness is not; for he has a constitution that extracts cheerful content from the humblest lot:

'Nothing could exceed the neatness of my little enclosures, the elms and hedge-rows appearing with inexpressible beauty. . . . 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. . . . It consisted of but one story, and was covered with thatch, which gave it an air of great snugness; the walls on the inside were nicely whitewashed, and my daughters undertook to adorn them with pictures of their own designing. Though the same room served us for parlor and kitchen, that only made it the warmer. Besides, as it was kept with the utmost neatness, the dishes, plates, and coppers, being well scoured, and all disposed in bright rows on the shelves, the eye was agreeably relieved, and did not want richer furniture.'

<sup>1</sup> I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith that he was in great distress, and, as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was dressed, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent; at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit; told the landlady I should soon return, and having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill.—*Boswell's Life of Johnson*.



'The little republic to which I gave laws was regulated in the following manner: by sunrise we all assembled in our common apartment, the fire being previously kindled by the servant. After we had saluted each other with proper ceremony, for I always thought fit to keep up some mechanical forms of good breeding, without which freedom ever destroys friendship, we all bent in gratitude to that Being who gave us another day. This duty being performed, my son and I went to pursue our usual industry abroad, while my wife and my daughters employed themselves in providing breakfast, which was always ready at a certain time. I allowed half an hour for this meal, and an hour for dinner; which time was taken up in innocent mirth between my wife and daughters, and in philosophical arguments between my son and me.'

They all make hay together, and in the calm of the evening sit under the hawthorn hedge, drink tea and enjoy the landscape; the two little ones read, the girls sing to the guitar; while the parents stroll down the sloping field, 'that was embellished with blue-bells,' and drink in the breeze that wafts both health and harmony:

'It is a proverb abroad, that if a bridge were built across the sea, all the ladies of the continent would come over to take pattern from ours; for there are no such wives in Europe as our own. But let us have one bottle more, Deborah, my life, and, Moses, give us a good song. What thanks do we not owe to Heaven for thus bestowing tranquillity, health, and competence! I think myself happier now than the greatest monarch upon earth. He has no such fireside, nor such pleasant faces about it.'

The poor Vicar's eldest daughter is abducted, and he sets out, with his Bible and pilgrim's staff, to find her; returns at midnight, to discover his house in a blaze of fire; burns his arm terribly in rescuing his two little children from the flames, but thinks only of the blessings he still enjoys:

"Now," cried I, holding up my children, "now let the flames burn on, and all my possessions perish; here they are,—I have saved my treasure; here, my dearest, here are our treasures, and we shall yet be happy." We kissed our little darlings a thousand times; they clasped us round the neck, and seemed to share our transports, while their mother laughed and wept by turns.'

Fresh calamities come. He is thrown into jail for debt, in a vile atmosphere, among wretches who swear and blaspheme; but he feels for them only compassion,—even resolves to reclaim them:

'These people, however fallen, are still men; and that is very good title to my affections. Good counsel rejected, returns to enrich the giver's bosom; and though the instruction I communicate may not mend them, yet it will assuredly mend myself. If these wretches . . . were princes, there would be thousands ready to offer their ministry; but, in my opinion, the heart that is buried in a dungeon is as precious as that seated upon a throne. . . . Perhaps I may catch up even one from the gulf, and that will be a great gain; for is there upon earth a gem so precious as the human soul?'

The prisoners wink, whisper, cough, and laugh, but he never gives way. In less than six days, some were penitent, and all were attentive:

'I did not stop here, but instituted fines for the punishment of immorality, and rewards for peculiar industry. Thus in less than a fortnight, I had formed them into

something social and humane, and had the pleasure of regarding myself as a legislator, who had brought men from their native ferocity into friendship and obedience.'

He falls ill, his illness increases; he sees that his family will soon be without bread, learns that his daughter is dying; still his soul is paternal and humane towards the author of his misery:

'Heaven be praised, there is no pride left me now. I should detest my own heart, if I saw either pride or resentment lurking there. On the contrary, as my oppressor has been once my parishioner, I hope one day to present him an unpolluted soul at the eternal tribunal.'

His second daughter is carried off and his eldest son is imprisoned under a false accusation of murder. He is not a stoic; he weeps, wants to die, even a curse is on his lips; but he remembers his calling, recovers his fortitude, and thinks how he will fit himself and his son for eternity. But he must also exhort his fellow-prisoners; makes an effort to rise from the straw, but is too weak, and is forced to recline against the wall. In this position, he explains that,—

'Providence has given to the wretched two advantages over the happy in this life—greater felicity in dying, and in Heaven all that superiority of pleasure which arises from contrasted enjoyment.'

Fortune will at last change in our favor, if we are inflexible. Benevolence is repaid with unexpected favor; simplicity and truth have their reward:

'I had nothing now on this side of the grave to wish for; all my cares were over, my pleasure was unspeakable. It now only remained that my gratitude in good fortune should exceed my former submission in adversity.'

Good triumphant over evil is the moral. Remember that patience in distress, trust in God, indulgent forgiveness, quiet labor, and cheerful endeavor, are the certain means of pleasure and of turning pain to noble uses. Consider that self-denial and heroism may coexist with many follies; that in the improvement of the race the most lowly have their allotted part. Be kind to the poor—a lover of happy human faces. Verily, this is Goldsmith himself.

*The Deserted Village* (1770). Few poems, if any, have attained a wider popularity. Gray, in this the last summer of his life, had it read aloud to him, and exclaimed, '*This man is a poet.*' It describes, not a living and active, but a departed and vanished, existence, which the poet has looked upon, loved and prized,—once a rural paradise, a seat of plenty and content; now a decay; a thing of memory, round which fancy and feeling

twine their golden, ever lengthening chain. Its original, we are inclined to think, is Lissoy, the scene of his boyhood. Much of it, we are told, was composed while strolling in the beautiful environs of London, and thus much of the softness and sweetness of English landscape is blended with the ruder features of his native village.

It is a mirror of the author's heart, of the fond pictures of early friends and early life forever sacred. Desolation has settled upon the haunts of his childhood, but imagination peoples the deserted spot anew, rebuilds its ruined haunts, carries us back to the season of natural pastimes, of simple joys in romantic seclusion:

'Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain,  
 Where health and plenty cheered the labouring swain;  
 Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,  
 And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed;  
 Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,  
 Seats of my youth, when every sport could please;  
 How often have I loitered o'er thy green,  
 Where humble happiness endeared each scene;  
 How often have I paused on every charm,  
 The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,  
 The never-failing brook, the busy mill,  
 The decent church that topped the neighbouring hill;  
 The hawthorn-bush, with seats beneath the shade,  
 For talking age and whispering lovers made!  
 How often have I blessed the coming day,  
 When toil remitting lent its turn to play;  
 And all the village train, from labour free;  
 Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree. . . .  
 Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close,  
 Up yonder hill the village murmur rose;  
 There as I passed, with careless steps and slow,  
 The mingling notes came softened from below;  
 The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,  
 The sober herd that lowed to meet their young,  
 The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,  
 The playful children just let loose from school.'

The whole poem is a transcript of his own associations and experience, idealized. From his father and brother alike were drawn the exquisite features of the village preacher, leading a life of active piety and of humble but noble usefulness. Observe the sublime simile in the closing lines:

'Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,  
 And still where many a garden flower grows wild,  
 There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,  
 The village preacher's modest mansion rose.  
 A man he was to all the country dear,

And passing rich with forty pounds a year;  
 Remote from towns, he ran his godly race,  
 Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change his place;  
 Unskilful he to fawn, or seek for power,  
 By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;  
 Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,  
 More bent to raise the wretched than to rise.  
 His house was known to all the vagrant train;  
 He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain.  
 The long-remembered beggar was his guest,  
 Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;  
 The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,  
 Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed;  
 The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,  
 Sat by his fire, and talked the night away;  
 Wept o'er his wounds, or tales of sorrow done,  
 Shouldered his crutch, and shewed how fields were won.  
 Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,  
 And quite forgot their vices in their woe:  
 Careless their merits or their faults to scan,  
 His pity gave ere charity began. . . .  
 At church with meek and unaffected grace,  
 His looks adorned the venerable place;  
 Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway;  
 And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray.  
 The service past, around the pious man,  
 With ready zeal, each honest rustic ran;  
 E'en children followed with endearing wile,  
 And plucked his gown, to share the good man's smile;  
 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.'

Through his immortal wanderings, amid the din and toil of crowded London, his heart—ever innocent and childlike amid a thousand follies and errors of the head—had cheated itself with a dream of rural quiet; but time at last had shattered the fabric of his vision, and cut to its root his cherished hope:

'In all my wanderings round this world of care,  
 In all my griefs—and God has giv'n my share—  
 I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,  
 Amid these humble bowers to lay me down;  
 To husband out life's taper at the close,  
 And keep the flame from wasting by repose;  
 I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,  
 Amid the swains to show my book-learn'd skill,  
 Around my fire an ev'ning group to draw,  
 And tell of all I felt and all I saw;  
 And as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,  
 Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,

I still had hopes, my long vexations past,  
Here to return—and die at home at last.

O bless'd retirement! friend to life's decline,  
Retreats from care, *that never must be mine*,  
How blest is he who crowns, in shades like these,  
A youth of labor with an age of ease;  
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,  
And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly!  
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,  
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep;  
Nor surly porter stands, in guilty state,  
To spurn imploring famine from the gate;  
But on he moves, to meet his latter end,  
Angels around befriending virtue's friend;  
Sinks to the grave with unperceiv'd decay,  
While resignation gently slopes the way;  
And all his prospects brightening to the last,  
His heaven commences ere the world be past.'

*She Stoops to Conquer, or The Mistakes of a Night* (1773); a prose comedy, in which the hero and his audience are led through five acts of blunders. Johnson said that he knew of no comedy for many years that had so much exhilarated an audience, and had answered the great end of comedy—making an audience merry. Two parties mistake a gentleman's house for an inn—such is the chief incident. The author but dramatized his own adventure, true to his habit of turning the events of his life to literary account. In his school days, a friend had given him a guinea for his travelling expenses homeward. He determined to spend his money royally. Instead of pushing directly home, he halted for the night at the little town of Ardagh, and, accosting the first person he met, inquired, with a lofty air, for the best house in the place. The person addressed chanced to be a notorious wag, who, amused with the self-consequence of the boy, directed him to the family mansion of Mr. Featherstone. Arriving there, he ordered his horse to be taken to the stable, walked into the parlor, seated himself by the fire, and demanded what he could have for his supper. Though commonly diffident, he now rose to the grandeur of the occasion, and assumed the carriage of the experienced traveller. The owner of the house soon discovered the mistake, but, being a man of humor, determined to fool his whimsical guest 'to the top of his bent.' Accordingly the stripling was permitted to swagger as he pleased. Supper served, he ordered a bottle of wine, and condescendingly insisted that the family should partake. As a last flourish, on going to



bed, he gave particular instructions to have a hot cake at breakfast! It was not till he had dispatched his morning meal, and was regarding his guinea with a pathetic farewell, that he was told, to his confusion and dismay, of his ludicrous blunder.

During the period of his newspaper drudgery (1756-64), he composed his *Essays*; weekly contributions, neglected at their first appearance, but generally read and admired when known to be from the pen of the famous author of the *Vicar of Wakefield*; sad commentary on the world, withholding from unknown and unhonored genius that praise which it lavishes at the sound of the trumpet when it is no longer needed. Also, *Letters from a Citizen of the World*, describing English life and manners under the assumed character of a Chinese traveller; *Letters from a Nobleman to his Son*, a short and gracefully narrated history of England.

As task-work, to recruit his exhausted finances, he put forth successively the *History of Rome*, *History of England*, *History of Greece*, and *History of Animated Nature*. The charms of his style and the play of his happy disposition throughout, have rendered these works far more popular than many others of much greater scope and science. Yet the undertakings were not congenial with his studies, which renders their popularity somewhat wonderful. His genius was diverted from its bent to drudge for bread, and his own correspondence betrays his misery:

‘Every soul is visiting about and merry but myself. And that is hard too, as I have been trying these three months to do something to make people laugh. There have I been strolling about the hedges, studying jests with a most tragical countenance. The *Natural History* is about half finished, and I will shortly finish the rest. God knows I am tired of this kind of finishing, which is but bungling work; and that not so much my fault as the fault of my scurvy circumstances. . . . I have published, or Davies has published for me, an *Abridgement of the History of England*, for which I have been a good deal abused in the newspapers for betraying the liberties of the people. God knows I had no thought for or against liberty in my head; my whole aim being to make up a book of a decent size, that, as ‘Squire Richard says, “*would do no harm to nobody.*”’

**Style.**—Simple, delicate, animated, pure, humane; lifted, by its warmth, above the school to which it belongs; abounding in images, mild, tender, and various, reflected from the calm depths of philosophic contemplation.

**Rank.**—The most charming and versatile writer of the eighteenth century. Johnson, estimating him as a writer, thus, in conversation with Boswell, compares him with Robertson:

‘Sir, you must consider how that penetration and that painting are employed. It is not history, it is imagination. He who describes what he never saw, draws from fancy. Robertson paints minds as Sir Joshua paints faces, in a history-piece; he imagines an heroic countenance. You must look upon Robertson’s work as romance, and try it by that standard. History it is not. Besides, sir, it is the great excellence of a writer to put into his book as much as his book will hold. Goldsmith has done this in his history. Now Robertson might have put twice as much in his book. Robertson is like a man who has packed gold in wool; the wool takes up more room than the gold. No, sir, I always thought Robertson would be crushed with his own weight—would be buried under his own ornaments. Goldsmith tells you shortly all you want to know: Robertson detains you a great deal too long. No man will read Robertson’s cumbrous detail a second time, but Goldsmith’s plain narrative will please again and again. I would say to Robertson what an old tutor of a college said to one of his pupils, “Read over your composition, and, wherever you meet with a passage which you think is particularly fine, strike it out!” . . . Sir, he has the art of compiling, and of saying everything he has to say in a pleasing manner. He is now writing a Natural History, and will make it as entertaining as a Persian tale.’

As a novelist, he wrote the first pure example of simple domestic fiction. Its pleasantry is great, its morality is impressive, its language is what ‘angels might have heard, and virgins told.’ As a poet, though less pointed and subtle than Pope, his appeal to the heart is more gentle, direct, and pure.

He had buffeted the trials and temptations of the world, and they had widened his sympathies; he had seen suffering, and bled for it—want, and relieved it—iniquity, and deplored it—gladness, and loved it—sadness, and cheered it,—because tenderness and sunshine were in him. Thus it is, by this fact of intimate contact with human nature and experience, that he held in his hand the moving strings of humanity, and, with the skill to make them vibrate regularly, drew from them immortal harmonies. Other writings have had higher power—his have that universal expression which never rises above the comprehension of the humblest, yet is ever on a level with the understanding of the loftiest; that familiar sweetness of household imagery which wins them welcome alike in the palace of the rich and the cottage of the poor, to solace and improve and gladden all. He wrote from the heart, seemingly unconscious of his fairy gifts and the excellence of his creations. ‘Mr. Goldsmith,’ said Paoli, ‘is like the sea, which casts forth pearls and many other beautiful things without perceiving it.’

**Character.**—From childhood he was noted for his charitable feelings. If he was prodigal, his prodigality is more than redeemed by the circumstance that he lavished oftener upon others than upon himself. His benevolence, always prompt and

often whimsical, forms one of the most eccentric, yet endearing, points of his character. At college, engaged to breakfast with a class-mate, he failed to make his appearance. His friend, repairing to his room, knocked, and was bidden to enter. Goldsmith was in bed—immersed in feathers. In the course of a stroll, the preceding evening, he had met a woman whose husband was in the hospital, herself a stranger from the country, destitute, without food or shelter for her five children. Without money, almost as poor as herself, he brought her to the college gate, gave her the blankets from his bed to cover her little ones, and part of his clothes to sell and purchase food. In consequence, finding himself cold during the night, he had cut open his feather-bed and buried himself in the feathers. His prompt disposition to oblige placed him, at times, in awkward positions; such as inviting to tea ladies whom he met unexpectedly; running up a bill in the most open-handed manner, then finding himself without a penny in his pocket to satisfy the claims of the sneering waiter.

His simplicity made him the victim of many a practical joke. As he and his countryman, Glover, on a rural excursion in the vicinity of London, were passing a cottage, they noticed through the open window a party at tea. 'How I would like to be of that party,' exclaimed the tired Goldsmith, casting a wistful glance at the cheerful tea-table. 'Nothing is more easy,' replied Glover, who was a notorious wag; 'allow me to introduce you.' On the word he entered the house, an utter stranger, followed by the unsuspecting Goldsmith, who supposed him to be an old acquaintance. The owner rose. The dauntless Glover shook hands with him cordially, fixed his eye on a good-natured looking face in the company, muttered something like a recognition, and straightway began an amusing story, invented at the moment, of something which he pretended had occurred on the road. The host supposed that the intruders were the friends of his guests; the guests that they were the friends of the host. They were not allowed time to discover the truth, for Glover followed one story with another, and kept the whole party in a roar. Tea was offered and accepted. At the end of an hour, spent in the most sociable manner, with some last facetious remarks, Glover bowed himself and his companion out, leaving the company to compare notes and find out how impudently they had been imposed upon.

He had that heedless, or, perhaps, happy disposition which takes no care for the morrow. He even threw the present upon the neck of the future, struggled with poverty in the days of his obscurity, and the struggle was rendered still more intense by his elevation into the society of the wealthy and luxurious.

His nature was affectionate and confiding. His heart craved familiar intercourse, family firesides, the guileless and happy company of children. In children's sports he was a leader, and the most noisy of the party, playing all kinds of tricks to amuse them. Hence his love of inferior society. He had neither the graces to sustain him in the elevated circles of literature and fashion, which talk and live for display, nor the tastes which make that artificial sphere congenial. He relished free, unstudied human nature, and sought it, where he was sure to find it,—among the unlettered, in the innocence of the child and the conviviality of the rustic. If his associations left his genius unsullied, it was because his nature, innately pure and good, had nothing in it to assimilate vice and vulgarity.

He had a constitutional gayety of heart, an elastic hilarity, 'a knack of hoping,' as he expressed it; and extracted sweets from that worldly experience which yields to others nothing but bitterness. As often as he returned to solitude and a garret, he was returning also to habitual cheerfulness. What he touched, he transmuted into gold.

As a child, he was shy, awkward, sensitive, bright, blundering, desultory,—and the child was father to the man. His affections lacked concentration; his pursuits, unity; his character, solidity. His overmastering defect in proper reserve, in self-control, placed him at a great disadvantage in animated conversation, and caused him to be habitually undervalued by his associates. The club were lost in astonishment at the appearance of *The Traveller*. They knew not how to reconcile its magic numbers with the heedless garrulity of its author. Hence Walpole called him an 'inspired idiot,' and Johnson said, 'no man was more foolish when he had not a pen in his hand, or more wise when he had.' This was the special wrong he suffered,—that in his lifetime he was never fully appreciated by any one. His genius flowered early, but his laurels came late. He never saw himself enthroned, and he was always overshadowed by men less genial, though more

showy. Those who ridiculed him, disliked him the more because they could not understand how he came by the intellectual wealth which he poured into the lap of the public, and which compelled them at last to respect him. These things, however, have happened to most of earth's benefactors. They whose minds are of no age or country must wait, in order to have justice done them, for the award of posterity. The song of commemoration ascends not till the ears are deaf that would have thrilled to the music.

‘A hundred cities claimed great Homer dead,  
Through which the living Homer begged his bread.’

The scorn of fools and the imperfect sympathy of friends were far heavier afflictions than the battles which he fought for his daily bread. These last belong to the appointed conditions of victory and of power. To struggle is not really to suffer. Only the soul that is taxed yields revenue. Only the ore that has felt the heat of the flames can become a golden crown. ‘Heaven,’ says De Quincey, ‘grants to few of us a life of untroubled prosperity, and grants it least of all to its favorites.’

**Influence.**—High art covers a moral beauty, is to itself a kind of religion, and thus by sequence is a noble ally of the moral and religious sentiments; it awakens, preserves, and develops them. Animated by the True, the Good, and the Beautiful, it purifies and ennobles the soul by elevating it towards the Infinite, that is to say, towards God. Now literature, in its more genial functions, as it speaks to the human spirit, works by the very same organs as the fine arts, educates the same deep sympathies with the ideal,—reflects the images of the sensible world, like sculpture and painting; reflects sentiment, like painting and music. Nay, its charm is more potent, because its impressions are deeper; its influence is more durable, in the degree that language is durable beyond marble or canvas; its empire is broader and deeper, in the degree that it expresses what is inaccessible to every other art,—thought that has no forms, thought that has no colors, thought that has no sounds, thought in its most refined abstraction.

Thus has Goldsmith wrought imperishably for mankind,—by exposing vice and exalting virtue, by charming us to love, to gladness, and to trust; by making the world's daily accidents



easier and kinder; by the charities that soothe, and heal and bless; by the nameless spell that draws all men in the line of his spiritual movement, in the direction of the true, the sweet, the natural, and the gentle. Thus he who was once a journeying beggar, now rides on the shoulders of the world. While the rich and the proud who ridiculed or disparaged him are forgotten, *he* is embalmed to perpetuity. Verily, the value of a man is not in the splendor of his externals, but in the ideas and the principles enshrined in him, in the central sentiments which move him. The diadems of kings, the riches of Ormus and of Ind, were poor and cheap, compared to this single possession of the dead, who all his life wore the badge of poverty:

OF OLIVER GOLDSMITH,—  
 A POET, NATURALIST, AND HISTORIAN,  
 WHO LEFT SCARCELY ANY STYLE OF WRITING UNTOUCHED,  
 AND TOUCHED NOTHING THAT HE DID NOT ADORN,  
 OF ALL THE PASSIONS,  
 WHETHER SMILES WERE TO BE MOVED OR TEARS,  
 A POWERFUL YET GENTLE MASTER:  
 IN GENIUS, SUBLIME, VIVID, VERSATILE,  
 IN STYLE, ELEVATED, CLEAR, ELEGANT,—  
 THE LOVE OF COMPANIONS,  
 THE FIDELITY OF FRIENDS,  
 AND THE VENERATION OF READERS,  
 HAVE BY THIS MONUMENT HONORED THE MEMORY.  
 HE WAS BORN IN IRELAND,  
 AT A PLACE CALLED PALLAS.  
 IN THE PARISH OF FORNEY, AND THE COUNTY OF LONGFORD,  
 ON THE 10TH NOVEMBER, 1728,  
 EDUCATED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN,  
 AND DIED IN LONDON,  
 4TH APRIL, 1774.

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## BURNS.

Fresh as the flower, whose modest worth  
 He sang, his genius 'glinted' forth,  
 Rose like a star, that, touching earth,  
 For so it seems,  
 Doth glorify its humble birth,  
 With matchless beams.—*Wordsworth.*

**Biography.**—Born in a low clay-built cottage in Ayrshire, Scotland, in 1759. His father was a poor farmer, but of manly

qualities and Christian virtues, who is said to have practised every known duty and to have avoided everything criminal. The following is the epitaph written for him by the son:

'O ye, whose cheek the tear of pity stains,  
 Draw near, with pious reverence, and attend!  
 Here lie the husband's dear remains,  
 The tender father and the generous friend:  
 The pitying heart that felt for human woe;  
 The dauntless heart that feared no human pride;  
 The friend of man, to vice alone a foe,  
 "For e'en his failings lean'd to virtue's side."

His mother was a very sagacious woman, who possessed an inexhaustible fund of ballads and legendary tales, with which she nourished the poet's infant imagination.

Subsistence was scanty. The family were obliged to live sparingly, did all the labor, almost fasted. For several years, butcher's meat was a thing unknown in the house. Robert went barefoot, bareheaded; at thirteen was busily employed, and at fifteen was the principal laborer on the farm:

'This kind of life—the cheerless gloom of a hermit, with the unceasing toil of a galley-slave, brought me to my sixteenth year.'

Too much toil rounded his shoulders, and induced melancholy. 'Almost every evening,' says his brother, 'he was constantly afflicted with a dull headache, which at a future period of his life was exchanged for a palpitation of the heart, and a threatening of fainting and suffocation in the bed in the night-time.' The father, a renter, worn out with grief and labor, received insolent letters from the factor, which set all the family in tears. The farm was changed, but a lawsuit sprang up:

'After three years' tossing and whirling in the vortex of litigation, my father was just saved from the horrors of a gaol by a consumption, which after two years' promises kindly stepped in.'

To rescue a pittance from the gripe of the law, the children, including two daughters, became creditors for arrears of wages. Another farm was taken. Robert had seven pounds annually for his services, and during four years his expenses did not exceed this wretched allowance. He said:

'I entered on this farm with a full resolution, *Come, go to, I will be wise!* I read farming books; I calculated crops; I attended markets, and, in short, in spite of *the devil, and the world, and the flesh*, I believe I should have been a wise man; but the first year, from unfortunately buying bad seed, and the second, from a late harvest, we lost half our crops. This overset all my wisdom, and I returned, *like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire!*'

Clouds of misfortune gathered darkly. He was obliged to hide. Jamaica was his destination. From the age of fifteen he had written rhymes, as the divine rage happened upon him,—songs, epistles, satires, and reveries. Before leaving his native land ‘forever,’ he resolved to publish his best poems, which had already acquired a local fame:

‘I weighed my productions as impartially as was in my power: I thought they had merit; and it was a delicious idea that I should be called a clever fellow, even though it should never reach my ears—a poor negro-driver; or perhaps a victim to that inhospitable clime, and gone to the world of spirits.’

The imagery and the sentiments were so natural and impressive, so familiar and striking, whether of superstition, of religion, of character, or of scandal,—old and young, learned and ignorant, were alike surprised and transported. He grew suddenly famous, altered his resolution, and hastened to Edinburgh with anticipating heart:

‘I had been for some days skulking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail, as some ill-advised people had uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at my heels. I had taken the last farewell of my friends; my chest was on the road to Greenock; I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia—*The Gloomy Night is Gathering Fast*—when a letter from Dr. Blacklock to a friend of mine overthrew all my schemes, by opening new prospects to my poetic ambition. The doctor belonged to a set of critics for whose applause I had not dared to hope. His encouragement in Edinburgh for a second edition fired me so much, that away I posted for that city, without a single acquaintance, or a single letter of introduction. The baneful star that had so long shed its blasting influence in my Zenith, for once made a revolution to the Nadir.’

Arriving there, he was feasted, flattered, and caressed, as the wonderful peasant. Multitudes, the sage, the noble, and the lovely, vied with each other in doing him honor. His hours were divided between poetry and rich men’s banquets, where his divine fire mingled with the smoke of intoxication. A subscription, conducted under the patronage of the great, brought him a second edition and five hundred pounds. For one winter he basked in the noontide sun of popularity, then, after an excursion of two months to the southern border, he returned to his family and the shades whence he had emerged. He now married Miss Armour, to whom he had been long attached. Compelled to work for his living, he took a little farm, and lived in a hovel. He seems to have contemplated his situation and prospects with consideration and forethought. He writes:

‘I am such a coward in life, so tired of the service, that I would almost at any time with Milton’s Adam, “gladly lay me in my mother’s lap and be at peace.” But a wife and children bind me to struggle with the stream, till some sudden squall shall overset

the silly vessel, or, in the listless return of years, its own craziness reduce it to a wreck. Farewell now to those giddy follies, those varnished vices, which, though half sanctified by the bewitching levity of wit and humour, are at best but thriftless idling with the precious current of existence.'

Amidst dreary objects and sordid cares, he mused on the image of his wife, and sent his thoughts, in charming lyrics, towards the place which her presence brightened; for she yet tarried on the banks of the Ayr, till he should be able to provide a suitable dwelling. When she arrived, we may well believe that he had a brief release from the pain of life; that he found an inexpressible charm in sitting at his own fireside, in wandering over his own ground, in resuming the spade and the plough, in farming his enclosures and managing his cattle. Indeed, he was accustomed to say that the happiest period of his life was the first winter spent in his new location. But the farming speculation proved a failure, and in 1791 he relinquished it, with empty pockets, to fill at Dumfries the small post of Exciseman, which was worth, in all, ninety pounds a year. His duties were, to brand leather, to gauge casks, to test the make of candles, to issue license for the transit of liquors. What employment for an immortal bard! what an atmosphere for grand or graceful dreams!

In his seventeenth year, he attended a country dancing-school and there whet his appetite for convivial pleasures. He had passed his nineteenth summer on a smuggling coast, studying mensuration—and learning to fill his glass. He had joined a flax-dresser in a neighboring town, and the shop had burned to ashes during a carousal. Growing celebrity had flushed him with its irregular excitement and indulgence had issued in excess. Wild desires and wild repentance alternately oppressed him. At Dumfries, his moral career was downwards. He shared the revels of the dissolute and the idle. The young pressed him to drink that they might enjoy his wit. Health and spirits failed. Ever and anon the heavenly instinct flamed, and he struck from his harp notes of imperishable excellence, then sat morose amidst the memories of his faults and his lost pleasures. He was very often drunk. Once at Mr. Riddell's, he made himself so tipsy that he insulted the lady of the house; the next day sent her an apology, which she refused, then dashed off some rhymes against her. One night in January he drank too much, and fell asleep in the street. A fatal chill penetrated to his bones, and the seeds of rheumatic

fever were rooted in his weakened frame. A month later he wrote: 'I close my eyes in misery, and open them without hope.' 'What business,' said he to his doctor, 'has a physician to waste his time on me? I am a poor pigeon not worth plucking. Alas! I have not feathers enough upon me to carry me to my grave.' On the 26th of June he wrote:

'Alas, Clarke! I begin to fear the worst. As to my individual self, I am tranquil, and would despise myself if I were not; but Burns's poor widow, and half-a-dozen of his poor little ones—helpless orphans!—there I am weak as a woman's tear.'

A letter from a solicitor, urging the payment of a bill, struck him with terror, and he had the bitterness of being obliged to beg:

'A rascal of a haberdasher, to whom I owe a considerable bill, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process against me, and will infallibly put my emaciated body into jail. Will you be so good as to accommodate me, and that by return of post, with ten pounds? O James! did you know the pride of my heart, you would feel doubly for me! Alas! I am not used to beg. . . . Save me from the horrors of a jail!'

A few days afterwards he sank into an untimely grave, consumed, at the early age of thirty-seven, by the fires of his own heart. His last words were a muttered execration against the legal agent by whose note his parting days had been embittered. He was interred with military honors, and a procession of ten thousand persons testified to the interest he had excited.

**Appearance.**—In height, about five feet ten inches; in person, agile and strong; his hair, tied behind and spreading in black curls upon his well-raised forehead; his eyes, large and dark, glowing when he spoke with feeling or interest; his shoulders bent, his dress often slovenly, his manners rustic, his air dignified.

**Education.**—He received, rather imperfectly, the training of the common school. In his sixth year he was put under the tuition of one Campbell, about a mile distant from the cottage, and subsequently under that of Mr. Murdoch, a very faithful and painstaking teacher, by whom he was accurately instructed in the first principles of composition. He is said to have been an apt pupil, to have made rapid progress, and to have been remarkable for the ease with which he committed devotional poetry to memory. His school attendance, however, seems to have been less appreciated by himself than the legendary lore which he derived from an old woman who resided in the family. He says:

'At those years I was by no means a favorite with anybody. I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory, a stubborn, sturdy something in my disposition, and an enthusi-



astic idiot piety. I say *idiot* piety, because I was then but a child. Though it cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent English scholar; and by the time I was ten or eleven years of age, I was a critic in substantives, verbs, and participles. In my infant and boyish days, too, I owed much to an old woman who resided in the family, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country, of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, dead-lights, wraiths, apparitions, cantraps, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of poetry; but had so strong an effect upon my imagination, that to this hour in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp look-out in suspicious places; and though nobody can be more sceptical than I am in such matters, yet it often takes an effort of philosophy to shake off these idle terrors. The earliest composition that I recollect taking pleasure in, was *The Vision of Mirza*, and a hymn of Addison's beginning, "How are thy servants blest, O Lord!" I particularly remember one stanza, which was music to my boyish ear:

"For though on dreadful whirls we hung,  
High on the broken wave."

I met with these pieces in *Mason's English Collection*, one of my school-books. The first two books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any two books I ever read since, were *The Life of Hannibal* and *The History of Sir William Wallace*. Hannibal gave my young ideas such a turn that I used to strut in raptures up and down after the recruiting drum and bagpipe, and wish myself tall enough to be a soldier; while the story of Wallace poured a Scottish prejudice into my mind, which will boil along there till the floodgates of life shut in eternal rest.'

At fourteen he was sent to school every alternate week for the improvement of his writing. At sixteen, obtaining a respite of three weeks, he reviewed English grammar, and studied French, which he is said to have acquired with uncommon facility. He tried Latin, but finding it dry and uninteresting, quickly laid it aside. He afterwards devoted a summer quarter to the study of surveying, with a somewhat fitful and irregular attention, having in the meanwhile, however, considerably extended his reading. He never struggled forward to a university, as many weaker men have done, but he grew into practical wisdom, into strength, into expertness, by the irrepressible movement of his own spirit. To him the gates of the temple of science were never opened, but mankind and the universe supplied him with ideas, and were not exhausted or diminished by the using.

**Motive.**—Ambition early made itself felt in him:

'I had felt early some stirrings of ambition, but they were the blind gropings of Homer's Cyclops round the walls of his cave. . . . The only two openings by which I could enter the temple of fortune were the gate of niggardly economy, or the path of little chicaning bargain-making. The first is so contracted an aperture, I never could squeeze myself into it; the last I always hated—there was contamination in the very entrance.'

So was his life an insurrection, between the spirit that would soar and the base entanglements that bound it down. While he

stooped behind his plow, his heart panted ardently to be distinguished:

‘Obscure I am, and obscure I must be, though no young poet’s, nor young soldier’s heart, ever beat more fondly for fame than mine,—

“And if there is no other scene of being  
Where my insatiate wish may have its fill—  
This something at my heart that heaves for room,  
My best, my dearest part was made in vain.”’

**Method.**— He carried a book in his pocket when he went to the field, to study in his spare moments. He wore out thus two copies of Mackenzie’s *Man of Feeling*. He had a favorite collection of songs, and pored over them driving his cart or walking to labor, ‘song by song, verse by verse, carefully noticing the true, tender, or sublime, from affectation and fustian.’ He kept a common-place book, in which he criticised his own productions, entered his ideas on man, religion, and literary phrases particularly fine. He maintained a correspondence with several of his companions, in order to form his expression. Some book he always carried, and read when not otherwise employed—even at meals, a spoon in one hand and a book in the other. He organized a debating club, to exercise himself in general questions, and discussed *pro* and *con*, in order to see both sides of every idea. Here are some specimen questions:

‘Whether do we derive more happiness from love or friendship?’ ‘Whether between friends, who have no reason to doubt each other’s friendship, there should be any reserve?’ ‘Whether is the savage man, or the peasant of a civilized country, in the most happy situation?’ ‘Whether is a young man of the lower ranks of life likeliest to be happy who has a good education and a well-informed mind, or he who has just the education and information of those around him.’

He wrote poetry according to the humor of the hour. He had usually half a dozen or more pieces on hand, and would take up one or other, as it suited the momentary tone of his mind, dismissing it as it brought on fatigue. His songs were composed with the utmost care and attention:

‘Until I am complete master of a tune in my own singing, such as it is, I can never compose for it. My way is this: I consider the poetic sentiment correspondent to my idea of the musical expression, then choose my theme, compose one stanza. When that is composed, which is generally the most difficult part of the business, I walk out, sit down now and then, look out for objects in nature round me that are in unison or harmony with the cogitations of my fancy, and workings of my bosom,—humming every now and then the air, with the verses I have framed. When I feel my muse beginning to jade, I retire to the solitary fireside of my study, and there commit my effusions to paper; swinging at intervals on the hind legs of my elbow-chair, by way of calling forth my own critical strictures, as my pen goes.’

One more proof that the harvest, though gathered in a day, is the result of ploughing, harrowing, planting, and growth. Not a page of fine writing was ever produced, without much intellectual effort; and the more seemingly simple, the greater the cost of production. Virgil occupied ten years in writing six books of the *Æneid*. Pericles, 'who thundered, and astonished Greece,' never spoke *extempore*, nor even ventured to deliver an opinion without ample preparation. Behind every little point of accomplishment, there is a great beam of endeavor and toil.

**Loves.**—Power of feeling is essential to greatness of character. The heart is the wizard that evokes thought, and opens the sluices of the inner skies. Imagination furnishes the poet with wings, but feeling is the muscle which plies them and lifts him from the ground.

Love was the consuming fire that revealed to Burns what manner of spirit he was of,—the volcano that heaved up mountains within his mind, gathered and whirled the spiritual waters in vigorous currents to the sea. At fifteen he had for his companion in the harvest-field a sweet and lovable girl, a year younger than himself:

'In short, she altogether, unwittingly to herself, initiated me in that delicious passion which, in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and book-worm philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys, our dearest blessing here below!'

In the evening, as the toilers returned from their toil, he loitered behind with her,—he knew not why. With a joy he could not explain, he sat beside her to 'pick from her little hands the cruel nettle-stings and thistles.' This simple girl sang, sweetly, a song composed by a neighboring country lad. Burns, with the consuming fire in his breast, saw no reason why he might not rhyme as well:

'Thus with me began love and poetry, which at times have been my only, and till within the last twelve months have been my highest, enjoyment.'

Away at school, a next-door rustic charmer set him off at a tangent from the sphere of his studies. He struggled on with his *sines* and *cosines* for a few days more, but stepping into the garden one noon to take the sun's altitude, there he met his angel,—

'Like Proserpine, gathering flowers,  
Herself a fairer flower.'

After that, he did nothing but craze the faculties of his soul about her, or steal out to meet her:

'The last two nights of my stay in the country, had sleep been a mortal sin, the image of this modest and innocent girl had kept me guiltless.'

He met yet another, a sprightly, blue-eyed creature, amiable and trusting. On the eve of his intended voyage to the West Indies, they stood on each side of a purling brook, laved their hands in the limpid stream, held a Bible between them, pronounced their vows of eternal constancy, then parted,—never to meet again.

On the banks of the Ayr, in the hush of a vernal evening, as he leaned against a tree, listening to the melody of birds, he spied with rapture 'one of the fairest pieces of nature's workmanship that ever crowned a poetic landscape.' It was a golden moment, that coined the air with song, and he sang her into immortality.

Anon, in Edinburgh, he met a young widow,—the celebrated Clarinda; saw and admired, kindled at the recollection of their interview; saw again, and loved with deathless affection, swore to remember her in all the pride and warmth of friendship till he should cease to be. He said:

'What luxury of bliss I was enjoying this time yester-night! My ever dearest Clarinda, you have stolen away my soul; but you have refined, you have exalted it; you have given it a stronger sense of virtue, and a stronger relish for piety. Clarinda, first of your sex! if ever I am the veriest wretch on earth to forget you,—if ever your lovely image is effaced from my soul,—

"May I be lost, no eye to weep my end,  
And find no earth that's base enough to bury me."'

Exactly. A few weeks later he wrote to still another, his wife:

'By night, by day, a-field, at hame  
The thoughts of thee my breast inflame;  
And aye I muse and sing thy name,—  
I only live to love thee.  
Though I were doomed to wander on  
Beyond the sea, beyond the sun,  
Till my last weary sand was run;  
Till then,—and then I love thee.'

But enough. He pursued every butterfly that promised to settle. He composed a song on every tolerable-looking lass in his parish, and finally one in which they were all included. He organized a club, and exacted that every candidate for admission should be the professed lover of one or more fair ones. When pressed to tell why he never applied himself to Latin, he was

wont to reply with a smile that he had learned all the Latin he desired to know, and that was *omnia vincit amor*. Verily, we have found the excitant that disturbs the electricity of the mental clouds.

**Writings.**—Burns could be religious. After the death of his father, he conducted cottage worship, and drew tears from those present. This phase of Scottish rustic life he has placed in everlasting remembrance in *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, the most heartfelt of virtuous idyls. The following exquisite picture represents the father and his family in their evening devotions:

'The evening supper done, wi' serious face,  
They round the ingle form a circle wide; [fire  
The sire turns o'er, with patriarchal grace,  
The big ha'-bible, ance his father's pride;  
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,  
His lyart haffets wearing thin and bare; [gray cheeks  
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,  
He wales a portion with judicious care: [selects  
And "Let us worship God!" he says, with solemn air. . . .

Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal King,  
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:  
"Hope springs exulting on triumphant wing,"  
That thus they all shall meet in future days:  
There ever bask in uncreated rays,  
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,  
Together hymning their Creator's praise,  
In such society, yet still more dear;  
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere. . . .

Compared with this, how poor Religion's pride,  
In all the pomp of method, and of art,  
When men display to congregations wide,  
Devotion's every grace, except the heart!  
The Power, incens'd, the pageant will desert,  
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;  
But, haply, in some cottage far apart,  
May hear, well pleased, the language of the soul;  
And in his book of life the inmates poor enroll.'

He loved the religion which is piety in the heart and morality in the outer life, which approves joy and speaks well of happiness; but against the gloomy theology that draws down the corners of the mouth and hangs a pall over the life of man, Voltaire was not more bitter or more jocose. Gatherings of the pious were held, in which the sacrament was administered in the open air. The rustic population from every quarter flocked to the communion as to a fair, presenting a serio-comic mixture of religion, sleep, drinking, courtship, a confusion of sexes, ages,



and characters. Presently, over all the congregation silent expectation sits, while the clergymen, one after another, hurl the thunderbolts of divine vengeance. This rural celebration, with its fierce creed which damns men, Burns has satirized in *The Holy Fair*. Rev. Mr. Moodie raves and fumes to impress the terrors of the law:

'Should Hornie, as in ancient days,  
'Mong sons of God present him,  
The very sight o' Moodie's face  
To's ain het hame hed sent him  
Wi' fright that day.

Hear how he clears the points o' faith  
Wi' rattlin' an' wi' thumpin'!  
Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath  
He's stampin' an' he's jumpin'!  
His lengthen'd chin, his turn'd-up snout,  
His eldritch squeal and gestures,  
Oh! how they fire the heart devout,  
Like cantharidian plasters,  
On sic a day!'

Now 'Smith opens out with his cold harangues,' then two more ministers speak. At last the audience have a respite, the people fall to eating, the dishes rattle, whiskey flows, kindling wit and raising a din of comment that is like to breed a rupture of wrath; lads and lasses, bent on minding both soul and body, sit round the table, and 'steer about the toddy,'—some making observation on this one's dress and that one's look, others forming appointments 'to meet some day':

'But now the Lord's ain trumpet touts,  
Till a' the hills are rairin',  
An' echoes back return the shouts;  
Black Russell is na sparin':  
His piercing words, like Highlan' swords,  
Divide the joints and marrow,  
His talk o' hell, where devils dwell,  
Our vera sauls does harrow  
Wi' fright that day.

A vast unbottom'd boundless pit,  
Fill'd fu' o' lowin' brunstane,  
Wha's ragin' flame an' scorchin' heat,  
Wad melt the hardest whunstane!  
The half-asleep start up wi' fear,  
And think they hear it roarin'  
When presently it does appear  
'Twas but some neebor snoorin'  
Asleep that day. . . .

How many hearts this day converts  
O' sinners and o' lasses!

Their hearts o' stane, gin night, are gane,  
 As saft as ony flesh is.  
 There's some are fou o' love divine;  
 There's some are fou o' brandy.'

Are not all creatures fellow-mortals, subject alike to the inexorable edict of 'dust to dust'? Are not all born to trouble, pursuing visions and losing content, doomed, in the very mantling flush of promise, to look upon the wreck or miscarriage of provident pains? Even a mouse stores up, calculates, and suffers, like a man. So was the love of Burns all-embracing. He pitied, and that sincerely, the *Mouse* whose home, in chill November, his ploughshare laid in ruins. The assistant, who drove the horses, ran after it to kill it, but was checked by his master, who was observed to fall immediately into reverie:

'Wee, sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous beastie,  
 Oh, what a panic's in thy breastie!  
 Thou need na start away sae hasty,  
 Wi' bickerin' brattle!  
 I wad be laith to rin an chase thee,  
 Wi' murd'ring pattle!'

[*hasty clatter*]

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,  
 An' weary winter comin' fast;  
 An' cozie here, beneath the blast,  
 Thou thought to dwell;  
 Till, crash! the cruel coulter passed  
 Out through thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble  
 Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!  
 Now thou's turned out, for a' thy trouble,  
 But house or hald,  
 To thole the winter's sleety dribble;  
 An' cranrench cald.

[*without, hold*  
 [*endure*  
 [*hoar-frost*]

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane  
 In provin' foresight may be vain:  
 The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men  
 Gang aft a-gley,  
 An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,  
 For promised joy.'

Amidst the gloom of personal misery brooding over the wintry desolation without, how touchingly he adds:

'Still thou art blest compared wi' me!  
 The present only toucheth thee:  
 But och! I backward cast my e'e  
 On prospects drear;  
 An' forward, though I canna see,  
 I guess an' fear.'

<sup>1</sup>The stick used for clearing away the clods from the plough.

Was ever common incident rendered into expression more natural, delicately graceful, and true?

Of the same nature, rich in poetic light and color, is the poem to the *Mountain Daisy*, that lay in the path of his plough:

'Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower,  
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 power,  
Thou bonnie gem. . . .

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,  
Thy snawie bosom sunward spread,  
Thou lifts thy unassuming head  
In humble guise;  
But now the share uptears thy bed,  
And low thou lies! . . .

E'en thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,  
*That fate is thine*—no distant date;  
Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives, elate,  
Full on thy bloom,  
Till, crushed beneath the furrow's weight,  
Shall be thy doom.'

In these poems, Burns is seen in his happiest inspiration, in his brightest sunshine, and tenderest moods.

Of quite another style, and best displaying the variety of his poetic talent, is *Tam O'Shanter*, a witch-story, beginning with revelry and ranging through the terrible, the supernatural, and the ludicrous:

'Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious—  
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!'

*The Jolly Beggars*, picturesque, varied, and powerful. A joyous band of vagrants are accustomed to collect at a lodging-house, to compensate in a hearty supper for the privations and contumelies of the day. Travelling tinkers, brawlers, and gypsies, all in rags, fight, bang, kiss each other, and make the glasses ring with their frantic merriment:

'Wi' quaffing and laughing  
They ranted and they sang;  
Wi' jumping and thumping  
The very girdle rang.'

Low life, but not below the regard of one who finds a human heart beating even in a happy devil.

In Burns, preëminently, the poet is the man. In all that he has written best, he has given us himself. But his songs, born of real emotion, are the very flame-breath of his heart, simple and

direct as laughter or tears. Here is one that contains 'the essence of a thousand love-tales':

'Ae fond kiss, and then we sever  
Ae fareweel, alas! for ever!  
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,  
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

Who shall say that fortune grieves him,  
While the star of hope she leaves him?  
Me, nae cheerful' twinkle lights me;  
Dark despair around benights me.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,  
Naething could resist my Nancy;  
But to see her was to love her;  
Love but her and love for ever.

Had we never loved sae kindly,  
Had we never loved sae blindly,  
Never met—or never parted,  
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Fare-thee-weel, thou first and fairest!  
Fare-thee-weel, thou best and dearest!  
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,  
Peace, enjoyment, love, and pleasure!

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;  
Ae fareweel, alas! for ever!  
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,  
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.'

**Style.**—Musical, graceful, picturesque, familiar, glowing with the warmth and truth of nature. He was content to exhibit his feeling as he felt it:

'My passions, when once lighted up, raged like so many devils, till they got vent in rhyme; and then the conning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet.'

This man, who despises cant, could not wear the classical dress. His figure is too awkward and powerful for the gold-embroidered jacket. Humming his verses to old Scotch airs as he walks in the furrow, he consults no fashion. In fact, he is contemptuous of rule, and sometimes pronounces more decisively than is consistent with politeness. At a private breakfast party, in a literary circle of Edinburgh, a fastidious clergyman made an attack on Gray's *Elegy*. He was urged to quote the passages which he thought exceptionable. This he attempted to do, but always in a blundering manner. Burns, who was enthusiastically fond of the poem, was at length goaded beyond forbearance by the wretched quibblings of the critic, and, with an eye flashing indignation, cried:

‘Sir, I now perceive a man may be an excellent judge of poetry by square and rule, and after all be a d—— blockhead.’

In prose, he was more ambitious, more studied, more artificial. His letters have sometimes an inflated tone which contrasts ill with the rugged simplicity of his verses. Pleased now to show himself as well bred as fashionable folks, he put on the grand conventional robe. For example:

‘O Clarinda, shall we not meet in a state, some yet unknown state of being, where the lavish hand of plenty shall minister to the highest wish of benevolence, and where the chill north-wind of prudence shall never blow over the flowery fields of enjoyment?’

It is but fair to state, however, that he was not master of pure English as of his native dialect.

**Rank.**—By far the greatest peasant-poet that has ever appeared. He is not like Shakespeare in the range of his genius—has little of his imagination or inventive power; but within the limited compass of personal feeling or domestic incident, he comes up to nature—and who can go beyond? Pope had more wisdom, but which is the poet for man’s heart and his pillow? He seldom rose into the region of great ideas, but he had the gift of vision—the eye to see and the divining instinct to understand what came and passed before him. He could not, like the great dramatists, lose himself in the creations of his fancy, but, within the sphere of his experience, or observation, whatever he has written is perfect and complete, as the humblest weed or the proudest flower,—pulsating with thought as well as with passion, full of light as well as of fire. He found his ideal, not in the remote and conventional, but in the familiar and near-at-hand; and, without rant or trick, with genuine feeling, gave it articulate voice—a voice not from the university, but from the heart of Nature. Thus we may understand why no poetry was ever more instantaneously and more widely popular; why in the rural circle he was a delight and an admiration, and in cultured Edinburgh a phenomenon.

He is the first of all our song writers. His songs are in themselves music—fitful gushes—every line, every cadence steeped in pathos.

He has left us only fragments of himself. He was too much the sport of stormy influences for the calm and regulated movement of sustained effort. Perhaps the most truly natural poets



are in this sense passive, Æolian harps swept by an ever-varying breeze.

**Character.**—His general abilities were extraordinary. His intellect was strong and its perceptions vivid. Its movement was that of gigantic but unpolished strength, remarkably quick, penetrating and sure. Especially in conversation, in brilliant repartee and social argument, his sagacious energy amazed the best thinkers of his time.

His intellectual character was fine, as well as logical; delicate, as well as powerful. Witness:

‘There is scarcely any earthly object gives me more—I do not know if I should call it pleasure—but something which exalts me, something which enraptures me—than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood, or high plantation, in a cloudy winter day, and hear the stormy wind howling among the trees and raving over the plain. . . . I listened to the birds and frequently turned out of my path, lest I should disturb their little songs or frighten them to another station.’

Again:

‘We know nothing, or next to nothing, of the structure of our souls, so we cannot account for those seeming caprices in them, that one should be particularly pleased with that which on minds of a different cast makes no extraordinary impression. I have some favorite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain-daisy, the harebell, the foxglove, the wild-briar rose, the budding birch and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never heard the loud solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of gray plover in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry. Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing? Are we a piece of machinery, which, like the Æolian harp, passive, takes the impression of the passing accident; or do these argue something within us above the trodden clod? I own myself partial to such proofs of those awful and important realities: a God that made all things, man’s immaterial and immortal nature, and a world of weal or woe beyond death and the grave.’

Calvinism, methodical, austere, iron-bound, was the prevalent religion. Against this proscriptive and gloomy form of faith, the vigorous and impetuous mind of Burns revolted, and, like a bow unstrung, tended to the opposite extreme:

‘Polemical divinity about this time was putting the country half mad; and I, ambitious of shining in conversation parties on Sundays, between sermons, at funerals, etc., used, a few years afterwards, to puzzle Calvinism with so much heat and indiscretion, that I raised a hue and cry of heresy against me, which has not ceased to this hour.’

He considers Christ to be only an inspired man, and resolves religion into adoration, benevolence, universal sympathies:

‘He who is our Author and Preserver, and will one day be our Judge, must be (not for His sake in the way of duty, but from the native impulse of our hearts) the object of our reverential awe and grateful adoration. He is almighty and all-bounteous, we are weak and dependent; hence prayer and every other sort of devotion. . . . He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to “everlasting life”; consequently it must be in every one’s power to embrace His offer of “everlasting life”; otherwise He could not, in justice, condemn those who did not. A mind pervaded,

actuated, and governed by purity, truth, and charity, though it does not *merit* heaven, yet is an absolutely necessary prerequisite, without which heaven can neither be obtained nor enjoyed; and, by divine promise, such a mind shall never fail of attaining "everlasting life"; hence the impure, the deceiving, and the uncharitable, extrude themselves from eternal bliss by their unfitness for enjoying it. The Supreme Being has put the immediate administration of all this, for wise and good ends known to Himself, into the hands of Jesus Christ, a great personage, whose relation to Him we cannot comprehend, but whose relation to us is [that of] a guide and Saviour; and who, except for our own obstinacy and misconduct, will bring us all, through various ways, and by various means, to bliss at last.'

*offend*  
*insult*  
Beyond question, he is fundamentally devout. He will not quarrel with a man for his irreligion, any more than for his want of a musical ear; but he will regret his exclusion from so 'superlative a source of enjoyment,' and would deeply imbue the mind of every child with the principles of religion. Often, at Edinburgh, he disapproved of the sceptical jokes which he heard at the table. He advises his pupil to keep up 'a regular warm intercourse with the Deity.' In difficulty, sorrow, and remorse, his unfailing support was his firm assurance of the loving-kindness of God, and the reality of a future existence, where riches return to their native sordid matter, where titles are disregarded, and human frailties are as if they had not been. One of his favorite quotations, spoken of religion, was:

'Tis *this*, my friend, that streaks our morning bright,  
'Tis *this* that gilds the honor of our night.  
When wealth forsakes us, and when friends are few;  
When friends are faithless, or when foes pursue.'

His sensibilities are tremblingly alive. The sounding woods are his delight. Solemn desolation charms him to a sad and oft-returning fondness. A beautiful face kindles him into song. A daisy turned under by his plough, a field-mouse hurrying from its ruined dwelling, moves him to pity and eloquence. Now buoyant, now pathetic, now stern, now stormful, he has a tone and the words for every mood of man's heart. Feeling himself equal to the highest, he claims no rank above the lowest,—a playmate to Nature and to Man.

His grand characteristic is *unconscious sincerity*. He is an honest man and an honest writer, abhorring formalism and hypocrisy. Always, in his successes and his failures, with genuine earnestness, he speaks his convictions. This virtue belongs to all men in any way heroic; and this it is, if they have also depth of vision, that makes men poets and prophets. In the preface of his first edition, he states that he had written,—

‘To amuse himself with the little creations of his own fancy, amid the toil and fatigues of a laborious life; to transcribe the various feelings, the loves, the griefs, the hopes, the fears, in his own breast; to find some kind of counterpoise to the struggles of a world, always an alien scene, a task uncouth to the poetical mind.’

Byron has wisely styled man a pendulum betwixt a smile and a tear. A tumultuous pulse, an excess of sap, kept Burns in apparent variations and extremes. Side by side with jocose satires are stanzas full of humble repentance or Christian resignation. He acknowledged but two classes of objects,—those of adoration the most fervent, or of aversion the most uncontrollable. Wrung with anguish one day, the next he was in merriment. In the prospective horrors of a jail, he composed verses of compliment; on his death-bed, he wrote a love-song. He says:

‘I lie so miserably open to the inroads and incursions of a mischievous, light-armed, well-mounted banditti, under the banners of imagination, whim, caprice, and passion; and the heavy-armed veteran regulars of wisdom, prudence, and forethought move so very, very slow, that I am almost in a state of perpetual warfare, and alas! frequent defeat. There are just two creatures I would envy,—a horse in his wild state traversing the forests of Asia, or an oyster on some of the desert shores of Europe. The one has not a wish without enjoyment, the other has neither wish nor fear.’

Yet what harmony, what music are in these discords! Perhaps it is a law of our nature, that as high as we have mounted in delight we shall sink in dejection. Hood expresses it, ‘There’s not a string attuned to mirth, but has its chord in melancholy’; and Burns, ‘Chords that vibrate sweetest pleasure thrill the deepest notes of woe.’ ‘Even in the hour of social mirth,’ he tells us, ‘my gayety is the madness of an intoxicated criminal under the hands of an executioner.’

If you would probe the real value of a man, ask not what is the grade of his living or the scale of his expenses, but what is the moral skeleton or frame-work of his career. Weigh the man, not his titles. There are those noble by nature, and they alone are noble. Only virtue is nobility,—all else is but paint wherewith to write its name. A lord with all his tinsel glitter is but a creature formed as you and I,—like us a wayfarer from tomb to tomb. He may have been rocked in a golden cradle, but he is not therefore well-born. He is better than the peasant, precisely in the degree that he has more thought, more truth, more humanity; richer, only in proportion as he is richer in his immortal nature. Ideas and principles,—these are the stamp of royalty. Wisdom, integrity, justice, piety,—these are kingly, and whoso

has them, he only is the best-born of men, though laid in the crib of an ass, or trained in the soil between the furrows. So has Burns a just self-consciousness. As the first duty of man, he respects his own nature, estimating himself and others by the spiritual method. In the splendid drawing-rooms of Edinburgh, he is unaffected, unastonished, never forgets the majesty of manhood. Standing on his own basis, conscious of his natural rank, he repels the forward, and subdues the supercilious. Pretensions of wealth or of ancestry he ignores or despises. The sterling of his honest worth no poverty can debase into servility. Oppression may bend, but it cannot subdue, his independence. He will not be hired. He would rather assert his integrity than wear a diadem. A mercenary motive he abhors. He was solicited to supply twenty or thirty songs for a musical work, with an understanding distinctly specified that he should receive a regular pecuniary remuneration for his contributions. With the first part of the proposal he instantly complied, but the last he peremptorily rejected :

'As to any remuneration, you may think my songs either above or below price; for they shall absolutely be the one or the other. In the honest enthusiasm with which I embark in your undertaking, to talk of money, wages, fee, hire, etc., would be downright prostitution of soul.'

The editor subsequently ventured to acknowledge his services by a small sum, which the poet with difficulty restrained himself from returning:

'I assure you, my dear sir, that you truly hurt me by your pecuniary parcel. It degrades me in my own eyes. However, to return it would savor of affectation; but as to any more traffic of that debtor and creditor kind, I swear by that honor which crowns the upright statue of Robert Burns' integrity—on the least motion of it, I will indignantly spurn the by-past transaction, and from that moment commence entire stranger to you.'

So did proud old Samuel Johnson throw away with indignation the new shoes which had been placed at his chamber door. 'I ought not,' says Emerson, 'to allow any man, because he has broad lands, to feel that he is rich in my presence. I ought to make him feel that I can do without his riches, that I cannot be bought,—neither by comfort, neither by pride,—and though I be utterly penniless, and receiving bread from him, that he is the poor man beside me.'

To measure his struggles and his pains, we must consider that he had not the patient dulness nor the crafty vigilance to make

mechanical toil and perpetual economy congenial or prosperous. He could plough, sow, harrow, reap, thrash, winnow, and sell,—none could do it better; but he did it by a sort of mechanical impulse—his thoughts were elsewhere. He would pen an ode on his sheep when he should have been driving them to pasture, see visions on his way home from market, write a ballad on the girl who shows the brightest eyes among his reapers. When addressed about a business matter, he always turned it off with, ‘Oh, talk to my brother about that.’ He procured a book of blank paper with the purpose, as expressed on the first page, of making farm memoranda. Here is a detached specimen of his entries:

‘Oh, why the deuce should I repine,  
And be an ill-foreboder?  
I’m twenty-three, and five feet nine,  
I’ll go and be a sodger!’

How should a man grow opulent, or purchase the soil he tills, who says:

‘I might write you on farming, on building, on marketing; but my poor distracted mind is so jaded, so racked, and bedeviled with the task of the superlatively damned obligation to make one guinea do the business of three, that I detest, abhor, and swoon at the very word business.’

His great defect was the lack of unity in his purposes, of consistency in his aims; the want of that self-command and self-suppression by which great souls, conceiving a mission, are able to fulfil it, despite the impulses of earth, alike in sunshine and in wintry gloom.

To the last, he had a divided aim in his activity,—conviviality and the muse. Thus it is that, while his hoofs were of fire, he continued to wade the mud. To this, more than to his outward situation, is it due that he never rose permanently above his environment into the serene ether of moral and physical victory, but passed existence in an angry discontent with fate. We can believe that to his culture as a poet a season of poverty and suffering was a positive advantage—a divine mean to a divine end. It was required only that his heart should be right, that he should constitute one object the soul of his endeavors; then, as it was his lot to strive, it would have been his glory to conquer. Said Jean Paul, who had often only an allowance of water, ‘I would not for much that I had been born richer.’ ‘The canary bird sings sweeter, the longer it has been trained in a



darkened cage.' 'Fortune,' says Disraeli, 'has rarely condescended to be the companion of genius.' Tasso was obliged to borrow a crown to subsist through the week. Cervantes, the genius of Spain, wanted bread. Said a nobleman to a bishop: 'I want your advice, my lord; how am I to bring up my son so as to make him get forward in the world?' 'I know of but one way,' replied the bishop; 'give him parts and poverty.' Poussin, shown a picture by a person of rank, remarked, 'You only want a little poverty, sir, to make you a good painter.' Johnson usually wrote from the pressure of want. With his lassitude and love of ease, he would never have been the literary autocrat of his century, had he not been pressed into service and driven on to glory at the sharp point of necessity.

**Influence.**—On the popular mind of Scotland his influence has been great and lasting. His poetry has helped to awaken, enlarge, elevate, and refine it. This frank, generous, and reckless blooming of poetic life was needed as a counteraction against the pitiless doctrines of Calvinism. To the national literature it restored the idea of beauty; to the national religion, the pleasures of instinct; to both, the natural expression of the heart's emotions.

While 'rivers roll and woods are green,' aspiring youth will be instructed by the efforts, the miseries, the revolts, the errors, and the virtues of the mighty peasant who 'grew immortal as he stooped behind his plough.'

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## COWPER.

Poor charming soul, perishing like a frail flower transplanted from a warm land to the snow: the world's temperature was too rough for it; and the moral law, which should have supported it, tore it with its thorns.—*Taine*.

**Biography.**—Born in the county of Hertford, in 1731, son of a clergyman. In his seventh year, he lost his mother, a lady of most amiable temper and agreeable manners. At this tender age he was sent to a boarding-school. Timid and home-sick, he was singled out by a boy of fifteen who persecuted him with

relentless cruelty, and never seemed pleased except when tormenting him:

'I conceived such a dread of his figure, . . . that I well remember being afraid to lift my eyes upon him higher than his knees; and that I knew him better by his shoe-buckles than by any other part of his dress.'

At nine a malady of the nerves seized him, the shadow of evil to come. At ten he was sent to Westminster, where he studied the classics diligently till eighteen. Here he experienced more brutality, and in consequence could never advert to those years without a feeling of horror. Warren Hastings was one of his schoolmates.

He next studied, or professed to study, the law, with a London attorney, and was admitted to the bar in 1754. A more unsuitable choice of profession it would have been difficult to make. He devoted his time chiefly to poetry and general literature. As students, he and Thurlow—the future Lord Chancellor—were 'constantly employed from morning to night in giggling and making giggle.' His evil had not left him. Melancholy came, profound dejection:

'Day and night I was upon the rack, lying down in horror and rising up in despair.'

At thirty-one, almost without an object in life, his father dead and his fortune small, he accepted gladly, without reflection, the post of reading clerk in the House of Lords. But his meek and gentle spirit was so overwhelmed by the idea of a public appearance, that he resigned his position before he assumed its duties. Thinking, like a man in a fever, that a change of posture would relieve his pain, he had requested appointment to the clerkship of the Journals—an office which, he had supposed, would not require his presence in the House. But he had to undergo an examination, and again his nerves were unstrung:

'They whose spirits are formed like mine, to whom a public exhibition of themselves, on any occasion, is mortal poison, may have some idea of the horror of my situation—others can have none. My continual misery at length brought on a nervous fever; quiet forsook me by day, and peace by night; even a finger raised against me seemed more than I could bear.'

For six months he studied the Journal books and tried to prepare himself, but he read without understanding:

'In this situation, such a fit of passion has sometimes seized me when alone in my chambers, that I have cried out aloud, and cursed the hour of my birth; lifting up my eyes to heaven not as a suppliant, but in the hellish spirit of rancorous reproach and blasphemy against my Maker.'

The day of examination arrived, and he attempted suicide as a means of escape. At last insanity came, and he was sent to an asylum, whilst his conscience was scaring him, and the bottomless pit seemed yawning to receive him.

On his recovery, feeling himself incapable of an active life, he withdrew into the country, with the remnant of his patrimony, and a further sum contributed by his friends. Here he formed an intimacy with the family of Mr. Unwin, a resident clergyman:

‘They are the most agreeable people imaginable; quite sociable, and as free from the ceremonious civility of country gentlefolks as any I ever met with. They treat me more like a near relation than a stranger, and their house is always open to me.’

To his joy they received him as an inmate. Their cheerful company, the wholesome air, and, above all, the maternal tenderness of Mrs. Unwin, gave him a few gleams of light. Several hours of each day he worked in the garden; the rest of the time he employed in reading scripture or sermons, in singing hymns with his friends, and in Christian conversation:

On the death of Mr. Unwin, he removed with the family to Olney, where he enjoyed the friendship of Rev. Mr. Newton, a man of great force of character and of fervid piety. Here, amid picturesque scenery, he lived a religious recluse. As a pastime to divert him from sad reflections, Mr. Newton engaged his assistance in preparing a volume of hymns; but his morbid melancholy increased, and in 1778 he was again shrouded in the gloom of madness. Mrs. Unwin watched over him with untiring vigilance. After four years, reason returned. As he began to recover, he took to gardening and composing poetry. A friend gave him three hares, which yet live in his verse. He had also five rabbits, two guinea-pigs, two dogs, a magpie, a jay, a starling, canaries, pigeons, and gold-finches.

When upwards of fifty years old he published his first volume of poems. On the occasion, he wrote to Mr. Unwin:

‘Your mother says I *must* write, and “must” admits of no apology; I might otherwise plead that I have nothing to say, that I am weary, that I am dull. . . . But all these pleas, and whatever pleas besides, either disinclination, indolence, or necessity, might suggest, are overruled, as they ought to be, the moment a lady adduces her irrefragable argument, *you must*.’

At this time, Lady Austen, a baronet’s widow, sister-in-law of a clergyman near Olney, became his friend. Elegant, accomplished, and witty, her society was an antidote to his low spirits.

Whenever the cloud seemed to be coming over him, her sprightliness dispelled it. She was the taskmaster of his muse, assigned him topics, and exhorted him to undertake the translation of Homer. Mrs. Unwin, the devoted friend of twenty years, looked with no little jealousy upon the ascendancy of this fair inspirer; and finding it necessary to choose which he should please to retain, Cowper, in mental anguish, sent Lady Austen a valedictory letter. Depression continued:

'My heart resembles not the heart of a Christian, mourning and yet rejoicing, pierced with thorns, yet wreathed about with roses; I have the thorn without the rose. My brier is a wintry one, the flowers are withered, but the thorn remains.'

His cousin, a woman of refined and fascinating manners, whom he had not seen for three-and-twenty years, came to visit them; and, with her, sweet moments. Thus he records the promised delight:

'I shall see you again, I shall hear your voice. We shall take walks together. I will show you my prospects—the hovel, the alcove, the Ouse, and its banks, everything that I have described. . . . I will not let you come till the end of May or the beginning of June, because before that time my green-house will not be ready to receive us, and it is the only pleasant room belonging to us. When the plants go out, we go in. I line it with nets, and spread the floor with mats, and there you shall sit, with a bed of mignonette at your side, and a hedge of honeysuckles, roses, and jasmine; and I will make you a bouquet of myrtle every day.'

Despair was seldom out of his mind. He floated on a sea of endless conjectures, apprehending the worst. In 1788 he wrote:

'O trouble! the portion of mortals—but mine in particular. Would I had never known thee, or could bid thee farewell forever! for I meet thee at every turn, my pillows are stuffed with thee, my very roses smell of thee.'

In 1792 Mrs. Unwin was stricken with paralysis, and the task of nursing her fell upon the sensitive and dejected poet. Again he battled with despondency, planned work upon Milton in his occasionally bright intervals, relapsed again into a painful illness of mind, from which, after the death of Mrs. Unwin, he found relief only in the revision of *Homer*. 'I may as well do this,' he said, 'for I can do nothing else'; and toiled sadly on till he died, in 1800, under the terrors of eternal damnation. On his death-bed, when told to confide in the Redeemer, who desired to save all men, he uttered a passionate cry, begging the clergyman not to offer him such consolations.

**Writings.**—*Truth*, one of his earlier poems—all of which, perhaps, have been less read than they deserved. The parallel

between Voltaire and the poor cottager is an exquisite piece of eloquence and poetry:

'Yon cottager, who weaves at our own door,  
Pillows and bobbins all her little store:  
Content though mean, and cheerful if not gay,  
Shuffling her threads about the live-long day,  
Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night  
Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light;  
She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,  
Has little understanding, and no wit;  
Receives no praise; but, though her lot be such,  
(Toilsome and indigent) she renders much;  
Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true —  
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew;  
And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes  
Her title to a treasure in the skies.

O happy peasant: O unhappy bard!  
His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward;  
He prais'd perhaps, for ages yet to come,  
She never heard of half a mile from home;  
He lost in errors his vain heart prefers,  
She safe in the simplicity of hers.'

On one occasion, to arouse him from unusual depression, Lady Austen told him, in her happiest manner, an amusing story of a famous horseman; and it kept him laughing during the greater part of the night. The next morning he turned it into the best of playful ballads—*John Gilpin*. It rapidly found its way into all the periodicals of the day, was read to crowded houses in London, and was repeated with equal success on provincial stages. Perhaps it has given as much pleasure to as many people, young and old, educated and uneducated, as anything of the same length that ever was written. It is worthy of remark that this merry ballad was written by a man who at the time seemed to himself suspended over an abyss—the flame and darkness of hell, and, while it was convulsing audiences with laughter, he was in the depths of despair.

A cousin sent him his mother's portrait. He received it in trepidation, kissed it, hung it where it would be seen last at night, first in the morning, and wrote a poem on it, whose tenderness and pathos, flowing in richer and sweeter music than he has elsewhere reached, are unequalled by anything else he has written, and surpassed by little in the language. Springing from the deepest and purest fount of passion, and shaping itself into mobile and fluent verse, it reveals his true originality, as well as



that life-like elegance, that natural spirit of art, wherein consists the great revolution of the modern style:

'O 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 smile 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!"  
 My mother! when I learn'd that thou wast dead,  
 Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?  
 Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,  
 Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?  
 Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss;  
 Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss.  
 Ah, that maternal smile! it answers—Yes.  
 I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,  
 I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,  
 And, turning from my nursery window, drew  
 A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!  
 But was it such? It was. Where thou art gone,  
 Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.  
 May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,  
 The parting word shall pass my lips no more! . . .  
 Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,  
 Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;  
 And where the gardener Robin, day by day,  
 Drew me to school along the public way,  
 Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapp'd  
 In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet-capt,  
 'Tis now become a history little known,  
 That once we call'd the pastoral house our own.  
 Short-lived possession! But the record fair,  
 That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,  
 Still outlives many a storm, that has effaced  
 A thousand other themes less deeply traced. . . .  
 Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,  
 When playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,  
 The violet, the pink, and jessamine,  
 I prick'd them into paper with a pin.  
 (And thou wast happier than myself the while,  
 Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head, and smile),  
 Could those few pleasant days again appear,  
 Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here? . . .  
 Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast  
 (The storms all weather'd and the ocean cross'd)  
 Shoots into port at some well-haven'd isle,  
 Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,  
 There sits quiescent on the floods, that show  
 Her beauteous form reflected clear below,  
 While airs impregnated with incense play  
 Around her, fanning light her streamers gay:—  
 So thou, with sails how swift! hast reach'd the shore,  
 "Where tempests never beat nor billows roar;"  
 And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide  
 Of life, long since has anchor'd by thy side.

But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,  
 Always from port withheld, always distress'd—  
 Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest toss'd,  
 Sails ripp'd, seams opening wide, and compass lost,  
 And day by day some current's thwarting force  
 Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.'

Lady Austen advised him to write something in blank verse. 'Set me a subject, then,' said he. 'Oh, you can write on anything; take the sofa.' So he began his masterpiece—*The Task*. Hence the mock-heroic opening:

'I sing the *Sofa*. I who lately sang  
 Truth, Hope, and Charity, and touch'd with awe  
 The solemn chords, and with a trembling hand,  
 Escap'd with pain from that advent'rous flight,  
 Now seek repose upon an humbler theme;  
 The theme though humble, yet august and proud  
 Th' occasion—for the fair commands the song.'

He begins with a history of *seats*, and, having come down to the creation of the sofa, goes backwards in memory to his school-days, when he rambled along the banks of the Thames till tired, and needed no sofa when he returned; then he dreams, traces his life down the stream of time to the present hour, noting what has charmed him, strengthened him, made him happy, or raised his drooping spirits,—and concludes that it has ever been free communion with Nature in the country:

'God made the country and man made the town,  
 What wonder, then, that health and virtue, gifts  
 That can alone make sweet the bitter draught  
 That life holds out to all should most abound  
 And least be threaten'd in the fields and groves.'

Then he follows the bent of his mind, describing what he has seen and felt,—sounds and sights, landscapes and domestic incidents, joy and sorrow; mingling here and there stories, opinions, dissertations, apostrophes, reflections; always expressing his convictions, not dreaming that he is heard, and employing words only to mark emotions.

He is never in want of a subject. To his eye, all objects, the smallest and most familiar, are poetic. Here is his memorable description of the post coming in:

'Hark! 'tis the twanging horn o'er yonder bridge,  
 That with its wearisome but needful length  
 Bestrides the wintry flood; in which the moon  
 Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright:—  
 He comes, the herald of a noisy world,

With spatter'd boots, strapp'd waist and frozen locks,  
 News from all nations lumb'ring at his back,  
 True to his charge, the close-pack'd load behind,  
 Yet careless what he brings, his one concern  
 Is to conduct it to the destin'd inn;  
 And having dropp'd the expected bag, pass on.  
 He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch.  
 Cold and yet cheerful; messenger of grief  
 Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some.' . . .

With expectant hand we open the close-packed load, to learn the tidings from noisy London, jewelled India, and the universe:

'Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,  
 Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,  
 And, while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn  
 Throws up a steaming column, and the cups,  
 That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,  
 So let us welcome peaceful ev'ning in.'

He sees a gallery of splendid and various pictures where others hear only a sound or see only extension. His description of a winter's walk at noon is one of the most feeling and elegant specimens of his manner:

'There is in souls a sympathy with sounds;  
 And, as the mind is pitch'd, the ear is pleas'd  
 With melting airs or martial, brisk or grave;  
 Some chord in unison with what we hear  
 Is touch'd within us, and the heart replies.  
 How soft the music of those village bells,  
 Falling at intervals upon the ear  
 In cadence sweet, now dying all away;  
 Now pealing loud again, and louder still,  
 Clear and sonorous, as the gale comes on!  
 With easy force it opens all the cells  
 Where Mem'ry slept. Wherever I have heard  
 A kindred melody the scene recurs,  
 And with it all its pleasures and its pains. . . .  
 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 soft musings as I tread  
 The walk, still verdant, under oaks and elms,  
 Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.'

Not infrequently the rudest and most insignificant sight,—a mole, for instance,—awakens a touch of native humor:

‘[We] feel at every step  
Our foot half sunk in hillocks green and soft,  
Raised by the mole, the miner of the soil.  
He, not unlike the great ones of mankind,  
Disfigures earth, and, plotting in the dark,  
Toils much to earn a monumental pile  
That may record the mischiefs he has done.’

Homely, flat, and tame was the country he described ; but its figures, seen by the poet, not the realist, are transfigured and ennobled by the earnestness of love, and are painted in lines which are genuine poetry,—exact, transparent, lingering fondly over the scene upon which the eye has rested. As one of many landscape views, take this :

‘How oft upon yon eminence our pace  
Has slackened to a pause, and we have borne  
The ruffling wind, scarce conscious that it blew,  
While admiration, feeding at the eye,  
And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene.  
Thence with what pleasure have we just discerned,  
The distant plow, slow-moving, and beside  
His laboring team, that swerved not from the track,  
The sturdy swain diminished to a boy!  
Here Ouse, slow-winding through a level plain  
Of spacious meads with cattle sprinkled o’er,  
Conducts the eye along his sinuous course  
Delighted. There, fast rooted in their bank,  
Stand, never overlooked, our favorite elms,  
That screen the herdsman’s solitary hut ;  
While far beyond, and overthwart the stream,  
That, as with molten glass, inlays the vale,  
The sloping land recedes into the clouds ;  
Displaying, on its varied side, the grace  
Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tower,  
Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells  
Just undulates upon the listening ear,  
Groves, heaths, and smoking villages, remote.’

The nature of his theme,—the *Sofa*,—suggestive of home scenes and experiences, naturally led to an immethodical treatment of topics coming up, as in every-day life, without order or coherence. It as naturally led to a diversity of sentimental expression,—descriptive, humorous, pathetic, satirical, moral, religious. Hence few poems contain so great a number of things to attract and attach readers. In his zeal to avoid the polished uniformity of Pope and his imitators, he had often become, in his former versification, too rugged. Sensible of his error, *The Task*

was made to unite strength and freedom with grace and melody. The doctrinal strain, too, which had operated against the popularity of his earlier poems, was pitched upon a lower key, and religion, without compromising any of its essentials, assumed an aspect less rueful and severe.

‘My principal purpose has been, to allure the reader by character, by scenery, by imagery, and such poetical embellishments, to the reading of what may profit him. . . . What there is of a religious cast in the volume, I have thrown towards the end of it, for two reasons: first, that I might not revolt the reader at his entrance, and, secondly, that my best impressions might be made last.’

These considerations, added to that of pervading sincerity, may explain why the success of the *Task* was instant and decided, giving its author rank as one of the classics of the language. ‘The best didactic poems,’ says Southey, ‘when compared with the *Task*, are like formal gardens in comparison with woodland scenery.’

His *Letters* are the purest and most perfect specimens of familiar correspondence in the language. Their charm consists in their *natural* elegance—their inimitable ease and colloquial freedom; in their exquisite light of poetic truth shed upon daily life; in the glimpse which they afford of an amiable, suffering, and benevolent character.

One day, being in much distress of mind, he took up the *Iliad*, and translated the first twelve lines. The same necessity pressing him again, he had recourse to the same expedient, and translated more. Every day, in a similar way, added something to the work; till at last he formed the design of translating the whole of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*—forty thousand verses. His task, self-constituted, was forty lines per day, to which he gave all the finish that the most scrupulous accuracy could command. He appears to have had a just conception of Homer, to have entered into the spirit of his poetry, and to have justly considered that the neat and artificial style of Pope was ill suited to the fire and majesty of the original:

‘There is not, I believe, in all the world to be found an uninspired poem so simple as are both of those of Homer; nor in all the world a poem more bedizened with ornaments than Pope’s translation of them. . . . Neither had Pope the faintest conception of those exquisite discriminations of character for which Homer is so remarkable. All his persons, and equally upon all occasions, speak in an inflated and strutting phraseology, as Pope has managed them; although in the original, the dignity of their utterance, even when they are most majestic, consists principally in the simplicity of their sentiments and of their language. . . . No writer more pathetic than Homer, because none more natural;



and because none less natural than Pope, in his version of Homer, therefore, than he, none less pathetic. . . .

As an accomplished person moves gracefully without thinking of it, in like manner the dignity of Homer seems to have cost him no labor. It was natural to him to say great things, and to say them well, and little ornaments were beneath his notice.'

These ideas and strictures indicate that a new light had risen in the poetical firmament; that in the manner of writing a new spirit had broken out: that, as the flower grows into fruit, the form of the human mind, since the soulless days of Queen Anne, had changed. Feeling is poetical, and nature is reasserted. Cowper's version, however, though more faithful than Pope's, in aiming at greater force and vigor, became too rugged and harsh.

**Style.**—Animated, vigorous, pointed, free, clear, and expressive. Less musical and brilliant than Pope's, less warm and glowing perhaps than Goldsmith's, it has more nature than the former, more 'bone and muscle' than the latter. His manner was his own. He wrote from a full soul, not for the pleasure of making a noise in the world, but to occupy himself. Hence his naturalness; hence his contempt of the 'creamy smoothness' of fashionable verse. Not the constraint of outward form, but,—

'Give me the line that ploughs its stately course  
Like a proud swan, conquering the stream by force;  
That, like some cottage beauty, strikes the heart,  
Quite unindebted to the tricks of art.'

While he admires Pope,—

'As harmony itself exact,  
In verse well disciplined, complete, compact,'

he condemns his devotion to form:

'But he, his musical finesse was such,  
So nice his ear, so delicate his touch,  
Made poetry a mere mechanic art,  
And every warbler has his time by heart.'

In reading Pope, we are impressed by the wonderful subjection of the idea to the exactions of the rhyme and the rhythm; in Cowper, by the earnestness of his thought, the purity and sweetness of his emotion. We read no poetry with a deeper conviction that its sentiments have come from the author's heart. We are not to suppose, however, that he wrote without care and even anxiety. On the contrary, his example is but another cumulative illustration of the truth, that the price of excellence in composition is labor. In more than one passage he has descanted on,—

‘The shifts and turns,  
The expedients and inventions multiform,  
To which the mind resorts, in chase of terms,  
Though apt, yet coy and difficult to win.’

**Rank.**—For colloquial freedom of manner, for noble and tender sentiment, for fervent piety, for glowing patriotism, for appreciation of natural beauty and of domestic life, for humor and quiet satire, for descriptive power, for skill and variety of expression (at least in the *Task*), he has seldom been equalled; and for all of these qualities combined, he has been surpassed by few or by none.

Young’s religion and mirth seem to belong to different men; Cowper lives in every line, and moves in every scene. Milton is more majestic, erudite, and profound; but he has less ease and elegance—is less completely a companion, a friend. In the productions of Milton and Young, religion is mainly controversial and theoretical; in those of Cowper, it is practical and experimental. Indeed, it is Cowper’s distinction to have dissipated the prejudice that contemplative piety cannot be poetical. For the first time the multitude saw with pleasure,—

‘A bard all fire,  
Touched with a coal from heaven, assume the lyre,  
And tell the world, still kindling as he sung,  
With more than mortal music on his tongue,  
That He who died below, and reigns above,  
Inspires the song, and that his name was Love.’

Pope has more brilliancy and a more exquisite sense of the elegances of art; but who would select him as a mirror of the affections, the regrets, the feelings, the desires, which all have felt and would wish to cherish? In his descriptions of nature, he is less ideal than Thomson, but more rapturous, simpler in diction, and more picturesque—more abounding in curious details. Thomson’s piety is of the kind easily satisfied and only thoughtlessly thankful. With all his love of natural scenery, the world is comparatively mechanical and dead. With Cowper,—

‘There lives and moves  
A soul in all things, and that soul is God.’

It is He who alike —

‘Gives its lustre to an insect’s wing,  
And wheels His throne upon the rolling world.’

When the human is touched and enlightened by the Divine,—

‘In that blest moment, Nature, throwing wide  
Her veil opaque, discloses with a smile

The author of her beauties, who, retired  
 Behind His own creation, works unseen  
 By the impure, and hears His word denied. . . .  
 But O Thou bounteous Giver of all good,  
 Thou art of all Thy gifts Thyself the crown!  
 Give what Thou canst, without Thee we are poor,  
 And with Thee rich, take what Thou wilt away.'

It is to be observed, also, that Cowper, more intimately than Thomson, sees Nature in union with human passion. Her full depth and tenderness are never revealed except to the heart that throbs with human interest.

His productions were eminently his own. He says:

'I reckon it among my principal advantages as a composer of verses, that I have not read an English poet these thirteen years, and but one these twenty years. Imitation even of the best models is my aversion; it is a servile and mechanical trick, that has enabled many to usurp the name of author, who could not have written at all if they had not written upon the pattern of some original. But when the ear and the task have been much accustomed to the style and manner of others, it is almost impossible to avoid it, and we imitate, in spite of ourselves, just in the same proportion as we admire.'

Again, referring to *The Task*:

'My descriptions are all from nature, not one of them second-handed. My delineations of the heart are from my own experience; not one of them borrowed from books, or in the least degree conjectural.'

Objects hitherto regarded with disdain or despair, were by him thought fit to be clothed in poetic imagery. He scrupled not to employ in verse every expression that would have been admitted in prose. In both these particulars—the choice and management of subjects—his predecessors had been circumscribed by the observance of the classical model; but moved by his inner strength and courage of soul, he crossed the enchanted circle, and regained the long-lost freedom of English poetry.

**Character.**—Quiet, earnest, pure, sensitive, tender, imaginative, devout, and unhappy.

He was predisposed to melancholy and insanity. A disposition to sadness was habitual; and subsiding grief, or the pressure of severe calamity, passing away, left in his mind the gray and solemn twilight that succeeds a partial or total eclipse. This state of gloom most probably resulted from some physical derangement; certainly not from sympathy with the suffering and sorrowing world, nor from sad experience of the troubles and conflicts of life. He says:

'My mind has always a melancholy cast, and is like some pools I have seen, which, though filled with a black and putrid water, will nevertheless in a bright day reflect the sunbeams from their surface.'

‘Indeed, I wonder, that a sportive thought should ever knock at the door of my intellect, and still more that it should gain admittance. It is as if a harlequin should intrude himself into the gloomy chamber where a corpse is deposited in state. His antic gesticulations would be unreasonable at any rate, but more specially so if they should distort the features of the mournful attendants into laughter. But the mind, long wearied with the sameness of a dull, dreary prospect, will gladly fix its eyes on anything that may make a little variety in its contemplations, though it were but a kitten playing with her tail.’

His only human relief was occupation:

‘The melancholy that I have mentioned to you, and concerning which you are so kind as to inquire, is of a kind, so far as I know, peculiar to myself. It does not at all affect the operations of my mind on any subject to which I can attach it, whether serious or ludicrous, or whatever it may be; for which reason I am almost always employed either in reading or writing, when I am not engaged in conversation. A vacant hour is my abhorrence; because when I am not occupied, I suffer under the whole influence of my unhappy temperament.’

Innocent, amiable, and pious, he lived — oftentimes in a sweat of agony — in dread of the eternal wrath. He could not persuade himself that one so vile as he conceived himself to be, could ever partake of the benefits of the Gospel; and — consistently with the Calvinistic system he had embraced — thought himself predestined to be damned:

‘The dealings of God with me are to myself utterly unintelligible. I have never met, either in books or in conversation, with an experience at all similar to my own. More than twelve months have now passed since I began to hope, that having walked the whole breadth of the bottom of this Red Sea, I was beginning to climb the opposite shore, and I prepared to sing the song of Moses. But I have been disappointed; those hopes have been blasted; those comforts have been wrested from me.’

Writing to his friend, Mr. Newton, respecting himself and Mrs. Unwin, he said:

‘But you may be assured, that notwithstanding all the rumours to the contrary, we are exactly what we were when you saw us last; — I, miserable on account of God’s departure from me, which I believe to be final; and she seeking His return to me in the path of duty, and in continual prayer.’

Already in the lengthening shadow of the grave he wrote:

‘I expect that in six days, at the latest, I shall no longer foresee, but feel, the accomplishment of all my fears. O lot of unexampled misery incurred in a moment! O wretch! to whom death and life are alike impossible! Most miserable at present in this, that being thus miserable I have my senses continued to me, only that I may look forward to the worst. It is certain, at least, that I have them for no other purpose, and but very imperfectly for this. My thoughts are like loose and dry sand, which, the closer it is grasped, slips the sooner away. . . .

Adieu. I shall not be here to receive your answer, neither shall I ever see you more, Such is the expectation of the most desperate, and the most miserable of all beings.’

Yet he never questioned the loving-kindness of God, the perfect rectitude of His providence, nor the support and joy of His religion to all men. For him alone, mysteriously, there was no assured hope.

We are not to charge religion with the affecting peculiarity of his case. It seems to be the nature of the poetic temperament—physical disorder aside—to vibrate between extremes, to carry everything to excess, to find torment or rapture where others find only relaxation. Thus the author of *Night Thoughts* was in conversation a jovial and witty man. ‘There have been times in my life,’ says Goethe, ‘when I have fallen asleep in tears; but in my dreams the most charming forms have come to console and to cheer me.’ ‘Alas! it is all outside,’ said Johnson; ‘I may be cracking my joke and cursing the sun: sun, how I hate thy beams!’ So we have the saintly Cowper despairing of Heaven, and the melancholy Cowper singing *John Gilpin*:

‘Strange as it may seem, the most ludicrous lines I ever wrote have been when in the saddest mood, and but for that saddest mood, perhaps, would never have been written at all.’

Never was poet more lonely or sad; yet by none has domestic happiness been more beautifully described. Despondent and remorseful, no one knew better the divine skill of strengthening the weak, of encouraging the timid, of pouring the healing oil into the wounded spirit.

As a writer, his ruling desire was to be useful. Referring to *The Task*, he says:

‘I can write nothing without aiming, at least, at usefulness. It were beneath my years to do it, and still more dishonourable to my religion. I know that a reformation of such abuses as I censured is not to be expected from the efforts of a poet; but to contemplate the world, its follies, its vices, its indifference to duty, and its strenuous attachment to what is evil, and not to reprehend it, were to approve it. From this charge, at least I shall be clear, for I have neither tacitly, nor expressly, flattered either its characters or its customs.’

**Influence.**—He was, if not the founder of a new school, the pioneer of a new era. When he died—one hundred years after the death of Dryden—blank verse was restored to favor, and English poetry was again in possession of its varied endowment. For the first time it became apparent that the despotism of Pope and Addison had passed away.

By the marriage of verse to theology and morals, he secured for poetry a more cordial reception in religious quarters.

He was practically the first to make poetry the handmaid to piety. Religion no longer stood ‘shivering and forlorn,’ but attired in the beauty of poetic enchantment, scattering flowers ‘where’er she deigned to stray.’



To estimate the scope and endurance of his practical influence, it is sufficient to consider the popularity which his poems gained and still preserve; their meditative and moral tone, ever slipping in between—

‘The beauty coming and the beauty gone;’

and the natural law by which the mind grows into the likeness of its associated images. No good thing is lost. All excellence is perpetual:

‘When one that holds communion with the skies  
Has filled his urn where the pure waters rise,  
And once more mingles with us meaner things,  
’Tis e’en as if an angel shook his wings;  
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide.’

## SECOND CREATIVE PERIOD.

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### CHAPTER V.

#### FEATURES.

E'en now we hear with inward strife  
A motion toiling in the gloom,  
The Spirit of the years to come  
Yearning to mix himself with life.—*Tennyson.*

**Politics.**—A colonial senate had confronted the British Parliament. Colonial militia had crossed bayonets with British regulars; and beyond the Atlantic, on the shores of an immeasurable land, three millions of Englishmen, refusing to be taxed without representation, had founded the English Republic. Across the Channel, where freedom was wholly extinct, the leading fact of the English Revolution,—the struggle between free inquiry and pure monarchy,—had been repeated. A Versailles audience had greeted with thunders of applause the lines of Voltaire: 'I am the son of Brutus, and bear graven on my heart the love of liberty and the horror of kings.' News of the American revolt had fallen like a spark on the inflammatory mass; and the Bastille, grim symbol of despotism, had been razed to the ground,—

'By violence overthrown  
Of indignation, and with shouts that drowned  
The crash it made in falling.'

Feudal France became a youthful America. Napoleon, organ and leader of the popular movement, was the giant of the middle-class. His only nobility, he said, was the rabble. His judicial code taught the equality of man before the law. Revolutionary principles were sown broadcast. Underneath the tumult of universal war, new forces waxed silently strong. Europe rallied, it is true, and the dread apostle of Democracy was banished to the barren rock of St. Helena; but the impulses he created and strengthened lived on. A hollow and insincere tranquillity

ensued, broken first by the insurrection of the Spanish colonies in America; then by the democratic ardor which their success kindled in Spain herself, and which extended into Portugal on the one hand, into Naples on the other. Emulating the energy of her neighbors, Greece, after four centuries of servitude, asserted and won her independence. Her triumph hastened the French Revolution of 1830, which in turn quickened the republican efforts of the Swiss, roused the unhappy Poles to a vain rebellion, inflamed an anti-papal rising in Italy, and in England intensified the desire for parliamentary reform.

The need was urgent. The representative system had become corrupt. Two-thirds of the lower house were appointed by peers. Three hundred members, it was estimated, were returned by one hundred and sixty persons. Seats were openly offered for sale, and the purchasers sold their votes. Only a small minority had the privilege of franchise. In Scotland, the county of Bute had at one time but a single resident voter. At an election he took the chair, proposed and seconded his own return, and solemnly announced himself unanimously elected. The House of Commons had ceased to represent the nation. Before the end of 1816, the demand even for universal suffrage was loud. The great work of the next sixteen years was the agitation for the correction of legislative abuses. Then, amid such rejoicing as political victory has seldom awakened, the Reform Act inaugurated forever the government of the people, by the people, for the people,—one more advance against the spirit of exclusiveness, restriction, narrowness, monopoly. That the change was accomplished by the pressure of public opinion is proof decisive of the natural and healthy march of English civilization,—its elasticity and yet sobriety of spirit.

'While men pay reverence to mighty things,  
They must revere thee, thou blue-cinctured isle,  
. . . not to-day, but this long while  
In the front rank of nations, mother of great kings,  
Soldiers, and poets.'

**Society.**—The cause which most disturbed or accelerated normal progress, in antiquity, was the appearance of great men; in modern times, it has been the appearance of great inventions. Printing has secured the past, and has guaranteed the future. Gunpowder and military appliances render the triumph of bar-

barians impossible. In 1807 the gas-light was tried in London, and soon the cheerful blaze chased away forever the tumultuous vagabonds who were wont, in the darkness, to insult, to plunder, and to kill. In the same year, Fulton made, from New York to Albany, the first successful voyage by steam. Ten years later, steamboats were flying on the Thames. Here is Jeffrey's description of one of these smoke-puffing vessels which surprised him and his wife on Loch Lomond:

'It is a new experiment for the temptation of tourists. It circumnavigates the whole lake every day in about ten hours; and it was certainly very strange and striking to hear and see it hissing and roaring past the headlands of our little bay, foaming and spouting like an angry whale; but, on the whole, I think it rather vulgarizes the scene too much, and I am glad that it is found not to answer, and is to be dropped next year.'

Scarcely less important was the application of steam to printing. On a November morning of 1814, the following announcement appeared in a London paper:

'The reader now holds in his hands one of the many thousand impressions of the *Times* newspaper, which were taken last night by a mechanical apparatus. That the magnitude of the invention may be justly appreciated by its effects, we shall inform the public that after the letters are placed by the compositors, and enclosed in what is called a "form," little more remains for man to do than to attend and watch this unconscious agent in its operations. The machine is then merely supplied with paper; itself places the form, inks it, adjusts the paper to the form newly inked, stamps the sheet, and gives it forth to the hands of the attendant, at the same time withdrawing the form for a fresh coat of ink, which itself again distributes, to meet the ensuing sheet, now advancing for impression; and the whole of these complicated acts are performed with such a velocity and simultaneousness of movement, that no less than eleven hundred sheets are impressed in one hour.'

In 1802 the vain experiment was tried of fitting a little engine to a carriage on the common road. Soon after wagers were won as to the weight a horse could draw on an iron train-way. Next the two were combined—the iron rail and the steam-carriage. From 1830 the old modes of transit were changed throughout the civilized world. The New England Puritan, when told how by magic a witch rode from Salem to Boston, looked up, trembled, and wished he had the power. A few generations after, in 1837, not a witch, but the lightning, rode, not the crupper of a broom, but a permanent wire, and thought was postilioned across the air. Machinery superseded forever the spindle and the distaff of the primeval world. Once three hundred women sat a long summer's day on Boston Common, and spun with three hundred wheels, well content with their few hanks of cotton, linen thread, and woollen yarn. But the spinning-wheel sank in turn

into disuse when it was found that the power-loom could spin more in a day than these three hundred in a month. A writer in 1833 was able to say that the length of yarn spun in England in one year was sufficient to girdle the earth two hundred thousand times, and the wrought fabrics of cotton exported in one year would form a continuous sheet from the earth to the moon.

These vast improvements were effected slowly, against bitter opposition. The adventurers in lighting by gas were universally derided. It was alleged in Parliament that 'the company aimed at a monopoly, which would ultimately prove injurious to the public, and ruin that most important branch of trade, our whale fisheries.' Fulton was mocked: 'Poor fellow, what a pity he is crazy!' Against the railway it was urged that the experiment of conveying goods in this manner had failed completely; for the average rate of the best engine was not four miles per hour. When it was suggested that the speed might be increased to fifteen and even to twenty miles, the rejoinder was that 'people would as soon suffer themselves to be fired off from a rocket as trust themselves to such a machine going at such a rate.' A writer in the *Quarterly Review* thus summarily disposes of the question:

'As to those persons who speculate on making railways general throughout the kingdom and superseding all canals, all the wagons, mail and stage-coaches, post-chaises, and, in short, every other mode of conveyance by land and by water, we deem them and their visionary schemes unworthy of notice.'

Workmen, suffering from a stagnation of trade, organized conspiracies for the destruction of machinery, which had lessened the requirements of manual labor. When the *Times* adopted the new press, the innovation was made with the utmost caution. All being ready, the pressmen were told one night to wait for news from the Continent. At six o'clock of the next morning the proprietor appeared among them, to tell them that the *Times* was already printed off by *steam*; that if they were evilly disposed, he was prepared; but that if they were peaceable, he would continue their wages till they should obtain employment elsewhere. The operative was not incorrect in his conclusion that machinery was throwing him out of work; and doubtless the distress was temporarily severe. Men were compelled to starve or turn to new vocations. Before long, however, the depression was seen to be a real elevation. Demands were mul-



tiplied. The new system, moreover, was doing the drudgery, while forms of activity were developed requiring observation and intelligence.

The advance of civilization is thus shown by the growing substitution of pacific for warlike occupations; further and in a still higher degree, by the rapid multiplication of the ties of connection between classes and nations, by the introduction of refined and intellectual tastes, by the repudiation of practices as inhuman which once were accepted as natural and right. After 1834 it was no longer permitted to behead the body of the slain criminal, to dissect it or hang it in chains. At the opening of the period men were hung for a theft of five shillings. In 1837 the death penalty was abolished for more than two-thirds of the crimes to which it had been assigned. *Trial by Battle*, though fallen into desuetude, was not legislatively abolished till 1817, when the right to it was openly claimed in Westminster Hall. The bench, the bar, the kingdom, were startled by the outrage. The emancipation of the slaves in all the dominions of the British crown was the result of a solemn conviction that man cannot justly be held and used as property; that he has sacred rights, the gifts of God, and inseparable from his nature, of which his bondage is an infraction. In 1834 the laborer, much as in the days of serfdom, was confined to a given area as the utmost range of his employment. In that year his sphere was extended, and the ditcher might carry his spade and pickaxe where he would. Among the glories of the present age, none is greater than the voluntary effort to relieve the suffering and raise the fallen. At the beginning of the century the number of schools, public and private, is said to have been three thousand three hundred and sixty-three. Here is a picture of one:

'In a garret, up three pair of dark, broken stairs, was a common school-room, with forty children, in a compass of ten feet by nine. On a perch forming a triangle with a corner of the room, sat a cock and two hens; under a stump bed, immediately beneath, was a dog-kennel in the occupation of three black terriers, whose barking, added to the voice of the children and the cackling of the fowls, on the approach of a stranger, were almost deafening. There was only one small window, at which sat the master, abstracting three-fourths of the light it was capable of admitting.'

Of the married, one-third of the men and one-half of the women could not sign the register. In 1818 only one person in seventeen attended school. In 1833 the proportion was one in eleven.

Five years before, in opposing the appointment of Wellington as Prime Minister, Brougham said:

'I am perfectly satisfied that there will be no unconstitutional attack on the liberties of the people. These are not the times for such an attempt. There have been periods when the country heard with dismay that the soldier was abroad. That is not the case now. Let the soldier be ever so much abroad, in the present age he can do nothing. There is another person abroad,—a less important person,—in the eyes of some an insignificant person,—whose labors have tended to produce this state of things,—the schoolmaster is abroad.'

Education was in various ways improving the general character. The establishment of Sunday schools in 1783 was the first attempt to broaden the instruction of the poor. Fifty years later, the attendance exceeded a million and a half. Societies were founded for the diffusion of knowledge, and literature was cheapened. During the first quarter of the century, missionary work, in Europe and America, was organized into a system. Even if no other good should result from it, the philanthropist might rejoice that, at the least, a new channel had been opened for carrying off the superabundant energies of the multitude. But the Fountain of Life was to send forth its stream to gladden the wilderness and the solitary place.

A glimpse of young America in this period may not be irrelevant or uninteresting; and it may enhance the interest of the picture to view ourselves in a foreign glass. The reader will judge how considerable have been the changes, to what extent prejudice mingles with the observations recorded, how incomplete may be the data, and how far the writers, who dislike the structure of American society, may forget or ignore the English descent of American manners. A transatlantic brother is *en route* from New York to Philadelphia:

'I now mounted, for the first time, an American stage, literally a kind of light wagon. While I attempt to describe this clumsy and uncomfortable machine, I cannot suppress the wish of being possessed of one of them, with the horses, harness, and driver, just as we set off, in order to convert them into an exhibition in London.'<sup>1</sup>

Arrived at his destination, he is forced to believe that,—

'Manufactures, the great source of national wealth, are at a very low ebb in the United States.'

He goes to the theatre, taking his seat in the pit:

'I was early in my attendance, and on my entrance, I found the back row taken up by a number of boys. . . . As the house filled, these urchins set up a violent clamor, beating with sticks, stamping with their feet, and the house echoed with their shrill pipes for the music of *Yankee Doodle*, and *Jefferson's March*.'

<sup>1</sup>Jansen's *Stranger in America*, 1807.

This is generalized into 'the indecorous behavior of an American audience.' It was still the day of primeval forests and vast solitudes. Of the lower class he says, in apparent oblivion that multitudes in England were living miserably on shell-fish and other sea-ware:

'They live in the woods and deserts, and many of them cultivate no more land than will raise them corn and cabbages, which with fish, and occasionally a piece of pickled pork or bacon, are their constant food. . . . Their habitations . . . are constructed of pine (?) trees, cut in lengths of ten or fifteen feet, and piled up in a square. . . . The interstices between the logs are often left open to the elements, and are large enough to give admission to vermin and reptiles.'

He is shocked to think that,—

'Amid the accumulated miseries, the inhabitants of log-houses are extremely tenacious of the rights and liberties of republicanism. They consider themselves on an equal footing with the best educated people of the country, and upon the principles of equality they intrude themselves into every company.'

Yet trade, steam, education, and chartism were doing what they could to create in England the same social condition. Intensely patriotic, he makes a painful effort to be candid:

'The punishments annexed to criminal convictions, throughout almost every state, are worthy of imitation. The many public executions which take place in England after every general gaol delivery, form a spectacle which strikes Americans with horror.'

Another, a lady, with whom loyalty is a sub-religion, sails from London in 1827, reaches Cincinnati in the course of her wanderings, and is astonished at the dearth of public amusement:

'I never saw any people who appeared to live so much without amusement as the Cincinnatians. Billiards are forbidden by law; so are cards. To sell a pack of cards in Ohio subjects the seller to a penalty of fifty dollars.'<sup>1</sup>

In Washington she visits the theatre. Unmindful that the Middle Ages still lurk in London, ignorant that the turbulent health of the young English had made the English traveller a proverb for bold and offensive manners, she says:

'The theatre was not open while we were in Washington, but we afterwards took advantage of our vicinity to the city to visit it. The house is very small, and most astonishingly dirty and void of decoration, considering that it is the only place of public amusement that the city affords. I have before mentioned the want of decorum at the Cincinnati theatre, but certainly that of the capital at least rivalled it in the freedom of action and attitude; a freedom which seems to disdain the restraints of civilised manners. One man in the pit was seized with a violent fit of vomiting, which appeared not in the least to annoy or surprise his neighbours; and the happy coincidence of a physician being at that moment personated on the stage, was hailed by many of the audience as an excellent joke, of which the actor took advantage, and elicited shouts of applause by saying, "I expect my services are wanted elsewhere." The spitting was incessant;

<sup>1</sup> *Domestic Manners of the Americans*: Frances Trollope.

and not one in ten of the male part of the illustrious legislative audience sat according to the usual custom of human beings; the legs were thrown sometimes over the front of the box, sometimes over the side of it; here and there a senator stretched his entire length along a bench; and in many instances the front rail was preferred as a seat.'

She deplores and abhors the iniquity of slavery, in which the North joins hands with the South:

'There is something in the system of breeding and rearing negroes in the Northern States, for the express purpose of sending them to be sold in the South, that strikes painfully against every feeling of justice, mercy, or common humanity.'

She has a fixed purpose to qualify all praise, and cannot or will not see the interior excellence, of which the outward charm is but a record in sculpture:

'I certainly believe the women of America to be the handsomest in the world, but as surely do I believe they are the least attractive.'

Her energy of observation breaks out in spasms of impatience with defective individuals:

'The ladies have strange ways of adding to their charms. They powder themselves immoderately, face, neck, and arms, with pulverized starch; the effect is indescribably disagreeable by daylight, and not very favourable at any time. They are also most unhappily partial to false hair, which they wear in surprising quantities. . . . I suspect this fashion to arise from an indolent mode of making their toilet, and from accomplished ladies' maids not being very abundant; it is less trouble to append a bunch of waving curls, here and there, and everywhere, than to keep their native tresses in perfect order.'

In no country was the homage to wealth so absolute as in England, in none was the reproach of poverty so great, in none was the logic of the soul so coarse; yet she complains, perhaps with a justness that needs no apology:

'Nothing can exceed their activity and perseverance in all kinds of speculation, handicraft, and enterprise, which promises a profitable pecuniary result. I heard an Englishman, who had been long resident in America, declare that in following, in meeting, or in overtaking, in the street, on the road, or in the field, at the theatre, the coffee-house, or at home, he had never overheard Americans conversing without the word *dollar* being pronounced between them.'

English nature cannot readily see beyond England, and there the gale which directs the vanes on university towers blows out of antiquity, while the definition of a public school is 'a school which excludes all that could fit a man for standing behind a counter.' Hence:

'Were we to read a prospectus of the system pursued in any of our public schools, and that of a first-rate seminary in America, we should be struck by the confined scholastic routine of the former, when compared to the varied and expansive scope of the latter; but let the examination go a little farther, and I believe it will be found that the old-fashioned school discipline of England has produced something higher, and deeper too, than that which roars so loud, and thunders in the index. . . . At sixteen, often much

earlier, education ends. . . . When the money-getting begins, leisure ceases, and all of lore which can be acquired afterwards, is picked up from novels, magazines, and newspapers.'

A few years later, there came to the United States a Frenchman, an ardent friend of free institutions, a careful and profound observer. In his eyes equality and civility are correlative facts:

'In no country is criminal justice administered with more mildness than in the United States. While the English seem disposed carefully to retain the bloody traces of the dark ages in their penal legislation, the Americans have almost expunged capital punishment from their codes. North America is, I think, the only country upon earth in which the life of no one citizen has been taken for a political offence in the course of the last fifty years.'<sup>1</sup>

In contrast with the social condition of England, where moneyed aristocracy has influence next to aristocracy of birth,—

'In America, where the privileges of birth never existed, and where riches confer no peculiar rights on their possessors, men unacquainted with each other . . . find neither peril nor advantage in the free interchange of their thoughts. If they meet by accident they neither seek nor avoid intercourse; their manner is therefore natural, frank, and open. . . . If their demeanor is often cold and serious, it is never haughty or constrained; and if they do not converse, it is because they are not in a humor to talk, not because they think it their interest to be silent.'

Under the influence of religion and democracy, austere authority vanishes, a familiar intimacy springs up, the son, master of his thoughts, is soon master of his conduct, the daughter enters early upon a free observation of the world, and acquires a character of self-reliance:

'Among all Protestant nations, young women are far more mistresses of their own actions than they are in Catholic countries. . . . In the United States the doctrines of Protestantism are combined with great political freedom and a most democratic state of society; and nowhere are young women surrendered so early or so completely to their own guidance.'

Married, their parts are changed, their habits are different; but their early culture survives, and they contract the conjugal tie voluntarily, having learned by the use of their independence, to relinquish it without a murmur:

'The Americans are at the same time a puritanical people and a commercial nation: their religious opinions, as well as their trading habits, consequently lead them to require much abnegation on the part of woman, and a constant sacrifice of her pleasures to her duties which is seldom demanded of her in Europe.'

In England, he says, public malice is constantly attacking the frailties of women, but:

'In America, all books, novels not excepted, suppose women to be chaste, and no one thinks of relating affairs of gallantry.'

<sup>1</sup> *Democracy in America*: Tocqueville.



And:

‘Although the travellers who have visited North America differ on a great number of points, they all agree in remarking that morals are far more strict there than elsewhere. It is evident that on this point Americans are very far superior to their progenitors, the English.’

The position of woman in society is determined by the existing state of civilization. The one may be accepted as the measure of the other, which, by reaction, it promotes. A European may affect to be the slave of woman, although ‘he never sincerely thinks her his equal.’ But:

‘In the United States men seldom compliment women, but they daily show how much they esteem them. They constantly display an entire confidence in the understanding of a wife, and a profound respect for her freedom; they have decided that her mind is just as fitted as that of a man to discover the plain truth, and her heart as firm to embrace it.’

England is slow and staid, sad by comparison with singing and dancing France; yet ringing and cheerful by comparison with America, it would seem:

‘I thought that the English constituted the most serious nation on the face of the earth, but I have since seen the Americans, and have changed my opinion.’

American life is a moving pageant. The aspect is animated, but its prevailing type is monotonous. The reason is, that the ruling passion is the love of riches:

‘The love of wealth is therefore to be traced, either as a principal or an accessory motive, at the bottom of all that the Americans do: this gives to all their passions a sort of family likeness, and soon renders the survey of them exceedingly wearisome.’

This, we are told, chiefly explains why, in the midst of a universally ambitious stir, there is so little grandeur of aim. All aim to rise, but few entertain hopes of great magnitude:

‘What chiefly diverts the men of democracies from lofty ambition is not the scantiness of their fortunes, but the vehemence of the exertions they daily make to improve them. They strain their faculties to the utmost to achieve paltry results, and this cannot fail speedily to limit their discernment and to circumscribe their powers. They might be much poorer and still be greater.’

If, while the social condition becomes more equal, commerce and industry afford but a slow and arduous way to fortune, the aspirants rush into politics as a profession, to relieve their necessities at the cost of the public treasury, and office-seeking becomes a rage. But the government which encourages this tendency, imperils its own tranquillity. It should teach subjects the art of providing for themselves:

‘I shall not remark that the universal and inordinate desire for place is a great social evil; that it destroys the spirit of independence in the citizen, and diffuses a venal

and servile humour throughout the frame of society; that it stifles the manlier virtues; nor shall I be at the pains to demonstrate that this kind of traffic only creates an unproductive activity which agitates the country without adding to its resources; all these things are obvious.'

The conclusion appears to be that America, in spite of the ocean which intervenes, is not to be sundered from Europe; that her people are a portion of the English—Norse pirates mellowed into civility—commissioned to explore the wilds of the New World; that the doctrine of equality has suggested to them certain laws, and given them a certain political character; that this democratic state has engendered among them feelings and opinions unknown among the elder aristocratic nations; that it has modified or destroyed the relations which before existed, and established others of a novel kind; that literature and art will be correspondingly affected.

**Religion.**—Mankind will return, in thought, to the first years of this century as to a great fructifying season of the race. The conflict of interests and the storm of ideas left Truth and Right more powerful than they were before the battle began. Wrote Robert Hall, a dissenter, in 1801:

'To an attentive observer . . . it will appear one of the most extraordinary phenomena of this eventful crisis, that amid the ravages of Atheism and infidelity, real religion is evidently on the increase.'

The precepts of Christianity were sensibly pervading the moral atmosphere. The faith was felt to be not a doctrine, but a life. Thoughtful minds were affected with a 'noble discontent,' instruction was acquiring an improved tone, the light was penetrating the darkness, and touching it with colors of ideal promise. In 1820 he could write:

'Evangelical truth has been administered in a purity and abundance in which preceding ages bear no proportion. And here, in justice to the established clergy of the realm, I cannot but remark the great advance in piety and diligence which they have exhibited during the last half-century. They have gone forth in numbers, rekindling the lamp of heavenly truth where before it had burned with a dim and sickly ray. They have explored and cultivated many a neglected spot, into which other laborers could not (for various reasons) gain admission with equal facilities of influence, and far be it from any of their dissenting brethren to regard their success with any other than a *godly* jealousy, a *holy* emulation.'

Among the 'signs of the times' he notes the growing disposition to estimate opinion by the sincere rule of the private heart, the diffusion of a milder, more candid, and charitable temper:

'At last the central principle of union begins to be extensively felt and acknowledged: amid all the diversities of external discipline or subordinate opinion, the seed

of God, the principle of spiritual and immortal life implanted in the soul, is recognized by the sincere followers of the Lamb as the transcendent point of mutual attraction in the midst of minor differences.'

Foster, pleading, in 1834, for the dissolution of the Established Church as a State institution, says of the Dissenters, among whom the Methodists are the most aggressive:

'In a survey of the country there are brought in our view several thousand places of worship, raised at their expense, many of them large, many of them smaller ones under the process, at any given time, of being enlarged, with the addition of many new ones every year. And I believe a majority of them are attended by congregations which may be described as numerous in proportion to their dimensions and the population of the neighborhood. So that if the dissenters be somewhat too sanguine in assuming that their number would already be found, on a census of the whole country, fully equal to the attendants of the churches of the establishment (in most of the great towns they far exceed), there is every probability that their rapid augmentation will very soon bring them to an equality.'

In the National Church, however, there were now no Wycliffes, no Latimers, no Taylors, no Butlers, whom plenitude of Divine Presence had made possible in ages of genius and piety. The curates were ill paid, the prelates overpaid. The abuse was converting bishops into surpliced merchants. Said Brougham in the House of Commons:

'How will the reverend bishops of the other House be able to express their due abhorrence of the crime of perjury, who solemnly declare in the presence of God, that when they are called upon to accept a living, perhaps of four thousand pounds a year, at that very instant they are moved by the Holy Ghost to accept the office and administration thereof, and for no other reason whatever?'

The old structures were kept in repair, but the spirit that once dwelt in them had gone out to animate other activities. The Establishment was the church, not of the poor, but of the gentry, the well-bred, whose worship was a quotation and a ceremonial. Hence to Sidney Smith Methodism was foolishness. Its preachers gained popularity by arts which the regular clergy were 'too dignified' to employ. Yet the convulsionary sect was producing a moral revolution; an upsetting of the physical machine, some would call it; a mad fermentation, he would say:

'That it has rapidly increased within these few years, we have no manner of doubt; and we confess we cannot see what is likely to impede its progress. The party which it has formed in the Legislature; and the artful neutrality with which they give respectability to their small number,—the talents of some of this party, and the unimpeached excellence of their characters, all make it probable that fanaticism will increase rather than diminish. The Methodists have made an alarming inroad into the Church, and they are attacking the army and navy. The principality of Wales, and the East India Company, they have already acquired. All mines and subterraneous places belong to them; they creep into hospitals and small schools, and so work their way upwards. . . . We most sincerely deprecate such an event; but it will excite in us no manner of sur-

prise if a period arrives when the churches of the sober and orthodox part of the English clergy are completely deserted by the middling and lower classes of the community.'

The morning that spread upon the mountains was shedding its glory upon the plains.

The religious element, with whose European antecedents we may here assume a general acquaintance, was dominant in the initial idea and impulse of the colonies; it was mighty and pervasive through the whole colonial period; and among the forces which have entered into American development, it must be regarded as the first in time, the steadiest in mode, and the most potent in energy:

'It must never be forgotten that religion gave birth to Anglo-American society. In the United States, religion is therefore commingled with all the habits of the nation, and all the feelings of patriotism; whence it derives a peculiar force. To this powerful reason, another of no less intensity may be added; in America, religion has, as it were, laid down its own limits. Religious institutions have remained wholly distinct from political institutions, so that former laws have been easily changed, while former belief has remained unshaken. Christianity has therefore retained a strong hold on the public mind in America; and it should be particularly remarked that its sway is not only that of a philosophical doctrine, which has been adopted upon inquiry, but of a religion, which is believed without discussion. In the United States, Christian sects are infinitely diversified and perpetually modified; but Christianity itself is a fact so irresistibly established, that no one undertakes either to attack or to defend it.'

Religion, in this country, is by common consent a distinct sphere. Nowhere is it invested with fewer forms, figures, and observances. By a judicious respect for democratic tendencies, moreover, it has sustained an advantageous struggle with that spirit of individualism which elsewhere, at certain epochs, has proved to be a most dangerous antagonist. It may here be a confirmed habit, or there a tender memory; but it is not an institution—a something planted and fixed, which would thwart or stay the spiritual laws of human nature.

**Poetry.**—With the sudden concourse of extraordinary events, the human mind flowered anew. Amidst the visible progress and the general ennobling of the public was manifested the moving sentiment of the age, at once generous and rebellious,—discontent with the present, aspiration for the future. We have seen it in the fervor and misery of Burns, in the overcharged soul of Cowper; we may see it in the passionate unrestraint of the Byronic school; in the dissenting principles, in the humanitarian dreams, in the restless explorations, of the school of Wordsworth.

The heart, in weariness of the precise art that fettered it,

clamored for pulsation and utterance. Already the nation had returned to the fresh wild strains of its youth, and Percy's *Reliques* had fed the enthusiasm which it accompanied and indicated. Other omens of the change were Warton's *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, and the imitations or forgeries of Macpherson and Chatterton, all which materially strengthened the new reviving love for the romantic past. This was the historical impulse, which reproduced on the literary stage at this moment the conceptions and manners of the Middle Age, the ideals of the Renaissance, and the vanished civilizations of the East. A second impulse—the philosophical—was communicated over the whole of Europe from Germany, whose literature from this date onward, bold, speculative, profound, has been gaining ground in both England and America, and has become the most vigorous of European forces. Of the political excitement which carried discussion and commotion everywhere; of the social circumstances which refined experience, enfranchised the intellect, and stimulated hope, we have spoken. In this period of converging tendencies, conservative and revolutionary, the useful, the beautiful, and the worthless struggled together for survival and preëminence. The era does not reach the elevation of the Elizabethan, but its productions are more varied, and only less magnificent. Poetry—narrative, dramatic, lyric, didactic—is clearly its distinguishing feature. Among the minor poets who rank as its renovators, is **Crabbe** (1754-1832), a gloomy painter of every-day life, uniting great power of delineation to great fondness for nature, but lacking ideality, and very unequal; often exciting admiration, too frequently provoking derision. His *Tales of the Hall* has a more regular plan and a more equable strain than any of his other works. Two brothers, meeting late in life at the hall of their native village, relate to each other passages of their past experience. After many years, the elder discovers, as he says, the lost object of his idolatry living in infamy:

'Will you not ask, how I beheld that face,  
Or read that mind, and read it in that place?  
I have tried, Richard, ofttimes, and in vain,  
To trace my thoughts, and to review their train—  
If train there were—that meadow, grove, and stile,  
The fright, the escape, her sweetness, and her smile;  
Years since elapsed, and hope, from year to year,  
To find her free—and then to find her here!  
But is it she?—O! yes; the rose is dead,



All beauty, fragrance, freshness, glory, fled;  
 But yet 'tis she—the same and not the same—  
 Who to my bower a heavenly being came;  
 Who waked my soul's first thought of real bliss,  
 Whom long I sought, and now I find her—this.'

She offers her hand, sees his troubled look, bids him discard it, then, while he stands gazing and perplexed, sings:

'My Damon was the first to wake  
 The gentle flame that cannot die:  
 My Damon is the last to take  
 The faithful bosom's softest sigh:  
 The life between is nothing worth,  
 O! cast it from thy thought away;  
 Think of the day that gave it birth,  
 And this its sweet returning day.

Buried be all that has been done,  
 Or say that nought is done amiss;  
 For who the dangerous path can shun  
 In such bewildering world as this?  
 But love can every fault forgive,  
 Or with a tender look reprove;  
 And now let nought in memory live,  
 But that we meet, and that we love.'

He is moved to pity:

'Softened, I said, "Be mine the hand and heart,  
 If with your world you will consent to part."  
 She would,—she tried. Alas! she did not know  
 How deeply-rooted evil habits grow.'

In vain; the fateful presence is there, and the resisting soul yields, sinks, then wastes to the end:

'There came at length request  
 That I would see a wretch with grief oppressed,  
 By guilt affrighted,—and I went to trace  
 Once more the vice-worn features of that face,  
 That sin-wrecked being! and I saw her laid  
 Where never worldly joy a visit paid:  
 That world receding fast! the world to come  
 Concealed in terror, ignorance, and gloom;  
 Sin, sorrow, and neglect; with not a spark  
 Of vital hope,—all horrible and dark.  
 It frightened me! I thought,—and shall not I  
 Thus feel? thus fear? this danger can I fly?  
 Do I so wisely live that I can calmly die?'

Living in two eras, he wrote in two styles; dealing in the first rather with the surface, in the second more with the heart, of things. But in general he was too classical, and has been nicknamed 'Pope in worsted stockings.' Here, in a glimpse of the unpromising scene of his nativity, is a specimen of his rough energy of description:

'Lo! where the heath, with withering brake grown o'er  
 Lends the light turf that warms the neighboring poor;  
 From thence a length of burning sand appears,  
 Where the thin harvest waves its withered ears;  
 Rank weeds that every art and care defy,  
 Reign o'er the land, and rob the blighted rye:  
 There thistles stretch their prickly arms afar,  
 And to the ragged infant threaten war;  
 There poppies nodding mock the hope of toil;  
 There the blue bugloss paints the sterile soil;  
 Hardy and high, above the slender sheaf  
 The slimy mallow waves her silky leaf;  
 O'er the young shoot the charlock throws a shade,  
 And clasping tares cling round the sickly blade;  
 With mingled tints the rocky coasts abound,  
 And a sad splendor vainly shines around.'

Another who enters the new school without abandoning his half classical but noble style, is **Campbell** (1777-1844), a Highlander in blood and nature, dreamy and meditative, of delicate taste and pure sentiment, calm, uniform, and mellifluous in the general tone of his verse. At eleven he begins to compose, and at twenty-one, in a dusky lodging of Edinburgh, writes the *Pleasures of Hope*, writes much of it several times over, writes it in sections, then arranges them in proper order; writes the opening last, revises it again and again, because he appreciates the importance of a good beginning, then, when it bears no resemblance to the original draught, captivates us with this exquisite picture:

'At summer eve, when Heaven's ethereal bow  
 Spans with bright arch the glittering hill below,  
 Why to yon mountain turns the musing eye,  
 Whose sunbright summit mingles with the sky?  
 Why do those cliffs of shadowy tint appear  
 More sweet than all the landscape smiling near?  
 'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view,  
 And robes the mountain in its azure hue.  
 Thus, with delight, we linger to survey  
 The promised joys of life's unmeasured way,  
 Thus, from afar, each dim-discovered scene  
 More pleasing seems than all the past hath been,  
 And every form, that Fancy can repair  
 From dark oblivion, glows divinely there.'

Hardly less felicitous are the following lines:

'Till Hymen brought his love-delighted hour,  
 There dwelt no joy in Eden's rosy bower!  
 In vain the viewless seraph lingering there,  
 At starry midnight charm'd the silent air;  
 In vain the wild-bird caroll'd on the steep,  
 To hail the sun, slow wheeling from the deep;

In vain, to soothe the solitary shade,  
 Aërial notes in mingling measure play'd;  
 The summer wind that shook the spangled tree,  
 The whispering wave, the murmur of the bee;  
 Still slowly pass'd the melancholy day,  
 And still the stranger wist not where to stray.  
 The world was sad! the garden was a wild!  
 And man, the hermit, sigh'd—till woman smiled!

When the guardian deities forsook mankind, Hope remained.  
 When Epimetheus indiscreetly opened Pandora's jar, all the ills  
 which have since afflicted humanity were let loose, and the lid  
 was replaced only in time to prevent the escape of Hope. What  
 emotion is so beneficent? Limited to no age, no clime, no con-  
 dition, it is strength to the weary, courage to the desponding,  
 promise to the desolate, life to the dying:

'Angel of life! thy glittering wings explore  
 Earth's loveliest bounds, and ocean's widest shore.'

When reason deserts her empire, Hope takes her seat upon the  
 vacant throne, as the radiant angels sat upon the stone by the  
 door of the empty sepulchre:

'Hark! the wild maniac sings, to chide the gale  
 That wafts so slow her lover's distant sail; . . .  
 Oft when yon moon has climb'd the midnight sky,  
 And the lone sea-bird wakes its wildest cry,  
 Piled on the steep, her blazing faggots burn  
 To hail the bark that never can return;  
 And still she waits, but scarce forbears to weep  
 That constant love can linger on the deep.'

Hope illumines, for the dying, the dread unknown, and on the  
 tombs of the departed it hangs the unfading garlands of a blessed  
 immortality. No cheerless creed of materialism can wed us to  
 the dust:

'Ah me! the laurell'd wreath that Murder rears,  
 Blood-nursed, and water'd by the widow's tears,  
 Seems not so foul, so tainted, and so dread,  
 As waves the night-shade round the sceptic's head. . . .  
 If Chance awaked, inexorable power,  
 This frail and feverish being of an hour;  
 Doom'd o'er the world's precarious scene to sweep,  
 Swift as the tempest travels on the deep,  
 To know Delight but by her parting smile,  
 And toil, and wish, and weep a little while;  
 Then melt, ye elements, that form'd in vain  
 This troubled pulse, and visionary brain!  
 Fade, ye wild flowers, memorials of my doom,  
 And sink, ye stars, that light me to the tomb!'

Only less important than the beginning is the ending:

‘Eternal Hope! when yonder spheres sublime  
Peal’d their first notes to sound the march of Time,  
Thy joyous youth began,—but not to fade.  
When all the sister planets have decay’d;  
When wrapt in fire the realms of ether glow,  
And Heaven’s last thunder shakes the world below;  
Thou, undismay’d, shalt o’er the ruins smile,  
And light thy torch at Nature’s funeral pile.’

Campbell’s fame is secure in quotation. Many of his lines have become household words. For example:

‘Tis distance lends enchantment to the view.’

‘Tis the sunset of life gives me mystical lore,  
And coming events cast their shadows before.’

‘What though my winged hours of bliss have been,  
Like angel-visits, few and far between?’

In the stories of the Border he has more freedom; as in *Lochiel’s Warning*, *O’Conner’s Child*, and *Lord Ulin’s Daughter*, with which every school-boy is familiar. Of the same romantic type is *Gertrude of Wyoming*, *A Tale of Pennsylvania*, founded on a tragedy of the Revolution, and sanctified by the usual ideal loveliness. The heroine, falling in a general massacre, dies in her husband’s arms:

‘Clasp me a little longer on the brink  
Of fate! while I can feel the dear caress;  
And when this heart hath ceased to beat,—oh! think,  
And let it mitigate thy woe’s excess,  
That thou hast been to me all tenderness,  
And friend to more than human friendship just.  
Oh! by that retrospect of happiness,  
And by the hopes of an immortal trust,  
God shall assuage thy pangs—when I am laid in dust!

Go, Henry, go not back, when I depart,  
The scene thy bursting tears too deep will move,  
Where my dear father took thee to his heart,  
And Gertrude thought it ecstasy to rove  
With thee, as with an angel through the grove  
Of peace, imagining her lot was cast  
In heaven; for ours was not like earthly love.  
And must this parting be our very last?  
No! I shall love thee still, when death itself is past.’

Another, of sterner tone and fuller swing, is **Southey** (1774–1843), voluminous and learned; a poet, scholar, antiquary, critic, historian, leader; beginning as a Socinian and a Radical; ending as a decided Anglican and an intolerant Conservative; in point of taste, however, a revolutionist, who violently breaks with tra-

dition, finds his models in the great masters of the Epic, and his themes in the wild and supernatural; gorgeous and sublime in imagery, but too fanciful, too remote, and wanting in sympathy and dramatic art. His most elaborate performance is the *Curse of Kehama*, founded upon the Hindu mythology; a theatre of horrors, whose hero is a second Dr. Faustus. The description of Padalon, or the Indian Hades, is Miltonic:

'Far other light than that of day there shone  
 Upon the travellers, entering Padalon.  
 They, too, in darkness entering on their way,  
 But far before the car  
 A glow, as of a fiery furnace light,  
 Filled all before them. 'Twas a light that made  
 Darkness itself appear  
 A thing of comfort; and the sight, dismayed,  
 Shrank inward from the molten atmosphere.  
 Their way was through the adamant rock  
 Which girt the world of woe; on either side  
 Its massive walls arose, and overhead  
 Arched the long passage; onward as they ride,  
 With stronger glare the light around them spread—  
 And, lo! the regions dread—  
 The world of woe before them opening wide,  
 There rolls the fiery flood,  
 Girding the realms of Padalon around.  
 A sea of flame it seemed to be,  
 Sea without bound:  
 For neither mortal nor immortal sight  
 Could pierce across through that intensest light.'

Equally fond of decorations and scenery, equally factitious, but more radiant, is **Moore** (1779–1852); witty and worldly, gay, nimble, and airy; a lively and pungent satirist; a writer of patriotic songs for his native Ireland, and of sacred lyrics for two hemispheres. His national airs were sung everywhere, from the palace to the highway. Judge from a single example the secret of their popularity:

'When he who adores thee has left but the name  
 Of his fault and his sorrows behind,  
 Oh, say, wilt thou weep, when they darken the fame  
 Of a life that for thee was resigned?  
 Yes, weep, and however my foes may condemn,  
 Thy tears shall efface their decree;  
 For Heaven can witness, though guilty to them,  
 I have been but too faithful to thee!

With thee were the dreams of my earliest love;  
 Every thought of my reason was thine;  
 In my last humble prayer to the Spirit above,  
 Thy name shall be mingled with mine!  
 Oh, blest are the lovers and friends who shall live



The days of thy glory to see;  
But the next dearest blessing that Heaven can give,  
Is the pride of thus dying for thee!'

Rarely has there been such an artist of harmony. The same wonder-working gift is exhibited here:

'Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea:  
Jehovah hath triumphed; his people are free.  
Sing; for the might of the tyrant is broken;  
His chariots, his horsemen, so splendid and brave,  
How vain was their boasting! the Lord hath but spoken,  
And chariots and horsemen are sunk in the wave.'

And in the following:

'I saw from the beach, when the morning was shining,  
A bark o'er the waters move gloriously on;  
I came when the sun o'er that beach was declining—  
The bark was still there, but the waters were gone.  
And such is the fate of our life's early promise,  
So passing the spring-tide of joy we have known;  
Each wave that we danced on at morning ebbs from us,  
And leaves us at eve on the bleak shore alone.'

Having risen to the ascendant in this his proper region, he follows the rest, and produces a romance,—*Lalla Rookh*, composed of four tales,—the *Veiled Prophet*, *Fire-Worshippers*, *Paradise and the Peri*, and the *Light of the Harem*. A tissue of prose narrative, gracefully told, connects them; for they are all recited for the entertainment of Lalla Rookh while she is journeying to wed her affianced lord. Here is an instance, from the second, of his rich Orientalism:

<p>'How calm, how beautiful, comes on The stilly hour when storms are gone; When warring winds have died away, And clouds, beneath the glancing ray, Melt off, and leave the land and sea Sleeping in bright tranquillity,— Fresh as if Day again were born, Again upon the lap of Morn! When the light blossoms, rudely torn And scattered at the whirlwind's will, Hang floating in the pure air still, Filling it all with precious balm, In gratitude for this sweet calm;— And every drop the thunder-showers Have left upon the grass and flowers</p>	<p>Sparkles, as 'twere the lightning-gem Whose liquid flame is born of them! When 'stead of one unchanging breeze, There blow a thousand gentle airs, And each a different perfume bears,— As if the loveliest plants and trees Had vassal breezes of their own To watch and wait on them alone, And waft no other breath than theirs! When the blue waters rise and fall, In sleepy sunshine mantling all; And even that swell the tempest leaves Is like the full and silent heaves Of lovers' hearts when newly blest, Too newly to be quite at rest.'</p>
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The third—perhaps the simplest and best—describes the efforts of an exiled fairy to regain admission to Heaven. She offers successively the last drop of blood of a patriot, the last sigh of a devoted lover, then the tear of a penitent:

‘Joy, joy forever! my task is done,  
 The gates are passed, and Heaven is won!  
 Oh! am I not happy? I am, I am.  
 To thee, sweet Eden! how dark and sad  
 Are the diamond turrets of Shadukiam,  
 And the fragrant bowers of Amberabad!

Farewell, ye odors of earth, that die  
 Passing away like a lover’s sigh;  
 My feast is now of the Tooba Tree,  
 Whose scent is the breath of eternity!  
 Farewell, ye vanishing flowers, that shone  
 In my fairy wreath, so bright and brief;  
 O! what are the brightest that e’er have blown,  
 To the lote tree, springing by Alla’s throne,  
 Whose flowers have a soul in every leaf!  
 Joy, joy forever! my task is done,  
 The gates are passed, and Heaven is won!’

The most undeniable and wide-ranging genius of this extraordinary and agitated period is **Coleridge** (1772–1834); at three, able to read the Bible; at eight, solitary, fretful, passionate, tormented by the boys, flattered and wondered at by all the old women; till fourteen, a playless day-dreamer; at fifteen, a fluent master of the classics and a lover of metaphysics; perusing Virgil ‘for pleasure,’ but unable to give a rule of syntax save in his own way; alternating Greek and Latin medical books with Voltaire’s *Philosophical Dictionary*; in college a voracious and desultory reader, his room the resort of the gowned politicians, himself the life and fire of debate as the champion of democracy; first a Unitarian, then convinced that Unitarianism was null and void; projector of a second Eden on the banks of the Susquehanna,—a Pantisocracy whose blessings were to extend from bards to donkeys; now preaching, now editing; now scheming stupendous epics, now troubled and trembling to propitiate ‘the two Giants, Bread and Cheese’; a thinker and a dreamer, poet and critic, a talker at whose feet sat men of fame, like children round a wizard; deep, exhaustless, inscrutable; of gifts so varied and so great that patient and wise use would have put him among the few masters, but of naturally vacillating temper, enhanced in early life by lack of discipline, and later by indulgence in opium; falling at last into pitiful imbecility, receiving from friends charity, and craving from Heaven forgiveness. His best poems are *The Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel*, and *Kubla Khan*, in all which the supernatural and fantastic are touched with matchless skill. The first is a phantasmagoria of mystery and sublimity, limned

forth in magical and meteoric tints. What a wild, weird picture is this:

‘The upper air burst into life!  
 And a hundred fire-flags sheen;  
 To and fro they were hurried about!  
 And to and fro, and in and out,  
 The wan stars danced between.  
 And the coming wind did roar more loud,  
 And the sails did sigh like sedge;  
 And the rain poured down from one black cloud;  
 The moon was at its edge.  
 The thick black cloud was cleft, and still  
 The moon was at its side;  
 Like waters shot from some high crag,  
 The lightning fell with never a jag,  
 A river steep and wide.’

Consider the still and awful grandeur in these lines:

‘Still as a slave before his lord,  
 The ocean hath no blast;  
*His great bright eye most silently*  
*Up to the moon is cast.’*

And the inexpressible beauty in these:

‘Day after day, day after day,  
 We stuck, nor breath nor motion,  
*As idle as a painted ship*  
*Upon a painted ocean.’*

Where shall we look for such a marvellous piece of imaginative painting as this?—

‘One after one, by the star-dogged moon, Too quick for groan or sigh, Each turned his face with a ghastly pang, And cursed me with his eye.	Alone, alone, all, all alone,— Alone on a wide, wide sea! And never a saint took pity on My soul in agony.
Four times fifty living men,— And I heard nor sigh nor groan,— With heavy thump, a lifeless lump, They dropped down one by one.	The many men so beautiful! And they all dead did lie: And a thousand, thousand slimy things Lived on, and so did I.
The souls did from their bodies fly,— They fled to bliss or woe! And every soul it passed me by Like the whiz of my cross-bow. . . .	I looked upon the rotting sea, And drew my eyes away; I looked upon the rotting deck, And there the dead men lay.’

Such strains will sound in the ears of latest generations. *Christabel* is a fragment, a romantic supernatural tale of chilliest horror. Geraldine is a fiend-lady, beautiful and bright, who illustrates the dangerous spell of Satanic malice under the garb of fair innocence:

‘A snake’s small eye blinks dull and shy,  
 And the lady’s eyes they shrank in her head,

Each shrank up to a serpent's eye;  
 And with somewhat of malice and more of dread  
 At Christabel she look'd askance. . . .  
 The maid, devoid of guile and sin,  
 I know not how, in fearful wise,  
 So deeply had she drunken in  
 That look, those *shrunken, serpent eyes*,  
 That all her features were resign'd  
 To this sole image in her mind,  
*And passively did imitate*  
*That look of dull and treacherous hate.'*

Here occurs that fine and familiar passage on broken friendship:

'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. . . .

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.  
 But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,  
 Shall wholly do away, I ween,  
 The marks of that which once hath been.'

*Kubla Khan* is the record of a gorgeous dream, and a miracle of music. 'The most wonderful of all poems,' says Swinburne, who revels in melodious words. What a thrilling landscape is here:

*'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 thrasher's flail:  
 And 'mid these dancing rocks, at once and ever,  
 It flung up momently the sacred river.  
 Five miles meandering with a hazy motion,  
 Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,  
 Then reached the caverns measureless to man,  
 And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean.'*

In a different mood and manner is *Love*. How trancingly rolls its melody:

'All thoughts, all passions, all delights,  
 Whatever stirs this mortal frame,  
 Are all but ministers of love,  
 And feed his sacred flame.

Oft in my waking dreams do I  
 Live o'er again that happy hour  
 When midway on the mount I lay  
 Beside the ruined tower.

The moonshine, stealing o'er the scene,  
 Had blended with the lights of eve;  
 And she was there, my hope, my joy,  
 My own dear Genevieve!'

Who shall estimate the wild beatings and the widowed longings of the heart of genius? Sad, yet inevitable, that the sigh of regret or the moan of despair should mingle with its music:

'*When I was young? Ah, woful 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 airy cliffs and glittering sands,  
 How lightly then it flashed along. . . .

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 woful 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! . . .  
*Life is but thought:* so think I will  
 That Youth and I are housemates still.'

Was never poet more radiant in genius, more rich in promise, than the short-lived **Keats**<sup>1</sup> (1796–1821); of fragile frame and delicate features; eyes mellow and glowing, large, dark, and sensitive, suffused with tears at the recital of a noble act or a beautiful thought; adverse to every kind of restraint, resolved to be free from all critical trammels; studied Italian, read Ariosto, devoured classical mythology, worshipped the Elizabethans,—above all, Spenser; nobly ambitious, longing for fame, but longing first to deserve it, pressing on assiduously with birth and health against him, feeling that what he did was to be done swiftly; talked down by inferiors who chanced to have the advantage of position; conscious of the unpruned savagery in the

<sup>1</sup> Son of an assistant in a livery stable.



tangled forest of his verse, and suffering from the vulgarities of hostile criticism in proportion as his ideal was high. In the winter of 1820 he was chilled in riding on the top of a stage-coach. On coming home he was persuaded to retire, and in getting between the cold sheets coughed slightly. 'That is blood in my mouth,' he said: 'bring me the candle; let me see this blood.' Then, looking up with sudden calmness: 'I know the color of that blood; it is arterial blood; I cannot be deceived in that color. That drop is my death-warrant; I must die.' In vain he repaired to Naples, and thence to Rome. Shortly before his death he told his friend that 'he thought the intensest pleasure he had received in life was in watching the growth of flowers'; and once, after lying peacefully awhile, he said, 'I feel the flowers growing over me.' On a grassy slope, in a secluded spot, amid the verdurous ruins of the Honorian walls, he sleeps, his simple headstone inscribed with his name, age, and the epitaph dictated by himself,—

'HERE LIES ONE WHOSE NAME WAS WRIT IN WATER.'

No tree or shrub is there, but the faithful daisies, mingling with the fresh herbage, crown the mound of their buried lover with a galaxy of their innocent stars, 'making one in love with death,' says Shelley, so soon to rest his own ashes beside him, 'to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.'

Intensity of conception was his bliss and his bane. *Endymion* has the rankness of tropic vegetation. Images are heaped in grotesque and tiresome profusion; but in passages like the invocation to Pan—the All—we see the divine faculty, the control of the finer sense which underlies the sensuous:

'O thou, whose mighty palace roof doth hang  
 From jagged trunks, and overshadoweth  
 Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life, death,  
 Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness; . . .  
 Be still the unimaginable lodge  
 For solitary thinkings; such as dodge  
 Conception to the very bourne of heaven,  
 Then leave the naked brain: be still the leaven,  
 That spreading in this dull and elodded earth,  
 Gives it a touch ethereal,—a new birth:  
*Be still a symbol of immensity;  
 A firmament reflected in a sea;  
 An element filling the space between;  
 An unknown,—but no more: we humbly screen  
 With uplift hands our foreheads, lowly bending,*

And giving out a shout most heaven-rending,  
 Conjure thee to receive our humble Pæan,  
 Upon thy Mount Lycean!'

One line is current wherever the English language is spoken:

'A thing of beauty is a joy forever.'

*Hyperion* is more evenly tempered; a noble fragment, lofty and clear-aired, showing the unerring instinct for fine words and the poetic uses of things. Byron thought it inspired by the Titans. Note the antique grace of the following:

*'Deep in the shady sadness of a vale,  
 Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,  
 Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,  
 Sat grey-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,  
 Still as the silence round about his lair;  
 Forest on forest hung about his head,  
 Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,  
 Not so much life as on a summer's day  
 Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,  
 But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.'*

You will never open a page without lighting on the loveliest imagery or the most eloquent expression. Thus, from the *Eve of St. Agnes*:

*'Out went the taper as she hurried in;  
 Its little smoke in pallid moonshine died:  
 She clos'd the door, she panted all akin  
 To spirits of the air, and visions wide;  
 Nor utter'd syllable, or "Wo betide!"  
 But to her heart her heart was voluble  
 Paining with eloquence her balmy side:  
 As though a tongueless nightingale should swell  
 Her throat in vain, and die heart-stifled in her dell.'*

Turn again and hear the sweet voice when mortal illness is closing upon its accents. The concrete is elevated into the typical; melody and meaning float together, 'accordant as swan and shadow.' From his house on the border of the fields he hears the plaintive anthem of the nightingale:

*'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 gray hairs;  
 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies,  
 Where but to think is to be full of sorrow  
 And leaden-eyed despairs. . . .*

*I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,  
 Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,  
 But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet*

*Wherewith the seasonable month endows  
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;  
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine. . . .*

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time,  
I have been *half in love with easeful Death,*  
*Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme*  
*To take into the air my quiet breath;*  
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,  
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,  
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad  
In such an ecstasy! . . .

*Thou wast not born for death, immortal bird!  
No hungry generations tread thee down.'*

He died too soon to develop a well-outlined character, but did enough to show the world all it had lost in him. How many flowers perish on the promise of the fruit, how many are blighted in the bud!

'The splendors of the firmament of time  
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;  
Like stars to their appointed height they climb,  
And death is a low mist which cannot blot  
The brightness it may veil.'

When a soul of superlative power appears, all the breadth of human faculty is required to know it, and men, in proportion to their intellect, will admit its transcendent claims. The poetic elements in **Shelley** (1792-1822) were superabundant; the son of a rich baronet, sweet, generous, tender, beautiful, and born a bard;<sup>1</sup> from his birth aglow with the transcendental rapture, and painting for the ideal Good,—

'Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.'

So sensitive that he could—

'Hardly bear  
The weight of the superincumbent hour.'

At school harshly treated by his instructors and mates; at Eton suffered revolting cruelty from the boys and his masters; judged society by the oppression he underwent, rebelled against authority and opinion, began to form socialistic Utopias, and found himself, by the very compass of his humanity, at war with existing institutions:

'I do remember well the hour which burst  
My spirit's sleep: a fresh May-dawn it was,  
When I walked forth upon the glittering grass,  
And wept, I knew not why: until there rose

<sup>1</sup> See *Queen Mab*, composed at eighteen.

From the near school-room voices, that, alas!  
 Were but one echo from a world of woes,—  
 The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes.

And then I clasped my hands and looked around,  
 But none was near to mock my streaming eyes,  
 Which poured their warm drops on the sunny ground,—  
 So, without shame, I spake: "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." . . .

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, but from that secret store  
 Wrought linked armor for my soul, before  
 It might walk forth to war among mankind.'

He incessantly speculated, thought, and read; began with Lucretius, and ended with Plato; avowed himself a republican and a sceptic; wrote novels at fifteen, and verses earlier; issued a syllabus of Hume's *Essays* when only seventeen, and challenged the authorities of Oxford to a public controversy; published a tract *On the Necessity of Atheism*, and was expelled from the university, yet an honest unbeliever, loving truth with a martyr's love, and willing to die to do the world a service; at nineteen married a fair maid of inferior birth, and was exiled from his father's presence; abandoned her, believing that husband and wife should continue united only so long as they love each other; was then deprived, as being unworthy, of the custody of his two children, by a decree of the Lord Chancellor, whom he cursed —

'By all the happy see in children's growth,  
 That undeveloped flower of budding years,  
 Sweetness and sadness interwoven both,  
 Source of the sweetest hopes and saddest fears!'

Meanwhile he had left for the Continent, in company with a lady who afterward became his second wife, who could 'feel poetry and understand philosophy'; returned and settled on the banks of the Thames. Consumption came, and he repaired to Italy, where he continued to pour out his inspirations, whether men would listen or no. There, it will be remembered, he was engulfed in the sea, his wave-beaten body burned, and the ashes buried. So ended a miracle of thirty years,—a romance of mystery and grief, passing at the moment when the stormy dawn was yielding to the noonday calm.

Never was poetry a more vivid expression of personal experience and aspiration. A unique spirituality pervades it all. The first touches of his wild poem of *Queen Mab* announce the dreamer and the idealist:

'How wonderful is death,—  
 Death and his brother Sleep!  
 One, pale as yonder waning moon,  
 With lips of lurid blue;  
 The other, rosy as the morn  
 When, throned on ocean's wave,  
 It blushes o'er the world:  
 Yet both so passing wonderful!  
 Hath then the gloomy Power  
 Whose reign is in the tainted sepulchres  
 Seized on her sinless soul?  
 Must then that peerless form  
 Which love and admiration cannot view  
 Without a beating heart, those azure veins  
 Which steal like streams along a field of snow,  
 That lovely outline, which is fair  
 As breathing marble, perish?'

His impassioned eloquence, the witchery of his music, his consolations in nature, the yearning for the spirit of loveliness, his burning desire to pierce the inner shrine of being, are conspicuous in *Alastor*, a youth enamored of solitude, who wanders long and fondly in quest of the unattainable Vision, then dies in the Caucasian wilderness. Nature is to him something living and divine. Her bloom is but the sheen of the peaceful Soul. He has felt her great heart throb, and in every existence sees the secret essence. How tenderly he speaks to her:

'Earth, ocean, air, beloved brotherhood!  
 If our great Mother have imbued my soul  
 With aught of natural piety to feel  
 Your love, and recompense the boon with mine;  
 If dewy morn, and odorous noon, and even  
 With sunset and its gorgeous ministers,  
 And solemn midnight's tingling silentness,—  
 If autumn's hollow sighs in the sere wood,  
 And winter robbing with pure snow and crowns  
 Of starry ice the gray grass and bare boughs,—  
 If spring's voluptuous pantings when she breathes  
 Her first sweet kisses,—have been dear to me,—  
 If no bright bird, insect, or gentle beast  
 I consciously have injured, but still loved  
 And cherished these my kindred,—then forgive  
 This boast, beloved brethren, and withdraw  
 No portion of your wonted favor now!'

How has he craved to penetrate behind all phenomena to the inmost sanctuary:



‘Mother of this unfathomable world!  
 Favor my solemn song, for I have loved  
 Thee ever, and thee only; I have watched  
 Thy shadow, and the darkness of thy steps,  
 And my heart ever gazes on the depth  
 Of thy deep mysteries. I have made my bed  
 In charnels and on coffins, where black death  
 Keeps record of the trophies won from thee,  
 Hoping to still these obstinate questionings  
 Of thee and thine, by forcing some lone ghost,  
 Thy messenger, to render up the tale  
 Of what we are. In lone and silent hours,  
 When night makes a weird sound of its own stillness,  
 Like an inspired and desperate alchemist  
 Staking his very life on some dark hope,  
 Have I mixed awful talk and asking looks  
 With my most innocent love, until strange tears,  
 Uniting with those breathless kisses, made  
 Such magic as compels the charmed night  
 To render up thy charge.’

Alastor drinks deep of the fountain of knowledge, and is still insatiate; has lingered long in lonesome vales, making the wild his home, and,—

‘His wandering step,  
 Obedient to high thoughts, has visited  
 The awful ruins of the days of old:  
 Athens and Tyre and Balbec, and the waste  
 Where stood Jerusalem, the fallen towers  
 Of Babylon, the eternal pyramids. . . .  
 Among the ruined temples there,  
 Stupendous columns, and wild images  
 Of more than man, where marble demons watch  
 The Zodiac’s brazen mystery, and dead men  
*Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around,*  
 He lingered, poring on memorials  
 Of the world’s youth.’

At length, far within a lonely dell, where odorous plants entwine a natural bower, the wanderer stretches his weary limbs. A vision visits him, a dream of hopes that never yet had flushed his cheek. For one tranced moment it has breath and being, then is swallowed up in night:

‘Lost, lost, forever lost,  
 In the wide pathless desert of dim sleep,  
 That beautiful shape!’

He wanders on, impelled by the bright memory of that ineffable dream,—

‘Day after day, a weary waste of hours,  
 Bearing within his life the brooding care  
 That ever fed on its decaying flame.’

Urged by a restless impulse, he bends his steps to the sea-shore,

embarks in a stray shallop floating near, and speeds as before a whirlwind—

‘Through the white ridges of the chafed sea.’

On flees the straining boat, safely,—

‘As if that frail and wasted human form  
Had been an elemental god.’

On, driven by the boiling torrent, while crags close round it their black and jagged arms:

‘A cavern there  
Yawned, and amid its slant and winding depths  
Ingulfed the rushing sea. The boat fled on  
With unrelaxing speed. “Vision and Love!”  
The poet cried aloud, “I have beheld  
The path of thy departure. Sleep and death  
Shall not divide us long.”’

On amid the windings of the cavern, now hurled by the battling tides, now moving slowly where the ‘fiercest war’ is calm. Now it pauses ‘shuddering’ in a pool of treacherous quiet, then,—

‘With gentle motion between banks  
Of mossy slope, and on a placid stream,  
Beneath a woven grove, it sails. . . .  
The ghastly torrent mingles its far roar  
With the breeze murmuring in the musical woods.’

Has any one painted more magnificently a primeval landscape?—

‘The noonday sun  
Now shone upon the forest, one vast mass  
Of mingling shade, whose brown magnificence  
A narrow vale embosoms. There huge caves,  
Scooped in the dark base of those airy rocks,  
Mocking its moans, respond and roar forever  
The meeting boughs and implicated leaves  
Wove twilight o’er the poet’s path, as, led  
By love or dream or god or mightier Death,  
He sought in Nature’s dearest haunt some bank,  
Her cradle and his sepulchre. More dark  
And dark the shades accumulate; the oak,  
Expanding its immense and knotty arms,  
Embraces the light beech. The pyramids  
Of the tall cedar, overarching, frame  
Most solemn domes within, and far below,  
Like clouds suspended in an emerald sky,  
The ash and the acacia floating hang  
Tremulous and pale. Like restless serpents, clothed  
In rainbow and in fire, the parasites,  
Starred with ten thousand blossoms, flow around  
The gray trunks, and, as gamesome infants’ eyes  
With gentle meanings and most innocent wiles  
Fold their beams round the hearts of those that love,  
These twine their tendrils with the wedded boughs

Uniting their close union; the woven leaves  
 Make network of the dark blue light of day,  
 And the night's moontide clearness, mutable  
 As shapes in the weird clouds. Soft mossy lawns  
 Beneath these canopies extend their swells,  
 Fragrant with perfumed herbs, and eyed with blooms  
 Minute, yet beautiful.'

Farther on a gradual change ensues, yet ghastly:

'On every side now rose  
 Rocks, which in unimaginable forms  
 Lifted their black and barren pinnacles  
 In the light of evening, and its precipice  
 Obscuring the ravine, disclosed above,  
 'Mid toppling stones, black gulfs, and yawning caves,  
 Whose windings gave ten thousand various tongues  
 To the loud stream. Lo! where the pass expands  
 Its stony jaws, the abrupt mountain breaks,  
 And seems, with its accumulated crags,  
 To overhang the world: for wide expand  
 Beneath the wan stars and descending moon  
 Islanded seas, blue mountains, mighty streams,  
 Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom  
 Of leaden-colored even, and fiery hills  
 Mingling their flames with twilight, on the verge  
 Of the remote horizon.'

On the threshold of a green recess, that seemed to smile in the lap of horror, the wanderer, feeling that death is on him, resigns himself 'to images of the majestic past.' As the horned moon, 'with whose dun beams inwoven darkness seemed to mingle,' sinks behind the jagged hills, his blood,—

'That ever beat in mystic sympathy  
 With nature's ebb and flow, grew feebler still;  
 And when two lessening points of light alone  
 Gleamed through the darkness, the alternate gasp  
 Of his faint respiration scarce did stir  
 The stagnate night,—till the minutest ray  
 Was quenched, the pulse yet lingered in his heart.  
 It paused,—it fluttered. But when heaven remained  
 Utterly black, the murky shades involved  
 An image silent, cold, and motionless  
 As their own voiceless earth and vacant air.  
 Even as a vapor fed with golden beams  
 That ministered on sunlight, ere the west  
 Eclipses it, was now that wondrous frame,—  
 No sense, no motion, no divinity.'

His benevolence, his passion to solve the riddle of the universe, to lose himself in the Spirit of Beauty, reappear in *Prometheus Unbound*, a tragedy fashioned after the Greek models, its high ideal the renovation of man and the world. No analysis will be attempted; yet we cannot omit an illustration of the marvellous

fineness of his powers. What a lightness of touch, what a wild, inimitable grace in the flight of the Hours:

'The rocks are cloven, and through the purple night  
I see cars drawn by rainbow-winged steeds,  
Which trample the dim winds: in each there stands  
A wild-eyed charioteer urging their flight.  
Some look behind, as fiends pursued them there,  
And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars:  
Others, with burning eyes, lean forth and drink  
With eager lips the wind of their own speed,  
As if the thing they loved fled on before,  
And now, even now, they clasp it. Their bright locks  
Stream like a comet's flashing hair: they all sweep onward.'

How truly imaginative is the song with which Panthea hails her sister Asia:

'Life of Life! thy lips enkindle  
With their love the breath between them,  
And thy smiles before they dwindle  
Make the cold air fire: then screen them  
In those locks where whoso gazes  
Faints, entangled in their mazes.

Child of Light! thy limbs are burning  
Through the vest which seems to hide them,  
As the radiant lines of morning  
Through the clouds, ere they divide them,  
And this atmosphere divinest  
Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinest.'

How exquisitely beautiful the response:

*My soul is an enchanted boat  
Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float  
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing;  
And thine doth like an angel sit  
Beside the helm conducting it,  
While all the winds with melody are ringing.  
It seems to float ever, forever,  
Upon that many-winding river,  
Between mountains, woods, abysses,  
A paradise of wildernesses!  
Till, like one in slumber bound,  
Borne to the ocean, I float down, around,  
Into a sea profound of ever-spreading sound.'*

Once only was he content to leave that interstellar region which was his home, and paint men and women. The *Cenci*, dark and gloomy, founded on an Italian tragedy of real life, may challenge comparison with any dramatic work since Otway. A single passage will suggest his wonderful descriptive power, his constant idealization, as well as the sombre character of the whole:

'I remember,  
Two miles on this side of the fort, the road

Crosses a deep ravine; 'tis rough and narrow,  
 And winds with short turns down the precipice;  
 And in its depth there is a mighty rock,  
 Which has from unimaginable years  
 Sustained itself with terror and with toil  
 Over a gulf, and, with the agony  
 With which it clings, seems slowly coming down;  
 Even as a wretched soul, hour after hour,  
 Clings to the mass of life, yet clinging, leans,  
 And, leaning, makes more dark the dread abyss  
 In which it fears to fall,—beneath this crag,  
 Huge as despair, as if in weariness,  
 The melancholy mountain yawns; below  
 You hear, but see not, an impetuous torrent,  
 Raging among the caverns, and a bridge  
 Crosses the chasm; and high above there grow,  
 With intersecting trunks, from crag to crag,  
 Cedars and yews, and pines, whose tangled hair  
 Is matted in one solid roof of shade  
 By the dark ivy's twine. At noonday here  
 'Tis twilight, and at sunset blackest night.'

And the final words of the daughter, who is going forth with her mother to execution, could not easily be surpassed for naturalness, force of simplicity, and moral sweetness:

'Farewell, my tender brother! Think  
 Of our sad fate with gentleness, as now:  
 And let mild pitying thoughts lighten for thee  
 Thy sorrow's load. Err not in harsh despair,  
 But tears and patience. One thing more, my child:  
 For thine own sake be constant to the love  
 Thou bearest us; and to the faith that I,  
 Though wrapped in a strange cloud of crime and shame,  
 Lived ever holy and unstained. And though  
 Ill tongues shall wound me, and our common name  
 Be as a mark stamped on thine innocent brow,  
 For men to point at as they pass, do thou  
 Forbear, and never think a thought unkind  
 Of those who perhaps love thee in their graves.  
 So mayest thou die as I do; fear and pain  
 Being subdued. Farewell! Farewell! Farewell!'

And :

'Here, mother, tie  
 My girdle for me, and bind up this hair  
 In any simple knot; ay, that does well.  
 And yours, I see, is coming down. How often  
 Have we done this for one another!'

The deep undertone of all his poetry is the sadness of the dark grave and of the limitless ocean, to which the poor, weak mortal must descend, with no unfaltering assurance of a Personality to rest upon in the wide, wide realm of change:

'We are as clouds that veil the midnight moon;  
 How restlessly they speed, and gleam, and quiver,



Streaking the darkness radiantly!—yet soon  
 Night closes round, and they are lost forever;  
 Or like forgotten lyres, whose dissonant strings  
 Give various response to each varying blast,  
 To whose frail frame no second motion brings  
 One mood or modulation like the last.<sup>1</sup>

And:

'Who telleth a tale of unspeaking death?  
 Who lifteth the veil of what is to come?  
 Who painteth the shadows that are beneath  
 The wide-winding caves of the peopled tomb?  
 Or uniteth the hopes of what shall be  
 With the fears and the love for that which we see?'<sup>2</sup>

Later, under the influence of Platonic ideas, he finds a sort of central peace in a Spirit of Love and Beauty as the animating principle of the universe:

'While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped  
 Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,  
 And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing  
 Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.  
 I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed;  
 I was not heard; I saw them not;  
 When musing deeply on the lot  
 Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing  
 All vital things that wake to bring  
 News of birds and blossoming,  
 Sudden thy shadow fell on me;  
 I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy!'<sup>3</sup>

It is in his lyrics that we have Shelley at his best. It is in these that he lays hold of the real sentiments, the unchanging emotions, of man. Mark the splendor of imagery and the magical music of these lines:

'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. . . .  
 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. . . .

<sup>1</sup> *Mutability.*

<sup>2</sup> *On Death.*

<sup>3</sup> *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty.*

That orbed maiden, with white fire laden,  
 Whom mortals call the moon,  
 Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,  
 By the midnight breezes strewn. . . .

I bind the sun's throne with the burning zone,  
 And the moon's with a girdle of pearl;  
 The volcanoes are dim, the stars reel and swim,  
 When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl. . . .

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.<sup>1</sup>

All things are made to pulsate, all to breathe and yearn. The verses seem to have been composed at a white heat of fervor. How rapturously he soars into the empyrean with the Skylark, as if delighting to dissolve himself in its triumphal chant:

'Hail to thee, blithe spirit!  
 Bird thou never wert,  
 That from heaven, or near it,  
 Pourest thy full heart  
 In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher,  
 From the earth thou springest  
 Like a cloud of fire;  
 The blue deep thou wingest,  
 And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

What thou art we know not;  
 What is most like thee?  
 From rainbow clouds there flow not  
 Drops so bright to see,  
 As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.'

Then the ever-haunting melancholy:

'Waking or asleep,  
 Thou of death must deem  
 Things more true and deep  
 Than we mortals dream,  
 Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,  
 And pine for what is not:  
 Our sincerest laughter  
 With some pain is fraught:  
 Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.'<sup>2</sup>

The mysticism, the haziness, which obscure much of his poetry — as the *Revolt of Islam*, the *Sensitive Plant*, the *Triumph of Life* — spring from these thrills of desire, this straining after something seen afar, the dreamy ecstasy too high for speech.

<sup>1</sup> *The Cloud.*

<sup>2</sup> *To a Skylark.*

Such men supply our need of wings. They bring us freedom and ideality. They forecast the possibilities of the race, and they rise in esteem in proportion as souls are refined. Art and eloquence are vain to weep their loss:

‘It is a woe too deep for tears, when all  
Is reft at once,—when some surpassing spirit,  
Whose light adorned the world around it, leaves  
Those who remain behind nor sobs nor groans,  
The passionate tumult of a clinging hope;  
But pale despair and cold tranquillity,  
Nature’s vast frame, the web of human things,  
Birth and the grave, that are not as they were.’

It yet remains to notice the chief of those who, while reflecting the light and shadow of their environment, communicated heat and lustre to this revolutionary period,—**Scott, Wordsworth, and Byron.**

In America there was yet no national type, and the situation was adverse to art. We were cultured at the outset; but ideality is retarded by the necessities of a new land which absorb passion in the contest with Nature. Imaginative productiveness, after the legendary stage is passed, follows material security and wealth.

**Drama.**—The dramas now produced were a compound of the characteristics of previous schools, excepting the profligacy of the Restoration. Nearly all, while possessed of literary merit, were wanting in the qualities requisite for successful presentation. The first writers of the age—Scott, Byron, Shelley, Coleridge, Wordsworth—adopted the dramatic form, but only to prove how rare a gift is popular dramatic art,—the art of portraying actual life and passion in interesting situations. In the dearth of successful playwrights, plays were introduced from Germany, full of exaggeration and horror,—the very antipodes of the sentimental; but after a run of unexampled success they ceased to attract attention. To them, however, we probably owe the five volumes of Miss Baillie, of which only one piece has been acted, though all have been largely read. Jerrold’s *Black-eyed Susan* received a brief but cordial welcome. Talfourd’s *Ion* and Miss Mitford’s *Rienzi*, though they made a stage success, were of a day whose fashion has gone by. Amid the many tragedies which are better fitted for reading than for acting, amid the many in which Dulness lays the ghost of Wit, one shines out like the stars of heaven, more fiery by night’s blackness,—the

*Virginius* of **James Sheridan Knowles**, the most successful of modern tragic dramatists.

At the opening of this period, Mrs. Siddons, the greatest tragic actress of the English theatre, had passed her prime. Before its close, both she and her brother, Kemble, had withdrawn from the boards. Kean died in 1833. Macready was left to transmit to a few some of the traditions which had passed from hand to hand, from mouth to mouth, within the lineal artistic descendants of Garrick and Betterton.

**Periodical.**—A department of literature now absorbing the productive energy of mind—as well as an influence destructive to the drama by superseding the band of critics who had been its body-guard—was the newspaper press. Now, also, as an inevitable necessity, was founded the dynasty of the Reviews,—the *Edinburgh*, the *London Quarterly*, the *North American*, and *Blackwood's Magazine*. The first ushered in the century, as the organ of the Whigs,—the organ of a progressive and liberal literary and political party. Its zeal led to the establishment of the next and the last by the Tory or Conservative party. Soon the *Westminster* appeared as a medium for the representation of Radical opinions. These, it is needless to add, were made the exemplars of numerous similar publications. The primary object of most was to furnish thorough criticisms of books, and careful papers on the current topics of politics and reform. As their scope enlarged, contributions were received on any subject to which the writer had devoted special attention. Their limits and popular purpose required that the articles should be condensed and spirited. Hence a peculiar style,—brief, pithy, trenchant, often eloquent, but always positive. Jeffrey, Sidney Smith, and Macaulay were master spirits in the first; Gifford and Southey, in the second; the Peabodys and the Everetts, in the third; Lockhart and Wilson, in the fourth.

The first *Daily* in the United States appeared in Philadelphia in 1784,—the *American Daily Advertiser*. The first newspaper in the Northwest appeared in Cincinnati in 1793,—the *Sentinel of the Northwestern Territory!* The *Morning Post*—the first penny paper of any pretensions—was started in 1833, with two hundred dollars capital and a doubtful credit, Mr. Greeley being one of the partners, printers, and publishers. In 1833 the first

number of the *Sun* was issued, with a circulation of three hundred, and comprising twelve columns, each ten inches in length. In after years (1851) the editor and originator said:

'In 1835 I introduced steam power, now so necessary an appendage to almost every newspaper office. At that time all the Napier presses in the city were turned by cranks, and as the *Sun* was the only daily of large circulation, so it seemed to be the only establishment where steam was really indispensable.'

The American press had as yet hardly emerged from its swaddling clothes. There can be no surer proof that the general mind is seeking higher aliment, that the love of knowledge is spreading through all classes of the community, than the growth of periodical literature.

**Essay.**—The miscellaneous literature of the period took mainly the form of long essays, most of which first appeared in the Reviews and Magazines. Among the many who thus distinguished themselves a few stand forth preëminent. Highest in the file is the name of **Jeffrey** (1773–1850), an eminent barrister, a versatile writer, and a brilliant critic. His style is flowing, spirited, and symmetrical, embellished with a copious felicity of illustration, as in the following observations on the steam-engine:

'It has become a thing stupendous alike for its force and its flexibility,—for the prodigious power which it can exert, and the ease, and precision, and ductility with which it can be varied, distributed, and applied. The trunk of an elephant, that can pick up a pin or rend an oak, is as nothing to it. It can engrave a seal, and crush masses of obdurate metal before it,—draw out, without breaking, a thread as fine as gossamer, and lift up a ship of war like a bauble in the air. It can embroider muslin and forge anchors, cut steel into ribbons, and impel loaded vessels against the fury of the winds and waves.'

At times, indeed, his diction is very poetical, as in the following tribute to Shakespeare:

'Although his sails are purple and perfumed, and his prow of beaten gold, they waft him on his voyage, not less, but more rapidly and directly, than if they had been composed of baser materials. All his excellences, like those of Nature herself, are thrown out together; and instead of interfering with, support and recommend each other. His flowers are not tied up in garlands, nor his fruits crushed into baskets, but spring living from the soil, in all the dew and freshness of youth; while the graceful foliage in which they lurk, and the ample branches, the rough and vigorous stem, and the wide-spreading roots on which they depend, are present along with them, and share, in their places, the equal care of their creator.'

In his early days he seems to have been betrayed occasionally into undue severity; but in his latter, to have made criticism a careful, conscientious, discriminating task. Of *Hyperion*, he said, with genial candor, but too late to cheer the dying poet:

'Mr. Keats is, we understand, still a very young man; and his whole works, indeed, bear evidence enough of the fact. They manifestly require, therefore, all the indulgence



that can be claimed for a first attempt; but we think it no less plain that they deserve it; for they are flushed all over with the rich lights of fancy, and so coloured and bestrown with the flowers of poetry, that, even while perplexed and bewildered in their labyrinths, it is impossible to resist the intoxication of their sweetness, or to shut our hearts to the enchantments they so lavishly present.'

He nobly endeavored to 'combine ethical precepts with literary criticism, and earnestly sought,' as he says, 'to impress his readers with a sense both of the close connection between sound intellectual attainments and the highest elements of duty and enjoyment, and of the just and ultimate subordination of the former to the latter.' Hence the moral suggestiveness of his critical writings, as in the following remarks on the transitoriness of poetical fame:

'When an army is *decimated*, the very bravest may fall; and many poets, worthy of eternal remembrance, have been forgotten, merely because there was not room in our memories for all.

By such a work as the *Specimens*, however, this injustice of fortune may be partly redressed, some small fragments of an immortal strain may still be rescued from oblivion, and a wreck of a name preserved, which time appeared to have swallowed up forever. There is something pious, we think, and endearing, in the office of thus gathering up the ashes of renown that has passed away; or rather, of calling back the departed life for a transitory glow, and enabling those great spirits which seemed to be *laid* forever, still to draw a tear of pity, or a throb of admiration, from the hearts of a forgetful generation. The body of their poetry, probably, can never be revived; but some sparks of its spirit may yet be preserved, in a narrower and feebler frame. . . .

There never was an age so prolific of popular poetry as that in which we now live; and as wealth, population, and education extend, the produce is likely to go on increasing. The last ten years have produced, we think, an annual supply of about ten thousand lines of good staple poetry—poetry from the very first hands that we can boast of—that runs quickly to three or four large editions—and is as likely to be permanent as present success can make it. Now, if this goes on for a hundred years longer, what a task will await the poetical readers of 1919! Our living poets will then be nearly as old as Pope and Swift are at present, but there will stand between them and that generation nearly ten times as much fresh and fashionable poetry as is now interposed between us and those writers; and if Scott, and Byron, and Campbell have already cast Pope and Swift a good deal into the shade, in what form and dimensions are they themselves likely to be presented to the eyes of their great-grandchildren?'

One of the most popular and influential writers of the period was the **Rev. Sidney Smith** (1771-1845); manly, fearless, independent; scorning hypocrites, pedants, and Tories; sometimes too flippant, sometimes too dogmatical, often a little unjust to his adversaries, but always frank, always himself, using his pen to enforce practical views in the cause of human improvement, and bringing to the aid of logical argument fertility of fancy and breadth of humor. Almost everything which he has written is characteristic. Thus:

'Daniel Webster struck me like a steam-engine in trowsers.'

Also:

'No, I don't like dogs; I always expect them to go mad. A lady asked me once for a motto for her dog Spot. I proposed, "Out, damned Spot!" but she did not think it sentimental enough.'

Again:

'I do not mean to be disrespectful, but the attempt of the Lords to stop the progress of reform reminds me very forcibly of the great storm of Sidmouth, and of the conduct of the excellent Mrs. Partington on that occasion. In the winter of 1824 there set in a great flood upon that town — the sea rose to an incredible height — the waves rushed in upon the houses — and everything was threatened with destruction. In the midst of this sublime storm, Dame Partington, who lived upon the beach, was seen at the door of her house with mop and pattens, trundling her mop, and squeezing out the sea-water, and vigorously pushing away the Atlantic Ocean. The Atlantic was roused. Mrs. Partington's spirit was up; but I need not tell you that the contest was unequal. The Atlantic Ocean beat Mrs. Partington. She was excellent at a sloop or puddle, but she should not have meddled with a tempest.'

We see that this wit, which has something of levity, is nevertheless earnest. There is a grave thought at the bottom, worth remembering for its own sake — something to reflect upon after we have laughed. Thus:

'I like pictures, without knowing anything about them; but I hate coxcomby in the fine arts, as well as in anything else. I got into dreadful disgrace with Sir George Beaumont once, who, standing before a picture at Bowood, exclaimed, turning to me, "immense breadth of light and shade!" I innocently said, "Yes; about an inch and a half." He gave me a look that ought to have killed me.'

And:

'Yes, he is of the Utilitarian school. That man is so hard you might drive a broad-wheeled wagon over him, and it would produce no impression; if you were to bore holes in him with a gimlet, I am convinced saw-dust would come out of him. That school treats mankind as if they were mere machines; the feelings or affections never enter into their calculations. If everything is to be sacrificed to utility, why do you bury your grandmother at all? why don't you cut her into small pieces at once and make portable soup of her?'

He has healthy views of life, and concentrates them into cut and polished diamonds:

'Take short views, hope for the best, and trust in God.'

'Some very excellent people tell you they dare not hope. To me it seems much more impious to dare to despair.'

'True, it is most painful not to meet the kindness and affection you feel you have deserved, and have a right to expect from others; but it is a mistake to complain of it, for it is of no use; you cannot extort friendship with a cocked pistol.'

'Moralists tell you of the evils of wealth and station, and the happiness of poverty. I have been very poor the greatest part of my life, and have borne it as well, I believe, as most people, but I can safely say that I have been happier every guinea I have gained.'

These marked individual features are delightful. In them, as in a glass, is mirrored the personality of the writer, and we meet a companion where we expect a book.

A prominent figure of the period was **William Hazlitt**<sup>1</sup> (1778–1830), son of a Unitarian clergyman, first a painter, then an author by profession—a critic of art and of literature; a liberalist in opinion, a lover of paradox, an enthusiastic student of the early dramatists; of rich imagination, of delicate but not well-balanced tastes; vivid, pungent, and picturesque in style; moody and somewhat bigoted, having refinement and eloquence, but wanting that quality which is the girdle and safeguard of all the rest,—which it is the characteristic of rightly trained minds in all things to prefer, and of common minds to reject,—moderation, self-restrained liberty. The following are cases in point:

‘The indefatigable readers of books are like the everlasting copiers of pictures, who, when they attempt to do anything of their own, find they want an eye quick enough, a hand steady enough, and colors bright enough, to trace the living forms of nature. Any one who has passed through the regular gradations of a classical education, and is not made a fool by it, may consider himself as having had a very narrow escape.’

And:

‘Women have often more of what is called good sense than men. They have fewer pretensions, are less implicated in theories, and judge of objects more from their immediate and voluntary impression on the mind, and, therefore, more truly and naturally. They cannot reason wrong, for they do not reason at all. They do not think or speak by rule, and they have in general more eloquence and wit, as well as sense, on that account. By their wit, sense, and eloquence together, they generally contrive to govern their husbands.’

Also:

‘Uneducated people have most exuberance of invention, and the greatest freedom from prejudice. Shakespeare’s was evidently an uneducated mind, both in the freshness of his imagination and in the variety of his views, as Milton’s was scholastic in the texture both of his thoughts and feelings. Shakespeare had not been accustomed to write themes at school in favor of virtue or against vice. To this we owe the unaffected but healthy tone of his dramatic morality. If we wish to know the force of human genius, we should read Shakespeare. If we wish to see the insignificance of human learning, we may study his commentators.’

The lesson is useful, but must be received with caution; it has a certain truth, but is not wholly true. Less critically, more sincerely, more happily:

‘No young man believes he shall ever die. . . . There is a feeling of Eternity in youth which makes us amends for everything. To be young is to be as one of the Immortals. . . . As infants smile and sleep, we are rocked in the cradle of our desires, and hushed into fancied security by the roar of the universe around us; we quaff the cup of life with eager thirst without draining it, and joy and hope seem ever mantling to the brim; objects press around us, filling the mind with their magnitude and with the throng of desires that wait upon them, so that there is no room for the thoughts of death.’

Of a quite different temper was **Charles Lamb** (1775–1834);

<sup>1</sup> His best known works are: *Table Talk*, *The Round Table*, *English Poets and Comic Writers*, *Elizabethan Dramatists*, *Characters of Shakespeare’s Plays*.

a wayward and eccentric humorist, occasionally and in a lower key a poet, beloved by all his contemporaries, somewhat quaint and antique in style, but natural and graceful; preëminently human, mingling the simplicity of the child with the learning of the scholar, seeking his materials chiefly in the common paths of life,—often in the humblest. His *Letters* and *Essays of Elia*, fanciful and meditative sketches, gay, serious, brilliant, or tender, have a strong individuality, and reflect, as in a mirror, his quick, penetrative, and genial nature. One or two detached sentences can but faintly suggest that diffusive quality of humor which so eminently distinguishes his manner:

'Absurd images are sometimes irresistible. I will mention two. An elephant in a coach office gravely coming to have his trunk booked; a mermaid over a fish-kettle cooking her own tail.'

And:

'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 case-ments, nor pour wax into the little cells of thine ears, with little-faithed, self-mistrusting Ulysses: retire with me into a Quakers' meeting.'

This characteristic is illustrated at great length in the famous *Dissertation on Roast Pig*. In all humor there is an influx of the moral nature. Through the mask shine the features of the man,—the broad, swimming eyes of love, or the sad earnestness into which the mind relaxes when it has stammered out its joke:

'We willingly call phantoms our fellows, as knowing we shall soon be of their dark companionship. Therefore we cherish dreams. We try to spell in them the alphabet of the invisible world; and think we know already how it shall be with us. Those uncouth shapes, which while we clung to flesh and blood affrighted us, have become familiar. We feel attenuated into their meagre essences, and have given the hand of half-way approach to incorporated being. We once thought life to be something; but it has unaccountably fallen from us before its time. Therefore we choose to dally with visions.'

Few have soared into regions of the vast and vague with so uniform and easy a flight as the variously-gifted **Thomas De Quincey** (1785-1859); in boyhood morbidly sensitive and precociously active, a truant from school, and a vagrant through England and Wales, setting out with a parcel under his arm, an English poet in one pocket, and the plays of Euripides in the other; lodging at farm-houses or subsisting on road-side berries as he tramped his way, and in return for casual hospitality writing letters of business for cottagers, or letters of love for maids; in manhood a writer of prodigious industry, and an intimate of literary celebrities; like Coleridge, a slave to opium,

from which, after years of indulgence, he liberated himself only by agonizing struggles; a philosophic inquirer, a critic of no common delicacy, an honest and fearless investigator; fitful, occasionally ungenial, at times unjustly depreciative, at others absurdly eulogistic; in faculty uniting to metaphysical acuteness poetical taste and sensibility; in style affluent, graphic, richly colored. His charm, his merit, indeed, is not so much in the novelty of his thoughts as in the dazzling fence of his rhetoric, his word-painting, his rhythm, his majestic swells and dying falls, which are to his bare ideas as autumn's gorgeous dyes to the landscape. Thus :

'Yes, reader, countless are the mysterious handwritings of grief or joy which have inscribed themselves successively upon the palimpsest<sup>1</sup> of your brain; and like the annual leaves of aboriginal forests, or the undissolving snows on the Himalaya, or light falling upon light, the endless strata have covered up each other in forgetfulness. But by the hour of death, but by fever, but by the searchings of opium, all these can revive in strength. . . . The romance has perished that the young man adored; the legend has gone by that deluded the boy: but the deep, deep tragedies of infancy, as when the child's hands were unlinked forever from his mother's neck, or his lips forever from his sister's kisses,—these remain lurking below all, and these lurk to the last.'

Not seldom is the meaning lost in a mere vague of music, as if clear and consecutive vision had swooned in the piling up and excess of imagery and sound. The minuteness and tenacity of his memory lead him into frequent and undue parentheses, into long digressions from which he never comes back to his theme; sometimes, however, apt and luminous, and generally sure to be instructive or entertaining. Thus :

'Entering I closed the door so softly that, although it opened upon a hall which ascended through all the stories, no echo ran along the silent walls. Then turning around I sought my sister's face. But the bed had been moved, and the back was now turned. Nothing met my eyes but one large window wide open, through which the sun of mid-summer at noonday was showering down torrents of splendor. The weather was dry, the sky was cloudless, the blue depths seemed to express types of infinity: and it was not possible for eye to behold or for heart to conceive any symbols more pathetic of life and the glory of life.

Let me pause for one instant in approaching a remembrance so affecting and revolutionary in my own mind, and one which (if any earthly remembrance) will survive for me in the hour of death, to remind some readers and to inform others that in the original Opium Confessions I endeavored to explain the reason why death, *ceteris paribus*, is more profoundly affecting in summer than in other parts of the year; so far at least as it is liable to any modification at all from accidents of scenery or season. The reason, as I there suggested, lies in the antagonism between the tropical redundancy of life in summer and the dark sterilities of the grave.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>A parchment from which the original writing has been obliterated in order to receive new, which in turn has been obliterated, so that the first draught stands revealed.

<sup>2</sup>De Quincey's most valuable writings are perhaps to be found in the *Confessions of an Opium Eater* and the *Miscellaneous Essays*. In the latter are *Joan of Arc*, the *Mail-coach*, and *Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts*, which it is the custom to call a fine piece of 'grim humor,' but which to us has always seemed a moody performance.



But the Nimrod of literary criticism was **Thomas B. Macaulay** (1800–1859), poet, essayist, historian, legislator, jurist, orator. When three years old, books were his companions. At four he replied to a condolence, ‘Thank you, madam, the agony is abated.’ At seven, left for a week with Hannah More, he stood on a chair and preached sermons to people brought in from the fields. At eight, with the whole of Marmion in his head, he began to imitate Scott’s verse. At fourteen he appeared in print. To retentive memory was added a quick wit. Mathematics he detested. At eighteen he wrote to his mother:

‘I can scarcely bear to write on mathematics or mathematicians. Oh, for words to express my abomination of that science, if a name, sacred to the useful and embellishing arts, may be applied to the perception and recollection of certain properties, numbers, and figures! Oh, that I had to learn astrology, or demonology, or school divinity! Oh, that I were to pore over Thomas Aquinas, and to adjust the relation of entity with the two predicaments, so that I were exempted from this miserable study! Discipline of the mind! Say rather starvation, confinement, torture, annihilation! But it must be. I feel myself a personification of algebra, a living trigonometrical canon, a walking table of logarithms. All my perceptions of elegance and beauty gone, or at least going. By the end of the term my brain will be as dry as the remainder biscuit after a voyage.’

The classics he loved. He cried over Homer, laughed over Aristophanes, and could not read *De Corona*, even for the twentieth time, without striking his clenched fist once a minute on the arms of his easy-chair. From this power of realizing the past proceeds his skill in the delineation of character. Hence his energetic, impassioned tone. From his vast and well-digested reading proceed the abounding mass and weight of his style,—a river of ideas and facts, urged forward by the internal heat. He is so opulent that he makes criticism almost a creative art, and the author or work reviewed becomes a hint for the construction of picturesque dissertations, magnificent comparisons, and glowing dialectic. At twenty-four he writes on Milton, and says:

‘The Puritan was made up of two different men, the one all self-abasement, penitence, gratitude, passion; the other proud, calm, inflexible, sagacious. He prostrated himself in the dust before his Maker; but he set his foot on the neck of his king. In his devotional retirement, he prayed with convulsions and groans and tears. He was half-maddened by glorious or terrible illusions. He heard the lyres of angels or the tempting whispers of fiends. He caught a gleam of the Beatific Vision, or woke screaming from dreams of everlasting fire. Like Vane, he thought himself intrusted with the sceptre of the millennial year. Like Fleetwood, he cried in the bitterness of his soul that God had hid His face from him. But when he took his seat in the council, or girt on his sword for war, these tempestuous workings of the soul had left no perceptible trace behind them. People who saw nothing of the godly but their uncouth visages, and heard nothing from them but their groans and their whining hymns, might laugh at them. But those had little reason to laugh who encountered them in the hall of debate or in the field of battle.’

Then he becomes a story-teller, in splendid metaphors:

‘Ariosto tells a pretty story of a fairy, who, by some mysterious law of her nature, was condemned to appear at certain seasons in the form of a foul and poisonous snake. Those who injured her during the period of her disguise were forever excluded from participation in the blessings which she bestowed. But to those who, in spite of her loathsome aspect, pitied and protected her, she afterwards revealed herself in the beautiful and celestial form which was natural to her, accompanied their steps, granted all their wishes, filled their houses with wealth, made them happy in love and victorious in war. Such a spirit is Liberty. At times she takes the form of a hateful reptile. She grovels, she hisses, she stings. But woe to those who in disgust shall venture to crush her! And happy are those who, having dared to receive her in her degraded and frightful shape, shall at length be rewarded by her in the time of her beauty and her glory!’

At forty, professedly reviewing Ranke’s *History of the Popes*, he dismisses the writer in two paragraphs, and straightway enters upon an examination of the Roman Catholic Church:

‘No other institution is left standing which carries the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon, and when camelopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian amphitheatre. The proudest royal houses are but of yesterday, when compared with the line of the Supreme Pontiffs. That line we trace back in an unbroken series, from the Pope who crowned Napoleon in the nineteenth century, to the Pope who crowned Pepin in the eighth; and far beyond the time of Pepin the august dynasty extends, till it is lost in the twilight of fable. The republic of Venice came next in antiquity. But the republic of Venice was modern when compared with the Papacy; and the republic of Venice is gone, and the Papacy remains. The Papacy remains, not in decay, not a mere antique; but full of life and youthful vigour. The Catholic Church is still sending forth to the furthest ends of the world missionaries as zealous as those who landed in Kent with Augustine; and still confronting hostile kings with the same spirit with which she confronted Attila. The number of her children is greater than in any former age. Her acquisitions in the New World have more than compensated her for what she has lost in the Old. Her spiritual ascendancy extends over the vast countries which lie between the plains of the Missouri and Cape Horn; countries which, a century hence, may not improbably contain a population as large as that which now inhabits Europe. The members of her community are certainly not fewer than a hundred and fifty millions; and it will be difficult to show that all the other Christian sects united amount to a hundred and twenty millions. Nor do we see any sign which indicates that the term of her long dominion is approaching. She saw the commencement of all the governments, and of all the ecclesiastical establishments, that now exist in the world; and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all. She was great and respected before the Saxon had set foot on Britain, before the Frank had passed the Rhine,—when Grecian eloquence still flourished at Antioch, when idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca. And she may still exist in undiminished vigour when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul’s.’

These single passages present an abstract of his talent—opulence of illustration and adornment, antithesis of ideas, regular sequence of thought, harmonious construction, and incomparable lucidity. Jeffrey, in acknowledging the manuscript of *Milton*, said, ‘The more I think, the less I can conceive where you picked up that style.’ It was the prevalent opinion of literary friends, that he wrote rapidly and made few corrections, so spontaneous

seemed his manner. On the contrary, he was minutely studious of every sentence, would often rewrite paragraphs and chapters to improve the arrangement or expression. Again would he correct, and his manuscripts were covered with erasures. He was equally attentive to proof-sheets. 'He could not rest until the lines were level to a hair's breadth, and the punctuation correct to a comma; until every paragraph concluded with a telling sentence, and every sentence flowed like running water.' Excellence is not matured in a day. Montesquieu, in allusion to one of his works, says to a correspondent, 'You will read it in a few hours, but the labor expended on it has whitened my hair.'

Franklin and Edwards, the one a philosopher and the other a theologian, were not of the *literary* guild in any strict sense of the term. Our veteran Chief of Letters was the amiable and gifted **Irving** (1783-1859), in whom the creative vigor, that, breathing and burning in the bosom of the nation, had found issue in action, blossomed into art. All his life a desultory genius, reading much, but studying little. In boyhood a rover, familiar with every spot where a murder or robbery had been committed, or a ghost seen; neglecting the exercises of the school for books of voyage and travel, gazing wistfully after the parting ships whose lessening sails wafted his imagination to distant climes. He knew and loved the sublime and beautiful of natural scenery, but more potent were the charms of historic ruins, of storied and poetical association:

'I longed to wander over the scenes of renowned achievement—to tread, as it were, in the footsteps of antiquity—to loiter about the ruined castle—to meditate on the falling tower—to escape, in short, from the commonplace realities of the present, and lose myself among the shadowy grandeurs of the past.'

Perhaps no other American ever met with so hearty a welcome abroad from men of all classes and nationalities, as he during the twenty odd years he passed in Europe. There he began his literary career under the kind and cordial auspices of Scott, and nearly all the leading writers of the day were among his friends. At home he was everywhere honored, and the gate of his pretty domain on the Hudson, though he was wifeless and childless, was forever opening to visitors. Never obsequious to the great, honest and grateful, kind, affable, generous, gentle, affectionate, self-denying,—above all, an exemplar of goodness, whose last words, characteristically embodying the supreme concern of this

life, might consistently have been: Be good. May we not predict a style which is an inborn elegance of mind, and a pleasure which is almost witching yet always refining?

In his *History of New York* we have at length something all our own, not copied from London, nor borrowed from Paris. The elements of his art are here, its admirable grace and temper, in this his early work; and his peculiar talent, ever reverting instinctively to the lights and shadows that play upon the surface of social life, as in the following unique account of the traditional manners of the Dutch settlers. Of their architecture he says, like one who has lived among the objects he describes:

'The houses of the higher class were generally constructed of wood, excepting the gable-end, which was of small black and yellow Dutch bricks, and always faced on the street; as our ancestors, like their descendants, were very much given to outward show, and were noted for putting the best leg foremost. The house was always furnished with abundance of large doors and small windows on every floor; the date of its erection was curiously designated by iron figures on the front; and on the top of the roof was perched a fierce little weather-cock, to let the family into the important secret which way the wind blew. These, like the weather-cocks on the tops of our steeples, pointed so many different ways, that every man could have a wind to his mind; and you would have thought old Æolus had set all his bags of wind adrift, pell-mell, to gambol about this windy metropolis; the most staunch and loyal citizens, however, always went according to the weather-cock on the top of the governor's house, which was certainly the most correct, as he had a trusty servant employed every morning to climb up and point it whichever way the wind blew.'

#### Of their home-life:

'As to the family, they always entered in at the gate, and most generally lived in the kitchen. To have seen a numerous household assembled around the fire, one would have imagined that he was transported back to those happy days of primeval simplicity which float through our imaginations like golden visions. The fire-places were of a truly patriarchal magnitude, where the whole family, old and young, master and servant, black and white, nay, even the very cat and dog, enjoyed a community of privilege, and had each a prescriptive right to a corner. Here the old burgher would sit in perfect silence, puffing his pipe, looking in the fire with half-shut eyes, and thinking of nothing for hours together; his *goede vrouw* on the opposite side would employ herself diligently in spinning her yarn or knitting stockings. The young folks would crowd around the hearth, listening with breathless attention to some old crone of a negro who was the oracle of the family, and who, perched like a raven in the corner of the chimney, would croak forth for a long winter afternoon a string of incredible stories about New England witches, grisly ghosts, horses without heads, and hairbreadth escapes, and bloody encounters among the Indians.'

#### Of their conviviality:

'These fashionable parties were generally confined to the higher classes or noblesse,—that is to say, such as kept their own cows and drove their own wagons. The company commonly assembled at three o'clock, and went away about six, unless it was in winter-time, when the fashionable hours were a little earlier, that the ladies might get home before dark. I do not find that they ever treated their company to iced creams, jellies, or syllabubs, or regaled them with musty almonds, mouldy raisins, or sour oranges, as is often done in the present age of refinement. Our ancestors were fond of more sturdy, substantial fare. The tea-table was crowned with a huge earthen dish, well stored with



slices of fat pork, fried brown, cut up into morsels, and swimming in gravy. The company being seated around the genial board, and each furnished with a fork, evinced their dexterity in launching at the fattest pieces of this mighty dish, in much the same manner as sailors harpoon porpoises at sea, or our Indians spear salmon. Sometimes the table was graced with immense apple-pies, or saucers full of preserved peaches and pears; but it was always sure to boast of an enormous dish of balls of sweetened dough fried in hog's fat and called dough-nuts or *oly koeks*; a delicious kind of cake, at present scarce known in this city, except in genuine Dutch families.'

This playfulness never betrays him from decorum. It is the gayety and airiness of a light, pure spirit, pleased with men and things, and fancying others equally pleased, or innocent of their displeasure. He continues:

'The tea was served out of a majestic delf tea-pot, ornamented with paintings of fat little Dutch shepherds and shepherdesses, tending pigs, with boats sailing in the air, and houses built in the clouds, and sundry other ingenious Dutch fantasies. The beaux distinguished themselves by their adroitness in replenishing this pot from a huge copper tea-kettle, which would have made the pigmy macaronies of these degenerate days sweat merely to look at it. To sweeten the beverage, a lump of sugar was laid beside each cup, and the company alternately nibbled and sipped with great decorum, until an improvement was introduced by a shrewd and economic old lady, which was to suspend a large lump directly over the tea-table by a string from the ceiling, so that it could be swung from mouth to mouth,—an ingenious expedient, which is still kept up by some families in Albany, but which prevails, without exception, in Communipaw, Bergen, Flat-Bush, and all our uncontaminated Dutch villages.'

How easy, simple, and sprightly, as of one who catches his tints direct from nature, always fresh and felicitous. Thus he completes the picture:

'No flirting nor coquetting, no gambling of old ladies, nor hoyden chattering and romping of young ones, no self-satisfied struttings of wealthy gentlemen with their brains in their pockets, nor amusing conceits and monkey divertisements of smart young gentlemen with no brains at all. On the contrary, the young ladies seated themselves demurely in their rush-bottomed chairs, and knit their own woollen stockings; nor ever opened their lips excepting to say, 'Yah, Mynheer,' or 'Yah, ya Vrouw,' to any question that was asked them; behaving in all things like decent well-educated damsels. As to the gentlemen, each of them tranquilly smoked his pipe, and seemed lost in contemplation of the blue and white tiles with which the fire-places were decorated. . . .

The parties broke up without noise and without confusion. They were carried home by their own carriages,—that is to say, by the vehicles nature had provided them, excepting such of the wealthy as could afford to keep a wagon. The gentlemen gallantly attended their fair ones to their respective abodes, and took leave of them with a hearty smack at the door; which, as it was an established piece of etiquette, done in perfect simplicity and honesty of heart, occasioned no scandal at that time, nor should it at the present: if our great grandfathers approved of the custom, it would argue a great want of reverence in their descendants to say a word against it.'

But the best example of his powers is the *Sketch Book*, mild, cheerful, fanciful, thoughtful, humorous. *The Wife*, *The Pride of the Village*, and *The Broken Heart*, are gems of sentiment and description. *Rip Van Winkle* and *Sleepy Hollow* are among the finest pieces of fiction to be found in any literature. As we



read, we are all drawn to beauty, gentleness, sunshine, elevating seriousness, or chastening sorrow. It is fundamentally the fascination of the *man*. We are captivated by the poetic graces of his fancy and the liquid music of his style; but behind all, under all, pervading all, is the deeper charm of the genial and sensitive soul in sympathy with the human heart. Here, in a few random sentences, is his essential self,—the modest and thoughtful saunterer in his meditations, the simple but polished artist in the scenes which he sets before us, filled with interest and passion by the magic infusion of mind:

'I delighted to loll over the quarter-ralling, or climb to the main-top, of a calm day, and muse for hours together on the tranquil bosom of a summer's sea; to gaze upon the piles of golden clouds just peering above the horizon, fancy them some fairy realms, and people them with a creation of my own; to watch the gentle, undulating billows, rolling their silver volumes, as if to die away on those happy shores.'<sup>1</sup>

'A tart temper never mellows with age, and a sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener with constant use.'<sup>2</sup>

'As the vine, which has long twined its graceful foliage about the oak, and been lifted by it into sunshine, will, when the hardy plant is rifted by the thunderbolt, cling round it with its caressing tendrils, and bind up its shattered boughs; so is it beautifully ordered by Providence that woman, who is the mere dependant and ornament of man in his happier hours, should be his stay and solace when smitten with sudden calamity; winding herself into the rugged recesses of his nature, tenderly supporting the drooping head, and binding up the broken heart.'<sup>3</sup>

'If ever Love, as poets sing, delights to visit a cottage, it must be the cottage of an English peasant.'<sup>4</sup>

'Other men are known to posterity only through the medium of history, which is continually growing faint and obscure: but the intercourse between the author and his fellow men is ever new, active, and immediate. He has lived for them more than for himself; he has sacrificed surrounding enjoyments, and shut himself up from the delights of social life, that he might the more intimately commune with distant minds and distant ages. Well may the world cherish his renown; for it has been purchased, not by deeds of violence and blood, but by the diligent dispensation of pleasure.'<sup>5</sup>

How easily might this inimitable description be transferred to canvas:

'Hard by the farm-house was a vast barn, that might have served for a church; every window and crevice of which seemed bursting forth with the treasures of the farm; the flail was busily resounding within it from morning to night; swallows and martins skimmed twittering about the eaves; and rows of pigeons, some with one eye turned up, as if watching the weather, some with their heads under their wings, or buried in their bosoms, and others swelling, and cooing, and bowing about their dames, were enjoying the sunshine on the roof. Sleek, unwieldy porkers were grunting in the repose and abundance of their pens; whence sallied forth, now and then, troops of sucking pigs, as if to snuff the air. A stately squadron of snowy geese were riding in an adjoining pond, convoying whole fleets of ducks; regiments of turkeys were gobbling through the farm-yard, and guinea-fowls fretting about it, like ill-tempered housewives, with their

<sup>1</sup> *The Voyage.*

<sup>2</sup> *Rip Van Winkle.*

<sup>3</sup> *The Wife.*

<sup>4</sup> *Rural Life in England.*

<sup>5</sup> *Westminster Abbey.*

peevish, discontented cry. Before the barn door strutted the gallant cock, that pattern of a husband, a warrior, and a fine gentleman, clapping his burnished wings, and crowing in the pride and gladness of his heart, sometimes tearing up the earth with his feet, and then generously calling his ever-hungry family of wives and children to enjoy the rich morsel which he had discovered.<sup>1</sup>

Where beyond the Atlantic will you find anything happier? And in this gallery of delightful pictures, what more happily conceived and executed than the following?

'The pedagogue's mouth watered, as he looked upon this sumptuous promise of luxurious winter fare. In his devouring mind's eye, he pictured to himself every roasting pig running about with a pudding in his belly and an apple in his mouth; the pigeons were snugly put to bed in a comfortable pie, and tucked in with a coverlet of crust; the geese were swimming in their own gravy; and the ducks pairing cosily in dishes, like snug married couples, with a decent competency of onion sauce. In the porkers he saw carved out the future sleek side of bacon, and juicy, relishing ham; not a turkey but he beheld daintily trussed up, with its gizzard under its wing, and, peradventure, a necklace of savory sausages; and even bright chanticleer himself lay sprawling on his back, in a side-dish, with uplifted claws, as if craving that quarter which his chivalrous spirit disdained to ask while living.'<sup>2</sup>

What author has succeeded so well as he in making literature *delicious*?

**Novel.**—We have seen the germs of fiction existing everywhere in the earliest ages, and expanding into the verse or prose of feudalism and chivalry as naturally as the grass grows upon the surface of the soil. We have seen it pass beyond the romantic into the realistic development, as an advancing society demanded more and more the narration of what is probable under the laws of poetic justice. Little cultivated from Chaucer to Queen Anne, we have seen it undergo a revolution in the hands of observers and moralists, becoming in De Foe and Richardson the novel of *character*, holding the mirror up to Nature, and aiming to elevate while it informed the mind. Like painting and sculpture, it was to appeal henceforth, in its highest products, to universal human experience.

After a long declension, when the poetical light was waning, this branch of literature acquired an unprecedented lustre in the masterpieces of **Scott**, who enlarged the scope of its topics, and gave it a higher finish of execution. Illustrative of English history, devoted in the best instances to the glorification of virtue and the chastisement of vice, it now became what the drama in its palmy summer had been. Before and around the *Waverley* were the *Caleb Williams* of Godwin, the *Persuasion* of Miss Austen,

<sup>1</sup>*Sleepy Hollow.*

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

the *Scottish Chiefs* of Miss Porter, and, in particular, the Irish tales of Miss Edgeworth,—all of which are directed in one way or another to utility, all seeking the amelioration of man, all realistic and moral.

The master's splendid illumination of the new path naturally drew into it a throng of competitors, the most illustrious of whom was our own countryman, **James Fenimore Cooper** (1789–1851), one of the most original and national of American writers. His favorite elements were the sea and the forest; his favorite characters were the sailor and the hunter, the pioneer and the Indian. These were no vivified pictures, but seeming realities,—like Long Tom Coffin and Leatherstocking. He has had few rivals in this power of breathing into phantoms of the brain the breath of life. His fame in the description of natural scenery under new and striking aspects is world-wide. His portraiture, without warm and varied coloring, is remarkable for fidelity and strength. Thus:

'On all sides, wherever the eye turned, nothing met it but the mirror-like surface of the lake, the placid view of heaven, and the dense setting of woods. So rich and fleecy were the outlines of the forest, that scarce an opening could be seen; the whole visible earth, from the rounded mountain-top to the water's edge, presenting one unvaried line of unbroken verdure. As if vegetation were not satisfied with a triumph so complete, the trees overhung the lake itself, shooting out towards the light; and there were miles along its eastern shore where a boat might have pulled beneath the branches of dark Rembrandt-looking hemlocks, quivering aspens, and melancholy pines. In a word, the hand of man had never yet defaced or deformed any part of this native scene, which lay bathed in the sunlight, a glorious picture of affluent forest grandeur, softened by the balminess of June, and relieved by the beautiful variety afforded by the presence of so broad an expanse of water.'

Of his numerous works, the best are *The Pilot*, *The Red Rover*, *The Spy*, *The Pioneers*, and *The Last of the Mohicans*. His attempts at sentiment were calamitous. The titles indicate that the field of his success was narrow and objective,—romantic rather than psychological. His most appreciative readers have been found, not among those of a sedentary and studious bent, but among the young and those of an active turn, who like an exciting and picturesque story, having little concern with the analysis of motives and the inner conflicts of feeling. Cooper will hold a permanent place for his vivid reflection of scenes and characters which have passed, or are passing, forever away. Over his native landscape he has cast a glamour, similar to that which was thrown over Scotland by the 'Wizard of the North.'

**History.**—Among historians during the last hundred years, we have seen the indications of a more critical judgment of historical facts, and an increasing comprehensiveness of view,—the disposition to explain phenomena by their principles and laws. Long series of uncritical narratives, like the *Universal History*, have been reduced to rubbish by the method which took a distinct and recognized form under the shaping genius of Voltaire, Hume, Gibbon, and Niebuhr. It was this last, a Prussian, who accomplished a revolution in the prevailing ideas respecting early Rome. Other writers, notably **Thomas Arnold**<sup>1</sup> (1795–1842) and **George Grote**<sup>2</sup> (1794–1871), traversed, in his spirit, the same and other fields of ancient history, eliminating the fabulous and legendary elements, and toning down to a juster estimate the exaggerated conceptions of men and events.

It seems unnecessary to add that, in becoming more critical and exact, history has become more humane and democratic. Two characteristics are especially worthy of notice in the tendencies of the period under consideration. One is a growing interest in early English history. The indefatigable Palgrave and the ambitious Turner did valuable work in these dark mines. Another is the mingling of manners with events, of portrait with narrative. Less importance is attached to the fortunes of princes and the issues of campaigns; more to the condition of the middle and lower classes, how the people actually lived, their habits of thought, modes of feeling, surroundings, domestic details, the daily aspect of their lives. Such is the charm of **Macaulay's** *History of England*, whose purpose is declared at the outset:

'I should very imperfectly execute the task which I have undertaken if I were merely to treat of battles and sieges, of the rise and fall of administrations, of intrigues in the palace, and of debates in the parliament. It will be my endeavor to relate the history of the people as well as the history of the government, to trace the progress of useful and ornamental arts, to describe the rise of religious sects and the changes of literary taste, to portray the manners of successive generations, and not to pass by with neglect even the revolutions which have taken place in dress, furniture, repasts, and public amusements. I shall cheerfully bear the reproach of having descended below the dignity of history, if I can succeed in placing before the English of the nineteenth century a true picture of the life of their ancestors.'

All this, under his lively consciousness of causes, forms a harmonious whole. Hence the readableness, the interest, of this work. He brought to it a marvellous memory, vast erudition,

<sup>1</sup>*History of Rome, and Lectures on Modern History.*

<sup>2</sup>*History of Greece.*

eloquence, rhetoric; a talent for demonstration, for development; the faculty of the orator for expounding and pleading, the gift of the poet to resuscitate the dead.

Before him, the acute and learned **Hallam** (1778–1859) had said of the duties and responsibilities of a historian :

‘The philosophy of history embraces far more than the wars and treaties, the factions and cabals of common political narration; it extends to whatever illustrates the character of the human species in a particular period,—to their reasonings and sentiments, their arts and industry.’

But Macaulay is an advocate, a pleader. Hume writes of trial and suffering, of heroism and faith, with a continued sneer at religious fervor and belief; Gibbon drops the seeds of death from his gorgeous robes of damask and gold; and history in all its forms, ancient or modern, is liable to be *partisan*. Hallam, however, with breadth and accuracy of knowledge, has, like M. Guizot, the calm judgment and the impartial emotion of a philosopher. These are the qualities which mark his *Middle Ages*, *Constitutional History of England* and *Literature of Europe*. Tried, moreover, by the underlying principle of his performance, the merit of a trustworthy guide must be conceded to him:

‘The trite metaphors of light and darkness, of dawn and twilight, are used carelessly by those who touch on the literature of the Middle Ages, and suggest by analogy an uninterrupted progression, in which learning, like the sun, has dissipated the shadows of barbarism. But with closer attention, it is easily seen that this is not a correct representation; that, taking Europe generally, far from being in a more advanced stage of learning at the beginning of the fifteenth century than two hundred years before, she had in many respects gone backwards, and gave little sign of any tendency to recover her ground. There is, in fact, no security, so far as the past history of mankind assures us, that any nation will be uniformly progressive in science, arts, or letters; nor do I perceive, whatever may be the current language, that we can expect this with much greater confidence of the whole civilized world.’

Historical literature in America finds its most eminent representative in the brilliant and genial **Prescott** (1796–1859), who, surpassed by others in vigor and profundity, is rarely equalled in power to win the fancy and to touch the heart. An aspiring student, with ample means for needful travel and illustrative material, he chose an unappropriated and romantic theme, spent eleven years in research and composition, hearing documents and authorities, dictating notes, which he afterwards repeated orally till the important details were photographed, then arranging them consecutively, harmoniously, and publishing in 1837 the *History of Ferdinand and Isabella*. The work was immediately rendered into five European languages. His reputation



was still further extended by *The Conquest of Mexico*. Not less successful was *The Conquest of Peru*. Visiting England, he was received with the utmost distinction. Oxford conferred upon him the degree of LL.D. His *Philip II* was left unfinished. From the first of the following passages you will judge that he excels in description; from the second, that he is master of the art of narrative; from both, that his talents are more artistic than philosophical:

‘Their progress was now comparatively easy, and they marched forward with a buoyant step, as they felt they were treading the soil of Montezuma. They had not advanced far when, turning an angle of the Sierra, they suddenly came on a view which more than compensated the toils of the preceding day. It was that of the valley of Mexico, or Tenochtitlan, as more commonly called by the natives; which, with its picturesque assemblage of water, woodland, and cultivated plains, its shining cities and shadowy hills, was spread out like some gay and gorgeous panorama before them. In the highly rarefied atmosphere of these upper regions even remote objects have a brilliancy of colouring and a distinctness of outline which seem to annihilate distance. Stretching far away at their feet were seen noble forests of oak, sycamore, and cedar, and beyond yellow fields of maize, and the towering maguey, intermingled with orchards and blooming gardens; for flowers, in such demand for their religious festivals, were even more abundant in this populous valley than in other parts of Anahuac. In the centre of the great basin were beheld the lakes, occupying then a much larger portion of its surface than at present, their borders thickly studded with towns and hamlets; and in the midst—like some Indian empress with her coronal of pearls—the fair city of Mexico, with her white towers and pyramidal temples, reposing, as it were, on the bosom of the waters,—the far-famed “Venice of the Aztecs.” High over all rose the royal hill of Chapultepec, the residence of the Mexican monarchs, crowned with the same grove of gigantic cypresses which at this day fling their broad shadows over the land. In the distance, beyond the blue waters of the lake, and nearly screened by intervening foliage, was seen a shining speck, the rival capital of Tezcuco; and still further on, the dark belt of porphyry, girdling the valley around, like a rich setting which nature had devised for the fairest of her jewels. Such was the beautiful vision which broke on the eyes of the conquerors. And even now, when so sad a change has come over the scene; when the stately forests have been laid low, and the soil, unsheltered from the fierce radiance of a tropical sun, is in many places abandoned to sterility; when the waters have retired, leaving a broad and ghastly margin white with the incrustations of salts, while the cities and hamlets on their borders have mouldered into ruins;—even now that desolation broods over the landscape, so indestructible are the lines of beauty which nature has traced on its features, that no traveller, however cold, can gaze on them with any other emotions than those of astonishment and rapture. What, then, must have been the emotions of the Spaniards, when, after working their toilsome way into the upper air, the cloudy tabernacle parted before their eyes, and they beheld these fair scenes in all their pristine magnificence and beauty! It was like the spectacle which greeted the eyes of Moses from the summit of Pisgah, and in the warm glow of their feelings they cried out: “It is the promised land!”’

And :

‘The parties closed with the desperate fury of men who had no hope but in victory. Quarter was neither asked nor given; and to fly was impossible. The edge of the area was unprotected by parapet or battlement. The least slip would be fatal; and the combatants, as they struggled in mortal agony, were sometimes seen to roll over the sheer sides of the precipice together. Cortes himself is said to have had a narrow escape from this dreadful fate. Two warriors, of strong, muscular frame, seized on him, and were

dragging him violently towards the brink of the pyramid. Aware of their intention, he struggled with all his force, and, before they could accomplish their purpose, succeeded in tearing himself from their grasp, and hurling one of them over the walls with his own arm. The story is not improbable in itself, for Cortes was a man of uncommon agility and strength. It has been often repeated, but not by contemporary history.

The battle lasted with unintermitting fury for three hours. The number of the enemy was double that of the Christians; and it seemed as if it were a contest which must be determined by numbers and brute force, rather than superior science. But it was not so. The invulnerable armour of the Spaniard, his sword of matchless temper, and his skill in the use of it, gave him advantages which far outweighed the odds of physical strength and numbers. After doing all that the courage of despair could enable men to do, resistance grew fainter and fainter on the side of the Aztecs. One after another they had fallen. Two or three priests only survived to be led away in triumph by the victors. Every other combatant was stretched a corpse on the bloody arena, or had been hurled from the giddy heights. Yet the loss of the Spaniards was not inconsiderable: it amounted to forty-five of their best men; and nearly all the remainder were more or less injured in the desperate conflict.

The victorious cavaliers now rushed towards the sanctuaries. The lower story was of stone, the two upper were of wood. Penetrating into their recesses, they had the mortification to find the image of the Virgin and Cross removed. But in the other edifice they still beheld the grim figure of Huitzilopotchli, with his censer of smoking hearts, and the walls of his oratory reeking with gore,—not improbably of their own countrymen. With shouts of triumph the Christians tore the uncouth monster from his niche, and tumbled him, in the presence of the horror-struck Aztecs, down the steps of the teocalli. They then set fire to the accursed building. The flame speedily ran up the slender towers, sending forth an ominous light over city, lake, and valley, to the remotest hut among the mountains. It was the funeral pyre of paganism, and proclaimed the fall of that sanguinary religion which had so long hung like a dark cloud over the fair regions of Anahuac.

**Theology.**—In Gibbon, Deism had changed its form—its point and mode of attack. The one, from being *a priori* moral, became historic; instead of denying facts, it felt bound to explain them: the other, from being a fear and hatred of Christianity, became a philosophical contempt. The latter, in its prevalent satire and irony, marks the influence of French infidelity. This influence is reproduced more conspicuously in **Paine**, a politician, a creature of the Revolution, who derives his doctrines from the English deists, his ribaldry from Voltaire, and his politics from Rousseau. Derived in some respects by direct lineage from him, are the socialist schemes of **Owen**, who, desirous to improve the condition of the industrial classes, and aiming to modify or remove temptations, proposes equality of property and facilitation of divorce. The French spirit animates literature in the poetry of Byron and Shelley, the one a type of the scepticism of despair, the other of the madness of enthusiasm; the one drawn down to earth, the other lifted into the ideal.

Now rose into importance and power the philosophic German genius, original and universal, to fertilize and renew human

thought. As far back as 1780, German ideas had been making their way into England. Intimate relations of the English royal family to Germany, English patronage of German universities, English alliance with the German States to arrest French arms, aided the movement. A result was the science of criticism, a method of analysis, in which philosophy and history were jointly employed in the investigation of every branch of knowledge. Thence English rationalism in its several forms of philosophical, literary, and critical: the first supplying reason with a fund of speculative objections to Revelation, and either utilitarian, as in **Bentham**, or intuitional, as in **Coleridge**; the former relying on sensation, the latter on primitive cognitions, as the ultimate test of truth; the second, more imaginative, appealing for its proof to the faculty of insight, regarding the inner consciousness as able to evolve a religion, tending either to pantheism or to naturalism, and expressing itself, not analytically, in the region of science, but, as in **Carlyle**, sentimentally, in the region of literature; the third, of later growth, directly attacking the historical and inspired basis of faith, the orthodox view of miracles and atonement, by the deductions of physics, language, and ethnology. Already are manifest the tendencies which mark the unbelief of to-day,—a more radical anti-supernaturalism, and a more earnest effort to give to Christianity a natural origin, to account for it as one, as the highest, of those spiritual products which have sprung from the depths of the soul.

Without indicating the special modifications of doctrinal theology, it may be said in general that criticism was setting it free from those accessories which are so often mistaken for its essence, giving it opportunity for new departures, to prove its immortal continuity by developments in fresh directions.

In America it was the heroic age of that fertile protest against Calvinism which has given to Boston Theology a name in Europe. It was the flushful morning of Unitarianism, born of evangelical religion on the one side, and of rationalistic criticism on the other. There were anticipations of it at and before the Reformation, but he who first brought it under the notice of the world was the illustrious **Dr. Channing**, of whom, pure, ardent, philanthropic, and brilliant, none should allow himself to speak except with reverence. Against the prevalent faith, which prostrates itself

in the dust, and darkens creation in order to bring out the splendor of the Creator, he asserts the free agency and moral dignity of man, especially the greatness seen in —

'The intellectual energy which discerns absolute, universal truth, in the idea of God, in freedom of will and moral power, in disinterestedness and self-sacrifice, in the boundlessness of love, in the aspirations after perfection, in desires and affections, which time and space cannot confine, and the world cannot fill. The soul, viewed in these lights, should fill us with awe. It is an immortal germ, which may be said to contain now within itself what endless ages are to unfold. It is truly an image of the infinity of God, and no words can do justice to its grandeur.'

Loftiness of conception raised him and his disciples into the region of art; and, with much that was produced in the charged atmosphere of Unitarian revolt, their discourses, overleaping the boundaries of sect, form additions to American literature. While denying the divinity of Christ, he adhered to the inspiration of Scripture. A bolder thinker appeared, a strong and impulsive nature, courageous to defend the weak against the strong, and prompted by a deep and unselfish love of man. **Parker**, passing the limitations set by his master, constructed an absolute religion, a system drawn: (1) from the intuition of the Divine, a consciousness that there is a God; (2) from the intuition of right, a consciousness that there is a moral law; (3) from the intuition of the immortal, a consciousness that the soul never dies. Rarely has a clergyman drawn his society so closely to himself. You will not be surprised that he should become the object of passionate devotion whose heart, out of its very abundance, inspires reflections like these:

'The greatest star is that at the little end of the telescope, the star that is looking, not looked after or looked at.'

'The orbit of the mind is wider than creation's utmost rim; nor ever did centripetal and centrifugal forces describe in their sweep a comet's track so fair-proportioned as the sweep of human life round these two foci, the mortal here, and the immortal in the world not seen.'

'Last autumn, in some of the pastures, fire ran along the wall, and left the ground black with its ephemeral charcoal, where now the little wind-flower lifts its delicate form and bends its slender neck, and blushes with its own beauty, gathered from the black ground out of which it grew; or some trillium opens its painted cup, and in due time will show its fruit, a beautiful berry there. So out of human soil, blackened by another fire which has swept over it, in due time great flowers will come in the form of spiritual beauty not yet seen, and other fruit grow there whose seed is in itself, and which had not ripened but out of that black ground. Thus the lilies of peace cover the terrible fields of Waterloo, and out of the graves of our dear ones there spring up such flowers of spiritual loveliness as you and I else had never known. It is not from the tall crowded warehouse of prosperity that men first or clearest see the eternal stars of heaven. It is often from the humble spot where we have laid our dear ones that we find our best observatory, which gives us glimpses into the far-off world of never-ending time.'

**Ethics.**—Assuming an acquaintance on the part of the reader with the discussions of this subject in previous chapters, it would seem quite unnecessary to do more, now and hereafter, than to classify ethical philosophers with respect to the two great schools of morals,—the rational or intuitive, which considers the idea of good to be an *a priori* conception of reason, an original principle, in which the idea of obligation is, apart from all consequences, essentially and necessarily implied; the inductive or utilitarian, which, denying that we have any such natural perception, maintains that the notions of merit and demerit are derived solely from an observation of the tendency of actions to promote pleasure or to cause pain, and holds, moreover, that pleasure and pain are the only possible objects of choice, the only motives that can determine the will. The former are the fundamental tenets of **Stewart, Hamilton,** and **Coleridge**; the latter, of **Bentham**, who declares that, if we ‘take away pleasures and pains, not only happiness, but justice, and duty, obligation and virtue, all of which have been so elaborately held up to view as independent of them, are so many empty sounds’; and of **Mackintosh**, who asserts that conscience, or the moral faculty, is a ‘secondary formation’ out of our animal appetites, engendered by the association of ideas. The latter is similar to the doctrine of **Hartley**,—that virtue, becoming, through the observed course of events and the promised joys of religion, peculiarly associated with the idea of pleasurable things, is by the force of habit soon loved independently of and in excess of these.

We have amply shown the inadequacy of the ‘happiness’ principle to reveal the origin and nature of the moral sentiments. Its dynamic force, as furnishing a rule of action, is obvious; but, in every consistent form, it is resolvable into selfishness, and its motive is therefore not moral. Doubtless a place must be given it in every moral system, but a subordinate, not a primary, one. All theories of virtue which do not, in the last analysis, raise men above the thought of self, withdraw from moral action that which is a main constituent of it—its unselfish character—and so at best reduce it to the level of prudence. The happiest are those who think least about happiness. To possess its purer essence, its finer bloom, not it, but some higher object, must be the end:



Goodness and piety may not merely fail of a proposed outward advantage, but are often compelled, if they would remain such, to lose all, and to suffer much. What, then, endures? What is sure in this world of vicissitude, confusion, and strife, of iniquity, suffering, and mysterious doom?

‘What wouldst thou have a good, great man obtain?  
Wealth, title, dignity, a golden chain,  
Or heaps of corpses which the sword hath slain?  
Goodness and greatness are not means, but ends.  
Hath he not always treasure, always friends,  
The good, great man? Three treasures—love, and light,  
And calm thoughts, equable as infant’s breath;  
And three fast friends more sure than day or night,—  
Himself, his Maker, and the angel Death?’<sup>1</sup>

**Science.**—The initial and significant fact to be noted here, for its influence on speculative opinions, is the gradual replacing of the conception of law by that of supernatural intervention. The discoveries of geology, even in the last century, greatly modified the notion that the earth was called into existence and elaborated instantaneously in all its parts by the creative fiat of the Deity. **Sir Charles Lyell** extended the ideas previously entertained, by showing (1) how great the changes in the form of the earth are known to have been, (2) how constantly they are going on, if we take into our survey the whole surface, and (3) by urging the aggregate effect of operations long continued, in themselves not extraordinary. In addition he indicated how plants and animals are now, as anciently, being embedded in mineral deposits, how their remains are washed into caves, or preserved in peat-mosses, and arrived at the conclusion that the crust of the earth has been fashioned *in the course of vast ages by causes like those which are still in action.*

It was perceived that the fossil species of life were not only different from those which at present inhabit the same regions, but, for the most part, different from any extant; that therefore the whole organic creation must have been renewed repeatedly. Hence either we must believe that types are interchangeable, that is, that the organized beings of one geological epoch were transmuted into those of another by natural agencies; or we must assume many successive creative acts, out of the common course of nature, and consequently miraculous. On the one

<sup>1</sup> Coleridge.

hand, in all our experience, we have never known a species *created*. On the other, we have never known such a phenomenon as *transmutation*; but it is established: (1) that animals and plants, when placed under conditions different from their previous ones, immediately begin to undergo certain alterations of structure; (2) that such alterations have been effected not only in irrational creatures, but in the several races of men; (3) that it is a matter of dispute whether some of the forms so modified are varieties or separate species. The astonishing discovery is made that every vertebrate, in the progress of its development, passes through the phases of the several orders below it. Thus our attention is invited to the correspondence which the embryo man exhibits to the fish, the salamander, the tortoise, the bird, the whale, the quadruped, and the ape. Which, then, we are asked, is the more reasonable and defensible hypothesis,—that life originates in some simple primordial substance, and is slowly *evolved* into ten million varieties, or that a new species is a special creation, moulded into being, thrown from the clouds, or sprung from the ground?—

‘Perfect forms

Limbed and full-grown: out of the ground uprose,  
As from his lair, the wild beast where he wons  
In forest wild, in thicket, brake, or den; . . .  
The grassy clods now calved; now half appeared  
The tawny lion, pawing to get free  
His hinder parts; then springs as broke from bounds,  
And rampant shakes his brinded mane.’<sup>1</sup>

And so the scientific conceptions which in these latter days have been so fruitful of debate, which have so profoundly affected literature and opinion, were already assuming form and lineament. Darwin was preparing to stir all Europe by the boldness of his speculations. The unknown author of *Vestiges of Creation* first attempted systematically to prove that the physical and vital affairs of the universe are all under the regulation of law. A reviewer, who has probably lived to smile at his incredulity and alarm, curiously styles it ‘one of the most striking and ingenious scientific romances that we have ever read.’ Its cardinal teachings are thus summarized:

‘The masses of space are formed by law; law makes them in due time theatres of existence for plants and animals; sensation, disposition, intellect, are all in like manner

<sup>1</sup>*Paradise Lost*, VII.

developed and sustained in action by law. It is most interesting to observe into how small a field the whole of the mysteries of nature thus ultimately resolve themselves. The inorganic has been thought to have one final, comprehensive law, *gravitation*. The organic, the other great department of mundane things, rests in like manner on one law, and that is—*development*. Nor may even these be after all twain, but only branches of one still more comprehensive law, the expression of a unity, flowing immediately from the One who is First and Last.'

But the Development Theory, whether applied to the organic world or to the inorganic, is itself a historical growth, older than the nineteenth century, older even than the eighteenth. We have intimations of it in Aristotle. More or less crudely, it was held by Anaximander over two thousand years ago. 'The originals,' says Emerson, 'are not original. There is imitation, model, and suggestion, to the very archangels, if we knew their history. . . . Read Tasso, and you think of Virgil; read Virgil, and you think of Homer; and Milton forces you to think how narrow are the limits of human invention.'

**Philosophy.**—As a reaction against the materialism of the eighteenth century, believed to be the source of frightful immorality, Reid in England and Kant in Germany had laid the foundations of a more spiritual creed. At Berlin, students had assembled in crowds to hear the ideal grandeur of Fichte. The transcendental Schelling, the sphinx-like Hegel, were attracting the attention of Europe. In France, the impassioned Cousin was charming the gay Parisians into sympathy with the lofty, profound, and divine. At this juncture a new star rose on the philosophic horizon. **Sir William Hamilton**, an intellectual athlete, the most brilliant of English metaphysicians, carried to its zenith the fame of the Scottish school for the study of the human mind. His subjective cast, his ideal bent, his elevated conception of speculative problems, appear at the outset in his definition of philosophy itself:

'The limitation of the term philosophy to the sciences of mind, when not expressly extended to the other branches of science, has been always that generally prevalent;—yet it must be confessed that, in this country, the word is applied to subjects with which, on the continent of Europe, it is rarely, if ever, associated. With us, the word philosophy, taken by itself, does not call up the precise and limited notion which it does to a German, a Hollander, a Dane, an Italian, or a Frenchman; and we are obliged to say the philosophy of mind, if we do not wish it to be vaguely extended to the sciences conversant with the phenomena of matter. We not only call Physics by the name of Natural Philosophy, but every mechanical process has with us its philosophy. We have books on the philosophy of Manufactures, the philosophy of Agriculture, the philosophy of Cookery, etc. In all this we are the ridicule of other nations. Socrates, it is said, brought down philosophy from the clouds,—the English have degraded her to

the kitchen; and this, our prostitution of the term, is, by foreigners, alleged as a significant indication of the low state of the mental sciences in Britain.'

Consciousness, he holds, is the basis of all intelligence. We are conscious not of the internal alone but of the external, of the *non-ego* as really as of the *ego*. Mind and matter are the two antithetical factors always and necessarily given in every act of perception. 'We have no reason whatever to doubt the report of consciousness, that we actually perceive at the external point of sensation, and that we perceive the material reality.' That is, we have an immediate and direct knowledge of physical objects:

'The total and real object of perception is the external object under relation to our sense and faculty of cognition. Suppose the total object to be twelve, that the external reality constitutes six, the material sense three, and the mind three; this may enable you to form some conjecture of the nature of the object of perception.'

Moreover, we can know a thing only as it stands related to our faculties. The latter being different, our knowledge would be different. To know is thus to limit. Hence we can know or conceive only the conditioned, not the infinite or the absolute. 'Existence, absolutely and in itself, is to us as zero.' The *absolute commencement* of anything that exists is, therefore, inconceivable. Consequently we are compelled to believe that every event has a cause. The idea of causation, we are taught, does not arise from power, but from want of it—the inability to pursue a thing into nonentity. In like manner, we cannot conceive a volition wholly undetermined; that is, a cause which is not itself caused: but if liberty is inconceivable, so also is its opposite, necessity. Though each of two contradictory opposites be beyond the limits of thought, one must be held as true; and the appeal is to consciousness, the Bible of philosophy, which declares in favor of God, freedom, and immortality.

Our present concern is, not to ask whether these doctrines be true, but to suggest that the lesson is salutary,—faith in the invisible; and to note, in this revival of philosophy, the change from the sensual to the super-sensual, a change manifest in all the high imaginative literature of the period. Speculation and poetry were alike uplifting and essentially interior,—engrossed by interests of the soul; a common character due in part to the universal renewal of ideas and ideality, in part to the importation of systems and dreams across the German Ocean, mainly by Coleridge, Wordsworth, the Scotch thinkers, and Carlyle.

**Résumé.**—The death of William IV, in 1837, closes the reign of personal government, and the accession of Victoria marks, amid confusion, discontent, and doubt, the expansion of constitutional freedom. The Tories, or Conservatives, go into office; the Whigs, or Liberals, into opposition; while the rise of the Free-Trade movement and the Chartist agitations indicate the ferment and spread of republican, or democratic, principles. Industrial strikes, socialistic assemblages, reform projects, church dissensions, mechanical improvements, the discoveries of science and their application to the business of life, prove the period to be one of excitement, of enthusiasm, and of growth. The opinions and contests born of the French Revolution inflame the passions and stimulate the imaginations of Europe. New thoughts, new hopes, new fears, new sentiments, pass into the heart and brain, and inspire a new literature, that reflects the mighty commotions and the numerous agencies which concur in its formation. Poets become innovators. Scott revives primitive feeling and feudal exploit. Coleridge opens the door to a stream of German ideas, while another sweeps in from France. The two currents lead to the study of first principles and the assertion of transcendental truth. Emotion is preëminent; nature, the goddess of adoration. Style becomes a free and direct expression of thought. Poetry, the predominant form of literature, breathes a spirit of universal sympathy; distinguished in its philosophical character especially by Wordsworth, in its imaginative character by Shelley, in its revolutionary character by Byron. The drama is less prolific of excellence. Few of the great venture on the field; still fewer reap any laurels. Fiction communicates the spirit and lessons of history, or exhibits in life and action new theories of education and morals. Much of the intellectual power of the age is expended in reviews. Criticism, aiming at life, clearness, and unity, throws a flood of light upon the past. Historical composition, aiming at the harmony and significance of manners and events, appeals to the thoughtful, cultivated student of human affairs. Utility is the avowed principle of action, and science, spreading with unexampled zeal, is applied to the arts with brilliant success. The consciousness of the Divine presence is being identified with the notion of consistent and regular evolution. Rationalism engenders more liberal views of God, a more fra-



ternal disposition, and a purer worship. Benevolence acts on a wider scale. Religious culture flows into new channels, winds its course among humble valleys, refreshes thirsty deserts, and enriches distant climes.

America, absorbing within herself and harmonizing the discordant elements of other races, produces little of general interest likely to become classical. The leading impulse is the pursuit of wealth. The cares of existence exclude its embellishments. Originality passes into machines. Religion is expansive and practical. Literature is, to a great degree, an offshoot or continuation of the European. The few who write are largely English in substance, still more in form. Irving and Cooper—though the one remembers Addison or Goldsmith, and the other Scott—have the refreshing flavor of nationality. Poetry, with hardly an exception, harps on the transatlantic strings. Here and there, in this and other departments, are risen or rising lights which render the country conspicuous at a distance. But the literary atmosphere is wanting; and what is done is chiefly prized, on the whole, as a promise of higher and more extensive effort.

A stirring, pregnant, eventful age, whose utterance—displaying the prevalent passion for change, the thirst for untried good, the impatience of endured wrong, the deeper sense of human worth—comes from the soul in the language of conviction and strong feeling.

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## SCOTT.

Blessings and prayers in nobler retinue  
Than sceptred king or laurelled conqueror knows,  
Follow the wondrous potentate.—*Wordsworth.*

**Biography.**—Born in Edinburgh, in 1771; taken at the age of three to the farm-house of an aged relative to try the efficacy of bracing air on his little shrunken leg; spent his days till his eighth year in the open fields, in the fellowship of sheep and lambs, and fed his imagination on legends of border heroism and adventure; then sent to the High School of his native town, where he became distinguished as a story-teller; transferred to the uni-

versity, where, instead of the regular course of studies, he pored over Ariosto, Cervantes, and other romancers; contracted an illness by the bursting of a blood-vessel, and, forbidden to speak, did nothing but read from morning till night; became a clerk to his father, and, in the midst of his mechanical duties, made frequent excursions—often on foot—in search of traditional relics; became an advocate, and continued to travel, exploring streams and ruins, gleaning legends and ballads; married, settled on the banks of the Tweed, collated the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, and in 1805 appeared as an original poet. From poetry he passed, in 1814, to fiction, beginning the long series of *Waverley*, and continuing it at the rate of two each year; transformed his cottage into a mansion, tried to revive the feudal life, and dispensed princely hospitality to those who were attracted in crowds by the splendor of his name; went into partnership with his printers, and at the age of fifty-five found himself ruined; resolved, with admirable courage and uprightness, to wipe out by literary task-work a debt of one hundred and seventeen thousand pounds; paid seventy thousand in four years, exhausted his brain, and died a paralytic in 1832.

**Writings.**—Percy's *Reliques* had prepared the way for the *Minstrelsy*, which contained many new ballads, with valuable local and historical notes. Its reputation led the world to expect something brilliant. In the maturity of his powers, he wrote the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, which was received with a rapture of enthusiasm. This is a story of the sixteenth century reviving the manners and sentiments of chivalrous times. The portrait of the aged harper, last of the race, is inimitable:

'The way was long, the wind was cold,  
The minstrel was infirm and old;  
His withered cheek, and tresses gray,  
Seemed to have known a better day;  
The harp, his sole remaining joy,  
Was carried by an orphan boy.  
The last of all the bards was he  
Who sung of Border chivalry;  
For well-a-day! their date was fled;  
His tuneful brethren all were dead,  
And he, neglected and oppressed,  
Wished to be with them, and at rest.  
No more, on prancing palfrey borne,  
He caroled, light as lark at morn;  
No longer courted and caressed,

High placed in hall a welcome guest,  
 He poured to lord and lady gay,  
 The unpremeditated lay:  
 Old times were changed, old manners gone;  
 A stranger filled the Stuart's throne;  
 The bigots of the iron time  
 Had called his harmless art a crime.  
 A wandering harper, scorned and poor,  
 He begged his bread from door to door,  
 And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,  
 The harp a king had loved to hear.'

Scott's love of country was like the passion of a lover for his bride. His fervid patriotism is inspirational in these famous lines:

'Breathes there a man with soul so dead,  
 Who never to himself hath said,  
 This is my own, my native land!  
 Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,  
 As home his footsteps he hath turned  
 From wandering on a foreign strand!  
 If such there breathe, go, mark him well;  
 For him no minstrel raptures swell;  
 High though his titles, proud his name,  
 Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;  
 Despite those titles, power, and pelf,  
 The wretch, concentred all in self,  
 Living, shall forfeit fair renown,  
 And, doubly dying, shall go down  
 To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,  
 Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.'

The same rapid movement, the same animated variety of scenery and incident, appear in the greater poem of *Marmion*. The battle scene and death of the hero are among its most spirited passages. The following is a fine piece of description:

'Day set at Norham's castled steep,	St. George's banner, broad and gay,
And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep,	Now faded as the fading ray,
And Cheviot's mountains lone:	Less bright, and less, was flung;
The battled towers, the donjon keep,	The evening gale had scarce the power
The loophole grates where captives weep,	To wave it on the donjon tower,
The flanking walls that round it sweep,	So heavily it hung.
In yellow lustre shone.	The scouts had parted on their search,
The warriors on the turrets high,	The castle gates were barred;
Moving athwart the evening sky,	Above the gloomy portal arch,
Seemed forms of giant height:	Timing his footsteps to a march,
Their armor, as it caught the rays,	The warder kept his guard,
Flashed back again the western blaze,	Low humming, as he paced along,
In lines of dazzling light.	Some ancient Border gathering-song.'

Here and there we find a well remembered passage, to instruct or elevate by its sentiment:

'O woman! in our hours of ease,  
 Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,

And variable as the shade  
 By the light quivering aspen made;  
 When pain and anguish wring the brow,  
 A ministering angel thou!’

Of the same chivalric type, but more richly picturesque, as well as more regular and interesting in plot, is the *Lady of the Lake*, the most popular of the author’s poems. The press could hardly keep pace with the demand. The post-horse duty rose in Scotland to an extraordinary degree, from the eagerness of travellers to visit the localities described. If the other may be styled courtly, sounding, and stirring, this may be called tender, gentle and domestic. The following are illustrations of its deeper meaning and subtler interest:

‘At first the chieftain to his chime,  
 With lifted hand, kept feeble time;  
 That motion ceased; yet feeling strong  
 Varied his look as changed the song:  
 At length no more his deafened ear  
 The minstrel’s melody can hear:  
 His face grows sharp; his hands are clenched  
 As if some pang his heart-strings wrenched;  
 Set are his teeth, his fading eye  
 Is sternly fixed on vacancy.  
 Thus, motionless and moanless, drew  
 His parting breath stout Roderick Dhu.’

And:

<p>‘He is gone on the mountain,          He is lost to the forest,          Like a summer-dried fountain          When our need was the sorest.          The font reappearing,          From the rain-drops shall borrow,          But to us comes no cheering,          To Duncan no morrow!          The hand of the reaper          Takes the ears that are hoary,          But the voice of the weeper          Wails manhood in glory.</p>	<p>The autumn winds rushing,          Waft the leaves that are searest,          But our flower was in flushing,          When blighting was nearest.          Fleet foot on the correi,          Sage counsel in cumber,          Red hand in the foray,          How sound is thy slumber!          Like the dew on the mountain,          Like the foam on the river,          Like the bubble on the fountain,          Thou art gone, and forever!’</p>
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Thenceforth his popularity as a poet sensibly declined, a fact due in part to unfortunate choice of subject, in part to exhaustion of the particular vein, and in part to the eclipsing radiance of a new star,—Byron,—who now drew attention, for the first time, from the outward form of man and nature to the secret recesses of soul. Returning, therefore, to his former notion of illustrating the manners of the past in prose, as he had done in verse, he found among some old lumber in the attic an incomplete manuscript thrown aside nearly ten years before, and in 1814 presented

anonymously to the world the first of his long series of descriptive and historical novels,—*Waverley*. Pouring after it, came the flood of its successors. The following, including historical epochs and dates, is a tabular view of the vast and varied cycle which made the ‘Great Unknown,’ as he was called, the wonder of his age:

### 1. *Historical.*

TITLES.		EPOCHS.	DATES.
WAVERLEY,	<i>Scottish,</i>	Pretender's attempt,	1745
OLD MORTALITY,	“	Rebellion of the Covenanters,	1679
LEGEND OF MONTROSE,	“	Civil War,	1645
THE ABBOT,	“	Mary Queen of Scots,	1568
THE MONASTERY,	“	Mary Queen of Scots,	1559
FAIR MAID OF PERTH,	“	Reign of Robert III,	1402
CASTLE DANGEROUS,	“	Black Douglas,	1306
IVANHOE,	<i>English,</i>	Richard Lion-Heart,	1194
KENILWORTH,	“	Reign of Elizabeth,	1575
FORTUNES OF NIGEL,	“	Reign of James I,	1620
PEVERIL OF THE PEAK,	“	Reign of Charles II,	1660
BETROTHED,	“	Welsh Wars,	1187
TALISMAN,	“	Richard Lion-Heart,	1193
WOODSTOCK,	“	Civil War and Commonwealth,	1652
QUENTIN DURWARD,	<i>Continental,</i>	Louis XI and Charles the Bold,	1470
ANNE OF GEIERSTEIN,	“	Epoch of Battle of Nancy,	1477
COUNT ROBERT OF PARIS,	“	Crusaders at Byzantium,	1090

### 2. *Social.*

TITLES.	DATES.	TITLES.	DATES.
GUY MANNERING,	1750	THE PIRATE,	1700
ANTIQUARY,	1798	ST. RONAN'S WELL,	1800
BLACK DWARF,	1708	REDGAUNTLET,	1770
ROB ROY,	1715	SURGEON'S DAUGHTER,	1750
HEART OF MIDLOTHIAN,	1751	TWO DROVERS,	1765
BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR,	1700	HIGHLAND WIDOW,	1735

The latter class, differing from the former mainly in a less close attachment of the narrative to history, relate chiefly to Scottish scenery and character. In addition to this prodigious amount of labor, he wrote much of a miscellaneous nature for reviews, edited Dryden and Swift, produced numerous works in the departments of criticism and biography; among them, *Life of Napoleon*, *Tales of a Grandfather*, *Demonology and Witchcraft*. Was ever such activity known, combined with such general excellence in the results?

**Style.**—Always easy and graphic, full of grace and glowing brightness, though never polished, proverbially careless and incorrect, as of one who looked only at broad and general effects, and was studious not so much of melody as of pictures. In verse,



flowing and vivid; an imitation, to some extent, of the irregular form adopted by the early minstrels. The prevailing measure is the octosyllabic, so well suited to a rapidly-succeeding variety of emotions.

The picturesque would seem to have been his forte. Witness the magnificent descriptions of sunset, sea, and forest:

‘The sun was now resting his huge disk upon the edge of the level ocean, and gilded the accumulation of towering clouds through which he had travelled the livelong day, and which now assembled on all sides, like misfortunes and disasters around a sinking empire and falling monarch. Still, however, his dying splendour gave a sombre magnificence to the massive congregation of vapours, forming out of the unsubstantial gloom the show of pyramids and towers, some touched with gold, some with purple, some with a hue of deep and dark red. The distant sea, stretched beneath this varied and gorgeous canopy, lay almost portentously still, reflecting back the dazzling and level beams of the descending luminary, and the splendid colouring of the clouds amidst which he was setting. Nearer to the beach, the tide rippled onward in waves of sparkling silver, that imperceptibly, yet rapidly, gained upon the sand.’<sup>1</sup>

And:

‘The sun was setting upon one of the rich glassy glades of the forest. Hundreds of broad-headed, short-stemmed, wide-branched oaks, which had witnessed, perhaps, the stately march of the Roman soldiery, flung their gnarled arms over a thick carpet of the most delicious greensward; in some places they were intermingled with beeches, hollies, and copsewood of various descriptions, so closely as totally to intercept the level beams of the sinking sun; in others, they receded from each other, forming those long sweeping vistas, in the intricacy of which the eye delights to lose itself; while imagination considers them as the paths to yet wider scenes of silvan solitude. Here the red rays of the sun shot a broken and discoloured light, that fell partially upon the shattered boughs and mossy trunks of the trees; and there they illuminated, in brilliant patches, the portions of turf to which they made their way. A considerable open space in the midst of this glade seemed formerly to have been dedicated to the rites of Druidical superstition; for on the summit of a hillock, so regular as to seem artificial, there still remained part of a circle of rough unhewn stones, of large dimensions. Seven stood upright; the rest had been dislodged from their places, probably by the zeal of some convert to Christianity, and lay, some prostrate near their former site, and others on the side of the hill. One large stone only had found its way to the bottom, and in stopping the course of a small brook which glided smoothly round the foot of the eminence, gave, by its opposition, a feeble voice of murmur to the placid and elsewhere silent streamlet.’<sup>2</sup>

**Rank.**—In poetry, the great modern troubadour. Though not of the illustrious few of the first class, he is the most eminent in minstrellic power. To Wordsworth, Shelley, and Byron, he is inferior in the perception of the spiritual mysteries of the universe; superior in creative conception, or the comprehensiveness which freed him from personal prejudices in describing life and manners, and which enabled him to represent, not one man, but collective human nature. In the refined processes of imagination and feeling, as poet or novelist, he is confessedly deficient, while

<sup>1</sup>*Antiquary.*

<sup>2</sup>*Ivanhoe.*

he has something in common with Shakespeare in the power of rendering palpable the remote, and idealizing the actual. Profound analysis there is not. In the delineation of character and scenery he devotes himself comparatively to the exterior, having neither the talent nor the leisure to reach the depth. The world which he exhibits is not of the highest art, true at once to the particular and the universal. Call it either modern, enlightened by the far-setting sun of chivalry; or Middle Age, sifted of its harsher features, softened and transfigured by the present. In the power of simple narration he is almost unequalled. Over every scene he pours the full tide of exuberant existence, and makes it live and glow. Writing with great rapidity, he aimed, in his plots, at no more than picturesque arrangement. The bravery of his struggle raises him as high among the heroes of his race as does his genius among its writers.

**Character.**—The temper of his mind was spirited, active, objective, chivalrous. He had a peculiar affinity with historic forces. His tastes and habits were antiquarian. He wished to be the founder of a distinct branch. His establishment was on the feudal scale; his house was fashioned in imitation of the ancient castles. His museum and grounds were adorned with relics. The tunes he loved were the simple notes of his native minstrelsy. As was remarked above, he could seize readily the sensible, significant features of objects, but had little spiritual penetration into their sources, relations, and issues. He said himself, in expressing his admiration of Miss Austen:

‘The big bow-wow strain I can do myself, like any now going, but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting, from the truth of the description and the sentiments, is denied to me.’

Though an aristocrat and a Tory, he loved men from the bottom of his heart. None ever treated his inferiors with greater kindness. His domestics served him gladly because they loved him. His shining face diffused its exhilarating glow wherever it appeared. His manners were spontaneous. ‘Give me an honest laugh,’ he said. ‘Sir Walter,’ said one of his old retainers, ‘speaks to every man as if he were his blood-relation.’ It was in his own home that his benevolence found its proper theatre for expansion. He delighted to collect his tenantry around him convivially. He watched over the education of his children,

shared in their rides, rambles and sports. He says in one of his letters:

‘There are many good things in life, whatever satirists and misanthropes may say to the contrary, but probably the best of all, next to a conscience void of offence (without which, by the by, they can hardly exist), are the quiet exercise and enjoyment of the social feelings, in which we are at once happy ourselves, and the cause of happiness to them who are dearest to us.’

His fellowship extended to dogs, of which he was excessively fond, pet hens, pet donkeys, and pet pigs.

The genial sunshiny freshness, the general healthiness, manifest in his pages, indicate a radical quality of his mind. Though his sensibilities were easily moved, he thought less of sympathizing with sorrow than of mitigating it. Such is his philosophy:

‘The last three or four years have swept away more than half the friends with whom I lived in habits of great intimacy. . . . Yet we proceed with our plantations and plans as if any tree but the sad cypress would accompany us to the grave where our friends have gone before us. It is the way of the world, however, and must be so; otherwise life would be spent in unavailing mourning for those whom we have lost. It is better to enjoy the society of those who remain to us.’

The basis of his character, as of all great ones, was energy triumphant over infirmity, disease, and disaster. His memory was precocious. An urchin at school, he could repeat whole cantos of Ossian and Spenser. What he acquired with facility he retained with pertinacity. He threw his ideas into language with marvellous ease. The last two volumes of *Waverley* were written in *three weeks!* A student watching the movement of his hand from the window of a neighboring attic, said: ‘It never stops; page after page is finished and thrown upon that heap of manuscript, and still it goes on unwearied; and so it will be till candles are brought in, and God knows how long after that. It is the same every night. I can’t stand the sight of it when I am not at my books.’ He rose at five the year round, and was scrupulously exact in the distribution of his hours.

His first ambition was feudal magnificence. Literary glory was secondary. His own productions he disparaged, yet criticism annoyed him. ‘I make it a rule never to read the attacks made upon me.’ So is Voltaire said to have been indifferent to praise, while the least word from an enemy drove him crazy.

Light and careless as he would seem to have been, he was inherently and consistently sad. This is an entry in his journal:

‘Anybody would think from the fal-de-ral conclusion of my journal of yesterday that I left town in a very good humor. But nature has given me a kind of buoyancy—I

know not what to call it—that mingles with my deepest afflictions and most gloomy hours. I have a secret pride—I fancy it will be most truly termed—which impels me to mix with my distress strange snatches of mirth, which have no mirth in them.'

We have more than once remarked this blending of opposite if not paradoxical qualities. Grimaldi, a celebrated clown, was pursued by a devouring melancholy. Liston, whose face would set an audience in good humor, was a confirmed hypochondriac. Molière was grave and silent. Invited to an evening party, to entertain the company with his wit, he scarcely opened his lips. To a physician of Paris there came one day an unknown patient, suffering under the deepest depression of mind, without any discoverable or assignable cause. 'You must drink good wine,' said he. 'I have in my cellar the best wine in the world,' replied the unknown; 'but it cannot make me forget my sadness.' 'You must travel, then.' 'I have made the tour of Europe; and still my wretchedness has travelled with me.' 'Oh, oh! the case is sad, indeed; but still there is a remedy: go every evening to the Italian comedy; you will see the celebrated harlequin Biancolelli play; his gayety is catching; that will make you cheerful.' 'Alas, sir! I see my malady is incurable: *I am Biancolelli!*'

**Influence.**—The vast sums which his prose and verse won, show how extensive was his popularity. He was the favorite of his age, read over the whole of Europe. He was the master-spirit that entered the wide field of historical romance and gleaned its wealth for posterity. Without writing specifically for ethical aims, he wrote with ethical truth, and is full charged with the morality of the future. Apart from their historical value, which is great, the Waverley series created an improved taste—a taste for good sense and genuine feeling, as opposed to rapid sentimentalism and romantic extravagance. With all his delight in Highland chiefs and Border thieves, he has a true brotherhood with men, and continually hints some tie between the reader and the vast varieties of being, ever with an eye and a heart to—

'Make channels for the streams of love  
Where they may broadly run.'

Doubtless, without being professedly so, he wished to be useful. It filled his eyes with tears to be told that he was doing great good by his attractive and noble tales. His fundamental honesty, and his wide humanity would form an *a priori* guarantee

that his works, on the whole, should contribute to the amelioration of man and society. On his deathbed it consoled him that he had not compromised the interests of virtue. He said to his son-in-law:

'Lockhart, I may have but a minute to speak to you. My dear, be a good man—be virtuous, be religious—be a good man. Nothing else will give you comfort when you come to lie here.'

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## WORDSWORTH.

I do not know a man more to be venerated for uprightness of heart and loftiness of genius.—*Walter Scott.*

**Biography.**—Born at Cockermonth, in the north of England, in 1770; educated at Cambridge; travelled, visited France, and, with the rest, felt the flame of the Revolution; returned, lived in seclusion and devoted himself to poetry, which he was enabled to do by a small legacy from a young friend; formed the acquaintance of Coleridge, and with him went to Germany; returned and settled with his sister at Grasmere, Coleridge and Southey residing near them,—whence the famous Lake School; received an increase of fortune, and married a friend of his early days, of whom, in the third year of his married life, he wrote:

'*She came*, no more a Phantom to adorn  
A moment, but an inmate of the heart,  
And yet a spirit there for me enshrined  
To penetrate the lofty and the low;  
Even as one essence of pervading light  
Shines in the brightest of ten thousand stars.'

Made repeated tours in Scotland and on the Continent, enjoyed the favors of government, succeeded Southey as poet-laureate, lived uneventfully, engrossed by contemplations, and gladdened by growing fame, and died in 1850, calmly, peacefully.

**Writings.**—Such a life was suited to nourish a thinker and a moralist. His great work is the *Excursion*, a genuinely noble poem on the interests of the soul, as thus set forth with the imposing seriousness of meditation, in the grave, grand harmonies of the organ:

'On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,  
Musing in solitude, I oft perceive



Fair trains of imagery before me rise,  
 Accompanied by feelings of delight,  
 Pure, or with no unpleasing sadness mixed;  
 And I am conscious of affecting thoughts  
 And dear remembrances, whose presence soothes  
 Or elevates the mind, intent to weigh  
 The good and evil of our mortal state.  
 To these emotions, whencesoe'er they come,  
 Whether from breath of outward circumstance,  
 Or from the Soul,—an impulse to herself,—  
 I would give utterance in numerous verse.  
 Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope,  
 And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith;  
 Of blessed consolations in distress;  
 Of moral strength, and intellectual Power;  
 Of joy in widest commonality spread;  
 Of the individual mind that keeps her own  
 Inviolable retirement, subject there  
 To Conscience only, and the law supreme  
 Of that Intelligence which governs all—  
 I sing!

The poet falls in with a meditative pedler: the two walk and commune regarding nature and human destiny. The wandering sage muses tenderly, cheerfully, on the troubles of the world, assured—

‘That the procession of our fate, howe'er  
 Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being  
 Of infinite benevolence and power,  
 Whose everlasting purposes embrace  
 All accidents, converting them to good.’

The brooding quiet, as of distance and space; the circling seasons, the falling leaves, the episodic and momentary aspects of his surroundings,—inevitably suggest the everlasting flow and ebb of things, the final evanescence of all:

‘So falls, so languishes, grows dim and dies,  
 All that this world is proud of. From their spheres  
 The stars of human glory are cast down;  
 Perish the roses and the flowers of kings.  
 Princes, and emperors, and the crowns and palms  
 Of all the mighty, withered and consumed!  
 Nor is power given to lowliest innocence  
 Long to protect her own. The man himself  
 Departs; and soon is spent the line of those  
 Who, in the bodily image, in the mind,  
 In heart or soul, in station or pursuit  
 Did most resemble him. Degrees and ranks,  
 Fraternities and orders—heaping high  
 New wealth upon the burthen of the old,  
 And placing trust in privilege confirmed  
 And re-confirmed—are scoffed at with a smile  
 Of greedy foretaste, from the secret stand  
 Of desolation aimed; to slow decline

These yield, and these to sudden overthrow;  
 Their virtue, service, happiness, and state  
 Expire; and Nature's pleasant robe of green,  
 Humanity's appointed shroud, enwraps  
 Their monuments and their memory.'

They are introduced to a hermit, a man driven to despair by disappointment and bereavement, unable to learn the lesson of submission, fiery, impatient, proud and passionate. All proceed to the house of the pastor, who recounts some of the mutations which have passed over his sequestered valley, and delivers this sublime message to the proud, vain, restless, doubting, and weary—the comprehensive and familiar invitation of the eternal Beneficence:

'The sun is fixed,  
 And the infinite magnificence of heaven  
 Fixed within reach of every human eye.  
 The sleepless Ocean murmurs for all ears,  
 The vernal field infuses fresh delight  
 Into all hearts. . . .  
 The primal duties shine aloft like stars,  
 The charities that soothe and heal and bless  
 Are scattered at the feet of man,—like flowers.'

Then this final great truth, which comprehends the rest:

'Life, I repeat, is energy of love  
 Divine or human; exercised in pain,  
 In strife and tribulation; and ordained,  
 If so approved and sanctified, to pass,  
 Through shades and silent rest, to endless joy.'

The beautiful is not confined to the rare. That which makes the beauty of poetry is the sentiment, not the dignity of the characters, nor the pomp of the words. Wordsworth's desire was to teach and elevate by simple means; to reveal, to the humblest, the inexhaustible treasures, the loveliness, the sacredness, the mystery of the common-place. *We are Seven* is an illustration, altogether spiritualistic and non-conventional:

'I met a little cottage girl;  
 She was eight years old, she said;  
 Her hair was thick, with many a curl  
 That clustered round her head.  
 She had a rustic woodland air,  
 And she was wildly clad,  
 Her eyes were fair, and very fair,—  
 Her beauty made me glad.  
 "Sisters and brothers, little maid,  
 How many may you be?"  
 "How many? Seven in all," she said,  
 And wondering looked at me.

"And where are they? I pray you tell."

She answered, "Seven are we;  
And two of us at Conway dwell,  
And two are gone to sea.

Two of us in the churchyard lie,  
My sister and my brother;  
And in the churchyard cottage I  
Dwell near them with my mother."

"You say that two at Conway dwell,  
And two are gone to sea,  
Yet ye are seven! I pray you tell,  
Sweet maid, how this may be?"

Then did the little maid reply,  
"Seven boys and girls are we;  
Two of us in the churchyard lie,  
Beneath the churchyard tree."

"You run about, my little maid,  
Your limbs they are alive;  
If two are in the churchyard laid,  
Then ye are only five."

"Their graves are green, they may be seen,"  
The little maid replied,  
"Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,  
And they are side by side.

My stockings there I often knit,  
My kerchief there I hem,  
And there upon the ground I sit,—  
I sit and sing to them.

And often after sunset, Sir,  
When it is light and fair,  
I take my little porringer,  
And eat my supper there.

The first that died was little Jane;  
In bed she moaning lay,  
Till God released her from her pain,  
And then she went away.

So in the churchyard she was laid:  
And when the grass was dry,  
Together round her grave we played,—  
My brother John and I.

And when the ground was white with snow,  
And I could run and slide,  
My brother John was forced to go,—  
And he lies by her side."

"How many are you, then," said I,  
"If they two are in heaven?"  
The little maiden did reply,  
"O master! we are seven."

"But they are dead; those two are dead!  
Their spirits are in heaven!"  
'Twas throwing words away; for still

The little maid would have her will,  
And said, "Nay, we are seven!"

It is perhaps to these minor poems that he, like Milton, owes his warm and living place in the English heart. Another is the *Intimations of Immortality*, a marvellous outburst of highest poetry, as unexceptionable in diction as it is deep and true. Whoever has recollection of his early years, whoever cherishes the hallowed dreams of youth, whoever has observed with thoughtful reverence the tastes, delights, affections, the mythic utterances and strange questionings of childhood, will appreciate these Platonic lines:

'There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,  
The earth, and every common sight,  
To me did seem  
Apparelled in celestial light,  
The glory and the freshness of a dream.  
It is not now as it hath been of yore;  
Turn wheresoe'er I may,  
By night or day,  
The things which I have seen I now can see no more. . . .  
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.'

Some of his sonnets are very beautiful; for instance, the following, at once powerful and sweet:

'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;  
The gentleness of heaven is on the sea;  
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,  
And doth with His eternal motion make  
A sound like thunder — everlastingly.  
Dear child! dear girl! that walkest with me here,

If thou appear'st untouched by solemn thought,  
 Thy nature is not therefore less divine:  
 Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;  
 And worship'st at the temple's inner shrine,  
 God being with thee when we know it not.'

**Style.**—Himself a creature of the reaction which set in with Cowper and Burns, he rushed to ridiculous extremes of simplicity, and in his earlier poems resolved to write as rustics talked, maintaining that their language was the fittest for verse of every description. He also contended that poetic diction should be in all respects the same with that of prose. Accordingly, we have a serious and affecting poem, *We are Seven*, beginning thus:

'A little child, dear brother *Jim*.'

In another, equally pathetic, a blind boy ventures on the sea:

'In such a vessel ne'er before  
 Did human creature leave the shore.'

That is, he pushes out into the perilous element in—

'A household tub like one of those  
 Which women use to wash their clothes.'

Words derive their tone and color from the ideas they embody and the heat they contain. Poetry may descend to the level of colloquialism, but cannot be confined there. In his later productions, and in the most successful of his earlier ones, Wordsworth deviated from his theory. Sometimes insipid, sometimes diffuse, he is usually graceful and harmonious, austere pure, and deeply musical, often magnificent.

**Rank.**—The poet of reflection and contemplation. By his self-consciousness, and his want of passion, he is not of the Shakespearean mould, nor hence of those who move human nature most profoundly. His personages are without reality—abstractions. Solemn and even, essentially philosophical and undramatic, he belongs to the Miltonian type without reaching the eminence of that bard of Paradise. As an interpreter of nature, he took the step which Chaucer and Shakespeare never took,—to explore the virtue which resides in the symbol, to describe objects as they affect human hearts, to show how the inflowing world is a material image through which the sovereign mind holds intercourse with man. Foremost and alone as the poet of the common and familiar, not, indeed, of the wit and merriment in things, but of the tenderness and thoughtfulness in



them. His ideas and sentiments are not in general those of the present, and cannot interest the worldly. They rank him with those who sing prophecies of a new and larger era.

No English author has so divided the critics. A few—De Quincey and Coleridge among them—think that he belongs to the first class; the majority think that he is not entitled to this distinction. Meanwhile his star is climbing ever higher into the unclouded sky. The circle of his readers widens with the process of the suns.

**Character.**—His reading was not extensive. He looked nature and man directly in the face, seemingly resolved to take nothing at second-hand. Essentially a thinker and a dreamer, listening to his own thoughts in solitary complacency, and thus falling into the errors of undue exaltation of the trivial, undue consciousness of self, excessive indifference to the meditative world and its noisy inanities. Carlyle, speaking of his deportment at a large and sumptuous dinner, says:

'I look upwards, leftwards, the coast being luckily for a moment clear; then, far off, beautifully screened in the shadow of his vertical green circle, which was on the other side of him, sate Wordsworth, silent, slowly, but steadily, gnawing some portion of what I judged to be raisins, with his eye and attention placidly fixed on these and these alone; the sight of whom, and of his rock-like indifference to the babble, quasi-scientific and other, with attention turned on the small practical alone, was comfortable and amusing to me, who felt like him, but could not eat raisins. This little glimpse I could still paint, so clear and bright is it, and this shall be symbolical of all.'

His self-absorption was so great that he was unconquerable by criticism or ridicule. He was a law unto himself, moving forward in the full assurance that his work, though unpopular, would be immortal. Spared the disturbing cares with which most men have to struggle, worshipped by his family, prosperous and happy,—circumstances increased his naturally high sense of merit. This is Carlyle's peculiar 'reminiscence':

'One evening, I got him upon the subject of great poets, who I thought might be admirable equally to us both; but was rather mistaken, as I gradually found. Pope's partial failure I was prepared for; less for the narrowish limits visible in Milton and others. I tried him with Burns, of whom he had sung tender recognition; but Burns also turned out to be a limited inferior creature, any genius he had a theme for one's pathos rather; even Shakespeare himself had his blind sides, his limitations; gradually it became apparent to me that of transcendent unlimited there was, to this critic, probably but one specimen known, Wordsworth himself!'

Seated on a throne in the seclusion of his mountains, it doubt-

less seemed to him right and fitting to relate in the *Prelude* the history of his mind — ‘how it had orb'd into the perfect star.’

His love of nature was a passion — a blissful and holy one. In boyhood, forms and colors were a rapture; in manhood, they were essences ineffable:

‘For I have learned  
To look on nature, not as in the hour  
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes  
The still, sad music of humanity,  
Nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample power  
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt  
A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean, and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,  
A motion, and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things.’

So intense was his spirituality, that he saw poetical elements in all objects, something sacred and sublime in the lowest. A washing-tub and a sucking pig are linked with exalted and kindling truths. Doubtless he thus invited, if he did not merit, the shafts of ridicule. It is, we think, this disposition or desire to see under disguises and humble forms everlasting beauty, that explains the occasional want of dignity in his themes, as well as his colloquial familiarity of treatment. He desired so to wed the minds of men to this goodly universe, that Elysian groves and Fortunate Fields should be a produce of the common day:

‘By words  
Which speak of nothing more than what we are,  
Would I arouse the sensual from their sleep  
Of death, and win the vacant and the vain  
To noble raptures.’

Only through the soul can the outer world be rightly apprehended. Affection, pure and noble, is always to be honored and admired as much in the peasant as in the prince. No one has more powerfully delineated the sentiments of benevolence, charity, and love. With an exquisite delicacy and depth of feeling, he was defective in the stronger passions, and hence had little power to stir the blood. Seldom, indeed, has he reached the warmth of the following description, whose tints are all ideal:

‘His present mind  
Was under fascination; he beheld

A vision, and adored the thing he saw.  
 Arabian fiction never filled the world  
 With half the wonders that were wrought for him.  
 Earth breathed in one great presence of the spring:  
 Life turned the meanest of her implements  
 Before his eyes, to price above all gold:  
 The house she dwelt in was a sainted shrine;  
 Her chamber window did surpass in glory  
 The portals of the dawn; all paradise  
 Could, by the simple opening of a door,  
 Let itself in upon him; pathways, walks,  
 Swarmed with enchantment, till his spirit sank  
 Surcharged within him,—overblest to move  
 Beneath a sun that wakes a weary world  
 To its dull round of ordinary cares;  
 A man too happy for mortality!'

On the whole, a plain, sincere, manly, wise, and happy man, calm, contemplative, and self-supported, to whom existence was moral and divine; quite inexplicable, indeed, by English mud and English utilities!

**Influence.**—On the poetry of his age, beneficial and extensive. He supplied an inexhaustible fund of antagonism to the philosophy which wraps the soul in a 'sensual fleece,' and gave the final quietus to the theory of mere taste and imitation, opposing to romantic themes and inflated diction, sense, nature and simplicity. More than any other, perhaps, did he contribute to spiritualize modern imaginative literature. He enlisted intellects in favor of an expansive and kindly philanthropy, brightened daily life with images of beauty and grace, gave us nobler loves and nobler cares.

Too little sensuous to be, as yet, widely popular; but that popularity will extend in proportion as the general mind ascends to his mount of vision. As long as perfection is the pole-star of humanity, admiring reverence will be paid —

'TO THE MEMORY OF  
 WILLIAM WORDSWORTH,  
 A TRUE PHILOSOPHER AND POET.  
 WHO BY A SPECIAL GIFT AND CALLING OF ALMIGHTY GOD,  
 WHETHER HE DISCOURSED ON MAN OR NATURE,  
 FAILED NOT TO LIFT UP THE HEART TO HOLY THINGS,  
 TIRED NOT OF MAINTAINING THE CAUSE OF THE POOR AND SIMPLE,  
 AND SO, IN PERILOUS TIMES, WAS RAISED UP TO BE  
 A CHIEF MINISTER, NOT ONLY OF NOBLEST POESY,  
 BUT OF HIGH AND SACRED TRUTH.'

<sup>1</sup>Inscription on the mural monument in Grasmere Church.

## BYRON.

Never had any writer so vast a command of the whole eloquence of scorn, misanthropy, and despair.—*Macaulay*.

**Biography.**—Born in London, in 1788; son of a brutal roisterer, who ill-treated his wife, squandered her property, then deserted her; his mother a ‘lioness,’ so passionate that in moments of fury she would rend in pieces her dresses and bonnets, call him a ‘lame brat,’ throw the fire-shovel at his head, then caress him, weep over him. Both were alternate storm and calm. Once they quarrelled so terribly, that each went privately to the apothecary’s to see whether the other had been to purchase poison. Another time, they snatched from his hand a knife with which, in one of his silent rages, he was in the act of cutting his throat. To school at five, and at eight, like Dante, a lover:

‘My passion had its usual effects upon me. I could not sleep—I could not eat—I could not rest; and although I had reason to know that she loved me, it was the texture of my life to think of the time which must elapse before we could meet again, being usually about twelve hours of separation. But I was a fool then, and am not much wiser now.’

At twelve he fell in love with his cousin, who died a year or two afterwards, ‘one of the most beautiful of evanescent beings.’ At fifteen he formed an ardent attachment for Mary Chaworth, whose father the poet’s grand-uncle had slain in a tavern brawl. She became the betrothed of another, and their parting interview is immortalized in *The Dream*:

‘I saw two beings in the hues of youth,  
 Standing upon a hill; a gentle hill,  
 Green and of mild declivity, the last,  
 As ’twere the cape of a long ridge of such,  
 Save that there was no sea to lave its base,  
 But a most living landscape, and the wave,  
 Of woods and corn-fields, and the abodes of men,  
 Scattered at intervals, and wreathing smoke,  
 Arising from such rustic roofs; the hill  
 Was crowned with a peculiar diadem  
 Of trees, in circular array, so fixed,  
 Not by the sport of nature, but of man:  
 These two, a maiden and a youth, were there  
 Gazing—the one on all that was beneath,  
 Fair as herself—but the boy gazed on her;  
 And both were young, and one was beautiful:  
 And both were young—yet not alike in youth.  
 As the sweet moon on the horizon’s verge,  
 The maid was on the eve of womanhood;

The boy had fewer summers, but his heart  
 Had far outgrown his years, and to his eye  
 There was but one beloved face on earth,  
 And that was shining on him.'

At twenty-seven, when the soul had well-nigh exhausted the body, and the body the soul, he married Miss Milbanke, of whom he had said:

'Yesterday, a very pretty letter from Annabella, which I answered. What an odd situation and friendship is ours!—without one spark of love on either side, and produced by circumstances which in general lead to coldness on one side, and aversion on the other. She is a very superior woman, and very little spoiled, which is strange in an heiress—a girl of twenty—a peeress that is to be, in her own right—an only child and a *savante*, who has always had her own way. She is a poetess, a mathematician, a metaphysician, and yet, withal, very kind, generous, and gentle, with very little pretension. Any other head would be turned with half her acquisitions, and a tenth of her advantages.'

Meanwhile he had studied at Harrow and at Cambridge, reading much, exercising vehemently, living irregularly, devouring all sorts of learning except that which was prescribed; had travelled on the Continent, had risen to renown, had been the idol of the gay and the life of the riotous; had been lashed to madness by the critics, had declared war upon society. His wife thought him insane, had him examined by physicians, learned that he was in his right mind, then left him, after a union of twelve months, and refused ever to see him again. This is his wail:

'Would that breast were bared before thee,  
 Where thy head so oft hath lain,  
 While that placid sleep came o'er thee  
 Which thou ne'er canst know again. . . .

All my faults perchance thou knowest,  
 All my madness none can know:  
 All my hopes, where'er thou goest,  
 Wither, yet with *thee* they go. . . .

Fare thee well! thus disunited,  
 Torn from every nearer tie,  
 Sear'd in heart, and lone, and blighted,  
 More than this I scarce can die.'

A daughter, Ada, reminded the wretched parents of what might have been,—a child of love, 'though born in bitterness and nurtured in convulsion.' In the touching lines which close the third canto of *Childe Harold*, he has vision of the sweet face that is lost without hope, and of the happiness which he shall never know:

'My daughter! with thy name this song begun,—  
 My daughter! with thy name thus much shall end,—  
 I see thee not, I hear thee not,—but none  
 Can be so wrapt in thee; thou art the friend



To whom the shadows of far years extend;  
 Albeit my brow thou never shouldst behold,  
 My voice shall with thy future visions blend,  
 And reach into thy heart, when mine is cold,—  
 A token and a tone, even from thy father's mould.'

The blame rested upon him. Popular feeling was strong. He was abused in the papers, and hooted in the streets. Miserable and reckless, he left England in 1816 forever:

'Once more upon the waters! yet once more!  
 And the waves bound beneath me as a steed  
 That knows his rider. Welcome to their roar!  
 Swift be their guidance wheresoe'er it lead!  
 Though the strain'd mast should quiver as a reed,  
 And the rent canvas fluttering strew the gale,  
 Still must I on; for I am as a weed,  
 Flung from the rock, on Ocean's foam to sail  
 Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath prevail.'

He went to Geneva, the poisoned arrows rankling in his memory and his heart; to Rome, to Ravenna, to Venice, where he steeped himself in the voluptuous Italian life; wrote continually, in scornful isolation, inspired by the sublimity without and the tempest within; braved danger, a score of times near death; sank even to debauchery; roused himself, and in 1823 embarked for Greece, to aid in her struggle for independence. There, from exposure, he was seized with a fever, and expired in a few days, at the age of thirty-six, amid the mourning of the nation, having raised himself to the height of glory, and debased himself to the depth of shame.

**Writings.**—Such a man will transcribe himself into his verses. *Childe Harold* is a diary of travel and experience. All were captivated. 'I awoke one morning and found myself famous.' All saw the author in the hero, who—

'Was sore sick at heart,  
 And from his fellow bacchanals would flee;  
 'Tis said, at times the sullen tear would start,  
 But Pride congeal'd the drop within his e'e:  
 Apart he stalk'd in joyless reverie,  
 And from his native land resolved to go,  
 And visit scorching climes beyond the sea:  
 With pleasure drugg'd, he almost long'd for woe.'

Later he throws off the mask, and avows:

'Yet must I think less wildly:—I *have* thought  
 Too long and darkly, till my brain became,  
 In its own eddy boiling and o'erwrought,  
 A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame:

And thus, untaught in youth my heart to tame,  
 My springs of life were poisoned. 'Tis too late!  
 Yet am I changed: though still enough the same  
 In strength to bear what life cannot abate,  
 And feed on bitter fruits without accusing Fate.'

When nature is thus surveyed, every word will note an emotion. Every touch will be vivid. The most powerful will reveal the caged panther that rages to leap upon some satisfying object. Thus:

'Sky, mountains, river, winds, lake, lightnings! ye  
 With night, and clouds, and thunder, and a soul  
 To make these felt and feeling, well may be  
 Things that have made me watchful; the far roll  
 Of your departing voices is the knoll  
 Of what in me is sleepless,—if I rest.  
 But where of ye, O tempests! is the goal?  
 Are ye like those within the human breast?  
 Or do ye find at length, like eagles, some high nest?  
 Could I embody and unbosom now  
 That which is most within me,—could I wreak  
 My thoughts upon expression, and thus throw  
 Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings, strong or weak,  
 All that I would have sought, and all I seek,  
 Bear, know, feel, and yet breathe—into one word,  
 And that one word were Lightning, I would speak;  
 But as it is, I live and die unheard,  
 With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword.'

In this furnace-flame history becomes animate, and we see again the pomps and splendors of its plumed and disorderly procession:

'I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;  
 A palace and a prison on each hand;  
 I saw from out the wave her structures 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!'

The far past is repleted, palpitates and lives. Within the vacant, magic circuit of the Coliseum, the thronged amphitheatre rises to view, with the sights and sounds of Rome's brutal sports. Here 'murder breathes her bloody steam,' and the eager nations murmur pity or roar applause. You shall behold the distant cottage of the dying athlete, slaughtered for the imperial pleasure, then the avenging Alaric descending upon the doomed city:

'I see before me the Gladiator lie;  
 He leans upon his hand,—his manly brow  
 Consents to death, but conquers agony,

And his droop'd head sinks gradually low,—  
 And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow  
 From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,  
 Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now  
 The arena swims around him,—he is gone,  
 Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the wretch who won.

He heard it, but he heeded not,—his eyes  
 Were with his heart, and that was far away;  
 He reck'd not of the life he lost nor prize,  
 But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,  
 There were his young barbarians all at play,  
 There was their Dacian mother,—he, their sire,  
 Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday.  
 All this rush'd with his blood. Shall he expire,  
 And unavenged?—Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire.'

*Cain* gives us the heroism of wickedness and misery, the thirst of knowledge which cannot be quenched, the pride of power which defies heaven and hell:

'*Cain.* Are ye happy?  
*Lucifer.* We are mighty.  
*Cain.* Are ye happy?  
*Lucifer.* No! Art thou?'

His *Corsair* is the story of a pirate whose purer feelings have been chilled and petrified. The heart of rock shelters one flower, and that is blasted when dies the love of his youth:

'The only living thing he could not hate,  
 Was reft at once,—and he deserved his fate,  
 But did not feel it less;—the good explore,  
 For peace, those realms where guilt can never soar;  
 The proud, the wayward, who have fix'd below  
 Their joy, and find this earth enough for woe,  
 Lose in that one their all,—perchance a mite,—  
 But who in patience parts with all delight?  
 Full many a stoic eye and aspect stern  
 Mask hearts where grief hath little left to learn;  
 And many a withering thought lies hid, not lost,  
 In smiles that least befit who wear them most.'

His *Giaour* is a narrative of woe, for which joy has no balm and affliction no sting; a tale of—

'The wither'd frame, the ruin'd mind,  
 The wreck by passion left behind,  
 A shrivell'd scroll, a scatter'd leaf,  
 Sear'd by the autumn blast of grief!'

*Mazeppa* is a record of torture. A lover is bound, by a savage count, on a furious horse rushing over wild plain and through black forest, while the wolves howl behind, and his cords are wet with gore. All day, all night, the race continues, then his pulse grows feeble, his eye dim, and his brain giddy:

'The earth gave way, the skies roll'd round,  
 I seem'd to sink upon the ground;  
 But err'd, for I was fastly bound.  
 My heart turn'd sick, my brain grew sore,  
 And throbb'd awhile, then beat no more:  
 The skies spun like a mighty wheel;  
 I saw the trees like drunkards reel,  
 And a slight flash sprang o'er my eyes,  
 Which saw no further: he who dies  
 Can die no more than then I died.  
 O'er-tortured by that ghastly ride,  
 I felt the blackness come and go,  
 And strove to wake; but could not make  
 My senses climb up from below:  
 I felt as on a plank at sea,  
 When all the waves that dash o'er thee  
 At the same time upheave and whelm,  
 And hurl thee towards a desert realm.'

*Lara* presents the spectacle of a man vainly rearing himself against inevitable fate, the tragic picture of one who —

'Stood a stranger in this breathing world  
 An erring spirit from another hurl'd,  
 A thing of dark imaginings, that shaped  
 By choice the perils he by chance escap'd;  
 But 'scaped in vain, for in their memory yet  
 His mind would half exult and half regret: . . .  
 His early dreams of good outstripp'd the truth,  
 And troubled manhood follow'd baffled youth:  
 With thought of years in phantom chase misspent,  
 And wasted powers for better purpose lent,  
 And fiery passions that had pour'd their wrath  
 In hurried desolation o'er his path,  
 And left the better feelings all at strife  
 In wild reflection o'er his stormy life; . . .  
 So much he soared beyond, or sunk beneath,  
 The men with whom he felt condemn'd to breathe,  
 And long'd by good or ill to separate  
 Himself from all who shared his mortal state:  
 His mind abhorring this had fix'd her throne,  
 Far from the world, in regions of her own.'

In *The Prisoner of Chillon* we see a father perish at the stake for his faith. Of his six sons, one is burned, two fall fighting, and three waste in chains, in dungeon darkness. The eldest sees his brothers sink, one by one, in slow agony, himself unable to reach their dying hands; sees the jailers coldly laugh as they scoop a shallow grave from the turfless earth in the pale and livid light of the cell:

'I had no thought, no feeling—none—  
 Among the stones I stood a stone,  
 And was, scarce conscious what I wist,  
 As shrubless crags within the mist,

For all was blank, and bleak and gray,  
 It was not night,—it was not day;  
 It was not even the dungeon light,  
 So hateful to my heavy sight,  
 But vacancy absorbing space,  
 And fixedness, without a place:  
 There were no stars,—no earth,—no time,  
 No check,—no change,—no good,—no crime,—  
 But silence and a stirless breath  
 Which neither was of life nor death;  
 A sea of stagnant idleness,  
 Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!

*Manfred* is the deification of self-will, a history of remorse without repentance, of suffering which seeks neither hope nor alleviation. It represents a man of unconquerable pride and boundless ambition, hating the world and his kind, yearning after the inaccessible, searching in the loneliest and most tempestuous aspects of nature for sympathy:

‘From my youth upwards  
 My spirit walked not with the souls of men,  
 Nor look’d upon the earth with human eyes;  
 The thirst of their ambition was not mine,  
 The aim of their existence was not mine;  
 My joys, my griefs, my passions, and my powers,  
 Made me a stranger; though I wore the form,  
 I had no sympathy with breathing flesh. . . .  
 My joy was in the Wilderness, to breathe  
 The difficult air of the iced mountain’s top,  
 Where the birds dare not build, nor insect’s wing  
 Flit o’er the herbless granite; or to plunge  
 Into the torrent, and to roll along  
 On the swift whirl of the new breaking wave  
 Of river, stream, or ocean, in their flow.  
 In these my early strength exulted; or  
 To follow through the night the moving moon,  
 The stars and their development; or catch  
 The dazzling lightnings till my eyes grew dim;  
 Or to look, list’ning, on the scatter’d leaves,  
 While autumn winds were at their evening song.’

If he has had father or mother or friend, they seem not such to him; yet was there one—

‘Like me in lineaments,—her eyes,  
 Her hair, her features, all, to the very tone  
 Even of her voice, they said were like to mine;  
 But soften’d all, and temper’d into beauty:  
 She had the same lone thoughts and wanderings,  
 The quest of hidden knowledge, and a mind  
 To comprehend the universe: nor these  
 Alone, but with them gentler powers than mine,  
 Pity, and smiles, and tears,—which I had not;  
 And tenderness,—but that I had for her;



Humility,—and that I never had.  
 Her faults were mine,—her virtues were her own;—  
 I loved her, and destroy'd her! . . .  
 Not with my hand, but heart,—which broke her heart,—  
 It gazed on mine and wither'd.'

The fatal remembrance occupies and fills him:

'My solitude is solitude no more,  
 But peopled with the Furies,—I have gnash'd  
 My teeth in darkness till returning morn,  
 Then cursed myself till sunset;—I have pray'd  
 For madness as a blessing,—'tis denied me.  
 I have affronted death,—but in the war  
 Of elements the waters shrunk from me,  
 And fatal things pass'd harmless,—the cold hand  
 Of an all-pitiless demon held me back,  
 Back by a single hair, which would not break.  
 In phantasy, imagination, all  
 The affluence of my soul. . . . I plunged deep,  
 But like an ebbing wave, it dash'd me back  
 Into the gulf of my unfathom'd thought.'

He will yield to neither men nor demons. When the infernal spirit rises, glaring forth the immortality of hell, and summons him away, he hurls defiance back:

'Thou hast no power upon me, *that* I feel;  
 Thou never shalt possess me, *that* I know;  
 What I have done is done; I bear within  
 A torture which could nothing gain from thine;  
 The mind which is immortal makes itself  
 Requit for its good or evil thoughts,—  
 Is its own origin of ill and end,—  
 And its own place and time,—its innate sense,  
 When stripp'd of this mortality, derives  
 No color from the fleeting things without;  
 But is absorb'd in sufferance or in joy,  
 Born from the knowledge of its own desert.  
*Thou* didst not tempt me, and thou couldst not tempt me;  
 I have not been thy dupe, nor am thy prey,—  
 But was my own destroyer, and will be  
 My own hereafter. Back, ye baffled fiends!  
 The hand of death is on me,—but not yours!'

There is one delight, a grim one,—consciousness of the capacity to suffer. Here and there, twinkling in sombre imagery of despair, are touches of quiet beauty and holy sentiment:

'How beautiful is all this visible world!  
 How glorious in its action and itself!  
 But we, who name ourselves its sovereigns, we  
 Half dust, half deity, alike unfit  
 To sink or soar, with our mix'd essence make  
 A conflict of its elements. . . . Oh, that I were  
 The viewless spirit of a lovely sound,  
 A living voice, a breathing harmony,

A bodiless enjoyment,—born and dying  
With the blest tone which made me!’

Or:

‘The night  
Hath been to me a more familiar face  
Than that of man; and in her starry shade  
Of dim and solitary loveliness,  
I learn’d the language of another world.  
I do remember me that in my youth,  
When I was wandering, upon such a night  
I stood within the Coliseum’s wall,  
Midst the chief relics of almighty Rome;  
The trees which grew along the broken arches  
Waved dark in the blue midnight, and the stars  
Shone through the rents of ruin; from afar  
The watch-dog bay’d beyond the Tiber. . . .  
And thou didst shine, thou rolling moon, upon  
All this, and cast a wide and tender light,  
Which soften’d down the hoar austerity  
Of rugged desolation, and filled up,  
As ’twere anew, the gaps of centuries;  
Leaving that beautiful which still was so,  
And making that which was not, till the place  
Became religion, and the heart ran o’er  
With silent worship of the great of old!—  
The dead, but sceptred sovereigns, who still rule  
Our spirits from their urns.’

If now you would see the grandest of the funeral poems, the most imposing of misanthropical creations, turn to *Darkness*, and witness the dream of universal destruction:

‘I had a dream, which was not all a dream.  
The bright sun was extinguished, and the stars  
Did wander darkling in the eternal space,  
Rayless, and pathless; and the icy earth  
Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air;  
Morn came and went—and came, and brought no day,  
And men forgot their passions in the dread  
Of this their desolation; and all hearts  
Were chilled into a selfish prayer for light:  
And they did live by watch-fires, and the thrones,  
The palaces of crowned kings—the huts,  
The habitations of all things which dwell,  
Were burnt for beacons; cities were consumed,  
And men were gathered round their blazing homes  
To look once more upon each other’s face; . . .  
A fearful hope was all the world contained;  
Forests were set on fire—but hour by hour  
They fell and faded—and the crackling trunks  
Extinguished with a crash—and all was black.  
The brows of men by the despairing light  
Wore an unearthly aspect, as by fits  
The flashes fell upon them; some lay down  
And hid their eyes and wept; and some did rest  
Their chins upon their clenched hands and smiled;

And others hurried to and fro, and fed  
 Their funeral piles with fuel, and look'd up  
 With mad disquietude on the dull sky,  
 The pall of a past world; and then again  
 With curses cast them down upon the dust,  
 And gnashed their teeth, and howled: the wild birds shriek'd,  
 And, terrified, did flutter on the ground,  
 And flap their useless wings; the wildest brutes  
 Came tame and tremulous; and vipers crawl'd  
 And twined themselves among the multitude,  
 Hissing, but stingless — they were slain for food: . . .

A meal was bought

With blood, and each sate sullenly apart  
 Gorging himself in gloom: . . .  
 The meagre by the meagre were devour'd,  
 Even dogs assail'd their masters, all save one,  
 And he was faithful to a corse, and kept  
 The birds, and beasts and famish'd men at bay,  
 Till hunger clung them, or the drooping dead  
 Lured their lank jaws; himself sought out no food —  
 But with a piteous and perpetual moan,  
 And a quick desolate cry, licking the hand  
 Which answer'd not with a caress — he died.  
 The crowd was famished by degrees; but two  
 Of an enormous city did survive,  
 And they were enemies: they met beside  
 The dying embers of an altar-place  
 Where had been heap'd a mass of holy things  
 For an unholy usage; they raked up,  
 And shivering scraped with their cold skeleton hands  
 The feeble ashes, and their feeble breath  
 Blew for a little life, and made a flame  
 Which was a mockery; then they lifted up  
 Their eyes as it grew lighter, and beheld  
 Each other's aspects — saw, and shrieked and died —  
 Ev'n of their mutual hideousness they died, . . .  
 The rivers, lakes, and ocean all stood still,  
 And nothing stirred within their silent depths;  
 Ships sailorless lay rotting on the sea,  
 And their masts fell down piecemeal; as they dropp'd,  
 They slept on the abyss without a surge.'

When Byron had imbued himself with Southern manners and morality he wrote *Don Juan*, the longest, and in some respects, the most characteristic of his poems; a vast medley of description, knowledge, wit, satire, mire and gold, Epicurean philosophy, and hopeless scepticism. It is draped with passages of delicacy and sweetness that form a pleasing contrast with the mockery and hatred which are the prevailing mood. Thus:

'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. . . .

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, passed, proved,  
 Hushed into depths beyond the watcher's diving.'

The great merits of the piece are powerful versification, witty allusion, richness of ideas, sentiments, images. Here is a specimen never to be forgotten:

'Between two worlds life hovers like a star,  
 'Twixt night and morn, upon the horizon's verge.  
 How little do we know that which we are!  
 How less what we may be! The eternal surge  
 Of time and tide rolls on, and bears afar  
 Our bubbles; as the old burst, new emerge,  
 Lash'd from the foam of ages; while the graves  
 Of empires heave but like some passing waves.'

**Style.**—Free, energetic, intense, affluent, melodious, often abrupt and irregular, always representative of himself,—now stormy and smiting, now soft and equable, a foaming, glittering tide. Byron preferred Pope to Shakespeare or Milton. The rest he considered barbarians; the new school, as shabby-genteel. He loved the oratorical form, symmetrical phrase, balanced antithesis. Yet was he more intent on what he had to say than on the way he said it. Most of his romantic tales are written in the octosyllabic measure which Scott brought into fashion. Of his two great performances, *Harold*, his masterpiece, is written in the Spenserian stanza, with an attempt—soon abandoned—to imitate the archaic character of the *Fairy Queen*; *Juan*, in a more flowing and plastic verse, the *ottava rima*, better fitted for the comic vein of which his earlier pieces give no sign, as well as for ribaldry and cynicism.

**Rank.**—The preëminent type of the revolutionary spirit, as Scott of the historical, and Wordsworth of the philosophical. Perhaps the most distinguished genius of the age for originality and energy. When we consider his inexhaustible fertility, his brilliant excesses, his rocket-like flights, the whirling gulf of fantasy and of flame, we are disposed to think him 'a miraculous child'; but his passionate, tumultuous nature so narrowed and perverted his conceptions of man and the world, as to make him

less the poet of the universe than of the individual, and thus to rob him of the real supremacy which his fruitful imagination seemed to promise. His ideals are false to genuine nobility. He could never metamorphose himself into another. There is in all his personages an essential sameness,—men proud and moody, cynical and defiant; women devoted and loving, but unreasoning and instinctive, with the latent fury of the tigress. In all his dramas the central figure is himself, persisting in his eternal monologue. The varieties are varieties of situation and costume.

He called himself 'the grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme.' But we have left his point of view behind us. Man is not an abortion. Life is not a farce. The business of poetry is not revolt mainly. Much has been rejected as worthless, passing with the restless, feverish conditions which gave it birth. Much can perish only with the English language. So felt the unhappy Byron:

'My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,  
And my frame perish even in conquering pain;  
But there is that within me which shall tire  
Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire.'

**Character.**—Never was literature so intensely subjective. Never did a man so clearly impress upon his work his own glory and his own condemnation. Over all are thrown the sable hues of his master-mood,—the gloomy humor of a mighty and sensitive spirit, madly and vainly struggling to break through its enclosure, then recoiling upon itself to find stability in universal scepticism:

'We wither from our youth, we gasp away,  
Sick; sick; unfound the boon, unslaked the thirst,  
Though to the last, in verge of our decay,  
Some phantom lures, such as we sought at first;  
But all too late; so are we doubly curst.  
Love, fame, ambition, avarice; 'tis the same,—  
Each idle, and all ill, and none the worst;  
For all are meteors with a different name,  
And Death the sable smoke where vanishes the flame.'

Joy is a bubble. Wretchedness is the common destiny. All rush to their doom. Some are wrecked earlier, others later:

'There is an order  
Of mortals on the earth who do become  
Old in their youth, and die ere middle age,  
Without the violence of warlike death.  
Some perishing of pleasure, some of study,  
Some worn with toil, some of mere weariness,



Some of disease, and some of insanity,  
 And some of withered or of broken hearts;  
 For this last is a malady which slays  
 More than are numbered in the lists of fate,  
 Taking all shapes and bearing many names.'

This genius was born long ago, its root in the Northern Scald, predisposed to the sad and sombre, revelling in dread images of desolation:

'When I have looked on some face that I love, imagination has often figured the changes that Death must one day produce on it,—the worm rioting on lips now smiling, the features and hues of health changed to the livid and ghastly tints of putrefaction; and the image, conjured up by my fancy, but which is as true as it is a fearful anticipation of what *must* arrive, has left an impression for hours that the actual presence of the object, in all the bloom of health, has not been able to banish: this is one of my pleasures of imagination.'

A volcanic nature is everywhere manifest in his life and utterance. He was a rudderless vessel, tossed about by every breeze of desire, on every wave of passion, impelled to ruin by his own fateful energy. Be it so. 'I will work the mine of my youth to the last vein of the ore, and then,—good night.' Restlessness, the relish of excitement, the craving for strife, are at once the propelling and limiting force of his art:

'To withdraw myself from myself has ever been my sole, my entire, my sincere motive in scribbling at all,—and publishing also the continuance of the same object, by the action it affords to the mind, which else recoils upon itself.'

To a mind thus driven and whirled, yet hedged, life could be only fever and torture. This is the confession wrung from him:

'The worm, the canker, and the grief  
 Are mine alone!

The fire that on my bosom preys  
 Is lone as some volcanic isle;  
 No torch is kindled at its blaze,  
 A funeral pile!'

But in the wind-spiced clouds are momentary rents which reveal the elysium of repose and the heaven of his yearning. His love of nature was passionate, thoughtful, and imaginative. His perceptions of beauty were exquisitely delicate. Passages like the following lace with light and stud with stars the gloom of his meditations:

'And when, at length, the mind shall be all free  
 From what it hates in this degraded form,  
 Reft of its carnal life, save what shall be  
 Existent happier in the fly and worm,—  
 When elements to elements conform,  
 And dust is as it should be, shall I not

Feel all I see, less dazzling, but more warm?  
 The bodiless thought, and spirit of each spot,  
 Of which, even now, I share at times the immortal lot?’

And:

‘Clear, placid Leman! thy contrasted lake,  
 With the wild world I dwelt in, is a thing  
 Which warns me with its stillness to forsake  
 Earth’s troubled waters for a purer spring.  
 This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing  
 To waft me from distraction; once I loved  
 Torn ocean’s roar, but thy soft murmuring  
 Sounds sweet as if a sister’s voice reproved,  
 That I with stern delights should e’er have been so moved.

It is the hush of night, and all between  
 Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear,  
 Mellow’d and mingling, yet distinctly seen,  
 Save darken’d Jura, whose capt heights appear,  
 Precipitously steep; and drawing near,  
 There breathes a living fragrance from the shore  
 Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on the ear  
 Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,  
 Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more.’

His tastes and opinions were capricious, varying with his physical condition. Intellect and imagination were alike restricted. Both were wanting in comprehensiveness. He had many rare glimpses of truth, but not the patience or the talent to pursue or combine them. His strength consisted in insight or intention, on the one hand; a vehement energy or inner exaltation, on the other. He was brave and generous. Scott describes him as being ‘a man of real goodness of heart, and the kindest and best feelings.’ What he needed was to be centrally fixed in principle. How many are the illustrations of his higher and better self, showing that his deep and abiding sympathies were with the tender, pure, noble, and good! Thus:

‘There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,  
 There is a rapture in the lonely shore,  
 There is society where none intrudes,  
 By the deep sea, and music in its roar:  
 I love not man the less, but Nature more,  
 From these our interviews, in which I steal  
 From all I may be, or have been before,  
 To mingle with the Universe, and feel  
 What I can ne’er express, yet cannot all conceal.’

Of *Don Juan*:

‘I am jealously tenacious of the undivided sympathy of my daughter; and that work (*Don Juan*), written to beguile hours of *tristesse* and wretchedness, is well calculated to loosen my hold on her affection. I will write no more of it;—would that I had never written a line!’

Of *Childe Harold*:

‘My theme  
Has died into an echo: it is fit  
The spell should break of this protracted dream.  
The torch shall be extinguished which hath lit  
My midnight lamp,—and what is writ is writ,—  
*Would it were worthier!*’

## Of humanity:

‘It is enough that those who want assistance are men, in order to claim the pity and protection of the meanest pretender to humane feelings.’

## Of woman:

‘Men have no criterion to judge of purity or goodness but woman. Some portion of this purity and goodness always adheres to woman, even though she may lapse from virtue: she makes a willing sacrifice of herself on the altar of affection, and thinks only of him for whom it is made; while men think of themselves alone.’

## Of a prayer in his behalf:

‘I can assure you that all the fame which ever cheated humanity into higher notions of its own importance would never weigh in my mind against the pure and pious interest which a virtuous being may be pleased to take in my welfare.’

## Of immortality:

‘The belief in the immortality of the soul is the only true panacea for the ills of life.’

## Of the separation from his wife:

‘You are one of the few persons with whom I have lived in what is called intimacy, and have heard me at times conversing on the untoward topic of my recent family disquietudes. Will you have the goodness to say to me at once, whether you ever heard me speak of her with disrespect, with unkindness, or defending myself at her expense, by any serious imputations of any description against her? Did you never hear me say, that “when there was a right or wrong, she had the right?” The reason I put these questions to you or other of my friends is, because I am said, by her and hers, to have resorted to such means of exculpation.’

Though proud and reserved, music made him weep. He preferred the Bible above all books, but observe the significant discrimination:

‘I am a great reader and admirer of those books, and had read them through and through before I was eight years old,—that is to say, the Old Testament; for the New struck me as a task, but the other as a pleasure.’

Impatient of all restraint, he feels intensely the moral law, and would flee to materialism as a refuge from bitter self-rebuke; yet, in words of immortal grandeur, revolts against its extinguished hopes:

‘I feel, I feel my immortality o’ersweep  
All pains, all tears, all time, all fears, and peal,  
Like the eternal thunders of the deep,  
Into my ears this truth—“Thou liv’st forever!”’

Himself vicious, he lashed vice in others with bitterness of invective. Aspiring after excellence, he was practically enslaved to vice. In short, he was an assemblage of clashing qualities, an extraordinary mixture of the seraph and the beast. We cannot but say of him, with mournful regret:

‘This should have been a noble creature: he  
Hath all the energy which would have made  
A goodly frame of glorious elements,  
Had they been wisely mingled; as it is,  
It is an awful chaos—light and darkness,  
And mind and dust, and passions and pure thoughts,  
Mix’d and contending, without end or order,  
All dormant or destructive.’

**Influence.**—He flooded forth good and evil impetuously. Much that he wrote is licentious in tone; some of it is openly obscene. Worse still, he holds up to admiration moral monsters in whom ‘one virtue is linked with a thousand crimes.’ The mean and corrupt are made attractive by clothing them in a blaze of diction, or by associating them with images of beauty and sublimity. Virtue is often disparaged, and dignity is conferred on vice. Doubtless, personal hatreds, bitter and reckless moods, frequently prompted him to say what he did not believe or feel. Accused, for example, of thinking ill of women, he replied:

‘If I meet a romantic person, with what I call a too exalted opinion of women, I have a peculiar satisfaction in speaking lightly of them; not out of pique to the sex, but to mortify their champion; as I always conclude, that when a man overpraises women, he does it to convey the impression of how much they must have favored him, to have won such gratitude towards them; whereas there is such an abnegation of vanity in a poor devil’s decrying women,—it is such a proof positive that they never distinguished him, that I can overlook it.’

As we have seen, side by side with this alluring Dead-sea fruit,—

‘Which tempts the eye  
But turns to ashes on the lip,—

are the fruits of the spirit,—beauty, loveliness, aspiration, pity, faith, hope, charity. Byron will always have charms for active, restless youth; and will ever find an echo in the breast of voiceless suffering. We shall not venture to pronounce on the *general tendency* of his writings. In that fadeless garden, flowers and weeds are commingled; in that eternal spring the waters are both salubrious and noxious.

How much does the man of great poetic genius or eloquence owe to mankind! If he sing not the highest word of joy or woe, how great is his remissness! If he dedicate his pen to lust and wine, to ribald mock and scoff, it is the greatest charity that can say to him, 'Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more.' The glory that burns around the brow of the Nazarene, so that we see him two thousand years off, was the birth of this thought — 'The Son of Man has come to save that which is lost.'



# DIFFUSIVE PERIOD.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### FEATURES.

On, like the comet's way, through infinite space,  
Stretches the long untravelled path of light,  
Into the depths of ages.—*Bryant.*

**Politics.**—Legislative measures are but temporary expedients. Because times are progressive, institutions must change. The Act of 1832 came to be regarded by many as a mere instalment of justice. Further expansion was demanded, and the advocacy of reform was no longer attended with personal risk. The agitators grew into a formidable party. The chief were extreme Liberals,—the ‘Chartists.’ Vast meetings were held, at one of which two hundred thousand persons were computed to be present. A monster petition, bearing more than a million names, was rolled into Parliament in a huge tub. Six points were embodied, most of which, in whole or in part, have since been incorporated in British law: universal suffrage; annual parliaments; secret voting,—vote by ballot; abolition of the property qualification for a seat in the House of Commons; payment of members; equal electoral districts. In 1846 the Corn Law, the key-stone of the protective system, was repealed. Free Trade was soon adopted in every department of commerce, and for nearly forty years the commercial policy of Britain has accepted the maxim,—‘Buy in the cheapest market, and sell in the dearest.’ Among later political achievements are the disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish Protestant Church, and the abolition of all religious tests for admission to office or for university degrees.

Evidently England in this era has entered upon the victories of peace. The only war which properly recalls the battle-period of her history was the Crimean, waged with Russia in defence of Turkey. Insular security and national sense have left

her tranquil. The stormy contentions that rage abroad and imperil the fortunes of continental nations, present themselves to her islands in a mitigated form.

Anglo-Americans, troubled with no fear of their neighbors, entertaining no purposes of aggression, and occupying a continent of boundless resources, had elected from the first a career of peaceful industry. Two notable wars have interrupted this development,—that of 1812, and the Great Rebellion; the first originating in the British claim to search American ships, the second in the awakened conscience on the subject of slavery, and the conflict of opinion regarding state sovereignty. The South maintained the right of each state to withdraw, at pleasure, from the Union; and the northern antipathy to the slave system furnished the pretext for secession. The rebellion quelled, industry was resumed with quickened energy. The restoration of order in the wasted and disorganized South, however, has been slow. In the North, growth has been rapid beyond all precedent. To-day united America presents a record of industrial progress without parallel in the annals of the human family. Her population has increased to more than fifty millions. To her hospitable shores men throng from the four quarters of the globe. Yet only a fraction of her magnificent heritage is under cultivation. A century since, in the words of Chatham, she was not allowed to make a horse-shoe nail. Year by year her imports have diminished, and may so continue, till she virtually ceases to be a customer, and supplies her own wants. Her industries have rooted firmly in the soil under the shelter of protective duties. That she will adopt ultimately the broad principle of unrestricted commerce, it may be safe to predict. Meanwhile the disastrous experience of the Old World, in the creation of sectional jealousies and class tyrannies, gives warning of the increasing peril of a tariff which has outlived its necessity. In 1879 Mr. Bright wrote to the editor of the *North American Review*:

‘It is a grief to me that your people do not yet see their way to a more moderate tariff. You are doing wonders, unequalled in the world’s history, in paying off your national debt. A more moderate tariff, I should think, would give you a better revenue, and by degrees you might approach a more civilized system. What can be more strange than for your great free country to build barriers against that commerce which is everywhere the handmaid of freedom and civilization?’

I should despair of the prospects of mankind if I did not believe that before long the intelligence of your people would revolt against the barbarism of your tariff. It seems

now your one great humiliation; the world looks to you for example in all forms of freedom. As to commerce, the great civilizer, shall it look in vain?’

A deplorable taint which has gradually infected the body politic, is the Corruption of the Civil Service. The doctrine of spoils and the system of appointments and removals offend the morality and impair the independence of the dominant party. A difficulty which more or less perplexes and troubles both sides of the Atlantic is the Labor Question—the problem of reconciling the rights of employers and employed. The relations of Capital and Labor are the angriest and most important with which we have to deal. But we have no such feudal relics as Game Laws, no such irritable associations as Orangemen, no convulsing Representative Reform, no collision of Church and State or of Church and Dissenters, no conquered territories to manage. Among us, of all communities in either hemisphere, the development of the democratic principle—the power of the people—has been most peaceful and most complete. Heirs of all the Past, we are the true Ancients, who from the vantage ground of our liberal institutions may first recognize the ascending sun of a new era, as those on the mountain-top first discern the coming beams of the morning.

‘All crimes shall cease, and ancient frauds shall fail,  
Returning justice lift aloft her scale,  
Peace o’er the world her olive wand extend,  
And white-robed Innocence from heaven descend.’

**Society.**—An unlimited possibility of improvement seems to have revealed itself. A main fact is the creation of value. England is a garden, with here and there a grove. Her fields have been ‘combed and rolled till they seem finished with a pencil.’ She presents an accumulation of toil and work which has no equal on the planet. Her Thames is an inextricable forest of masts, yards, and cables. Her docks, six miles long, resemble towns. Her air is darkened with the smoke of furnaces. Her warehouses are Babylonian. The East brings her tribute. Her colonies are becoming other Englands. Money, goods, business, flow hither, and pour thence. Her prosperity is the argument of materialism.

A part of this wealth, in compensation, returns to the brain, to establish schools and libraries, to create preachers, astronomers, and chemists, to found hospitals, savings-banks, mechanics’ insti-

tutes, parks, and other charities and amenities. The cultivated are many, and ever becoming more numerous. The press, which voices the will of the people as the source of sovereignty, is more powerful than fleets and armies. Universities provide munificently for the education of the upper classes; and National Schools, for the 'lower million.' The advantages once confined to men of family are now open to the untitled nobility, who possess the power without the inconveniences that belong to rank.

Insular limitation remains. With a pitiless logic, the serious Swedenborg shut up the English souls in a heaven by themselves. Race strives immortally to keep its own. Anciently two monarchs would divert themselves, after dinner, by thrusting each his sword through the other's body. It was the redundancy of animal vigor. The primitive Teuton still lives—though in well-cut modern garments—in the love of full stomachs, of great feasts; in the passion for stimulants; in the necessity for violent impressions; in the furor for horses and races; in the combative and daring instinct which requires prodigious risks; in the abounding sap which, averse to culture, prefers eating and drinking, boxing and cricket, equestrianism and boating. In the schools, athletic games occupy a portion of every day. When Tom Brown asks himself why he comes to school, he replies:

'I want to be *A1* at cricket and football and all the other games, and to make my hands keep my head against my fellow, lout or gentleman. . . . I want to carry away just as much Latin and Greek as will take me through Oxford respectably. . . . I want to leave behind me the name of a fellow who never bullied a little boy or turned his back on a big one.'

Doubtless these athletes will behave rudely. A fist-fight is the natural way of settling their quarrels. During the exercises of Commemoration week, the undergraduates keep up an incessant howl. When the Oxford degree was conferred upon Longfellow, they proposed 'Three cheers for the red man of the West.' When the Vice-Chancellor was reading a Latin address, they called out, 'Now construe.' A man, whose attire was not in taste, was stormed at: 'Take off that coat, sir.' 'Go out, sir.' 'Won't you go at once?' 'Ladies, request him to leave.' 'Doctor Brown, won't *you* put that man out?'

The school is a sort of primitive society. Each big boy has several who are bound to be his servants. Says a witness:

'I state as a fact, that from the 1st of January to the 31st of December, the young foundation scholar has not a single moment which is not exposed to interruption. At

half-past three in the morning, two of the younger, chosen in succession, rise to light the fire, boil the water, call up those of the big boys who have ordered this to be done. Frequently the senior, awakened at four o'clock, does not get up till half-past seven; he must then be called every half hour. This task falls to each of the small boys two or three times weekly.'

To maintain obedience, terror is used; and among the oppressed it is considered a point of honor not to denounce their oppressors. Kicks are commonplace:

'In the first degree the real punishments are systematic boxes on the ears; the offender must keep his hands at his sides, and hold his head forward to receive a dozen slaps applied right and left.'

Sometimes he is so cruelly bruised that he is unable for many days to join in the games and other exercises. Tom Brown was tossed upwards in a blanket with such force that he struck the ceiling. On one occasion he was seized and held before a blazing fire till he was ready to faint.

The picture, indeed, softens and brightens under the operation of a gradual reform; nevertheless, we perceive here the revival of a feudal aristocracy. 'Talent and wit,' said Steudhal, 'lose twenty-five per cent in value on reaching England. So great is the ascendancy of birth or fortune.'

Frightful contrasts exist in the social strata. Gentlemen and fine ladies gaze upon the ragged toiler with a frigid curiosity. Few workmen rise to be independent. They drink much and save nothing. Dull seasons are inevitable. Competition is severe. They have children in droves. Strikes turn them into the streets by thousands. Accident and sickness engulf them in a black and bottomless pit. Yet they are not utterly isolated. From reading the newspapers and hearing important questions discussed, they possess no inconsiderable store of intelligence in social, political, and religious matters. It tends to equalize conditions, that masters are compelled to send to school two hours daily all factory children from twelve to fifteen years of age. The fundamental maxim is, that unless a nation be educated, it will become ungovernable, as well as improvident. Into the hands of great proprietors the soil has now entirely passed. Half of it is owned by about a thousand persons. Commerce has assisted the process by giving birth to large fortunes, the owners of which are led by social ambition to buy landed estates. The proprietor's stable is more admirable than the tiller's hovel. In the midst of cottages are country seats which replace the mediæval



castle, and whose masters play therein, under new forms, the part of the mediæval baron. This enormous concentration of land, coupled with the cruelties of the Tudor conquest, explains the deplorable evils of sea-girt Ireland, and her deathless hatred of the conquerors.

The American is the continuation of English genius into new conditions, more or less propitious. There is the same practical common-sense, a similar, but more general, love of physical well-being. Under a feudal system, the poor get as much accustomed to their poverty, as the rich to their opulence. Here, on the contrary, the desire of acquisition haunts the imagination of the one, and the dread of loss that of the other. All strain to pursue or to retain delights so imperfect, so fugitive. The love of material gain is the predominant taste. Hence the universal stir, the ceaseless change, the perpetual hurry, the unrest in the midst of abundance. Says Tocqueville:

'A man of the United States clings to this world's goods as if he were certain never to die; and he is so hasty in grasping at all within his reach, that one would suppose he was constantly afraid of not living long enough to enjoy them. He clutches everything, he holds nothing fast, but soon loosens his grasp to pursue fresh gratifications. . . .

A man builds a house to spend his latter years in, and he sells it before the roof is on: he plants a garden, and lets it just as the trees are coming into bearing: he brings a field into tillage, and leaves other men to gather the crops: he embraces a profession, and gives it up: he settles in a place which he soon afterward leaves, to carry his changeable lodgings elsewhere. . . . Death at length overtakes him, but it is before he is weary of his bootless chase of that complete felicity which is forever on the wing.'

It is this restlessness, united to love of freedom and attention to public affairs, that creates prosperity. The world affords no similar example of rapid development. Our territory touches two oceans a thousand leagues apart, stretching through all the productive degrees of latitude. Our surplus products amounted in 1860 to sixty million sterling; in 1878 to one hundred and forty million. We can supply wheat enough to feed the world, cotton enough to clothe it, coal enough to warm it, oil enough to light it. We have almost as many miles of railroad, and as many miles of telegraph, as the rest of the globe. Our mines of gold and silver, of copper and iron, are practically inexhaustible. In ten thousand ways machinery has lifted the burden from labor, and multiplied the comforts of life.

But our progress consists not in material things alone. Mental equality is the basis of popular sovereignty. The free school spreads republican principles, and creates the reading

public. We consume a periodical literature twice as great as that of England and France. Nowhere have such vast and complete educational systems been so rapidly perfected. By their influence the circle of knowledge unceasingly expands. The rural districts assimilate to the towns, and the provinces to the capital. Nowhere are individuals so insignificant. Nowhere are men so nearly alike, nowhere is competition so intense, nowhere is it so difficult for any one person to walk quick and cleave a way through the dense throng which presses him. Nowhere are fixed distinctions so improbable. The new are constantly springing up, the old are constantly falling away. Those who went before are soon forgotten; those who will come after, who can tell? Real superiorities are coveted and respected, but it is also easily seen that the greatest men have their limitations; and the humblest may follow in the track which the grandest levels for his coach.

With the decrease of drudgery, and the increase of leisure, habits become more contemplative, feeling more refined, and mind widens its empire in all directions. A most notable fact of the period is the art movement. The marked devotion to the art-galleries of the Centennial Exhibition, the multiplication of art-schools, reveal a taste for the beautiful from which time and opportunity will reap grand harvests of achievement and appreciation. Humanitarian advance, everywhere, is seen in the helpful treatment of criminals and unfortunates; in prison reforms, in the tender care of the insane, in the efforts to mitigate the horrors of war, in the mitigation of the penal code, in the foundation of societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, in the abolition of slavery, in the growing disposition to live, not for self merely, but for some form of the eternal good. This is the last and best hope of civilization.

**Religion.**—In looking at the nineteenth century, we are struck with one commanding characteristic,—the tendency in all its movements to expansion, to diffusion, to universality. It is more and more understood that religious truth is every man's property and right; that it is committed to no order or individual, to no priest or sage, to be given or withheld. The historical questions, once so much disputed between Anglican and Puritan, are less and less controverted by scholars on either side. Few

maintain a divine right for either system of church organization. A multitude agree that Episcopal government, however ancient and however beneficial, is not essential to the existence of an authorized ministry. Few, without concealing their fear that externalism may become a duty or settle into hypocrisy, would now assert the unlawfulness of written forms; and the time is past for any to speak contemptuously of spontaneous prayer. Protestants everywhere are coming to perceive that there may be a legitimate development in doctrine, in ethics, in ceremonial, in polity.

In England, the State Church, rich and powerful, finds favor with the majority. But her separating walls are crumbling, while her shield has broadened till it spreads over three distinct parties,—the *High*, which is the more aristocratic, leaning more upon authority, fonder of ritual; the *Low*, more popular, more ardent, more eager to renovate the heart; the *Liberal*, or *Rationalistic*, which includes a large number of the most cultivated minds, eminently qualified for reconciling science and faith. The political influence of the clergy has steadily declined.<sup>1</sup> Once the chief directors of the policy of Europe, they now form a baffled, if not desponding, minority, whose ideal is not so much in the future as in the past.

In America, all parties unite in the conviction that the civil authority should be neutral as regards the different denominations, and that these should severally govern themselves. We have over twenty-two million worshippers, and above seventy-two thousand congregations,—more than twice as many as in England. State support, supplemented by private bounty, has done less for the one than voluntary offerings have done for the other. Religion here, so far as its vital power is concerned, is individual. Its allies are culture and reform, but its foundations shift perpetually. It is less a habit,—more a thought, feeling, sentiment and purpose, impulsive and growing.

In both countries, dogma is fast yielding to reason and persuasion; in both, a diminished importance is ascribed to the outward parts of Christianity. Its inward evidences, the marks of divinity which it wears on its own brow, are becoming of greater

<sup>1</sup> In the reign of Henry III, the spiritual peers formed one half of the Upper House; in the middle of this century, only one fourteenth.

moment. Not a name or a creed, but purity of desire and deed, Christly love of God and man,—this is the essential thing:

‘Let us think  
Of forms less, and the external. Trust the spirit,  
As sovran nature does, to make the form;  
For otherwise we only imprison spirit,  
And not embody. Inward evermore  
To outward,—so in life, and so in art,  
Which still is life.’

So the modern typical preacher exposes and reproves public sins, applies and urges the motives to sobriety, honesty, charity; and without being entirely released from the old narrowness, broadens into a critic and cultivator of character. His grand endeavor is not so much to save men as to make them worthy.

The more closely we approach the centre of our faith, the more closely we draw together. The followers of Calvin no longer burn, torture, imprison, or traduce the descendants of Servetus. When they have ceased to be good sectarians, they are merely ‘suspended.’ They may still be—as all believe them to be—good Christians, and may find themselves, in their non-sectarian sphere, more attractive, more influential, more useful.

But human affairs admit no unmixed good. That the tendencies are achieving a higher condition for the race there can be no doubt; but the simplicity and fervor of the elder time seem to have passed away before the self-assertion of liberty, the levelling of democracy, the distrust of cupidity, the spirit of criticism, the decline of imagination, the discovery of unchanging law. There is much preaching for lucre or display; much attendance from usage, for propriety’s sake, or from a vague notion of salvation. There is a disposition to look at religion, instead of living in it; to own it as a noble fact, as if it were a fair creation of the soul, instead of a divine reality; to discuss with the lips each other’s doctrines, instead of going into silence with their own God. In particular, we mourn the decay of reverence, that most beautiful of all forms of moral goodness; that character of humility and of awe, so dependent, so earnest, so devout, which, Ixion-like, bestowed its affections upon a cloud, and made its illusions the source of purest virtues. ‘Why is it,’ said Luther’s wife, looking sadly back upon the sensuous creed which she had left, ‘that in our old faith we prayed so often and so warmly, and that our

prayers are now so few and so cold?' The child, as it develops into youth, exchanges its repose for conflict fraught with danger; but would we forever keep it a child?

But if there is a loss of enthusiasm, there is a gain of temper. Unbelief has grown gentle and respectful. Benevolence, uprightness, enterprise, and freedom are multiplying. The religious element, the sighing for the perfect, the longing for the infinite, the thirst for beauty, the hunger for righteousness, can never die. The central, saving truths of the faith will flower and fruit as long as there are days of toil and sorrow, or nights of weariness and pain.

Meanwhile the effective strength of the ministry is in earnestness,—in a solemn conviction that religion is a great concern; in a solemn purpose that its claims shall be felt; in acquaintance with contemporary secular thought; in ability to discern and explain the consistency of Christianity with the new lights which are breaking in from the outer world; in courage to renounce ideas that are outlived, or habits that are outlawed; in culture that is instinct with life and feeling.

**Poetry.**—The potent tidal wave which threw on shore so many treasures of the deep, has long since ebbed, and no second has arisen which approaches the level of the former. The genius of the present is less creative than elective and refining, exquisite rather than imaginative, diffusive rather than powerful.

Two kinds of verse are discernible,—one which continues the impulse received from Keats and Shelley, the other from Wordsworth. The dominant tone is composite, uniting the classicism and romanticism of the first to the reflection and naturalism of the second. Richly melodious and highly colored, embracing every variety of rhythm and technical effect, it finds its chief voice in **Tennyson**.

The conditions affecting the social order have affected the conditions bearing upon art. The most notable of these are the iconoclastic tendencies of science and the passion for material progress. Both indicate a subsidence of the forces which heaved up the mountain ranges of the Byronic age. Never, perhaps, was the poetical talent so largely diffused. Never was so much good poetry written—never so much performance above mediocrity; but poets have been supplanted in general regard, and



very few are able to command the attention of the English nations. New theories are far more exciting than new poems.

It is hardly necessary to add, that the refinements of life are transferred to literature and its works; that our poets, therefore, carry to further perfection reverence for human character, regard to human duty, tenderness for Nature, and love for the Divine. Their specific excellence is elaborateness of finish—perfection of form and structure—richness of diction and variety of metre.

Without much originality, the verses of **Hunt** (1784–1859) are sweet, fluent, and feeling,—successful imitations of the lighter and more picturesque parts of Chaucer. The following, on the grasshopper and the cricket, are characteristic:

‘Green little vaulter in the sunny grass,  
Catching your heart up at the feel of June,  
Sole voice that’s heard amidst the lazy noon,  
When even the bees lag at the summoning brass;  
And you, warm little housekeeper, who class  
With those who think the candles come too soon,  
Loving the fire, and with your tricksome tune  
Nick the glad silent moments as they pass;  
  
O sweet and tiny cousins, that belong,  
One to the fields, the other to the hearth,  
Both have your sunshine; both, though small, are strong  
At your clear hearts; and both seem given to earth  
To ring in thoughtful ears this natural song—  
Indoors and out, summer and winter, Mirth.’

We recognize at once the simple delight of his master in the concrete forms and objects of the outer world.

Then the calm gravity of heart which makes the pulse of the two-fold inspiration:

‘Blest is the turf, serenely blest, Where throbbing hearts may sink to rest, Where life’s long journey turns to sleep, Nor ever pilgrim wakes to weep. A little sod, a few sad flowers, A tear for long-departed hours, Is all that feeling hearts request To hush their weary thoughts to rest.	There shall no vain ambition come To lure them from their quiet home. Nor sorrow lift, with heart-strings riven, The meek imploring eye to heaven; Nor sad remembrance stoop to shed His wrinkles on the slumberer’s head; And never, never love repair To breathe his idle whispers there.’
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Another who warbled cheerful and trustful music, even through privation, sorrow, and anguish, was **Hood** (1799–1845), a night-ingale in the stormy dark. There is something Shakespearean in his analysis of a spectral conscience:

‘But Guilt was my grim Chamberlain  
That lighted me to bed  
And drew my midnight curtains round,  
*With fingers bloody red.*’

His noble efforts in behalf of the poor and unfortunate, his sympathy with suffering and woe, are felicitously wrought in *The Song of the Shirt*, and *The Bridge of Sighs*, all pathetic and tragical. But he could seldom express himself except through witty and humorous forms. One of his most popular effusions in the style peculiarly his own, is the ode to his infant son:

'Thou happy, happy elf!  
 (But stop—first let me kiss away that tear)  
 Thou tiny image of myself;  
 (My love, he's poking peas into his ear!)  
 Thou merry, laughing sprite!  
 With spirits feather light,  
 Untouched by sorrow, and unsoiled by sin,  
 (Good heavens! the child is swallowing a pin!)

Thou little tricky Puck!  
 With antic joys so funnily bestuck,  
 Light as the singing bird that wings the air,  
 (The door! the door! he'll tumble down the stair!)  
 Thou darling of thy sire!  
 (Why, Jane, he'll set his pinafore afire!)  
 Thou imp of mirth and joy!  
 In Love's dear chain so strong and bright a link,  
 Thou idol of thy parents (Drat the boy!  
 There goes my ink!) . . .

Thou young domestic dove!  
 (He'll have that jug off with another shove!)  
 Dear nursling of the hymeneal nest,  
 (Are those torn clothes his best?)  
 Little epitome of man!  
 (He'll climb upon the table, that's his plan!) . . .

Thou pretty opening rose!  
 (Go to your mother, child, and wipe your nose!)  
 Balmy, and breathing music like the south,  
 (He really brings my heart into my mouth!)  
 Fresh as the morn, and brilliant as its star,  
 (I wish that window had an iron bar!)  
 Bold as the hawk, yet gentle as the dove,  
 (I'll tell you what, my love,  
 I cannot write, unless he's sent above!)

A contemporary of Cowper, who bandied epithets with Byron, who lived to see Tennyson pass for the greatest poet of his country and his time, was the wayward and impetuous **Landor** (1775–1864); a pioneer of the school gone by, a reverend landmark of the one under review; a scholar of opulent range; a delightful essayist; a lover of beauty pure and simple; among recent singers, one of the most versatile, most independent, though far from being the greatest in achievement. His taste for classical themes, his facility in classical verse, his power of

bringing the antique spirit within the range of modern thought and sympathy, are seen in the *Heroic Idyls*, which are Latin poems, and their English version,—the *Hellenics*. He was always at ease in either language. The famous shell-passage in *Gebir*—an early poetical romance—is said to have been written first in Latin, and to have been more musical than its translation:

‘But I have sinuous shells of pearly hue  
 Within, and they that lustre have imbibed  
 In the sun’s palace-porch, where when unyoked  
 His chariot-wheel stands midway in the wave:  
 Shake one and it awakens, then apply  
 Its polished lips to your attentive ear,  
 And it remembers its august abodes,  
 And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there.’

On the whole, however, to the multitude he will ever be a sealed book, because radically deficient in geniality of feeling. His imagery seems to us cold and statuesque. This may be due partly or mainly to his habit of first composing in a foreign tongue. We may be surprised that he often shed tears in the passion of his work. His affection for nature was instinctive and sincere. He desired,—

‘To let all flowers live freely, and all die,  
 Whene’er their Genius bids their souls depart,  
 Among their kindred in their native place.  
 I never pluck the rose; the violet’s head  
 Hath shaken with my breath upon its bank,  
 And not reproached me; the ever-sacred cup  
 Of the pure lily hath between my hands  
 Felt safe, unsoiled, nor lost one grain of gold.’

To read Landor one must exert himself, and the exertion is to some purpose. The same is true, in even a higher degree, of **Browning** (1812– ), subtle and penetrating, eminently a thinker, exercising our thought rather than our emotion; concrete in presentation, and, when most felicitous, dramatic, but capricious in expression, and greatly deficient in warmth and music; original and unequal; an eclectic, not to be restricted in his themes, with a prosaic regard for details, and a barbaric sense of color and form.

The poem of his youth—*Paracelsus*—is a metaphysical dialogue, the history of a thwarted soul that would know and enjoy, that would drink deep at the fountains both of knowledge and of pleasure. The following passage is characteristic:

‘Another world!  
 And why this world, this common world, to be

A make-shift, a mere foil, how fair soever,  
 To some fine life to come? Man must be fed  
 With angels' food, forsooth; and some few traces  
 Of a diviner nature, which look out  
 Through his corporeal baseness, warrant him  
 In a supreme contempt for all provision  
 For his inferior tastes — some straggling marks  
 Which constitute his essence, just as truly  
 As here and there a gem would constitute  
 The rock, their barren bed, a diamond.  
 But were it so — were man all mind — he gains  
 A station little enviable. From God  
 Down to the lowest spirit ministrant,  
 Intelligence exists which casts our mind  
 Into immeasurable shade. No, no:  
 Love, hope, fear, faith — these make humanity,  
 These are its sign, and note, and character;  
 And these I have lost! — gone, shut from me forever.'

This has the simplicity and truth of the old drama:

'Festus, strange secrets are let out by Death,  
 Who blabs so oft the follies of this world:  
 And I am Death's familiar, as you know.  
 I helped a man to die some few weeks since. . . .

No mean trick

He left untried; and truly well-nigh wormed  
 All traces of God's finger out of him.  
 Then died, grown old; and just an hour before —  
 Having lain long with blank and soulless eyes —  
 He sate up suddenly, and with natural voice  
 Said, that in spite of thick air and closed doors,  
 God told him it was June; and he knew well,  
 Without such telling, harebells grew in June;  
 And all that kings could ever give or take  
 Would not be precious as those blooms to him.'

Observe now the magical effect of high passion:

'O lyric Love, half angel and half bird,  
 And all a wonder and a wild desire!'

Such the self-forgetful cadences in which he addresses his dead wife, **Elizabeth Barrett Browning** (1809–1861); a rhymer at ten, an author at seventeen; an omnivorous reader, a loving student of philosophy and the classics; in style, original from the beginning, remarkable alike for defects and for beauties; often rugged and unfinished, from subordination of taste to excess of feeling; always intense, rarely sportive; worshipful and sympathetic, tremulously sensitive to the sorrows and mysteries of existence; the most fragile of beings, yet essaying to reach the infinite; all ethereal, yet all human, the idol of her kindred, the most beloved of minstrels and of women.

Her poetry as a whole is an uneven production, full of prosaic

episodes, with much that is forced and unnatural, a chaos from which rare lustres break out. Thus:

'The essence of all beauty I call love,  
The attribute, the evidence, and end,  
The consummation, to the inward sense,  
Of beauty apprehended from without,  
I still call love. As form, when colourless,  
Is nothing to the eye—that pine-tree there,  
Without its black and green, being all a blank—  
So, without love, is beauty undiscerned  
In man or angel. Angel! rather ask  
What love is in thee, what love moves to thee,  
And what collateral love moves on with thee,  
Then shalt thou know if thou art beautiful.'<sup>1</sup>

Also:

'A *Thought* lay like a flower upon mine heart,  
And drew around it other thoughts like bees  
For multitude and thirst of sweetnesses. . . .  
While I spoke,  
The thought I called a flower, grew nettle-rough;  
The thoughts, called bees, stung me to festering.  
Oh, entertain (cried Reason, as she woke)  
Your best and gladdest thoughts but long enough,  
And they will all prove sad enough to sing.'<sup>2</sup>

And this:

'O sorrowful great gift  
Conferred on poets, of a two-fold life,  
When one life has been found enough for pain.  
We staggering 'neath our burden as mere men,  
Being called to stand up straight as demi-gods,  
Support the intolerable strain and stress  
Of the universal, and send clearly up  
With voices broken by the human sob,  
Our poems to find rhymes among the stars!'<sup>3</sup>

Of a mother gazing on her fatherless child, just waking from sleep, and perplexed between a mortal presence and the angelhood it had been away to visit:

'She leaned above him (drinking him as wine)  
In that extremity of love 'twill pass  
For agony or rapture, seeing that love  
Includes the whole of nature, rounding it  
To love,—no more,—since more can never be  
Than just love. Self-forgot, cast out of self,  
And drowning in the transport of the sight,  
Her whole pale passionate face, mouth, forehead, eyes,  
One gaze, she stood! then, slowly as he smiled,  
She smiled too, slowly, smiling unaware,  
And drawing from his countenance to hers  
A fainter red, as if she watched a flame  
And stood in it aglow.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*A Drama of Exile.*

<sup>2</sup>*Sonnet.*

<sup>3</sup>*Aurora Leigh.*

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*



*Aurora Leigh* is essentially an autobiography, withal a mirror of modern life and issues, almost a handbook of literature and the arts; superior in power to any similar contemporary structure, yet incongruous in the parts, unsatisfactory in the aggregate, and the most idiosyncratic of its author's poems. One feels that life was to her a very serious thing, that she wrought reverently, that she struggled painfully to render the music that was in her,—the dream was so far beyond the symbol,—the mount of vision was so high, time and opportunity all so narrow and so brief:

'The winds sound only in opposing straits;  
The sea, beside the shore; man's spirit rends  
Its quiet only up against the ends  
Of wants and oppositions, loves and hates,  
Where, worked and worn by passionate debates,  
And losing by the loss it apprehends,  
The flesh rocks round, and every breath it sends  
Is ravelled to a sigh. All tortured states  
Suppose a straitened place. Jehovah Lord,  
Make room for rest around me! out of sight  
Now float me of the vexing land abhorred,  
Till in deep calms of space, my soul may right  
Her nature—shoot large sail on lengthening cord,  
And rush exultant on the Infinite.'

Another elaborate novel in verse, less profound, less imaginative, but more graceful, more musical, and far more readable, is *Lucile*, by **Robert Lytton**,<sup>1</sup> to whom friends once looked for signs of a new poetical dawn. In this his masterpiece we must admire the noble features which distinguish all that he has written,—the generous reach of thought, the disposition to look inward to the duties, onward to the destinies of man, and the doctrine of the gradual education of the race by struggle against evil. The reader may find an indication of the author's spirit and manner, as well as somewhat that may be useful in pleasure or suggestive in reflection, in sentences like these. Of concentration:

'The man who seeks one thing in life, and but one,  
May hope to achieve it before life be done;  
But he who seeks all things, wherever he goes,  
Only reaps from the hopes which around him he sows  
A harvest of barren regrets.'

Of courage and self-respect:

'Let any man once show the world that he feels  
Afraid of its bark, and 'twill fly at his heels:  
Let him fearlessly face it, 'twill leave him alone:  
But 'twill fawn at his feet if he flings it a bone.'

<sup>1</sup> 'Owen Meredith,' born 1831, son of Edward Lytton Bulwer.

What need to remind us that we cannot subsist on visions?

'We may live without poetry, music, and art;  
We may live without conscience, and live without heart;  
We may live without friends; we may live without books;  
But civilized man cannot live without cooks.'

Of the beauty and beatitude which we conceive and pursue:

'We but catch at the skirts of the thing we would be,  
And fall back on the lap of a false destiny.  
So it will be, so has been since this world began!  
And the happiest, noblest, and best part of man  
Is the part which he never hath fully play'd out:  
For the first and last word in life's volume is — Doubt.  
The face the most fair to our vision allow'd  
Is the face we encounter and lose in the crowd.  
The thought that most thrills our existence is one  
Which, before we can frame it in language, is gone.'

Of the price of excellence:

'Not a truth has to art or to science been given,  
But brows have ached for it, and souls toil'd and striven.'

Of the principle of concord, or the law of friendship:

'There are loves in man's life for which time can renew  
All that time may destroy. Lives there are, though, in love,  
Which cling to one faith, and die with it; nor move  
Though earthquakes may shatter the shrine.'

Of influence:

'No life  
Can be pure in its purpose and strong in its strife  
And all life not be purer and stronger thereby.'

Of the divine significance of life and the reward of the faithful:

'Honest love, honest sorrow,  
Honest work for the day, honest hope for the morrow,  
Are these worth nothing more than the hand they make weary.  
The heart they have sadden'd, the life they leave dreary?'

**Matthew Arnold** (1822— ) is the poet of cultured intellect. The qualities of his verse are simplicity, clearness, music, calm. Uniting great mental activity to great moral earnestness, he is one of those who represent the unsatisfied aspirations of their age. His characteristic mood is sadness. Man is a wanderer from his birth, adrift on the river of Time:

'Vainly does each, as he glides,  
Fable and dream  
Of the lands where the river of Time  
Had left ere he woke on its breast,  
Or shall reach when his eyes have been closed.  
Only the tract where he sails  
He wots of; only the thoughts,  
Raised by the objects he passes, are his. . . .

But what was before us we know not,  
 And we know not what shall succeed.  
 Haply, the river of Time,—  
 As it grows, as the towns on its marge  
 Fling their wavering lights  
 On a wider, statelier stream,—  
 May acquire, if not the calm  
 Of its early mountainous shore,  
 Yet a solemn peace of its own.

And the width of the waters, the hush  
 Of the gray expanse where he floats,  
 Freshening its current and spotted with foam  
 As it draws to the Ocean, may strike  
 Peace to the soul of the man on its breast,—  
 As the pale waste widens around him,  
 As the banks fade dimmer away,  
 As the stars come out, and the night-wind  
 Brings up the stream  
 Murmurs and scents of the infinite sea.<sup>1</sup>

Not wholly passive. He shall have the firm endurance of the Stoic, with the uplift of a more spiritual faith:

‘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 through hours of gloom fulfill’d.

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.’<sup>2</sup>

His sentiment and purpose shall be the highest truth, the wisest conduct of life, help to encounter with courage and to bear with fortitude the brief ills of this brief life:

‘Is it so small a thing  
 To have enjoyed the sun;  
 To have lived light in the spring;  
 To have loved, to have thought, to have done;  
 To have advanced true friends, and beat down baffling foes? . . .  
 I say, Fear not! Life still  
 Leaves human effort scope.  
 But since life teems with ill,  
 Nurse no extravagant hope;  
 Because thou must not dream, thou need’st not then despair!’<sup>3</sup>

After all, who has not felt, under the cloud of mortal destiny, to ask of what profit is this persistent upward effort, this vain

<sup>1</sup>*The Future.*

<sup>2</sup>*Morality.*

<sup>3</sup>*Empedocles on Etna.*

struggle to be content, this painful conflict between the mind which cannot find God and the heart which cannot rest without Him? Why not yield, and be as others,—benumbed by the world's sway, or possessed by the fiery glow of passion?—

'For most men in a brazen prison live,  
Where, in the sun's hot eye,  
With heads bent o'er their toil, they languidly  
Their lives to some unmeaning taskwork give,  
Dreaming of naught beyond their prison wall,  
And as, year after year,  
Fresh products of their barren labor fall  
From their tired hands, and rest  
Never yet comes more near,  
Gloom settles slowly down over their breast;  
And while they try to stem  
The waves of mournful thought by which they are prest,  
Death in their prison reaches them,  
Unfreed, having seen nothing, still unblest!'<sup>1</sup>

A few escape these narrow limits, and depart anew on the wide ocean of being. There the freed prisoner sails where he listeth, happily ignorant of the fatal typhoons that cross his sea from eternity:

'And then the tempest strikes him; and between  
The lightning-bursts is seen  
Only a driving wreck,  
And the pale master on his spar-strewn deck,  
With anguish'd face and flying hair,  
Grasping the rudder hard,  
Still bent to make some port, he knows not where,  
Still standing for some false, impossible shore.  
And sterner comes the roar  
Of sea and wind, and through the deepening gloom  
Fainter and fainter wreck and helmsman loom,  
And he too disappears, and comes no more.'<sup>2</sup>

Are we, then, ordained to the condition either of a madman or a slave? Look again, and see a tract of heaven disclosed:

'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 great,  
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 deeds 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 horizons be,  
How vast, yet of what clear transparency!'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*A Summer Night.*<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

In **Swinburne** (1837- ), unflagging and impetuous, will be found a world of melody and a wealth of imaginative song. He represents the world and the flesh. His devotion is addressed to sensuous beauty. This is the stamp on all his poems, early and late,—audacity of diction, exuberance of fancy, profusion of double epithets, ever-shifting variety of metre. Judge, from lines such as these, the richness of the soil, and the rank unwholesome flowers that may spring therefrom:

‘Love, that is flesh upon the spirit of man  
 And spirit within the flesh whence breath began;  
 Love, that keeps all the choir of lives in chime;  
 Love, that is blood within the veins of time;  
 That wrought the whole world without stroke of hand,  
 Shaping the breadth of sea, the length of land,  
 And with the pulse and motion of his breath  
 Through the great heart of the earth strikes life and death;  
 Love, that for every life shall not be sold,  
 Nor bought nor bound with iron nor with gold;  
 So strong that heaven, could love bid heaven farewell,  
 Would turn to fruitless and unflowering hell;  
 So sweet that hell, to hell could love be given,  
 Would turn to splendid and sonorous heaven.’<sup>1</sup>

And:

‘Her flower-soft lips were meek and passionate,  
 For love upon them like a shadow sate  
 Patient, a foreseen vision of sweet things,  
 A dream with eyes fast shut and plumeless wings  
 That knew not what man’s love or life should be,  
 Nor had it sight nor heart to hope or see  
 What thing should come, but childlike satisfied  
 Watched out its virgin vigil in soft pride  
 And unknissed expectation.’<sup>2</sup>

There runs through these verses, however, a strong moral energy, an exultant sense of kinship with the illimitable:

‘A land that is thirstier than ruin;  
 A sea that is hungrier than death;  
 Heaped hills that a tree never grew in;  
 Wide sands where the wave draws breath;  
 All solace is here for the spirit  
 That ever for ever may be  
 For the soul of thy son to inherit  
 My mother, my sea.’<sup>3</sup>

One might almost suspect him of that deep Germanic instinct, pantheistic yet pensive, which seeks and loves desert and solitary places, where the soul enjoys the pleasure of believing itself infinite. And what more natural, in these moments of abandonment and expansion, than the ascriptions of an adoring reference

<sup>1</sup> *Tristram and Iseult.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *By the North Sea.*



from the grandeur and loveliness of things to a Divine Presence of which they are the acknowledged symbol?

'As my soul has been dutiful  
Only to thee,  
O God most beautiful  
Lighten thou me,

As I swim through the dim long rollers, with eyelids uplift from the sea.

Be praised and adored of us  
All in accord,  
Father and lord of us,  
Always adored,

The slayer and the stayer and the harper, the light of us all, and our lord.

At the sound of thy lyre,  
At the touch of thy rod,  
Air quickens to fire  
By the foot of thee trod,

The saviour and healer and singer, the living and visible God.

The years are before thee  
As shadows of thee,  
As men that adore thee,  
As cloudlets that flee:

But thou art the God, and thy kingdom is heaven, and thy shrine is the sea.<sup>1</sup>

Another fine example, musical with the cadences distinctly his own,—the emotion of a pagan who chooses to die with his gods:

'A little while and we die; shall life not thrive as it may?

For no man under the sky lives twice, outliving his day.

And grief is a grievous thing, and a man hath enough of his tears:

Why should he labor, and bring fresh grief to blacken his years?

Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean; the world has grown gray from thy breath;

We have drunken of things Lethean, and fed on the fulness of death.'<sup>2</sup>

In the following we not only see his surprising command of rhythm, but discover something of the seer-like power to drop the plummet below the ordinary world of experience:

'Before the beginning of years  
There came to the making of man  
Time, with the gift of tears;  
Grief, with the glass that ran;  
Pleasure, with sin for leaven;  
Summer, with flowers that fell;  
Remembrance, fallen from Heaven;  
And madness, risen from hell;  
Strength, without hands to smite;  
Love, that endures for a breath;  
Night, the shadow of light;  
And life, the shadow of death.  
And the high gods took in hand  
Fire, and the falling of tears;

And a measure of sliding sand  
From under the feet of the years;  
And froth and drift of the sea;  
And dust of the laboring earth,  
And bodies of the things to be  
In the houses of death and of birth,  
And wrought with weeping and laughter,  
And fashioned with loathing and love,  
With life before and after,  
And death beneath and above,  
For a day and a night and a morrow,  
That his strength might endure for a span,  
With travail and heavy sorrow,  
The holy spirit of man.'

<sup>1</sup> *Off Shore.*

<sup>2</sup> *Hymn to Proserpine.*

There is a disposition to regard Mr. Swinburne as the foremost of a new school of British poets,—a New Romantic school, of which Browning and Rossetti have been leaders, and which, resisting an established ideal, aims to reunite beauty and passion in rhythmical art. It is to be regretted that he tends to carry epithet and sound to a fatiguing excess; that he presents so little variety of mood, so few studies of visible objects; that he is not more profoundly ethical. We should not be surprised to learn that he has lived without trial,—without the refining fire which is needed to draw forth the sweetest and most perfect harmonies of soul. No chasm has yawned before him to make him aware of the divinity within him. Out of their abyss of anguish, Tasso, Dante, and Milton, purified, redeemed, exalted, sang such songs to their fellows as others who had never suffered could never utter. Simple Robert Burns goes singing down the centuries,—why? Because he was in sympathy with life,—loved nature, loved mankind, entered into human joy and sorrow, hated oppression, despised cant, mourned over his weakness, revered Christian goodness.

Within the last fifty years national development has greatly modified the conditions which in America were antagonistic to a devoted pursuit of the ideal. Material interests are less urgent than formerly. The 'useful' is perpetually passing beyond the vulgar notions of utility. A large and increasing proportion of energy is given to the gratification of an elegant taste. We are beginning to enjoy that rest and leisure out of which spring the fine and gracious attributes of imagination and fancy, which are the bloom of civilization. At last the sweet and varied measures of a band of genuine singers are heard, no longer with dull amazement but with grateful welcome, essentially American in tone and object. The treasures of all ages are at their disposal, but on the whole they occupy themselves, not with mediæval and classical themes, but with Nature and Man,—scenery, patriotism, friendship, religion, love.

To enumerate all or a majority of those who here have added to the sum of human pleasure by their ministry of song, is beyond our need and intention. We cannot even allude individually to the minor voices, which are many and charming; and can but briefly refer to the clearer and louder ones that lead the

chorus, and more distinctly echo the yearnings of our divergent destiny.

Among those who have given substantial evidence of a home-movement in poetic art, the firstborn is **Richard H. Dana** (1787–1879), contemplative, compact, and original, possessed of a deep sensibility to beauty and sublimity, and uniting exact description with a suggestive imagination, as in these stanzas of the *Buccaneer*:

‘The island lies nine leagues away.  
 Along its solitary shore,  
 Of craggy rock and sandy bay,  
 No sound but ocean’s roar,  
 Save where the bold, wild sea-bird makes her home,  
 Her shrill cry coming through the sparkling foam.

But when the light winds lie at rest,  
 And on the glassy, heaving sea,  
 The black duck, with her glossy breast,  
 Sits swinging silently,—  
 How beautiful! no ripples break the reach,  
 And silvery waves go noiseless up the beach.

Nor holy bell, nor pastoral bleat,  
 In former days within the vale;  
 Flapped in the bay the pirate’s sheet:  
 Curses were on the gale:  
 Rich goods lay on the sand, and murdered men;  
 Pirate and wrecker kept their revels then.’

Less subjective, but more spirited and flowing, is **Percival** (1795–1856). The joy and exuberance of his mind are displayed with fine effect in the *Prevalence of Poetry*:

‘The world is full of poetry—the air  
 Is living with its spirit; and the waves  
 Dance to the music of its melodies,  
 And sparkle in its brightness. Earth is veiled  
 And mantled with its beauty; and the walls  
 That close the universe with crystal in  
 Are eloquent with voices that proclaim  
 The unseen glories of immensity,  
 In harmonies too perfect and too high  
 For aught but beings of celestial mould,  
 And speak to man in one eternal hymn,  
 Unfading beauty and unyielding power.’

More popular than either is **Halleck** (1790–1867), whose verse is a mixture of serious thought and emotion with playful and careless fancies,—manly, clear, vivid, warm with feeling, or sparkling with wit. In lines such as these we see the purity, tenderness, and melody, of which he is capable:

'Young thoughts have music in them, love  
 And happiness their theme;  
 And music wanders in the wind  
 That lulls a morning dream.  
 And there are angel voices heard  
 In childhood's frolic hours,  
 When life is but an April day  
 Of sunshine and of flowers. . . .

To-day the forest leaves are green,  
 They'll wither on the morrow;  
 And the maiden's laugh be changed ere long  
 To the widow's wail of sorrow.  
 Come with the winter snows and ask  
 Where are the forest birds?  
 The answer is a silent one  
 More eloquent than words.'

The most elevated of his strains is the martial lyric of *Marco Bozzaris*. The following lines evince qualities which ought to rank their author high among lyric artists:

'An hour passed on—the Turk awoke;  
 That bright dream was his last;  
 He woke—to hear his sentries shriek,  
 "To arms! they come! the Greek! the Greek!"  
 He woke—to die midst flame, and smoke,  
 And shout, and groan, and sabre-stroke,  
 And death-shots falling thick and fast  
 As lightnings from the mountain-cloud;  
 And heard, with voice as trumpet loud,  
 Bozzaris cheer his band:  
 "Strike—till the last armed foe expires;  
 Strike—for your altars and your fires;  
 Strike—for the green graves of your sires;  
 God—and your native land!"'

There may be in **Willis** (1806–1867) a tendency to exaggeration, a too strong inclination to finely turned periods; but so rich, so sweet, so captivating is his poetry, that for some attributes of the poetic character we hardly know where to look for his superior. Lessons of piety gave the impulse, and around the domestic scenes of old Hebrew life he threw a charm which has made his Scripture pieces unique in our literature. The *Healing of the Daughter of Jairus* is an example, of which the conclusion is drawn with exquisite beauty:

'Like a form  
 Of matchless sculpture in her sleep she lay—  
 The linen vesture folded on her breast,  
 And over it her white transparent hands,  
 The blood still rosy in their tapering nails.  
 A line of pearl ran through her parted lips,  
 And in her nostrils, spiritually thin,

The breathing curve was mockingly like life;  
 And round beneath the faintly tinted skin  
 Ran the light branches of the azure veins;  
 And on her cheek the jet lash overlay,  
 Matching the arches pencill'd on her brow.  
 Her hair had been unbound, and, falling loose  
 Upon her pillow, hid her small round ears  
 In curls of glossy blackness, and about  
 Her polished neck, scarce touching it, they hung,  
 Like airy shadows floating as they slept.  
 'Twas heavenly beautiful. The Saviour raised  
 Her hand from off her bosom, and spread out  
 The snowy fingers in his palm, and said,  
 "Maiden! Arise!"—and suddenly a flush  
 Shot o'er her forehead, and along her lips  
 And through her cheek the rallied color ran;  
 And the still outline of her graceful form  
 Stirred in the linen vesture; and she clasp'd  
 The Saviour's hand, and fixing her dark eyes  
 Full on his beaming countenance—*arose!*'

The *Dying Alchemist* is powerfully conceived and powerfully executed:

'The night wind with a desolate moan swept by;  
 And the old shutters of the turret swung  
 Screaming upon their hinges; and the moon,  
 As the torn edges of the clouds flew past,  
 Struggled aslant the stain'd and broken panes  
 So dimly, that the watchful eye of death  
 Scarcely was conscious when it went and came.'

And:

'The fire beneath his crucible was low;  
 Yet still it burn'd; and ever as his thoughts  
 Grew insupportable, he raised himself  
 Upon his wasted arm, and stirr'd the coals  
 With difficult energy, and when the rod  
 Fell from his nerveless fingers, and his eye  
 Felt faint within its socket, he shrunk back  
 Upon his pallet, and with unclosed lips  
 Mutter'd a curse on death!'

The despair of the visionary, who has agonized, watched, and fasted for a hope that mocks him at last:

'I did not think to die  
 Till I had finish'd what I had to do;  
 I thought to pierce th' eternal secret through  
 With this my mortal eye;  
 I felt,—oh God! it seemeth even now  
 This cannot be the death-dew on my brow!'

The *Wife's Appeal* is highly finished. Her approach and the attendant circumstances, the appeal to her husband's latent love of fame, are most delicately and dramatically represented. His reply is in a lofty strain:



'I did hope to vary  
 My life but with surprises sweet as this,—  
 A dream—but for thy waking—fill'd with bliss.  
 Yet now I feel my spirit  
 Bitterly stirr'd, and—nay, lift up thy brow!  
 It is thine own voice echoing to thee now,  
 And thou didst pray to hear it,—  
 I must unto my work and my stern hours!  
 Take from my room thy harp, and books, and flowers!'

The sequel is touching and instructive. A year has elapsed:

'He had won power and held it. He had walk'd  
 Steadily upward in the eye of Fame,  
 And kept his truth unsullied,—but his home  
 Had been invaded by unevenom'd tongues;  
 His wife—his spotless wife—had been assail'd  
 By slander, and his child had grown afraid  
 To come to him,—his manner was so stern,  
 He could not speak beside his own hearth freely.  
 His friends were half estranged, and vulgar men  
 Presumed upon their services and grew  
 Familiar with him. He'd small time to sleep,  
 And none to pray; and, with his heart in fetters,  
 He bore harsh insults silently, and bow'd  
 Respectfully to men who knew he loath'd them!  
 And, when his heart was eloquent with truth,  
 And love of country, and an honest zeal  
 Burn'd for expression, he could find no words  
 They would not misinterpret with their lies.  
 What were his many honors to him now?  
 The good half doubted, falsehood was so strong,—  
 His home was hateful with its cautious fears,—  
 His wife lay trembling on his very breast,  
 Frighted with calumny!—And this is *Fame!*'

Earth and sky were perpetual ministers to his imagination; and with some effort, we suspect, did he subdue his fancy to the prosaic spirit of the time. Scepticism, analysis, scientific conquest, realism, may be in the order of growth to better things; but we shall never cease to read with a pleased sadness, as of a beauty irretrievably lost, *A Child's First Impression of a Star*:

'She had been told that God made all the stars  
 That twinkled up in heaven, and now she stood  
 Watching the coming of the twilight on,  
 As if it were a new and perfect world,  
 And this were its first eve. She stood alone

By the low window, with the silken lash  
 Of her soft eye upraised, and her sweet mouth  
 Half parted with the new and strange delight  
 Of beauty that she could not comprehend,  
 And had not seen before. The purple folds  
 Of the low sunset clouds, and the blue sky  
 That look'd so still and delicate above,

Fill'd her young heart with gladness, and the eve  
 Stole on with its deep shadows, and she still  
 Stood looking at the west with that half smile,  
 As if a pleasant thought were at her heart.  
 Presently, in the edge of the last tint  
 Of sunset, where the blue was melted in  
 To the faint golden mellowness, a star  
 Stood suddenly. A laugh of wild delight  
 Burst from her lips, and putting up her hands,  
 Her simple thought broke forth expressively—  
 "Father! dear father! God has made a star!"

Who has not observed that every child recalls the primitive ages, when the lightning was a bird of fire, and the clouds were the flocks of heaven?

We have had one poet to whom Mr. Swinburne has condescended to pay a tribute,—the gifted and eccentric **Poe** (1809–1849), a man of rare capacity cursed by an incurable perversity; writer of a manuscript volume of verses at ten years of age; at school noted as 'the swiftest runner, the best boxer, the most daring swimmer'; sensitive, tender, and melancholy, yet reckless and unmanageable; expelled from college, then from a military academy; enlisting in the army, then deserting; at twenty-six married to his cousin, a girl of thirteen, angelically beautiful in person and spirit, to whom he was idolatrously devoted; a contributor, an editor, an author, usually in debt; dying at last, in a Baltimore hospital, of delirium tremens, on the eve of his second marriage. The wild weird *Raven* was hailed as the most original poem America had produced. Its popularity is world-wide. The poet, or speaker, is represented as losing his early love Lenore (innocence), and as visited by a raven (remorse). Now from these four stanzas construct the tragedy of a soul, seeking to allay its immortal thirst, wounded by its immoderate desires and withered by its premature experience:

'But the Raven still beguiling all my sad soul into smiling,  
 Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and bust and door;  
 Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking  
 Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—  
 What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt and ominous bird of yore  
 Meant in croaking, "Nevermore." . . .

"Prophet!" cried I, "thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!—  
 By that Heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore!—  
 Tell this soul with sorrow laden, if, within the distant Aidens,  
 It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore,—  
 Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."  
 Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."

“Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!” I shrieked, upstarting.  
 “Get thee back into the tempest and the night’s Plutonian shore!  
 Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!  
 Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my door!  
 Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!”  
 Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

And the Raven, never fitting, still is sitting, still is sitting  
 On the pallid bust of Pallas, just above my chamber door;  
 And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s that is dreaming,  
 And the lamplight o’er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;  
 And my soul *from out that shadow* that lies floating on the floor,  
 Shall be lifted—nevermore!’

The *Bells* is perhaps the rarest instance in the language of the suggestiveness of rhyme and the power of onomatopoeic words. *Annabel Lee* is thoroughly artistic, and nothing could be more melodious or more nobly sentimental. The impression left is one of pleasurable sadness, arising from the contemplation of generous and high devotion to a loveliness that has become an undying memory:

‘And neither the angels in heaven above,  
 Nor the demons down under the sea,  
 Can ever dissever my soul from the soul  
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;  
 For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams  
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;  
 And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes  
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;  
 And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side  
 Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,  
 In the sepulchre there by the sea,  
 In her tomb by the sounding sea.’

We have seen how large an element of truth is contained in the traditional opinion that poets are wayward creatures, bad, glad, or mad, meteoric vagabonds of Parnassus, like Byron or Poe. Our **Bryant**, however, has the distinction of being a representative poet without any of the disastrous vagrancies that make a biography picturesque. In childhood mild and meditative, in maturity calm and careful. Blair’s *Grave* and Young’s *Night Thoughts* were his early favorites, and to the strife of passion he ever preferred the quietude of Nature in fields and forests. There he saw only the tokens of creative beneficence, and from every scene could elicit some elevating inference or cheering sentiment.

Inevitably, the *ars poetica*, with such a mind, will be subservient to purposes of moral utility. It will solemnize existence

rather than adorn it, because happiness is only an accessory—worthiness is the end. It will minister only to high, manly, serious views. Benevolence and veneration will give it color; the mysteries of time and the transitoriness of human life, which have touched men most in all ages, will inspire it; and the conviction that—

‘Eternal Love doth keep

In his complacent arms the earth, the air, the deep,—

will constitute its dominant charm.

From the beginning, a deep sad thought has weighed upon the restless spirit of man—the troubled dream—the unknown goal—the valley of the shadow—the infinite obscurity—the black sea of oblivion that swallows up the grace and loveliness, the thoughts and acts, of so many million beings whom no eye shall ever see again. The instinctive dread is upon all men, and in a thousand ways they seek to fortify themselves against the terrors of dissolution, that they may meet their fate serenely. ‘When I am dead,’ said an expiring chief at Washington, ‘let the big guns be fired over me.’ It were easier to die, if buried in state. Saladin, in his last illness, ordered his shroud to be uplifted as a flag, and the herald was commanded to cry: ‘Behold! this is all which Saladin, the vanquisher of the East, carries away of all his conquests.’ To pass from the world in a striking antithesis was not barren comfort! The humblest desires at least a simple stone—that he may pretend to live by the proof of his last sleep. It is this overshadowing idea of the death-doom which the author of *Thanatopsis* has rendered imperishably articulate for every fearful and longing soul, with a voice so gentle, so wise, and so winning, as to mitigate what cannot be remedied, and consecrate what before was painful. With what thoughtful tenderness he asks us to seek the healing sympathy of Nature, to receive bravely her mild and gentle lesson that we must die, to bring our conduct up to her loftiness, to contemplate our fate with that resignation which leadeth to wisdom:

‘When thoughts

Of the last bitter hour come like a blight  
Over thy spirit, and sad images  
Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,  
And breathless darkness, and the narrow house,  
Make thee to shudder, and grow sick at heart;—  
Go forth, under the open sky, and list

To Nature's teachings, while from all around,—  
 Earth and her waters, and the depths of air,—  
 Comes a still voice. Yet a few days, and thee  
 The all-beholding sun shall see no more  
 In all his course; nor yet in the cold ground,  
 Where thy pale form was laid, with many tears,  
 Nor in the embrace of ocean, shall exist  
 Thy image. Earth that nourished thee, shall claim  
 Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again,  
 And, lost each human trace, surrendering up  
 Thine individual being, shalt thou go  
 To mix forever with the elements,  
 To be a brother to the insensible rock  
 And to the sluggish clod, which the rude swain  
 Turns with his share, and treads upon. The oak  
 Shall send his roots abroad, and pierce thy mould.'

What consolation is offered? Not the Christian idea of a heaven with its chrysolite splendors and harping angels, but the Pagan idea of a nameless multitude vanished into the great drowned regions of the past, where the least may in some sort share the awful and shadowy unconsciousness of kings and seers:

'Yet not to thine eternal resting-place  
 Shalt thou retire alone, nor couldst thou wish  
 Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down  
 With patriarchs of the infant world,—with kings,  
 The powerful of the earth,—the wise, the good,  
 Fair forms and hoary seers of ages past,  
 All in one mighty sepulchre.'

Visible glories are but dying mementos. Beauty and grandeur do but embellish the universal grave:

'The hills,  
 Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun,—the vales  
 Stretching in pensive quietness between;  
 The venerable woods,—rivers that move  
 In majesty, and the complaining brooks  
 That make the meadows green; and, poured round all,  
 Old Ocean's gray and melancholy waste,—  
 Are but the solemn decorations all  
 Of the great tomb of man.'

Since the morning of creation the recorded names contain not half a century, and the living are as vaporious phantasms on the peaks of a submerged continent. On no spot of earth may you plant your foot, and affirm that none sleeps beneath:

'All that tread  
 The globe are but a handful to the tribes  
 That slumber in its bosom. Take the wings  
 Of morning, pierce the Barcan wilderness,  
 Or lose thyself in the continuous woods  
 Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound,



Save his own dashings,—yet the dead are there:  
 And millions in those solitudes, since first  
 The flight of years began, have laid them down  
 In their last sleep,—the dead reign there alone.'

It is related of Buddha that there came to him one day a woman who had lost her only child. She called frantically on the prophet to give back her little one to life. 'Go, my daughter,' said he, 'get me a mustard-seed from a house into which death has never entered, and I will do as thou hast bidden me.' From house to house she went, saying, 'Give me a mustard-seed, kind folk, for the prophet to revive my child'; but far as she wandered, in the crowded thoroughfare, and by the lonely roadside, she found not the home on whose door the shadow had not settled. Gradually the prophet's meaning dawned upon her mind; she saw the broader grief of the race, and her passion was merged in pity. Forget yourself in the common sorrow, be reconciled to Destiny. Why hesitate to enter the darkness where so vast a company have gone,—where all must go? Yet a few days, and the rest will follow. The brave and the fair, the bright and the joyous shall—like you who depart in silence and alone—have their light in ashes:

'All that breathe  
 Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh  
 When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care  
 Plod on, and each one as before will chase  
 His favorite phantom; yet all these shall leave  
 Their mirth and their employments, and shall come,  
 And make their bed with thee. As the long train  
 Of ages glides away, the sons of men,  
 The youth in life's green spring, and he who goes  
 In the full strength of years, matron and maid,  
 The speechless babe, and the gray-headed man—  
 Shall one by one be gathered to thy side,  
 By those, who in their turn shall follow them.'

Be fortified by these considerations. If other solace is needed, seek it in the performance of duty. Above all, be conscience-clear; think nobly, act nobly, hope well:

'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.'

After the lapse of sixty-four years, we have the same general tone of thought and a similar organ-like movement in *The Flood of Years*. His longest poem is *The Ages*, which treats of the theme of human progress, recapitulates the course of history, argues the gradual amelioration of mankind, and predicts for the nations a still more glorious era. That the earth is a theatre whereon the human drama is everlastingly played, is a conception fundamental to *The Fountain*, *The Antiquity of Freedom*, and *The Crowded Street*. With what depth of feeling, with what sweet, mild music, does he say:

‘Let me move slowly through the street,  
 Filled with an ever-shifting train,  
 Amid the sound of steps that beat  
 The murmuring walks like autumn rain. . . .  
 The struggling tides of life that seem  
 In wayward, aimless course to tend,  
 Are eddies of the mighty stream  
 That rolls to its appointed end.’

These pieces are almost perfect of their kind. Here is another:

‘Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again;  
 Th’ eternal years of God are hers;  
 But error, wounded, writhes in pain,  
 And dies among his worshippers.’

They purify and elevate, as well as please. The verses, *Future Life*, addressed to his wife, are among his best:

‘How shall I know thee in the sphere which keeps  
 The disembodied spirits of the dead,  
 When all of thee that time could wither sleeps  
 And perishes among the dust we tread?  
 For I shall feel the sting of ceaseless pain  
 If there I meet thy gentle presence not;  
 Nor hear the voice I love, nor read again  
 In thy serenest eyes the tender thought.’

His most poetical poems are, perhaps, *The Land of Dreams*, and *The Voice of Autumn*. It will be seen that his vein is narrow, but rich and deep. He has brought us more pure gold than many others who have ranged over wider fields.

In the fine, artistic blending of wit, fancy, and imagination, **Dr. Holmes** (1809– ) excels every modern Englishman. He has many points of resemblance with Hood, but is healthier in tone, wider in culture, and superior in splendor of effect. In the *vis comica* no American is comparable to him, except Lowell. A satirist, humorist, novelist, scholar, scientist,—he is, above

everything, a poet; and, as such, is the best example of the school of Pope that either side of the Atlantic has produced. Since the *Essay on Man* and the *Dunciad*, no metrical essays have appeared that were so pointed, musical, and judicious. In commemorative verse—in the power of lifting the ‘occasional’ into the classic, he is almost unrivalled. His obvious characteristics are nationality, vigor, elasticity, terseness, and finish, including a wonderful perfection of movement. Thus:

‘What secret charm long whispering in mine ear  
 Allures, attracts, compels, and chains me here,  
 Where murmuring echoes call me to resign  
 Their secret haunts to sweeter lips than mine;  
 Where silent pathways pierce the solemn shade,  
 In whose still depths my feet have never strayed;  
 Here, in the home where grateful children meet,  
 And I, half alien, take the stranger’s seat,  
 Doubting, yet hoping that the gift I bear  
 May keep its bloom in this unwonted air?  
 Hush, idle fancy, with thy needless art,  
 Speak from thy fountains, O my throbbing heart!  
 Say, shall I trust these trembling lips to tell  
 The fireside tale that memory knows so well?  
 How in the days of Freedom’s dread campaign,  
 A home-bred school-boy left his village plain,  
 Slow faring southward, till his wearied feet  
 Pressed the worn threshold of this fair retreat;  
 How with his comely face and gracious mien,  
 He joined the concourse of the classic green,  
 Nameless, unfriended, yet by Nature blest  
 With the rich tokens that she loves the best;  
 The flowing locks, his youth’s redundant crown,  
 Smoothed o’er a brow unfurrowed by a frown;  
 The untaught smile, that speaks so passing plain,  
 A world all hope, a past without a stain;  
 The clear-hued cheek, whose burning current glows  
 Crimson in action, carmine in repose;  
 Gifts such as purchase, with unminted gold,  
 Smiles from the young, and blessings from the old.’<sup>1</sup>

Goldsmith wrote nothing at once so forceful and so sweet. Add to that portrait this true and charming picture of spring:

‘Winter is past; the heart of Nature warms  
 Beneath the wrecks of unresisted storms;  
 Doubtful at first, suspected more than seen,  
 The Southern slopes are fringed with tender green;  
 On sheltered banks, beneath the dripping eaves,  
 Spring’s earliest nurslings spread their glowing leaves,  
 Bright with the hues from wider pictures won,  
 While azure, golden,—drift, or sky or sun:  
 The snowdrop, bearing on her patient breast

<sup>1</sup>*Astræa*, delivered before a society of Yale College, 1850.

The frozen trophy torn from winter's crest;  
 The violet, gazing on the arch of blue  
 Till her own iris wears its deepened hue;  
 The spendthrift crocus, bursting through the mold,  
*Naked and shivering, with his cup of gold.*  
 Swelled with new life, the darkening elm on high  
 Prints her thick buds against the spotted sky;  
 On all her boughs the stately chestnut cleaves  
 The gummy shroud that wraps her embryo leaves;  
 The house-fly stealing from his narrow grave,  
*Drugged with the opiate that November gave,*  
 Beats with faint wing against the snowy pane,  
 Or crawls tenacious o'er its lucid plain;  
 From shaded chinks of lichen-crustcd walls  
 In languid curves the gliding serpent crawls;  
 The bog's green harper, thawing from his sleep,  
*Twangs a hoarse note and tries a shortened leap;*  
 On floating rails that face the softening noons  
 The still shy turtles range their dark platoons,  
 Or toiling, aimless, o'er the mellowing fields,  
 Trail through the grass their tessellated shields.'

Commonly, as in Hood, humor jostles pathos. Thus:

'I know it is a sin  
 For me to sit and grin  
 At him here:  
 But the old three-cornered hat,  
 And the breeches, and all that,  
 Are so queer!'<sup>1</sup>

And near it, this perfect pearl:

'The mossy marbles rest  
 On the lips that he has pressed  
 In their bloom;  
 And the names he loved to hear  
 Have been carved for many a year  
 On the tomb.'<sup>2</sup>

Or:

'Come, dear old comrade, you and I  
 Will steal an hour from days gone by;  
 The shining days when life was new,  
 And all was bright with morning dew,—  
 The lusty days of long ago,  
 When you were Bill and I was Joe. . . .  
 You've won the great world's envied prize,  
 And grand you look in people's eyes,  
 With H. O. N. and L. L. D.,  
 In big, brave letters, fair to see,—  
 Your fist, old fellow! off they go!—  
 How are you, Bill? How are you, Joe?''<sup>3</sup>

Then, characteristically:

'Ah, pensive scholar, what is fame?  
 A fitful tongue of leaping flame:

<sup>1</sup>*The Last Leaf.*

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>*Bill and Joe.*

A giddy whirlwind's fickle gust,  
That lifts a pinch of mortal dust;  
A few swift years, and who can show  
Which dust was Bill, and which was Joe? . . .

No matter; while our home is here,  
No sounding name is half so dear:  
When fades at length our lingering day,  
Who cares what pompous tombstones say?  
Read on the hearts that love us still,  
*Hic jacet Joe. Hic jacet Bill.*<sup>1</sup>

We soon discover that he is always graceful and melodious, whether lofty or sportive, swift or measured; that he is always fresh, always genial, always manly; that his sense of the ludicrous is not keener than his sense of the beautiful—that, in fact, the latter is his chief fascination. Above the host of things brilliant and magnificent, should ever be foremost among all our inculcating, deepest in the heart, largest in the remembrance of youth, the following lines, than which, for combined melody, saving sentiment, and sublime earnestness, grander cannot be conceived:

'Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,  
As the swift seasons roll!  
Leave thy low-vaulted past!  
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
Till thou at length art free,  
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!'

In his serious and sentimental verse, **Lowell** (1819— ) has several equals and some superiors; but in wide range of power and variety of expression he is surpassed by none. The *Biglow Papers* have given him a prominent rank among the greatest satirists and humorists of the age. To his many other merits he adds that of an accomplished philologist; in particular, he is esteemed for his accurate knowledge of the Yankee dialect, so flexibly and amusingly employed in the unique *Papers*. A few brief examples will sufficiently exhibit his tone and style in satire and humor. For instance, here are some hints to statesmen:

'A ginooine statesman should be on his guard,  
Ef he *must* hev beliefs, nut to b'lieve 'em tu hard;  
For, ez sure ez he does, he'll be blartin' 'em out  
'Thout regardin' the natur o' man more'n a spout;  
Nor it don't ask much gumption to pick out a flaw  
In a party whose leaders are loose in the jaw:  
An' so in our own case I ventur' to hint  
Thet we'd better nut air our perceedins in print,

<sup>1</sup> *Bill and Joe.*



Nor pass resserlootions ez long ez your arm,  
 That may, ez things heppen to turn, do us harm;  
 For when you've done all your real meanin' to smother,  
 The darned things 'll up and mean sunthin' or 'nother.  
 No, never say nothin' without you're compelled tu,  
 An' then don't say nothin' that you can be held tu,  
 Nor don't leave no friction-idees layin' loose,  
 For the ign'ant to put tu incend'ary nse.'

Here is a fragment decidedly pastoral:

'Zekle crep' up quite unbeknown	The very room, coz she was in,
An' peeked in thru' the winder,	Seemed warm from floor to ceilin',
An' there sot Huldy all alone,	An' she looked full ez rosy agin
'Ith no one nigh to hender.	Ez the apples she was peelin'.
A fireplace filled the room's one side	She heered a foot, an' knowed it tu,
With half a cord o' wood in,—	A-raspin' on the scraper,—
There warn't no stove (tell comfort died)	All ways to once her feelins flew,
To bake ye to a puddin'.	Like sparks in burnt-up paper.
The wa'nut logs shot sparkles out	He kin' o' l'itered on the mat,
Towards the pootiest, bless her!	Some doubtfle o' the sekle;
And little flames danced all about	His heart kep' goin' pity-pat,
The chiny on the dresser. . . .	But hern went pity Zekle.'

Here is a typical theological controversy:

'Somewhere in India upon a time,  
 (Read it not in Injah, or you spoil the verse)  
 There dwelt two saints whose privilege sublime  
 It was to sit and watch the world grow worse,  
 Their only care (in that delicious clime)  
 At proper intervals to pray and curse; . . .

Each from his hut rushed six score times a day,  
 Like a great canon of the Church full-rammed  
 With cartridge theologic (so to say,  
 Touched himself off, and then, recoiling, slammed  
 His hovel's door behind him in a way  
 That to his foe said plainly,—you'll be damned; . . .

Our saints had practised for some thirty years;  
 Their talk beginning with a single stem,  
 Spread like a banyan, sending down live piers,  
 Colonies of digression, and, in them  
 Germs of yet new dispersion; once by the ears,  
 They could convey damnation in a hem,  
 And blow the pinch of premise-priming off  
 Long syllogistic batteries, with a cough. . . .

At length, when their breath's end was come about,  
 And both could, now and then, just gasp "impostor!"  
*Holdin' their heads thrust menacingly out,*  
*As staggering cocks keep up their fighting posture,*  
 The stranger smiled and said, "Beyond a doubt  
 'Tis fortunate, my friends, that you have lost your  
 United parts of speech, or it had been  
 Impossible for me to get between. . . .

So having said the youth was seen no more,  
 And straightway our sage Brahmin, the philosopher,

Cried, "That was aimed at thee, thou endless bore,  
 Idle and useless as the growth of moss over  
 A rotting tree-trunk!" "I would square that score  
 Full soon," replied the Dervise, "could I cross over  
 And catch thee by the beard. Thy nails I'd trim  
 And make thee work, as was advised by him." . . .

And so  
 The good old quarrel was begun anew;  
 One would have sworn the sky was black as sloe,  
 Had but the other dared to call it blue;  
 Nor were the followers who fed them slow  
 To treat each other with their curses, too,  
 Each hating t'other (moves it tears or laughter?)  
 Because he thought him sure of hell hereafter!'<sup>1</sup>

But more than the sportive quality of his imagination do we enjoy its depth and earnestness, its contemplative, ideal vein; as in the following verses:

'Of all the myriad moods of mind  
 That through the soul come thronging,  
 Which one was e'er so dear, so kind,  
 So beautiful as longing?  
 The thing we long for, that we are  
 For one transcendent moment;  
 Before the present, poor and bare,  
 Can make its sneering comment.  
 Still through our paltry stir and strife  
 Glows down our wished Ideal;  
 And longing moulds in clay what life  
 Carves in the marble Real;  
 To let the new life in, we know,  
 Desire must ope the portal;  
 Perhaps the longing to be so  
 Helps make the soul immortal.'<sup>2</sup>

And the lofty faith of these lines:

'Careless seems the Great Avenger; history's pages but record  
 One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems and the Word;  
 Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne;  
 But that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown  
 Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own!'<sup>3</sup>

Nowhere has Lowell appeared to us personally so attractive as in his sonnets, which he calls 'the firstlings of my muse.' Any of them will kindle a desire to see its companions. The moral beauty of this one will excite regret that strains which began so worthily were not more frequently renewed:

<sup>1</sup>*An Oriental Epilogue.*      <sup>2</sup>*Longing.*

<sup>3</sup> Compare the Greek poet:

'The mills of the gods grind late, but they grind fine;'  
 and Longfellow's paraphrase:  
 'Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small:  
 Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all.'

'What were I, Love, if I were stripped of thee,  
 If thine eyes shut me out whereby I live,  
 Thou who unto my calmer soul dost give  
 Knowledge, and Truth, and holy Mystery,  
 Wherein Truth mainly lies for those who see  
 Beyond the earthly and the fugitive,  
 Who in the grandeur of the soul believe,  
 And only in the Infinite are free?  
 Without thee I were naked, bleak, and bare  
 As yon dead cedar on the sea-cliff's brow;  
 And Nature's teachings, which come to me now,  
 Common and beautiful as light and air,  
 Would be as fruitless as a stream which still  
 Slips through the wheel of some old ruined mill.'

It is impossible to read Lowell's poems without being entertained or improved. We think them valuable not only for their intrinsic excellence, but for the vast influence which their increasing circulation destined them to exert.

One of our most characteristic and popular poets is **Whittier** (1807- ). Bryant excepted, no one has been less influenced by other literatures. He may be said to illustrate four principal phases in our national history: Aboriginal Life, *Mogg Megone*; Colonial Life, *Mabel Martin*; Abolitionism, *Farewell of a Virginia Slave Mother*; and the Civil War, *Barbara Fritchie*. He was the poet of anti-slavery, as Phillips its orator, Mrs. Stowe its novelist, and Sumner its statesman: but while his anti-slavery poetry had a vast effect in rousing and condensing public sentiment, it was more vehement than inspirational; and as the events which suggested it were temporary, it is read with constantly waning interest. Far more successful have been his narrative and legendary poems. *Maud Muller* and *Skipper Ireson's Ride* had no prototypes; nor has *The Barefoot Boy* a parallel:

'Blessings on thee, little man,  
 Barefoot boy, with cheek of tan!  
 With thy turned-up pantaloons,  
 And thy merry whistled tunes;  
 With thy red lip, redder still  
 Kissed by strawberries on the hill;  
 With the sunshine on thy face,  
 Through thy torn brim's jaunty grace:  
 From my heart I give thee joy,—  
 I was once a barefoot boy!  
 Prince thou art—the grown-up man  
 Only is republican.  
 Let the million dollared ride!  
 Barefoot, trudging at his side

Thou hast more than he can buy  
 In the reach of ear and eye—  
 Outward sunshine, inward joy:  
 Blessings on thee, barefoot boy! . . .  
 Cheerily, then, my little man,  
 Live and laugh, as boyhood can!  
 Though the flinty slopes be hard,  
 Stubble-speared the new-mown sward,  
 Every morn shall lead thee through  
 Fresh baptisms of the dew;  
 Live and laugh, as boyhood can!  
 Shall the cool wind kiss the heat:  
 All too soon these feet must hide  
 In the prison cells of pride,

Lose the freedom of the sod,  
 Like a colt's for work be shod,  
 Made to tread the mills of toil,  
 Up and down in ceaseless moil:  
 Happy if their track be found

Never on forbidden ground;  
 Happy if they sink not in  
 Quick and treacherous sands of sin.  
 Ah! that thou couldst know thy joy,  
 Ere it passes, barefoot boy!

No writer of ballads founded on our native history and tradition can be compared with him. Much of his material appears to have been gathered, in his wanderings, from the lips of sailors, farmers, and old women, as in the exquisite *Robin*:

'My old Welsh neighbor over the way  
 Crept slowly out in the sun of spring,  
 Pushed from her ears the locks of gray,  
 And listened to hear the robin sing.

Her grandson, playing at marbles, stopped,  
 And, cruel in sport as boys will be,  
 Tossed a stone at the bird, who hopped  
 From bough to bough in the apple-tree.

"Nay!" said the grandmother; "have you not heard,  
 My poor, bad boy! of the fiery pit,  
 And how, drop by drop, this merciful bird  
 Carries the water that quenches it?

He brings cool dew in his little bill,  
 And lets it fall on the souls of sin:  
 You can see the mark on his red breast still  
 Of fires that scorch as he drops it in.

My poor Bron rhuddyn! my breast-burned bird,  
 Singing so sweetly from limb to limb,  
 Very dear to the heart of our Lord  
 Is he who pities the lost like Him!"

"Amen!" I said to the beautiful myth;  
 "Sing, bird of God, in my heart as well:  
 Each good thought is a drop wherewith  
 To cool and lessen the fires of hell.

Prayers of love like rain-drops fall,  
 Tears of pity are cooling dew,  
 And dear to the heart of our Lord are all  
 Who suffer like Him in the good they do!"

We soon perceive that it is not by marvellous finish or by lofty imagination that Whittier has obtained the suffrages of the reading public. He himself disclaims these eminent merits:

'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. . . .

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.'

Yet he reaches the hearts of his countrymen, because he has that touch of nature which is beyond art; because he embodies, in smooth and flowing metre, the cardinal qualities of greatness,—simplicity, sincerity, manliness, piety. The ethical element is not extraneous and occasional, but inherent and intense. Who cannot understand the aspirations and discontent of *Maud Muller*? Who has not had the elevated and thoughtful tendencies of his mind developed or encouraged by the well-known concluding couplets:

'God pity them both! and pity us all,  
Who vainly the dreams of youth recall.

For of all sad words of tongue or pen,  
The saddest are these: "It might have been!"

Ah, well! for us all some sweet hope lies  
Deeply buried from human eyes;

And, in the hereafter, angels may  
Roll the stone from its grave away!'

This devout seriousness, the motive of such pieces as *The Hermit of Thebaid*, is never long absent. We quote at random:

'Ah, the dead, the unforgot!  
From their solemn homes of thought,  
Where the cypress shadows blend  
Darkly over foe and friend,  
Or in love or sad rebuke,  
Back upon the living look.

And the tenderest ones and weakest,  
Who their wrongs have borne the meekest,  
Lifting from those dark, still places,  
Sweet and sad-remembered faces,  
O'er the guilty hearts behind  
An unwitting triumph find.<sup>1</sup>

Again:

'Stand still, my soul, in the silent dark,  
I would question thee,  
Alone in the shadow drear and stark,  
With God and me!

What daunts thee now? what shakes thee so?  
My sad soul say.  
"I see a cloud, like a curtain low,  
Hang o'er my way." . . .

What, my soul, was the errand here?  
Was it mirth or ease,  
Or heaping up dust from year to year?  
"Nay, none of these!" . . .

Know well, my soul, God's hand controls  
Whate'er thou fearest;  
Round Him in calmest music rolls  
Whate'er thou hearest.

And where art thou going, soul of mine?  
Canst see the end?  
And whither this troubled life of thine  
Evermore doth tend?

What to thee is shadow, to Him is day,  
And the end He knoweth,  
And not on a blind and aimless way  
The spirit goeth.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*The New Wife and the Old.*

<sup>2</sup>*My Soul and I.*



In these days of iconoclasm it is good to read:

'I see the wrong that round me lies,  
I feel the guilt within;  
I hear, with groan and travail-cries,  
The world confess its sin.

Yet, in the maddening maze of things,  
And tossed by storm and flood,  
To one fixed stake my spirit clings;  
I know that God is good!'<sup>1</sup>

The manly and pathetic reflections in *Snow-bound*, as well as its pictures of winter life and landscape, are admirable. *Questions of Life* is replete with felicitous thoughts and phrases. *The Tent on the Beach* is celebrated. In these and later poems, the author is seen to be a poet of steady growth. There is no falling off as the shadows thicken. If in his last volume we miss the fire of his first, the loss is amply compensated by a more artistic workmanship, and by the calmer, deeper tone of thought and feeling. There is no probability that a new school, of which the rough barbaric 'realisms' of Whitman are the supposed nucleus, will ever draw the nation away from the stainless pages of Whittier and his leading contemporaries, chief among whom is **Longfellow** — the central figure in our poetical literature.

**Drama.**—The downward tendency of the stage, as a field for literary effort, has continued to the present hour. However it may be explained, the fact is clear, that, with few exceptions — as **Bulwer's** *Richelieu* and *Lady of Lyons* — the dramas written by men of genius within the present period have not been of the available kind; while the authors of successful plays have not been men of genius, and most of them are scarcely known in the literary world. Browning represents the dramatic element of recent times, such as it is; but, in the original sense of the term, he is not a dramatist at all. He has not the peculiar faculty for the invention of incidents adapted to dramatic effect, nor the power of forgetting himself in the separate creations which he strives to inform. Tennyson's *Queen Mary* is a forced effort, the result of deliberate forethought, a dramatic poem rather than a stage-drama. Beyond all the rest, yet vainly, Swinburne seeks to renew the vigor of other days, when the

<sup>1</sup> *Eternal Goodness.*

drama was the natural outgrowth of a passionate and adventurous era.

If we seek the causes for this decline, we shall find a main one, it is believed, in the practical, positive temper of the age. Intellect has been diverted to other and utilitarian objects,—invention, discovery, journalism. Writers and readers are occupied with new ideas, new themes, new forms. The early stage, moreover, was an important means of instruction, and a primary means of entertainment. But facilities for amusing and instructing the people greatly multiplied. That office is now assumed very largely by the novel and the press. The times are no less stirring, but surplus desire has at present a thousand outlets where it then had one. The diffusion of literature brings intellectual diversion to every fireside at a cheaper rate than dramatic performances. Again, this degeneracy has been confirmed by theatrical management. Formerly, while dramatists were often actors, managers were one or both; to-day, the latter are merely a trading, monetary class. The introduction of movable scenery has begotten and fostered the love of scenic effects. The theatre, as a commercial institution, strives to draw 'the crowd' by ephemeral and dazzling display. The stress is transferred from the mental to the physical. Sensuous appeals take the place of ideas and sentiments. Pomp and noise supply the need of vivid language and vigorous thought. Here, as described by a newspaper critic, is the pageant of a modern play:

'It includes a burning house, a modern bar-room, real gin cock-tails, a river-side pier, a steamboat in motion, the grand saloon or state-cabin of the steamboat, the deck of the same, the wheel-house, the funnels, and the steamboat in flames; and all these objects are presented with singular fidelity to their originals.'

How wide the contrast between this show and the meagre equipment on which the grand old Elizabethans could rely! Of a similar play a like critic observes:

'It is not a work of literature, but a work of business. The piece is a rough conglomeration of the nothings of the passing hour—objects and incidents drawn, but not always drawn with accuracy, from the streets, the public conveyances, the haunts of profligacy. These nothings are offered for their own sake, and not made tributary to any intellectual purpose whatever.'

Finally, with the spread of the religious movement at the close of the last century, a reaction set in against the theatre, and had the natural effect of lowering its tone and manners, as well as its

literature. Thus an adverse moral feeling has been an accelerating force to sink it below the level of high art.

Yet the general elevation has told powerfully here as elsewhere; and the morale of the theatre, in sympathetic accord with society, has improved beyond precedent. The coarseness and indecency of the past have been left forever behind. It were wise to promote this advancement by a discriminating censure and a judicious restraint. It were vain and senseless to attempt to destroy what has sprung from an instinctive demand of the soul for the incarnate exhibition of the ideals which it trusts—heroism, grandeur, beauty, sorrow, hope, honor that swerves not, virtue triumphant. The dramatic element which creates the theatre is universal and innate. Every preacher who would agitate men out of moral apathy, and rouse them to a sense of personal duty, must employ it. The great divines of the world—as Chrysostom, Whitefield, Wesley, Spurgeon, Beecher—have been essentially great actors—teachers by action. Historians, like Carlyle, Froude, and Motley, who marshal ideas as a living and breathing host, have been masters of the dramatic manner. Springing from what is best in man, the theatre is potent for good. Nowhere can elevated lessons be brought home so directly to the heart. Every great emotion is uplifting. He who has felt like a hero or saint, is thereby more heroic or saintly. It was a very healthy feeling which prompted the boatman, when he saw Forrest as Iago, to cry out: ‘I would like to get hold of you, after the show is over, and wring your infernal neck.’ Said Steele of Betterton: ‘From his acting I have received a stronger impression of what is great and noble in human nature than from the arguments of the most solid philosophers, or the descriptions of the most charming poets.’ When the elder Booth had recited the Lord’s Prayer in the presence of a select company, the host stepped forward with streaming eyes, and in broken accents said: ‘Sir, you have afforded me a pleasure for which my whole future life will feel grateful. I am an old man, and every day from my boyhood to the present I have repeated that prayer; but I never heard it before, never!’ When the stage is divorced from its mission, it is also potent for ill; and here lies the secret of the felt antagonism. No agency can compare with it in power to corrupt,

when surrendered to shame, when villany is invested with charms, and portraits of debauchery attract more than they repel. Those who seek its redemption will condemn its abuse, and encourage the 'legitimate drama.' Meanwhile, there is needed, in its present state, a more careful discrimination both of dramas to be read and of dramas as acted. Pope's lines should be remembered:

'Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,  
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;  
Yet, seen too oft, familiar with her face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.'

**Periodical.**—One of the most peculiar and influential of the literary forces in this era of prose is the periodical press in its manifold forms, ranging between the two extremes of quarterly and daily. The phenomenal facts are quantity, quality, and rate of increase. The older reviews and magazines, while much less vigorous than formerly, still keep the lead, though having to contest the field with many younger and very formidable rivals. The most remarkable advancement, alike in ability of thought and extent of power, has been made by the newspaper, and its development in the United States—especially within the last decade—has never been paralleled in any other country, nor here by any other industry or pursuit. In 1880, nine hundred and eighty dailies were witness to the soul of enterprise and energy in America; while, in 1881, Great Britain had but one hundred and sixty-six for the news supply of its population of thirty-five millions. We have long been the greatest readers in the world. Our periodical publications nearly equal those of the rest of the globe, and the diffusion is growing annually more penetrating and minute.

It is needless to allude to the services of a free, pervasive press as a cohesive agent of civilization; as an appliance to chronicle facts, to circulate theories, to expose chronic vice and constitutional abuse,<sup>1</sup> to report and enlarge discussion, to correct the sins of extravagance and chimera, to hold the community, with a wide-reaching sagacity, to a constant deliberation on social and reformatory questions, till sober principles prevail and the elements are left to a peaceful readjustment. That it has multi-

<sup>1</sup> Four hostile newspapers are more to be dreaded than a hundred thousand bayonets.  
—*Napoleon I.*

plied readers, and excited curiosity touching every department of knowledge, is beyond dispute. That it is a great intellectual convenience, is equally patent. It is the democratic form of literature to the multitude who have neither the money to purchase books nor the leisure to read them. It abbreviates and systematizes labor, condensing the researches of the few for the disposal of the many.

On the other hand—while the evils to be deplored are far less than the blessings conferred—constant reading of reviews, so far as it accustoms the reader to accept information at second-hand, tends to make him superficial, to induce the feeling of submission and dependence. So far, also, as its attitude is partisan, he is liable to the infection of partisan habits. Criticism is much a form of personal expression. It is an assistant, not a finality. Often it is only the self-revelation of a man. The greatest works have made their way seemingly without the slightest reference to the opinions and protests of critics.

Undoubtedly the newspaper of the future will be less commercial and more literary. It will have a more catholic spirit. It will have a juster sense of moral and social values. It will devote more space to the remedial and purifying agencies of society, less to the frivolities and vices which now exclude so much of greater moment and sweeter import, which only cater to a prurient taste, and stimulate a morbid desire for low excitements. A paper that treats crime as a jest, that labels immorality as 'rich developments,' that puts forward uncleanness with startling head-lines and exhaustive detail, to become the daily food of children and youth,—is a moral scourge. Few things can be of graver importance to the parent than the selection of a family paper, destined to occupy the thoughts and to possess the imagination of forming and susceptible minds. Let us be grateful to the noble men and women who are honestly trying to realize their own ideal, and to make the press what it ought to be,—an emanation from the best spirit and culture.

**Essay.**—It is the province of some to spread out a topic in all its breadth and variety; of others, to touch upon many subjects, but to exhaust none. The aggregate of good done by these gleaners in the fields of thought is not easily to be estimated. How much should we lose of what is most attractive



and valuable in English literature, if the productions of even the later essayists were left out of the account! They are a legitimate and most characteristic outgrowth of the national and dominant tendencies, reflecting that practical morality which has filled the last two centuries with dissertations on the rule of duty, and that freedom of discussion which has been asserted for so many ages by English writers, enforced by the public sense, then secured by the laws.

Slight but spirited essays are no uncommon feature of the daily and weekly journal; while the contributors to our leading periodicals, and the authors of the well-known series of *English Men of Letters*, represent such a mass of critical opinion as was never before brought together. It is generally admitted, however, that *reviewing* has lost something of its authority by the newspaper press, which, tending to constrain it within the limits of a quarter-column and the party creed, has in a measure turned it into a fatal facility of stock phrases and commonplace ideas. A few papers, indeed, keep up the traditions of better days, and a standard of excellence, in some respects really high, is not seldom reached; but the average 'notice' in even these is too empirical and hasty. The enormous multiplication of books has doubtless tended to this decadence, in which, though the reviewer may have a sound head and a good heart, with a wish to find merit and a purpose to exhibit it, he rarely has time to look beyond the preface.

While our critics seem not to have the collective force, the recognized leading, of the race that has passed away, they perhaps have a more enlarged and profound conception of their functions. Without neglecting form, they think more of the matter,—the energy and nobleness of the thoughts and sentiments. Not without some acrimony, they evince less personal rancor than formerly, when the critics composed a tribunal. Interesting examples of this higher, wider, more earnest criticism may be found in Vaughan's *Hours with the Mystics*, Taylor's *Notes on Books*, Masson's *British Novelists*, Shairp's *Aspects of Poetry*; above all, in the works of Carlyle, Arnold, Froude, and Ruskin. The first, our 'modern Ezekiel,' will be treated by himself. He requires a wide and open space. **Matthew Arnold** (1822— ) is by many relished rather as a critic

than as a poet. The bent of his faculty lies more in the direction of argument, which he illustrates by his poetic imagination. While criticism, with Macaulay, clings to practical considerations, with him, as with Sainte-Beuve, it must maintain its independence of the practical spirit. How shall it see things in themselves, as they are,—how shall it be disinterested?—

‘By keeping aloof from practice: by resolutely following the law of its own nature, which is to be a free play of the mind on all subjects which it touches; by steadily refusing to lend itself to any of those ulterior, political, practical considerations about ideas which plenty of people will be sure to attach to them, which perhaps ought often to be attached to them, which in this country at any rate are certain to be attached to them quite sufficiently, but which criticism has really nothing to do with. Its business is, as I have said, simply to know the best that is known and thought in the world, and, by in its turn making this known, to create a current of true and fresh ideas. Its business is to do this with inflexible honesty, with due ability; but its business is to do no more, and to leave alone all questions of practical consequences and applications, questions which will never fail to have due prominence given to them.’<sup>1</sup>

This is high ground. You are to deal with facts and fancies for the sake of the truth which is in them, not for the sake of a sect or party. It is no organized preference of the useful to the ornamental; for what can be more profitable to the mind than to dwell upon what is excellent in itself, upon the absolute beauty and fitness of things? Yet do not suppose that you are to ignore or undervalue consequences. Your main business, however, is ‘*to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world.*’ That is, you are to be ‘perpetually dissatisfied’ with whatsoever falls ‘short of a high and perfect ideal.’ You are not, therefore, to be a mere spectator, though Arnold should seem to advise it. He is himself, fortunately, more than this—he is also a judge. Else he had not made so many admirable observations like these:

‘Heine had all the culture of Germany; in his head fermented all the ideas of modern Europe. And what have we got from Heine? A half-result, for want of more balance, and of nobleness of soul and character. That is what I say; there is so much power, so many seem able to run well, so many give promise of running well; so few reach the goal, so few are chosen. *Many are called, few chosen.*’<sup>2</sup>

And:

‘What a manifest failure is this last word of the religion of pleasure! One man in many millions, a Heine, may console himself, and keep himself erect in suffering, by a colossal irony of this sort, by covering himself and the universe with the red fire of this sinister mockery; but the many millions cannot—cannot if they would. That is where the sentiment of a religion of sorrow has such a vast advantage over the sentiment of a religion of pleasure,—in its power to be a general, popular, religious sentiment, a stay for the mass of mankind, whose lives are full of hardship.’<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Essays in Criticism.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

Nor shall you assume the liberal gait of a Frenchman. As an Englishman you are too moral to consider a man as a mere subject of painting—you are concerned to know whether he is a rascal, or one on whose principles of life the wayfaring and the foot-sore may rest.

‘But moral rules, apprehended as ideas first, and then rigorously followed as laws, are, and must be, for the sage only. The mass of mankind have neither force of intellect enough to apprehend them clearly as ideas, nor force of character enough to follow them strictly as laws. The mass of mankind can be carried along a course full of hardship for the natural man, can be borne over the thousand impediments of the narrow way, only by the tide of a joyful and bounding emotion. It is impossible to rise from reading Epictetus or Marcus Aurelius without a sense of constraint and melancholy, without feeling that the burden laid upon man is well-nigh greater than he can bear. Honor to the sages who have felt this, and yet have borne it! . . . The paramount virtue of religion is, that it has *lighted up* morality; that it has supplied the emotion and inspiration-needed for carrying the sage along the narrow way perfectly, for carrying the ordinary man along it at all. Even the religions with most dross in them have had something of this virtue; but the Christian religion manifests it with unexampled splendor.’

Indeed, Arnold’s great charm is sentiment. His supreme virtue is his essentially religious feeling,—his serious intention, and his sympathetic treatment.

The same large and noble way of treating subjects is evident in the *Short Studies* of **Froude**, famous chiefly as a historian. This writer combines an almost matchless English style with analytical acuteness and a high spiritual tone. He is, it is true, hostile to most ecclesiastical institutions, and is distrusted by the religious public; but there is in him an honest homage to truth, while the conviction of divine government is central. We may dissent from some of his opinions, but we must allow that the spirit of his teachings, as indicated in the following passage, is lofty and sound:

‘The saint when he has the power calls the sword to his aid, and in his zeal for what he calls the honor of God, makes war upon such people with steel and fire. The innovator, on the other hand, knowing that he is not that evil creature which his rival represents him as being, first suffers; suffers in rough times at stake and scaffold; suffers in our own later days in good name, in reputation, in worldly fortune; and as the whirligig of time brings round his turn of triumph, takes, in French revolutions and such other fits of madness, his own period of wild revenge. The service of truth is made to appear as one thing, the service of God as another; and in that fatal separation religion dishonors itself with unavailing enmity to what nevertheless it is compelled at last to accept in humiliation; and science, welcoming the character which its adversary flings upon it, turns away with answering hostility from doctrines without which its own highest achievements are but pyramids of ashes.’

He exists for the excellent who can utter or entertain such a truth as this:

'Property is consistent with intense worldliness, intense selfishness, intense hardness of heart; while the grander features of human character,—self-sacrifice, disregard of pleasure, patriotism, love of knowledge, devotion to any great and good cause,—these have no tendency to bring men what is called fortune; they do not even necessarily promote their happiness; for do what they will in this way, the horizon of what they desire to do perpetually flies before them. High hopes and enthusiasms are generally disappointed in results; and the wrongs, the cruelties, the wretchedness of all kinds, which forever prevail among mankind,—the shortcomings in himself of which he becomes more conscious as he becomes really better,—these things, you may be sure, will prevent a noble-minded man from ever being particularly happy.'

They add points of light to our sky who teach:

'Whether the end be seventy years hence, or seven hundred,—be the close of the mortal history of humanity as far distant in the future as its shadowy beginnings seem now to lie behind us,—this only we may foretell with confidence,—that the riddle of man's nature will remain unsolved. There will be that in him yet which physical laws will fail to explain,—that something, whatever it be, in himself and in the world, which science cannot fathom, and which suggests the unknown possibilities of his origin and his destiny.'

But the greatest living master of English prose is **Ruskin** (1819– ), the prolific and versatile art-critic, at once a theorizer and an artist, to whom conviction gives prophetic fervor; sometimes—and not strangely—dogmatic; thoroughly partisan, frequently excessive in blame or praise, and so to be read with discrimination, but not followed blindly, while ever impressing us more with the amplitude of his genius, with the loftiness of his spirit, and with the nobleness of his aim. After the poets, who had depicted Nature in melodious verse; after the painters, who had portrayed her in expressive color,—he it was who revealed her in prose, with the imaginative splendor of the one and the graphic power of the other. The first thing he remembers, we are told, was the 'intense joy, mingled with awe,' which he felt in the presence of some natural scene; and before he had completed his ninth year he wrote:

'Papa, how pretty those icicles are,  
That are seen so near, that are seen so far;  
Those dropping waters that come from the rocks  
And many a hole, like the haunt of a fox.  
That silvery stream that runs babbling along,  
Making a murmuring, dancing song.  
Those trees that stand waving upon the rock's side,  
And men, that, like spectres, among them glide.  
And waterfalls that are heard from far,  
And come in sight when very near.  
And the water-wheel that turns slowly round,  
Grinding the corn that requires to be ground.  
And mountains at a distance seen,  
And rivers winding through the plain.  
And quarries with their craggy stones,  
And the wind among them moans.'

It is beauty, we see, that expands the thought, while it gives to the wing liberty and might. To mediate for this and future generations, between the materialism which would depress our higher self and the spiritualism which would unduly exalt it,—to divest the one of its grossness, and the other of its vagueness, was the mission of Mr. Ruskin. And how beautifully, how grandly, beyond all chance of successful rivalry, has he spoken ! The gods might dream of writing thus:

'The noon-day sun came slanting down the rocky slopes of La Riccia, and its masses of entangled and tall foliage, whose autumnal tints were mixed with the wet verdure of a thousand evergreens, were penetrated with it as with rain. I cannot call it color, it was conflagration. Purple, and crimson, and scarlet, like the curtains of God's tabernacle, the rejoicing trees sank into the valley in showers of light, every separate leaf quivered with buoyant and burning life; each, as it turned to reflect or transmit the sun-beam, first a torch and then an emerald. Far up into the recesses of the valley, the green vistas arched like the hollows of mighty waves of some crystalline sea, with the arbutus flowers dashed along their flanks for foam, and silver flakes of orange spray tossed into the air around them, breaking over the gray walls of rock into a thousand separate stars, fading and kindling alternately as the weak wind lifted and let them fall. Every blade of grass burned like the golden floor of heaven, opening in sudden gleams as the foliage broke and closed above it, as sheet-lightning opens in a cloud at sunset; the motionless masses of dark rock,—dark, though flushed with scarlet lichen,— casting their quiet shadows across its restless radiance, the fountain underneath them filling its marble hollow with blue mist and fitful sound, and over all,—the multitudinous bars of amber and rose, the sacred clouds that have no darkness, and only exist to illumine, were seen in fathomless intervals between the solemn and orbéd repose of the stone pines, passing to lose themselves in the last, white blinding lustre of the measureless line where the Campagna melted into the blaze of the sea.'

With what exuberant splendor he describes the dawn in the Alps, transferring to his page the very glory and freshness of the morning:

'And then wait yet for one hour, until the east again becomes purple, and the heaving mountains, rolling against it in darkness, like waves of a wild sea, are drowned one by one in the glory of its burning; watch the white glaciers blaze in their winding paths about the mountains, like mighty serpents, with scales of fire; watch the columnar peaks of solitary snow, kindling downwards, chasm by chasm, each in itself a new morning; their long avalanches cast down in keen streams brighter than the lightning, sending each his tribute of driven snow, like altar-smoke, up to the heaven; the rose light of their silent domes flushing that heaven about them and above them, piercing with purer beams through its purple lines of lifted cloud, casting a new glory on every wreath as it passes by, until the whole heaven—one scarlet canopy—is interwoven with a roof of waving flame, and tossing, vault beyond vault, as with the drifted wings of many companies of angels; and then, when you look no more for gladness, and when you are howed down with fear and love of the Maker and Doer of this, tell me who has best delivered this His message unto men!'

We are pleased with the stateliness of his style, the chastened magnificence of his diction, and are grateful; but we are doubly grateful for the burning purity of his feeling, the elevation of his ideal, his noble reverence, his inspiring truth. All beauty, he



would teach us, has a human and a Divine side. Forms, however ugly, from which great qualities shine, are loved. The facts in Nature are 'the nouns of the intellect, and make the grammar of the eternal language.' Her beauty is only emblematic of the attributes of God. For how can an object be beautiful without moderation, the type of Government by Law, opposed to every sign of violence, to every sign of extravagance? or perfectly so without symmetry, the type of Divine Justice? without repose, the type of the Divine Permanence, the most unfailing test, without which nothing can be right, with which nothing can be ignoble? without unity, the type of the Divine Comprehensiveness, which, connecting change and contrast, as in the melodies of music, is 'at the root of all our delight in any beautiful form whatsoever'? Have you understood that nothing, though it be pretty, graceful, rich, is beautiful until it speaks to the imagination? Tones of music, depths of space, sky and flower,—have they not somewhat immeasurable and divine, as chosen men and women have a largeness of suggestion,—somewhat that is catholic, spiritual, universal? This is the reason why Proclus says of beauty that 'it swims on the light of forms.' Hence, too, the remark that he who climbs the white roof of the Milan Cathedral, and gazes on the forest of statues, 'feels as though a flight of angels had alighted there and been struck to marble.' And in the same strain Ruskin declares:

'Whatever beauty there may result from the effects of light on foreground objects, from the dew of the grass, the flash of the cascade, the glitter of the birch trunk, or the fair daylight hues of darker things (and joyfulness there is in all of them), there is yet a light which the eye invariably seeks with a deeper feeling of the beautiful, the light of the declining or breaking day, and the flakes of scarlet cloud burning like watch-fires in the green sky of the horizon; a deeper feeling, I say, not perhaps more acute, but having more of spiritual hope and longing, less of animal and present life, more manifest, invariably, in those of more serious and determined mind (I use the word serious not as being opposed to cheerful, but to trivial and volatile); but, I think, marked and unfailing even in those of the least thoughtful dispositions. I am willing to let it rest on the determination of every reader, whether the pleasure which he has received from these effects of calm and luminous distance be not the most singular and memorable of which he has been conscious; whether all that is dazzling in color, perfect in form, gladdening in expression, be not of evanescent and shallow appealing, when compared with the still small voice of the level twilight behind purple hills, on the scarlet arch of dawn over the dark troublous-edged sea.'

We need not fear too much admiring this adorer of beauty, who at eve so truly obeys the voice obeyed at prime; who never swerves from reliance on those verities which have been the joy of all great souls; who never falters in his conviction that the

principles of beauty are brought 'to a root in human passion or human hope'; who is so fine and high a lover that he must deny to art any greatness which is not the expression of a pure soul, to the face any loveliness which is not ethical, and to the voice any excellence which is not born of virtue:

'A bad woman may have a sweet voice; but that sweetness of voice comes of the past morality of her race. That she can sing with it at all she owes to the determination of laws of music by the morality of the past. Every act, every impulse, of virtue and vice, affects in any creature, face, voice, nervous power, and vigour and harmony of invention, at once. Perseverance in rightness of human conduct, renders, after a certain number of generations, human art possible; every sin clouds it, be it ever so little a one; and persistent vicious living and following of pleasure render, after a certain number of generations, all art impossible.'

'That is ever the difference,' says Emerson, 'between the wise and the unwise: the latter wonders at what is unusual, the wise man wonders at the usual.' The artist of highest aim creates his ideal by combining things which, though never wanting, are ordinarily little noticed. It is in these that the lesson of devotion is chiefly taught. For instance:

'If in our moments of utter idleness and insipidity, we turn to the sky as a last resource, which of its phenomena do we speak of? One says it has been wet, and another it has been windy, and another it has been warm. Who, among the whole chattering crowd, can tell me of the forms and the precipices of the chain of tall white mountains that girded the horizon at noon yesterday? Who saw the narrow sunbeams that came out of the south and smote upon their summits until they melted and mouldered away in a dust of blue rain? Who saw the dance of the dead clouds when the sunlight left them last night, and the west wind blew them before it like withered leaves? All has passed, unregretted as unseen; or if the apathy be ever shaken off, even for an instant, it is only by what is gross, or what is extraordinary; and yet it is not in the broad and fierce manifestations of the elemental energies, not in the clash of the hail, nor the drift of the whirlwind, that the highest characters of the sublime are developed. God is not in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the still small voice.'

And:

'All those passings to and fro of fruitful shower and grateful shade, and all those visions of silver palaces built about the horizon, and voices of moaning winds and threatening thunders, and glories of colored robe and cloven ray, are but to deepen in our hearts the acceptance, and distinctness, and dearness of the simple words, "Our Father, which art in heaven."''

Blessings upon him who has opened so many thousand eyes to the beauty of the sky which is above us, and of the grass which we trample under our feet:

'Gather a single blade of grass, and examine for a minute, quietly, its narrow sword-shaped strip of fluted green. Nothing, as it seems there, of notable goodness or beauty. A very little strength, and a very little tallness, and a few delicate long lines meeting in a point,—not a perfect point neither, but blunt and unfinished, by no means a creditable or apparently much cared for example of Nature's workmanship; made, as it seems, only to be trodden on to-day, and to-morrow to be cast into the oven; and a little pale

and hollow stalk, feeble and flaccid, leading down to the dull brown fibres of roots. And yet, think of it well, and judge whether of all the gorgeous flowers that beam in summer air, and of all strong and goodly trees, pleasant to the eyes and good for food,—stately palm and pine, strong ash and oak, scented citron, burdened vine,—there be any by man so deeply loved, by God so highly graced, as that narrow point of feeble green.'

Like most voluminous writers, he shows to greatest advantage in select passages; but eloquence and suggestiveness are his general features. None has said truer or finer things. Few have been so helpful. Who will not own the fascination of such periods as we have read? Who would not wish to remember the multitude like these?

'The picture which has the nobler and more numerous ideas, however awkwardly expressed, is a greater and a better picture than that which has the less noble and less numerous ideas, however beautifully expressed. No weight, nor mass, nor beauty of execution can outweigh one grain or fragment of thought.'

'Of all God's gifts to the sight of man, colour is the holiest, the most divine, the most solemn. We speak rashly of gay colour, and sad colour is in some degree pensive, the loveliest is melancholy, and the purest and most thoughtful minds are those which love colour the most.'

'In mortals, there is a care for trifles, which proceeds from love and conscience, and is most holy; and a care for trifles, which comes of idleness and frivolity, and is most base. And so, also, there is a gravity proceeding from dulness and mere incapability of enjoyment, which is most base.'

'If ever, in autumn, a pensiveness falls upon us as the leaves drift by in their fading, may we not wisely look up in hope to their mighty mountains? Behold how fair, how far prolonged, in arch and aisle, the avenues of the valleys, the fringes of the hills! So stately,—so eternal; the joy of man, the comfort of all living creatures, the glory of the earth,—they are but the monuments of those poor leaves that flit faintly past us to die. Let them not pass, without our understanding their last counsel and example; that we also, careless of the monument by the grave, may build it in the world,—monument by which men may be taught to remember, not where we died, but where we lived.'

'The whole period of youth is one essentially of formation, edification, instruction. There is not an hour of it but is trembling with destinies,—not a moment of which, once past, the appointed work can ever be done again, or the neglected blow struck on cold iron. Take your vase of Venice glass out of the furnace, and strew chaff over it in its transparent heat, and recover *that* to its clearness and rubied glory when the north wind has blown upon it; but do not think to strew chaff over the child fresh from God's presence, and to bring the heavenly colours back to him,—at least in this world.'

Perhaps next to Lowell, the most capable, as well as the most popular of American critics, is **Whipple** (1819– ). He approaches his work with kindness and candor; and brings to it an irradiating fancy, quick perception, range of thought, elaborate research, rich stores of illustration and ornament. His style, it will be seen, is natural, easy, clear, spirited, and attractive. For example:

'As an artist, Mr. Emerson exhibits the same fidelity to his own ideas which he has always taken for his guide in the pursuit of truth. The construction of his verse is as

unique as his mental idiosyncrasy. It certainly betrays incidentally the proof of a rare poetic culture. His masterly command of English shows a careful study of the best sources of the language; but not a sign of imitation can be found in his writings,—not even the use of the imagery which has been consecrated by the habit of ages. His lines are often abrupt, sometimes a little uncouth, but never deficient in masculine strength. With no pretension to the finish and smoothness which give grace to the poems of Tennyson, they present frequent surprises of dainty melody, and charm as much by the sweetness of their flow as by the grandeur of their thought.'

And:

'Wit is abrupt, darting, scornful, and tosses its analogies in your face; Humor is slow and shy, insinuating its fun into your heart. Wit is negative, analytical, destructive; Humor is creative. The couplets of Pope are witty, but Sancho Panza is a humorous creation. Wit, when earnest, has the earnestness of passion, seeking to destroy; Humor has the earnestness of affection, and would lift up what is seemingly low into our charity and love. Wit, bright, rapid, and blasting as the lightning, flashes, strikes, and vanishes in an instant; Humor, warm and all-embracing as the sunshine, bathes its objects in a genial and abiding light. Wit implies hatred or contempt of folly and crime, produces its effects by brisk shocks of surprise, uses the whip of scorpions and the branding-iron, stabs, stings, pinches, tortures, goads, teases, corrodes, undermines; Humor implies a sure conception of the beautiful, the majestic, and the true, by whose light it surveys and shapes their opposites. It is a humane influence, softening with mirth the ragged inequalities of existence, promoting tolerant views of life, bridging over the spaces which separate the lofty from the lowly, the great from the humble. . . . When Wit and Humor are commingled, the result is a genial sharpness, dealing with its objects somewhat as old Izaak Walton dealt with the frog he used for bait,—running the hook neatly through his mouth and out at his gills, and in so doing "using him as though he loved him!"'<sup>1</sup>

Was never a truer American than **Henry Thoreau** (1817-1862), a disciple of Emerson, a transcendentalist, who demanding something better than tradition—the original and eternal life out of which tradition springs—found it in moral isolation, as a borderer on the confines of civilization. He never married, never went to church, never voted; would not be restricted by craft or profession, and declined long engagements. With no talent for wealth, he knew how to be poor; and, if he must have money, preferred earning it by a short piece of manual labor,—as a land-surveyor,—then back to his endless rambles and miscellaneous studies. He had no homage but for truth. Advised by the Republican and Abolitionist committees of Concord not to lecture on John Brown, he answered, 'I did not send to you for advice, but to announce that I am to speak.' His aim was 'plain living and high thinking.' With no taste for conventional elegance, he would not attend dinner-parties, because there each was in the other's way. 'They make their pride in making their dinner cost much; I make my pride in making my dinner cost little.' Asked at table what dish he preferred, he replied, 'The

<sup>1</sup>*Literature and Life*. His chief work is *Literature of the Age of Elizabeth*.

nearest.' A mind of rare quality, with a temper of natural sweetness; indigenous as the oak, untouched by English and European manners,—a sturdy, independent son of nature, like the primeval Teuton whose name he bore,—Thor, the Northman.

He had a profound passion for the wild, and was happy in solitude:

'I find it wholesome to be alone the greater part of the time. To be in company, even with the best, is soon wearisome and dissipating. I love to be alone. I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude. We are for the most part more lonely when we go abroad among men than when we stay in our chambers. A man thinking or working is always alone, let him be where he will. Solitude is not measured by the miles of space that intervene between a man and his fellows. The really diligent student in one of the crowded hives of Cambridge College is as solitary as a dervis in the desert.'

With an axe, a few dollars, and none but the clothes he wore, he went into the woods, on the edge of Walden Pond, and unaided, except at the raising, built himself a house fifteen feet long, ten feet wide, eight feet high, at an expense of about twenty-eight dollars, and lived there by himself over two years, at a total net cost of about twenty-five dollars! He would not starve for want of luxuries:

'I have made a satisfactory dinner, satisfactory on several accounts, simply off a dish of purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*) which I gathered in my cornfield, boiled and salted. I give the Latin on account of the unsavoriness of the trivial name. And pray what more can a reasonable man desire, in peaceful times, in ordinary noons, than a sufficient number of ears of green sweet corn boiled, with the addition of salt?'

He would be no butterfly entangled in a spider's web:

'My furniture, part of which I made myself, and the rest cost me nothing of which I have not rendered an account, consisted of a bed, a table, a desk, three chairs, a looking-glass three inches in diameter, a pair of tongs and andirons, a kettle, a skillet, and a frying-pan, a dipper, a wash-bowl, two knives and forks, three plates, one cup, one spoon, a jug for oil, a jug for molasses, and a japanned lamp. None is so poor that he need sit on a pumpkin.'

The chairs were,—

'One for solitude, two for friendship, three for society. When visitors came in larger and unexpected numbers there was but the third chair for them all, but they generally economized the room by standing up.'

There was one inconvenience, however,—the difficulty of getting to a sufficient distance from his guests:

'I have found it a singular luxury to talk across the pond to a companion on the opposite side. In my house we were so near that we could not begin to hear,—we could not speak low enough to be heard; as when you throw two stones into calm water so near that they break each other's undulations. If we are merely loquacious and loud talkers, then we can afford to stand very near together, cheek by jowl, and feel each other's breath; but if we speak reservedly and thoughtfully, we want to be farther apart,



that all animal heat and moisture may have a chance to evaporate. If we would enjoy the most intimate society with that in each of us which is without, or above, being spoken to, we must not only be silent, but commonly so far apart bodily that we cannot possibly hear each other's voice in any case.'

Reading and meditation, the sights and sounds of the pathless forest, were his rarest society:

'I kept neither dog, cat, cow, pig, nor hens, so that you would have said there was a deficiency of domestic sounds; neither the churn, nor the spinning-wheel, nor even the singing of the kettle, nor the hissing of the urn, nor children crying, to comfort one. An old-fashioned man would have lost his senses or died of ennui before this. Not even rats in the wall, for they were starved out, or rather were never baited in,—only squirrels on the roof and under the floor, a whippoorwill on the ridge pole, a blue-jay screaming beneath the window, a hare or woodchuck under the house, a screech-owl or a cat-owl behind it, a flock of wild geese or a laughing loon on the pond, and a fox to bark in the night. . . . Wild sumachs and blackberry vines breaking through into your cellar; sturdy pitch-pines rubbing and creaking against the shingles for want of room, their roots reaching quite under the house.'

Such hearts hold their fortunes within. They have liberty vast as the sky. Like birds which come and go, they enjoy the most valuable part of every domain, while themselves live free and uncommitted:

'In imagination I have bought all the farms in succession, for all were to be bought, and I knew their price. I walked over each farmer's premises, tasted his wild apples, discoursed on husbandry with him, took his farm at his price, at any price, mortgaging it to him in my mind; even put a higher price on it,—took everything but a deed of it,—took his word for his deed, for I dearly love to talk,—cultivated it, and him too to some extent, I trust, and withdrew when I had enjoyed it long enough, leaving him to carry it on.'

We may guess that he knew the country like a bird, and had paths of his own. On a walk with Emerson he drew out a diary, and read the names of all the plants that should bloom on that day. 'He saw as with microscope, heard as with ear-trumpet; and his memory was a photographic register of all he saw and heard.' Thus:

'I could always tell if visitors had called in my absence, either by the bending twigs or grass, or the print of their shoes, and generally of what sex or age or quality they were by some slight trace left, as a flower dropped, or a bunch of grass plucked and thrown away, even as far off as the railroad, half a mile distant, or by the lingering odor of a cigar or pipe. Nay, I was frequently notified of the passage of a traveller along the highway sixty rods off, by the scent of his pipe.'

Again:

'One day when I went to my wood-pile, or rather my pile of stumps, I observed two large ants, the one red, the other much larger, nearly half an inch long, and black, fiercely contending with one another. Having once got hold they never let go, but struggled and wrestled and rolled on the chips incessantly. Looking farther, I was surprised to find that the chips were covered with such combatants, that it was not a *duellum*, but a *bellum*, a war between two races of ants, the red always pitted against the black, and frequently two red ones to one black. . . . It was evident that their battle-cry was—Conquer or die. In the meanwhile there came along a single red ant on the hill-side of

this valley, evidently full of excitement, who either had despatched his foe, or had not yet taken part in the battle; probably the latter, for he had lost none of his limbs; whose mother had charged him to return with his shield or upon it. Or perchance he was some Achilles, who had nourished his wrath apart, and had now come to avenge or rescue his Patroclus. He saw this unequal combat from afar,—for the blacks were nearly twice the size of the red,—he drew near with rapid pace till he stood on his guard within half an inch of the combatants; then, watching his opportunity, he sprang upon the black warrior, and commenced his operations near the root of his right fore-leg, leaving the foe to select among his own members; and so there were three united for life. . . . I should not have wondered by this time to find that they had their respective musical bands stationed on some eminent chip, and playing their national airs the while, to excite the slow and cheer the dying combatants.'

Here are the heroism and courage of Austerlitz. Here is the patriotism of Bunker Hill. Doubtless they are fighting for a principle, and the result will be as important and memorable to them as was Gettysburg to those there engaged:

'I took up the chip on which the three I have particularly described were struggling, carried them into my house, and placed it under a tumbler on my window-sill, in order to see the issue. Holding a microscope to the first-mentioned red ant, I saw that, though he was assiduously gnawing at the near fore-leg of his enemy, having severed his remaining feeler, his own breast was all torn away, exposing what vitals he had there to the jaws of the black warrior, whose breast-plate was apparently too thick for him to pierce; and the dark carbuncles of the sufferer's eyes shone with ferocity such as war only could excite. They struggled half an hour longer under the tumbler, and when I looked again the black soldier had severed the heads of his foes from their bodies, and the still living heads were hanging on either side of him, like ghastly trophies at his saddle-bow, still apparently as firmly fastened as ever, and he was endeavoring with feeble struggles, being without feelers and with only the remnant of a leg, and I know not how many other wounds, to divest himself of them; which at length, after half an hour more, he accomplished. I raised the glass, and he went off over the window-sill in that crippled state. . . . I never learned which party was victorious, nor the cause of the war; but I felt for the rest of that day as if I had had my feelings excited and harrowed by witnessing the struggle, the ferocity and carnage, of a human battle before my door.'

The world was full of poetic suggestion to him. It existed, to his imagination, for the uplifting and consolation of human life. The things seen symbolized the things unseen. Thus:

'The winds which passed over my dwelling were such as sweep over the ridges of mountains, bearing the broken strains, or celestial parts only, of terrestrial music. The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted; but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth everywhere.'

And:

'When other birds are still the screech-owls take up the strain, like mourning women their ancient u-lu-lu. Their dismal scream is truly Ben Jonsonian. Wise midnight hags! . . . Yet I love to hear their wailing, their doleful responses, trilling along the wood-side; reminding me sometimes of music and singing birds; *as if it were the dark and tearful side of music, the regrets and sighs that would fain be sung.*'

We may see clearly, though it be less obtrusive than his nature-worship, that the primary element in him was the ideal. Congratulated by his friends that he had opened his way to fortune

by the manufacture of a superior pencil, he said that he should never make another. 'Why should I? *I would not do again what I have done once.*' His religion was deep and essential, though of a primitive and absolute kind. This is his obedience to the Highest:

'Chastity is the flowering of man; and what are called Genius, Heroism, Holiness, and the like, are but various fruits which succeed it. Man flows at once to God when the channel of purity is open. By turn our purity inspires and our impurity casts us down. He is blessed who is assured that the animal is dying out in him day by day, and the divine being established.'

His English, we might judge, was acquired from the poets and prose-writers of its best days. His metaphors and images have the freshness of the soil. His range was narrow, but within his limits he was a master. He needed only a tender and pervading sentiment to have been a Homer. Pure and guileless, and fond of sympathy, he yet was cold and wintry. 'I love Henry,' said one of his friends, 'but I cannot like him; and as for taking his arm, I should as soon think of taking the arm of an elm-tree.' His works are replete with fine observations, finely expressed. One cannot fail to see the resemblance of his style to Emerson's and Alcott's. Nothing that he wrote can be spared. We subjoin several of his compact and vigorous sentences:

'The blue-bird carries the sky on his back.'

'Moral reform is the effort to throw off sleep.'

'Who but the Evil One has said, "Whoa!" to mankind?'

'How can we expect a harvest of thought who have not a seed time of character?'

'Only he can be trusted with gifts who can present a face of bronze to expectations.'

'Mythology is the crop which the Old World bore before its soil was exhausted, before the fancy and imagination were affected with blight.'

'Any nobleness begins at once to refine a man's features, any meanness or sensuality to imbrute them.'

'Goodness is the only investment that never fails. In the music of the harp which trembles round the world it is the insisting on this which thrills us.'

'Give me a culture which imports much muck from the meadows, and deepens the soil,—not that which trusts to heating manures, and improved implements and modes of culture only!'

'No humane being, past the thoughtless age of boyhood, will wantonly murder any creature, which holds its life by the same tenure that he does. The hare in its extremity cries like a child.'

'Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains. I would drink deeper; fish in the sky, whose bottom is pebbly with stars.'

Here, finally, is the mythical record of his disappointments:

'I long ago lost a hound, a bay horse, and a turtle-dove, and am still on their trail. Many are the travellers I have spoken of concerning them, describing their tracks and what calls they answered to. I have met one or two who had heard the hound, and the tramp of the horse, and even seen the dove disappear behind a cloud, and they seemed as anxious to recover them as if they had lost them themselves.'

It is not the fact that imports, but the impression. Experience has a triple value under a poetic veil. Thoreau, in tone and imagery, is American; fresh, free, generous, and bold.

Two men of superior talent will hereafter claim our attention,—the subtle-minded **Hawthorne**, and the wide-minded **Emerson**.<sup>1</sup>

**Novel.**—This, next to the newspaper, is that form of literature which has the widest popular influence and is most characteristic of the period. It is distributed among all classes by ten thousand agencies,—publishing houses, Sunday-school libraries, magazines, and weeklies. It is the daily food, for good or evil, of the civilized world. So great is the interest which the human mind takes in human life—in the doubts and fears, the hopes, ambitions, and passions, of the *people*.

The pictorial novel—which is predominantly of a descriptive and historical cast, and in which the romance element is ever liable to appear—affords no parallel to the multifarious power of Scott. Its most illustrious representative is **Lord Lytton**<sup>2</sup> (1805–1873). His *Rienzi*, *The Last Days of Pompeii*, and *The Last of the Barons*, are fascinating, instructive, and nobly ambitious. Few have been so brilliantly equipped for literary performance, and none could have used his gifts more industri-

<sup>1</sup> Other essayists and critics, English and American, some of whom are well-known poets, all of whom have added to our sum of knowledge and means of entertainment, are: J. Brown, *Spare Hours*; James Martineau, *Essays, Philosophical and Theological*; Goldwin Smith, *Lectures on the Study of History*; J. A. Symonds, *Sketches and Studies in Southern Europe*; R. H. Hutton, *Essays, Theological and Literary*; Bayard Taylor, *Studies in German Literature*; Richard Grant White, *Shakespearean critic, Words and their Uses*; Henry N. Hudson, *Shakespearean editor and critic*; R. H. Stoddard, *Bric-a-Brac Series*; Henry Reed, *Lectures on English History as Illustrated by Shakespeare's Plays*; C. J. and A. Hare, *Guesses at Truth*; Peter Bayne, *Essays in Biography and Criticism*; A. Bronson Alcott, *Table-Talk*; T. W. Higginson, *Atlantic Essays*; D. J. Mitchell, *Reveries of a Bachelor*; A. K. H. Boyd, *The Country Parson*; H. W. Beecher, *Life Thoughts*; C. H. Spurgeon, *John Ploughman's Talk*; F. W. Farrar, *Eternal Hope*; Dean Stanley, *Memorials of Westminster Abbey*; T. De Witt Talmage, *Daily Thoughts*; John Fiske, *The Unseen World*; Leslie Stephen, *Hours in a Library*; W. R. Greg, *Enigmas of Life*; Thomas Starr King, *Substance and Show*; Gail Hamilton, *Skirmishes and Sketches*; J. G. Holland, *Every-Day Topics*; James T. Field, *Yesterdays with Authors*; E. C. Stedman, *Victorian Poets*; G. W. Cooke, *Ralph Waldo Emerson*. The list could be extended almost indefinitely.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Lytton Bulwer. No novel or novelist is purely of one kind. No classification can be made except by predominant features.

ously. Yet his works enter no more into the life of the world. Politically and socially, he was a power in his day; the admired, courted, titled, rich *litterateur*: but he was poised in a superb selfishness, and his fame was loveless. Much that he wrote sustains the testimony of his wife and neighbors, that his personal character was not admirable. Marvellous jewelry of thought and fancy, brilliant with many dyes, has he bequeathed us; but he needed the heart that should bring him into sympathy with the phases of humanity, and give him permanency in popular regard. 'A thousand brilliant men have risen and passed away, attracting wide attention while they lived, but warming and fructifying no mind by their light, and expiring at last like a burned-out star, leaving no trace in the sky. So near the earth were they, that their light faded at once when the fountain failed, while many a lesser star, by burning nearer heaven, has been able to send down its rays for centuries after its fires were extinguished.'<sup>1</sup>

The ethical novel—which is preëminently a study of life, definitely in the interest of reform, or penetratively in view of its many issues—has had innumerable cultivators, some of whom are not likely soon to be equalled. It was **Thackeray's** mission to paint the manners of a day and of a class, to renew the combative spirit of Swift and the realistic spirit of Fielding. He was a reformer, a satirist, who brought to the aid of satire an abounding truth, consummate humor, a clear understanding, a profound knowledge of the heart, an unflinching skill to detect the good or the vile. Hating distinctions of rank, he wrote the *Book of Snobs*. Outside of an aristocracy, where each on the social ladder respects the man above him and despises the one below, solely on account of their position, this would have been impossible:

'If ever our cousins the Smigsmags asked me to meet Lord Longears, I would like to take an opportunity after dinner, and say, in the most good-natured way in the world: Sir, Fortune makes you a present of a number of thousand pounds every year. The ineffable wisdom of our ancestors has placed you as a chief and hereditary legislator over me. Our admirable Constitution (the pride of Britons and envy of surrounding nations) obliges me to receive you as my senator, superior, and guardian. Your eldest son, Fitz-Heehaw, is sure of a place in Parliament; your younger sons, the De Brays, will kindly condescend to be post-captains and lieutenant-colonels, and to represent us in foreign courts, or to take a good living when it falls convenient. These prizes our admirable Constitution (the pride and envy of, etc.) pronounces to be your due; without count of your dulness, your vices, your selfishness; of your entire incapacity or folly. Dull as you may be (and we have as good a right to believe that my lord is an ass, as the other

<sup>1</sup> J. G. Holland.



proposition that he is an enlightened patriot) — dull, I say, as you may be, no one will accuse you of such monstrous folly, as to suppose that you are indifferent to the good luck which you possess, or have any inclination to part with it. No—and patriots as we are, under happier circumstances, Smith and I, I have no doubt, were we dukes ourselves, would stand by our order.

We would submit good-naturedly to sit in a high place. We would acquiesce in that admirable Constitution (pride and envy of, etc.) which made us chiefs and the world our inferiors; we would not cavil particularly at that notion of hereditary superiority which brought so many simple people cringing to our knees. May be we would rally round the Corn Laws; we would make a stand against the Reform Bill; we would die rather than repeal the acts against Catholics and Dissenters; we would, by our noble system of class legislation, bring Ireland to its present admirable condition.'

Hating the emptiness of pretentious and uncultured fashion, he wrote *Pendennis*, in which the hero, sighing after the ideal and beginning an epic, falls in love with a stupid actress, who learns her parts mechanically. She has just been playing Ophelia, and he asks her if Ophelia loved Hamlet:

"In love with such a little ojou's wretch as that stunted manager of a Bingley?" She bristled with indignation at the thought. Pen explained it was not of her he spoke, but of Ophelia of the play. "Oh, indeed; if no offence was meant, none was taken;" but as for Bingley, indeed, she did not value him—not that glass of punch. Pen next tried her on Kotzebue. "Kotzebue? who was he?" "The author of the play in which she had been performing so admirably." She did not know that—"the man's name at the beginning of the book was Thompson," she said. Pen laughed at her adorable simplicity. Pendennis, Pendennis, how she spoke the words! Emily, Emily! how good, how noble, how beautiful, how perfect, she is.'

With the same justified and contained hatred he lashes in *Vanity Fair* the vulgarity of snobbery, the flimsiness of shams, gilded ignorance, blustering hypocrisy, legacy-hunters, illustrious fools, the flatteries and intrigues, the villanies and miseries, of money worship. The satire may develop itself in the personages, naturally, psychologically, in the literary form, or exhibit itself alone, in dissertations, as here:

'What a dignity it gives an old lady, that balance at the banker's! How tenderly we look at her faults, if she is a relative (and may every reader have a score of such), what a kind, good-natured old creature we find her! How the junior partner of Hobbs and Dobbs leads her smiling to the carriage with the lozenge upon it, and the fat, wheezy coachman! How, when she comes to pay us a visit, we generally find an opportunity to let our friends know her station in the world! We say (and with perfect truth) I wish I had Miss Mac Whirter's signature to a cheque for five thousand pounds. She wouldn't miss it, says your wife. She is my aunt, say you, in an easy, careless way, when your friend asks if Miss Mac Whirter is any relative? Your wife is perpetually sending her little testimonies of affection; your little girls work endless worsted baskets, cushions, and foot-stools for her. What a good fire there is in her room when she comes to pay you a visit, although your wife laces her stays without one! The house during her stay assumes a festive, neat, warm, jovial, snug appearance not visible at other seasons. You yourself, dear sir, forget to go to sleep after dinner, and find yourself all of a sudden (though you invariably lose) very fond of a rubber. What good dinners you have—game every day, Malmsey, Madeira, and no end of fish from London! Even the servants in the kitchen share in the general prosperity; and, somehow, during the stay of Miss

Mac Whirter's fat coachman, the beer is grown much stronger, and the consumption of tea and sugar in the nursery (where her maid takes her meals) is not regarded in the least. Is it so, or is it not so? I appeal to the middle classes. Ah, gracious powers! I wish you would send me an old aunt—a maiden aunt—an aunt with a lozenge on her carriage, and a front of light coffee-coloured hair—how my children should work work-bags for her, and my Julia and I would make her comfortable! Sweet—sweet vision! Foolish—foolish dream!

There is the like reiterated irony in *The Newcomes*, the like sanguinary sarcasm, the studied presence of a moral intention. Here is one of his caustic essays on forced and ill-sorted marriages, that unhallowed traffic of the great and worldly:

'Poor Lady Clara! I fancy a better lot for you than that to which fate handed you over. I fancy there need have been no deceit in your fond, simple, little heart, could it have been given into other keeping. But you were consigned to a master whose scorn and cruelty terrified you; under whose sardonic glances your scared eyes were afraid to look up, and before whose gloomy coldness you dared not to be happy. Suppose a little plant, very frail and delicate from the first, but that might have bloomed sweetly and borne fair flowers, had it received warm shelter and kindly nurture; suppose a young creature taken out of her home, and given over to a hard master whose caresses are as insulting as his neglect; consigned to cruel usage, to weary loneliness, to bitter, insulting recollections of the past; suppose her schooled into hypocrisy by tyranny,—and then, quick let us hire an advocate to roar out to a British jury the wrongs of her injured husband, to pat the agonies of his bleeding heart (if Mr. Advocate gets plaintiff's brief in time, and before defendant's attorney has retained him), and to shew society injured through him! Let us console that martyr, I say, with thumping damages; and as for the woman—the guilty wretch!—let us lead her out and stone her. . . . So Lady Clara flies from the custody of her tyrant, but to what a rescue! The very man who loves her, and gives her asylum, pities and deprecates her. She scarce dares to look out of the windows of her new home upon the world, lest it should know and reproach her. All her sisterhood of friendship is cut off from her. If she dares to go abroad, she feels the sneer of the world as she goes through it, and knows that malice and scorn whisper behind her. People as criminal, but undiscovered, make room for her, as if her touch were pollution. She knows she has darkened the lot and made wretched the home of the man she loves best, that his friends who see her treat her with but a doubtful respect, and the domestics who attend her, with a suspicious obedience. In the country lanes, or the streets of the country town, neighbors look aside as the carriage passes in which she is splendid and lonely. Rough hunting companions of her husband's come to the table: he is driven perforce to the company of flatterers and men of inferior sort; his equals, at least in his own home, will not live with him. She would be kind, perhaps, and charitable to the cottagers around her, but she fears to visit them, lest they too should scorn her. The clergyman who distributes her charities blushes and looks awkward on passing her in the village, if he should be walking with his wife or one of his children.'

To blame a vice is to laud the contrary. To abase the false is to exalt the true. To sacrifice selfishness and pride is to raise an altar to sweetness and tenderness. We perceive that satire veils the essential side of Thackeray's character; that he adores love and kindness; that he reveres the family, simple sentiments, pure contentments; that, so far from being only a cold and sneering cynic, his crown and glory is his humanity. Visibly,

incessantly, this appears,—above all, in the *History of Henry Esmond*, the least popular, but the most elevated, touching, and artistic of his stories. Forgetting the author, we listen to the hero, a contemporary of Queen Anne, a writer of memoirs, whose observations are microscopical, whose details are photographic, who carries us back, in style and manners, a hundred and fifty years. Here are some illustrations of his modulated and noble tone, of his sympathy with the tender, good, and beautiful:

‘With a look of infinite pity and tenderness in her eyes, she took his hand again, placing her other fair hand on his head, and saying some words to him, which were so kind and said in a voice so sweet, that the boy, who had never looked upon so much beauty before, felt as if the touch of a superior being or angel smote him down to the ground, and kissed the fair protecting hand as he knelt on one knee. To the very last hour of his life, Esmond remembered the lady as she then spoke and looked, the rings on her fair hands, the very scent of her robe, the beam of her eyes lighting up with surprise and kindness, her lips blooming in a smile, the sun making a golden halo round her hair.’

And:

‘As I think of the immense happiness which was in store for me, and of the depth and intensity of that love which, for so many years, hath blessed me, I own to a transport of wonder and gratitude for such a boon,—nay, am thankful to have been endowed with a heart capable of feeling and knowing the immense beauty and value of the gift which God hath bestowed upon me. Sure, love *vincit omnia*, is immeasurably above all ambition, more precious than wealth, more noble than name. He knows not life who knows not that: he hath not felt the highest faculty of the soul who hath not enjoyed it. In the name of my wife I write the completion of hope, and the summit of happiness. To have such a love is the one blessing, in comparison of which all earthly joy is of no value; and to think of her, is to praise God.’

Also:

‘They walked out, hand-in-hand, through the court, and to the terrace-walk, where the grass was glistening with dew, and the birds in the green woods above were singing their delicious choruses under the blushing morning sky. How well all things were remembered! The ancient towers and gables of the hall darkling against the east, the purple shadows on the green slopes, the quaint devices and carvings of the dial, the forest-crowned heights, the fair yellow plain cheerful with crops and corn, the shining river rolling through it towards the pearly hills beyond; all these were before us, along with a thousand beautiful memories of our youth, beautiful and sad, but as real and vivid in our minds as that fair and always remembered scene our eyes beheld once more. We forget nothing. The memory sleeps, but wakens again; I often think how it shall be when, after the last sleep of death, the *réveille* shall rouse us forever, and the past in one flash of self-consciousness rush back, like the soul revived.’

That novel is truly historic which attains illusion, which puts us in living contact with the varied spectacle of its era, affording us the extreme pleasure of believing in what we read.

The most obvious characteristic of fiction in America, as on the opposite shores of the Atlantic, is brilliant profusion. In this respect it may be said to occupy the position of the Eliza-

bethan drama. Here, however, with some qualification, the resemblance ceases. The efflorescence of the present has little of the powerful vitality, the rich color, of that wonderful bloom. Novels there are, in perilous abundance, technical finish, talent of a high order; but they lack the baptism of fire, the heat that breeds excellence. Deficient in ardor, energy, depth of feeling, depth of thought, the multitudinous tones—though each in turn clear and bell-like—lose their music day by day.

The widest fame yet attained by American novelists has been won by **Cooper** and **Mrs. Stowe**, each of whom had the rare fortune to introduce a new and conquering figure to European letters,—first the Indian, then the Negro. Theme, more than form, renders them imperishable. No other, pursuing the virgin vein, can hope to repeat their successes; for the conditions on which they were based will never recur. But a higher triumph, by a profounder treatment, is possible to others. It is truth to human nature beyond anything else—external phenomena or nationality—that makes the novel great; and by this criterion will the slow alembic of years extract the immortal from the transient. Meanwhile, in the fading, ever-shifting train, one man stands out thus in clear relief, above the accidental caprice of time and place, one who will hold his own before the master-artists of the world,—**Hawthorne**. On other pages we shall endeavor to comprehend him, and Dickens, and George Eliot,—

‘Authors of delight

And happiness, which to the end of time  
Will live, and spread, and kindle.’<sup>1</sup>

**History.**—The period develops, with more or less distinctness, three schools of historians,—the imaginative or romantic, which makes the most lavish effort to reanimate souls, to picture the past dramatically, vividly; the realistic, which aims to show events and people as they were; and the philosophic, which seeks

<sup>1</sup> Other novelists, some of whom will be recognized as eminent in other departments, are: Benjamin Disraeli, *Lothair*; Bayard Taylor, *John Godfrey's Fortune*; Thomas Hardy, *Far from the Madding Crowd*; Wilkie Collins, *Woman in White*; W. D. Howells, *Lady of the Aroostook*; Henry James, Jr., *A Passionate Pilgrim*; Charles Reade, *Never too Late to Mend*; J. G. Holland, *Arthur Bonnicastle*; Edward Eggleston, *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*; Francis Bret Harte, *Roaring Camp*; Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown at Oxford*; Charles Lever, *Tom Burke of Ours*; George Macdonald, *Robert Faulkner*; E. P. Roe, *The Opening of a Chestnut Burr*; A. W. Tourgee, *A Fool's Errand*; William Ware, *Zenobia*; Julian Hawthorne, *Garth*; Charles Kingsley, *Hypatia*; Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*; Miss Mulock, *John Halifax*; Mrs. Holmes, *Tempest and Sunshine*; Mrs. Whitney, *Faith Gartney's Girlhood*; Mrs. Oliphant, *Son of the Soil*; Miss Phelps, *The Gates Ajar*; Miss Burnett, *That Lass o' Lowrie's*; Miss Spofford, *Amber Gods*; Misses Warner, *The Wide, Wide World*. We are, as hitherto, forced to omit some deserving names.



to show that historical phenomena have a system and a sequence, determined by natural laws. We have seen that Macaulay set the fashion of the first. To it belong the sinister and furious Carlyle,<sup>1</sup> the more popular and paradoxical Froude;<sup>2</sup> to the second, the calm and scholarly Freeman,<sup>3</sup> the spirited and artistic Green;<sup>4</sup> to the third, the learned and ambitious Buckle,<sup>5</sup> the careful and comprehensive Lecky.<sup>6</sup>

**Froude** is a portrait-painter, and, wanting the scientific quality which clings to facts, is often led astray by his vivid genius. He is, it is needless to add, widely read, and might be broadly characterized by Carlyle's advice to an invalid, to 'read the last volume of Macaulay's History, or *any other new novel.*' Here is his conception of history:

'It often seems to me as if History was like a child's box of letters, with which we can spell any word we please. We have only to pick out such letters as we want, arrange them as we like, and say nothing about those things which do not suit our purpose.'

In other words, let your theory be what it will, history will not object—it will provide you abundant facts to prove whatever you wish to believe. Nevertheless, like Matthew Arnold, who yet would have a book consist only of premises, one must have a theory, higher or lower: an ignoble one, it may be, like that of Comte, or a noble one like that of Froude—life a baffling duality of principle, a drama where good and evil fight out their everlasting battle. Very naturally he adds:

'The address of history is less to the understanding than the higher emotions. We learn in it to sympathize with what is great and good; we learn to hate what is base. In the anomalies of fortune we feel the mystery of our mortal existence; and in the companionship of the illustrious natures who have shaped the fortunes of the world, we escape from the littlenesses which cling to the round of common life, and our minds are tuned in a higher and nobler key.'

**Buckle** (1822–1862), a man of rare talent, was the first to apply, on a considerable scale, scientific treatment to the facts of human experience, and the first to attempt, by such means, to bring history into the category of the exact sciences. This implies the belief, evidently, that human actions are determined

<sup>1</sup> *Cromwell. The French Revolution.*

<sup>2</sup> *England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Death of Elizabeth.*

<sup>3</sup> *The Norman Conquest. Conquest of the Saracens. Federal Government. Old English History.*

<sup>4</sup> *A Short History of the English People. The Making of England.*

<sup>5</sup> *Civilization in England.*

<sup>6</sup> *Rationalism. European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne. England in the Eighteenth Century.*



by natural causes—by influences which are palpable and ponderable; that men, as much as the acorn, are a physiological growth. That there is in this general view a large element of truth, is quite certain; but it excludes special and personal agencies. Hence arises the one-sidedness of the author, his exaggeration of physical considerations, his depreciation of moral ones. A not strange reaction from the credulous annalists and chroniclers, with whom the two forces of history were arbitrary,—individual volition and supernatural caprice. Never was a work, not fictitious, the subject of so much interest to minds so numerous and diverse. The world was startled into admiration by its bold assumptions, vigorous style, and vast reading. Only a fraction of the immense design was accomplished. ‘My book, my book! I shall never finish my book!’ was his dying lament. But the labor was not in vain. The effect was unmistakable. Seeds were dropped to germinate,—the fragment notes an epoch.

Buckle acquired the sudden brilliancy of the meteor, and has suffered an abatement of his lustre. **Lecky**, on the contrary, the truer philosopher, just, candid, liberal, and broad, always the historian, never the partisan,—is growing into the permanent illumination of the planet.

**Bancroft’s** *United States*, thus far the standard, is accorded a high rank in the historical literature of the age. The labor of more than forty years, and still incomplete, it is far the most successful effort to reduce to order and beauty the chaotic materials of American history. His style combines the poetic and the philosophic, with a strong inclination to declamatory magnificence. Such a taste is liable to produce a historical romance, and to sacrifice accuracy for eloquence. It is dangerous, also, to that unity which, in the midst of complexity, we perceive or feel in the histories of such as Gibbon, Grote, and Macaulay.

For its research, freshness, flow, and finish, *the Rise of the Dutch Republic*, by **Motley** (1814–1877), was hailed as the dawn of a new star. It has attracted readers and translators only fewer than Prescott’s. The promise given by this was at an early date fulfilled by its continuation, *The United Netherlands*. The faults of this eminent writer are an occasional redundancy and a rather over-zealous partisanship; his merits—labor, patience, consistency, life-like representation—have inscribed his name

imperishably on the scroll of fame. A brief extract or two will give a fair idea of his vivid, pictorial style. He is speaking of the cathedral of Antwerp:

‘The church, placed in the centre of the city, with the noisy streets of the busiest metropolis in Europe eddying around its walls, was a sacred island in the tumultuous main. Through the perpetual twilight, tall columnar trunks in thick profusion grew from a floor chequered with prismatic lights and sepulchral shadows. Each shaft of the petrified forest rose to a preternatural height, their many branches intermingling in the space above to form an impenetrable canopy. Foliage, flowers and fruit of colossal luxuriance; strange birds, beasts, griffins and chimeras in endless multitudes; the rank vegetation and the fantastic zoölogy of a fresher or fabulous world seemed to decorate and to animate the screened trunks and pendant branches; while the shattering symphonies or dying murmurs of the organ suggested the rushing of the wind through the forest,—now the full diapason of the storm, and now the gentle cadence of the evening breeze.’

And of the reforming fury of the image breakers:

‘And now, as the shadows of night were deepening the perpetual twilight of the church, the work of destruction commenced. Instead of vespers rose the fierce music of a psalm yelled by a thousand angry voices. It seemed the preconcerted signal for a general attack. A band of marauders flew upon the image of the Virgin, dragged it forth from its receptacle, plunged daggers into its inanimate body, tore off its jewelled and embroidered garments, broke the whole figure into a thousand pieces, and scattered the fragments along the floor. A wild shout succeeded, and then the work, which seemed delegated to a comparatively small number of the assembled crowd, went on with incredible celerity. Some were armed with axes, some with bludgeons, some with sledge-hammers, others brought ladders, pulleys, ropes, and levers. Every statue was hurled from its niche, every picture torn from the wall, every painted window shivered to atoms, every ancient monument shattered, every sculptured decoration, however inaccessible in appearance, hurled to the ground. Indefatigably, audaciously, endowed, as it seemed, with preternatural strength and nimbleness, these furious iconoclasts clambered up the dizzy heights, shrieking and chattering like malignant apes, as they tore off in triumph the slowly-matured fruit of centuries. In a space of time wonderfully brief they had accomplished their task.’

**Draper’s** *Intellectual Development of Europe* must take its place among the valuable contributions of the age to the philosophy of history. It is intended to demonstrate *a posteriori* that human life, collective and individual, is subject to the dominion of law. Varieties of antecedent and concomitant conditions determine social advancement: and its stages—the same for the miniature man as for a nation—are the Age of Credulity, the Age of Inquiry, the Age of Faith, the Age of Reason, and the Age of Decrepitude. We are thus reminded of Buckle and of Comte, with their one-sided accumulation of facts, and their fatalistic views of causation.

We are also reminded of the two-fold evil of physical study, when made exclusive—the disposition to reduce all facts of

intelligence to phenomena of matter, and to resolve all existence into mechanism.<sup>1</sup>

**Theology.**—We live in an age of unsparing research, an age in which rapidity of transition is a marked feature, an age in which alterations are being wrought, by numerous and subtle forces, upon current beliefs. The changing spirit of the times—so far as it has a rationalistic drift—may be represented by churchmen like Maurice, Newman, Kingsley, Stanley, Martineau; by transcendentalists like Carlyle and Emerson; by speculative thinkers like Spencer and Mill; by refined physicists like Tyndall and Huxley; by advanced critics like Froude, Arnold, Müller, and Lecky. Some of these, it will be understood, are merely liberal; some are in the line of materialism, but will not be called materialists; others are moderate or intermediate sceptics, giving the precedence to Reason when the alternative is Reason or Revelation; all, directly or indirectly, promotive doubtless of the effort of man to rise higher in the apprehension of the Infinite, to descend deeper into the eternal ground of things.

Let three of them exhibit the prominent attitudes of cultured Free Thought. We are told by **J. S. Mill** that ‘in the present state of our knowledge the adaptations in nature afford a large balance of probability in favor of creation by intelligence’; that miracles—which it were better to call wonders—are not of the character to convince eye-witnesses, but may be explicable by natural law yet undiscovered; that it can only be hoped, not scientifically believed, that Jesus is a divine messenger; that of the origin of Christianity we know nothing more than that ‘God made provision in the scheme of creation for its arising at the appointed time by natural development’; that ‘familiarity of the imagination with the conception of a morally perfect Being, and the habit of taking the approbation of such a Being as the standard of conduct,’ is a benefit precious beyond calculation to mankind; that,—

‘The indulgence of hope with regard to the government of the universe and the destiny of man after death, while we recognize as a clear truth that we have no ground for more than hope, is legitimate, and philosophically defensible. The beneficial effect of such a hope is far from trifling. It makes life and human nature a far greater thing

<sup>1</sup> Two literary historians in this country must be regarded as doing honor to the literature of our mother-tongue,—Ticknor and Tyler; the one in his *Spanish Literature*, the other in his *American Literature*; both enthusiastic in research, both vigorous and vivid in style, with a sustained moral dignity that not seldom rises to eloquence.

to the feelings, and gives greater strength, as well as greater solemnity, to all the sentiments which are awakened in us by our fellow-creatures and by mankind at large.'

Finally, that the standard of excellence in Christ, held up to believers as a model for imitation, is a gift of inestimable value which can never be lost:

'About the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality, combined with profundity of insight, which, if we abandon the idle expectation of finding scientific precision where something very different was aimed at, must place the Prophet of Nazareth, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in his inspiration, in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast. When this preëminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer and martyr to that mission who ever existed upon the earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor even now would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life. When to this we add that to the conception of the rational sceptic, it remains a possibility that Christ actually was what he supposed himself to be,—not God, for he never made the smallest pretension to that character, and would probably have thought such a pretension as blasphemous as it seemed to the men who condemned him,—but a man charged with a special, express, and unique commission from God to lead mankind to truth and virtue, we may well conclude that the influences of religion on the character which will remain after rational criticism has done its utmost against the evidences of religion, are well worth preserving, and that what they lack in direct strength, as compared with those of a firmer belief, is more than compensated by the greater truth and rectitude of the morality they sanction.'

**Lecky** defines the position of a large class of rationalists, when he says of their profession:

'It regards Christianity as designed to preside over the moral development of mankind, as a conception which was to become more and more sublimated and spiritualized as the human mind passed into new phases, and was able to bear the splendour of a more unclouded light. Religion it believes to be no exception to the general law of progress, but rather the highest form of its manifestation, and its earlier systems but the necessary steps of an imperfect development. In its eyes the moral element of Christianity is as the sun in heaven, and dogmatic systems are as the clouds that intercept and temper the exceeding brightness of its ray. The insect whose existence is but for a moment might well imagine that these were indeed eternal, that their majestic columns could never fail, and that their luminous folds were the very source and centre of light. And yet they shift and vary with each changing breeze; they blend and separate; they assume new forms and exhibit new dimensions; as the sun that is above them waxes more glorious in its power, they are permeated and at last absorbed by its increasing splendour; they recede, and wither, and disappear, and the eye ranges far beyond the sphere they had occupied into the infinity of glory that is above them. Any one who has attentively examined that great school, which exercises so vast an influence over the literature and policy of our age, must have perceived that it is in many respects widely removed from the old Voltairean spirit. It is no longer exclusively negative and destructive, but is, on the contrary, intensely positive, and in its moral aspect intensely Christian. It clusters around a series of essentially Christian conceptions,—equality, fraternity, the suppression of war, the elevation of the poor, the love of truth, and the diffusion of liberty. It revolves around the ideal of Christianity, and represents its spirit without its dogmatic system, and its supernatural narratives. From both of these it unhesitatingly recoils, while deriving all its strength and nourishment from Christian ethics.'

Next to Carlyle, **Emerson** presents the highest type of the antagonism which literature assumes towards the Christian faith. A lover of the truth, who will not commit his trust to the limits of any formula, he says:

'I am glad to hear each sect complain that they do not now hold the opinions they are charged with. The earth moves and the mind opens. I am glad to believe society contains a class of humble souls who enjoy the luxury of a religion that does not degrade; who think it the highest worship to expect of Heaven the most and best; who do not wonder there was a Christ, but there were not a thousand; who have conceived an infinite hope for mankind; who believe that the history of Jesus is the history of every man, written large.'

And these are the 'excelsior' heights which he sees from afar in the empyrean:

'There will be a new church founded on moral science, at first cold and naked, a babe in the manger again, the algebra and mathematics of ethical law, the church of men to come, without shawms or psaltery or sackbut; but it will have heaven and earth for its beams and rafters; science for symbol and illustration; it will fast enough gather beauty, music, picture, poetry. Was never stoicism so stern and exigent as this shall be. It shall send man home to his central solitude, shame these social supplicating manners, and make him know that much of the time he must have himself to his friend. He shall expect no coöperation, he shall walk with no companion. The nameless thought, the nameless Power, the super-personal Heart,—he shall repose alone on that.'

With this partial introductory survey of influences, we may now offer some general reflections on their spirit, significance and effect:

1. It cannot escape observation that unbelief, the extreme of dissent, has the characteristic of present thought—increased moral earnestness. It is far more sincere, discriminating, and just, than formerly. Instead of revelling in the ruin which it effects, it confesses with pain its inevitable conflict with human aspirations, and bewails the impossibility of solving the enigma. It has a deeper appreciation of the system it protests against or assails, and, not destructive only, it aims to be reconstructive. The difference lies in the more subjective and spiritual tone which has passed into every department of mental activity, which lifts even the man of science—as in the noble instance of Tyndall—above the grovelling idea that facts are to be sought solely for the purpose of utility.

2. It must be clear that the history of religious ideas has been an onward process of development. Theology, for example, has abandoned the geocentric theory of the universe, which there once seemed plenty of texts to support. It no longer combats the discoveries of geology which have renovated and transformed



the six-day interpretations of Genesis. Death and pain, once believed with unfaltering assurance to be the fruit of disobedience in Paradise, are acknowledged to have raged and revelled on the globe ages before it was trodden by man. The alarm over evolution, once considered subversive of the Bible, has subsided in the gradual conviction that the question at bottom is one of method, and that Darwinism needs a God as much as does the old view. Witchcraft, to disbelieve which was once the eccentricity of the few, has passed into the region of fables. The old-fashioned doctrinal sermon has almost totally disappeared. Hell-fire, once deemed fundamental, has become a metaphor. The words 'eternal punishment' stand; but in how many ways are they defined? The God of wrath is displaced by the God of love, whose judgments are meant only for correction. Would you realize how completely the aspect and complexion of religion have altered, consider your feelings as you read the following passage from *The Sight of Hell*, a tract 'for children and young persons,' by a priest of the Roman church, who, living in the present, is still in the bondage of the Middle Ages:

'See, on the middle of that red-hot floor stands a girl; she looks about sixteen years old. Her feet are bare. She has neither shoes nor stockings. . . . Listen! she speaks. She says, "I have been standing on this red-hot floor for years. Day and night my only standing-place has been this red-hot floor. . . . Look at my burnt and bleeding feet. Let me go off this burning floor for one moment, only for one single short moment." . . . The fourth dungeon is the boiling kettle . . . in the middle of it there is a boy. . . . His eyes are burning like two burning coals. Two long flames come out of his ears. . . . Sometimes he opens his mouth, and blazing fire rolls out. But listen! there is a sound like a kettle boiling. . . . The blood is boiling in the scalded veins of that boy. The brain is boiling and bubbling in his head. The marrow is boiling in his bones. . . . The fifth dungeon is the red-hot oven. . . . The little child is in this red-hot oven. Hear how it screams to come out. See how it turns and twists itself about in the fire. It beats itself against the roof of the oven. It stamps its little feet on the floor. . . . God was very good to this child. Very likely God saw it would get worse and worse, and would never repent, and so it would have to be punished much more in hell. So God in His mercy called it out of the world in its early childhood.'

Consider the surprise, the repugnance, the horror which these infamous sentences now excite; yet consider again how perfectly they harmonize with the realizations of rather more than two hundred years ago, when even the latitudinarian and impassioned Taylor could write:

'Alexander, the son of Hyrcanus, caused eight hundred to be crucified, and whilst they were yet alive caused their wives and children to be murdered before their eyes, so that they might not die once, but many deaths. This rigour shall not be wanting in hell. . . . Mezentius tied a living body to the dead until the putrefied exhalations of the dead

had killed the living. . . . What is this in respect of hell, when each body of the damned is more loathsome and unsavoury than a million of dead dogs? . . . What comparison will there be between burning for an hundred years' space, and to be burning without interruption as long as God is God?'

3. To suppose religion endangered by these changes, or future ones, is altogether misleading. As the satisfaction of an ineradicable want, it is deathless. Only the visible body waxes old as a garment. The vital element is indestructible, growing with the race and revealing itself. The dogma perishes; the intuition—the instinct of devotion—can never die. Transition is the sign of life. The 'increasing purpose' of the ages, by the orderly processes of natural law, brings ever to the front fresh modifications of belief. Without change, no expansion. To be perfect is to have changed often.

**Ethics.**—It accords with the hard, Philistine temper of the age, that the utilitarian school of morals and politics should be at present extremely influential in England. Spencer and Bain are prominent names, but **John Stuart Mill** has done more to popularize and spread it than any other of its members. His father, stern and repellant, was an uncompromising disciple of Bentham. 'He resembled,' says the son, 'most Englishmen in being ashamed of the signs of feeling, and by the absence of demonstration starved the feelings themselves.' 'His entering the room where the family was assembled, was observed by strangers to operate as an immediate damper.' He resolved so to educate his son that he should be 'a worthy successor.' 'In all his teaching he demanded of me not only the utmost I could do, but much that I could by no possibility have done.' The child began Greek at the age of three, by means of 'lists of common Greek words, with their signification in English,' written out for him on cards by his father. At eight he had read the *Anabasis*, the *Memorabilia*, part of Lucian, two orations of Isocrates, and six dialogues of Plato. In addition to this, lessons in arithmetic in the evening; then, according to his taste, the histories of Robertson, Hume, Gibbon, Hooke, or the *Annual Register*. At twelve he was put upon a severe course of logic, beginning with Aristotle's *Organon*, followed by the *Computatio* of Hobbes. As he read and studied, he made notes on slips of paper for the daily report required to be given, while father and son took their morning walk. Already, at seven, in the composition of a brief Roman

history, he had made his *début* in authorship. Is it a matter of wonder, after such an education, that this man should be true to the theoretical convictions in which he had been drilled? Is it surprising that he should define happiness to be ‘the sole end of human action, and the promotion of it the test by which to judge of all human conduct’? Here is the formal statement:

‘The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, utility or the greatest happiness principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness.’

If it be observed, as a fact, that virtue is often desired for ‘its own sake, the explanation is:

‘We gradually, through the influence of association, come to desire the means without thinking of the end; the action itself becomes an object of desire, and is performed without reference to any motive beyond itself. Thus far, it may still be objected that the action having, through association, become pleasurable, we are as much as before moved to act by the anticipation of pleasure, namely, the pleasure of the action itself. But granting this, the matter does not end here. As we proceed in the formation of habits, and become accustomed to will a particular act . . . because it is pleasurable, we at last continue to will it without any reference to its being pleasurable.’

Very plausible, but no essential modification of Hartley’s doctrine of association, and—we need not further argue—unable to account for the unique and preëminent position which mankind have assigned to virtue. The principle is the same, but the spirit has altered. We have travelled far since we left Hobbes. The main object was then to depress human nature by resolving the noblest deeds into gross elements; the main object is now to sublimate conceptions of happiness so as to include the highest displays of heroism. Bentham held that nothing but self-interest would ‘serve for diet,’ though, ‘for a dessert, benevolence is a very valuable addition’; Mill affirms that even hygienic precepts should be inculcated, not chiefly on prudential grounds, but because ‘by squandering our health, we disable ourselves from rendering services to our fellow-creatures.’ Not less significant is the position, that ‘the mind is not in a state conformable to utility, unless it loves virtue as a thing desirable in itself.’ Rather conciliatory, and very gratifying. At this rate there will soon be no quarrel (because so slight difference) between utilitarian and intuitive moralists. Still more important are the concessions that there is a distinction of *kind* in pleasures, and that human action may have ‘its æsthetic aspect, or that of its beauty.’ We remember, however, that his boyish fancy revelled,

when permitted, in *Robinson Crusoe*, *Arabian Nights*, and *Don Quixote*; that he was often mentally depressed, as if the spirit were struggling to rend the bonds which had been laid upon it; that he found genuine comfort in the poetry of Wordsworth; that he himself had a poetic temperament, starved in the training; that of his dead wife he has said, 'her memory is to me a religion, and her approbation the standard by which, summing up as it does all worthiness, I endeavor to regulate my life';—then we see that the foundation of him is the ideal; that utilitarianism only separates him from the ethical idealism to which his inmost self is inclined; that the beauty of his style, the admissions (inconsistent with his method) into which he is frequently betrayed by his sympathy with the spiritual, are the overflowings of the ideal nature, which transcends the boundaries vainly set for it. Therefore is he better than his logic.

'Below the surface stream, shallow and light,  
Of what we say we feel; below the stream,  
As light, of what we think we feel,—there flows,  
With noiseless current strong, obscure and deep,  
The central stream of what we feel indeed.'

We quote once more:

'The contest between the morality which appeals to an external standard, and that which grounds itself on internal conviction, is the contest of progressive against stationary morality, of reason and argument against the deification of mere opinion and habit.'

Nothing, as we have before had occasion to explain, could be more fallacious. That the standard of duty may become progressively higher is fully admitted; but the change is only a development. The moral idea is original and underived; circumstances determine the nature and range of its application. In itself immutable, the future will but give it a grander sweep.

The opposite system of morals is represented by the learned **Whewell**, the judicial **Lecky**, and the brilliant **Martineau**.

Forty years ago Tocqueville declared:

'The Americans do not read the works of Descartes, because their social condition deters them from speculative studies; but they follow his maxims, because this very social condition naturally disposes their understanding to adopt them.'

He concluded that the Americans display more readiness and taste for general ideas than their transatlantic forefathers, because democratic institutions tend to expand and dilate thought, and to suggest the indefinite perfectibility of man. Be this how it may, our foremost speculative thinkers—as **Bascom**, **Haven**,

**Hickok, McCosh, and Porter**—are of the intuitive school. Here, where men are immersed in love of coal, steam, and electricity, absorbed in pursuit of the means,—worshipping the machinery, losing sight of the ends,—it is reassuring to hear a voice like this:

‘There is an awful sanctuary in every immortal spirit, and man needs nothing more than to exclude all else, and stand alone before himself, to be made conscious of an authority he can neither dethrone nor delude. From its approbation comes self-respect; from its disapprobation comes self-contempt. A stern behest is ever upon him that he do nothing to degrade the real dignity of his spiritual being. He is a law to himself, and has both the judge and executioner within himself, and inseparable from him.’

**Science.**—Perhaps the distinguishing characteristic of the age is, that it draws, far more largely than heretofore, upon experiment as a means of arriving at truth, while the knowledge thus acquired is applied to art and investigation with a freedom and boldness hitherto unknown. The innovations thus made upon other modes of thought are without parallel. New direction has been given to inquiry and aspiration. Gifted intellects have been diverted from poetry,—from the search for the ideal to the search for the real. We have seen how profoundly historical method has been influenced by the conception of order. Metaphysicians study the nervous system, and speak of the *dynamics* of mind. All departments have the scientific coloring,—the widened survey of man and of nature.

The highest generalization of science is development,—development from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, from the general to the special, from the simple to the complex. This process is considered by Spencer to be traceable ‘in the formation of the worlds in space, in the multiplication of the types and species of plants and animals on the globe, in the organization and diversity of languages, . . . and in all the changes of human institutions and society.’ Evolution,—theistic, not atheistic,—once opposed by naturalists themselves, and still contested by some, may almost be regarded as an established law. In biology, it was famously reinforced in 1859 by **Darwin’s** (1809–1882) *Origin of Species*, and in 1871 by his *Descent of Man*. The former, though it may be tracked in the snow of the ancients, was the first elaborate essay to explain the mode in which the alleged progressive transmutation of organic bodies from the lowest to the highest has been conducted. ‘Darwinism’ passed



into current use as expressing a strong theory of the differentiation of species,—a proposed solution of the problem *how* animals and plants came to have the structure and habits that characterize them as distinct classes. Organisms multiply so rapidly that, were all to live, there would be neither room enough nor subsistence. Each struggles to adapt itself to the constantly altering condition of its environment. Each, in this manner, is slowly modified in its natural state, as a rose or a dog under artificial cultivation and breeding. Each resembles its parents in generic points, but varies in particulars:

‘Amid the struggle for existence which has been always going on among living beings, variations of bodily conformation and structure, if in any degree profitable to an individual of any species, will tend to the preservation of that individual, and will generally be inherited by its offspring.’

In the battle for life, the strong prevail, the weak die,—those least adapted to the situation giving way before those better adapted; and this is Darwin’s celebrated principle of Natural Selection, or ‘survival of the fittest.’ Tragical and depressing in some of its aspects, sublime and poetical in others:

‘It is interesting to contemplate a tangled bank clothed with many plants of many kinds, with birds singing on the bushes, with various insects flitting about, and with worms crawling through the damp earth, and to reflect that these elaborately constructed forms, so different from each other, and dependent upon each other in so complex a manner, have all been produced by laws acting around us. These laws, taken in the largest sense, being growth with reproduction; inheritance, which is almost implied by reproduction; variability from the indirect and direct action of the conditions of life, and from use and disuse; a ratio of increase so high as to lead to a struggle for life, and as a consequence to natural selection, entailing divergence of character and the extinction of less-improved forms. Thus, from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving—namely, the production of the higher animals—directly follows. There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed laws of gravity, from so simple a beginning, endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been and are being evolved.’

Every full-orbed soul feels the uplift of the ideal. **Tyndall** (1820- ), in recasting the definitions of matter and force, illustrates the ground-idea of man, which, though restricted, has a movable boundary, and tends ever outward into the illimitable. ‘These evolution notions,’ he exclaims, ‘are absurd, monstrous, and fit only for the intellectual gibbet, *in relation to the ideas concerning matter which were drilled into us when young.*’ There is, he decides, but one substance; not matter as vulgarly understood, nor yet spirit, but the original of both, possessing

therefore a physical and a spiritual side. Hence ‘matter is essentially mystical and transcendental.’ ‘Emotion, intellect, will, and all their phenomena, were once latent in a fiery cloud.’ Again:

‘Supposing that, in youth, we had been impregnated with the notion of the poet Goethe, instead of the notion of the poet Young, looking at matter not as brute matter, but as the *living garment of God*, is it not probable that our repugnance to the idea of primeval union between spirit and matter might be considerably abated?’<sup>1</sup>

**Bain** (1818- ) is more explicit: ‘The arguments for the two substances have, we believe, now entirely lost their validity. The one substance with two sets of properties, two sides,—the physical and the mental,—*a double-faced unity*, would appear to comply with all the exigencies of the case.’

As often as supposed isolated phenomena have been seen to occupy fixed places in invariable sequences, they have been regarded as accounted for and explained, without recourse to the volition of superior beings, who, to such extent, have retired from participation in the world’s affairs. Hence science has seemed to antagonize the religious sentiment. But no fundamental belief is possibly in danger. The concessions of **Huxley** (1825- ), added to the utterances of Tyndall, should compose the popular apprehension:

‘The properties of living matter distinguish it absolutely from all other kinds of things; and the present state of knowledge furnishes us with no link between the living and the not-living.’

Nothing has been found to bridge the chasm between the inorganic and the organic. Minuteness of change does not account for the introduction of a new principle. Life must have been put originally into the series from which it is at last evolved. In other words, it must be admitted that a supernatural act, directly or indirectly, originated life in the primordial cell.

‘Has matter more than motion? has it thought,  
Judgment, and genius? is it deeply learn’d  
In mathematics? has it framed such laws  
Which but to guess, a Newton made immortal?  
If so, how each sage atom laughs at me  
Who think a clod inferior to a man:  
If art to form, and counsel to direct,  
And that which greater far than human skill,  
Resides not in each block,—a god-head reigns.’

Be not frightened with a word. ‘Reign of law’ can mean nothing

<sup>1</sup>*Fragments of Science.*

more than the universal prevalence of methodical succession. When events are said to 'come by law,' they are explained scientifically, not exhaustively. You gain no further insight into why the apple falls when you say that it does so by the force of gravitation. You are merely able, by this expression, most usefully to relate it to other phenomena, as the fall of a rose-leaf and the velocities of comets. Molecular groupings, molecular motions, explain nothing. Rarely is our patience so severely tried as by the flippant blasphemy of those arrogant scientists (or scientific *attachés*) who inscribe on their banners, 'full high advanced,' *No faith, Believe nothing*. Science, that can catalogue the stars, calculate eclipses, girdle the globe with lightning, and send your messages upon flaming wings, is impotent, with all her vaunted resources, to produce one fibre of a blade of grass, to tell the cause of one vein in the radiant tracery of a flower, or approximate to the most distant definition of what thought may really be. Let a poet rebuke, with an emphasis of far-reaching instinct, the audacious materialist:

'Flower in the crannied wall,  
I pluck you out of the crannies;  
Hold you here in my hand,  
Little flower, root and all.  
And if I could understand  
What you are, roots and all, and all in all,  
I should know what God and man is.'<sup>1</sup>

**Philosophy.**—As the dominant ethics is utilitarian, so the dominant psychology is empirical or sensational. First among the representatives of the latter school are Mill, Lewes, Spencer, and Bain. They have powerful auxiliaries in Tyndall and Huxley, who are not philosophers, but scientists. All our knowledge comes primarily from the senses. All our ideas—as of right and wrong, truth and beauty, duty and honor—are derived from experience. If any are admittedly in the mind, yet admittedly beyond experience, they are pronounced delusive. Nothing is true necessarily and *a priori*. The only certitude is that we have such and such impressions. You are convinced that two parallel lines cannot meet, that a part is less than the whole; but it might be otherwise in the universities of the Dog-Star. Some boldly resolve all thought into the mere action of nervous cen-

<sup>1</sup> Tennyson.

tres, induced by purely physical forces. Others identify the *laws* of matter and mind. Some, like **Spencer**, unlike **Mill**, adopt the Hamiltonian test of belief—the inconceivableness of the opposite, the inability to think a given proposition false. All decline to recognize intuitive elements. Space and time are evolved from sensation, though themselves the conditions of sensation. Causation means invariable antecedence, though it must be evident that no phenomenon comes into existence *because* another phenomenon precedes. Precedence is but the *sign* of antecedent *efficiency*. As a class, they reduce the idea of the Infinite to a mere negation, an impotency. If there are feelings which spring up in an unknown way by means of association, these in turn generate no reality. Ask what assurance you have for your highest hopes, and the reply is, *Whence gravitation?* They will utter no profession of faith, but leave you on a wide sea of conjecture—in the open polar zone—

‘To starve in ice,  
Immovable, infixed, and frozen round.’

This is the principle employed by the subtlest form of infidelity to-day,—that man knows nothing except appearances or relations between things unknown. Its logical issue is *Agnosticism*,<sup>1</sup> and this is its final message ‘unto men’:

‘An immense solitary spectre waits:  
It has no shape, it has no sound; it has  
No place, it has no time; it is, and was,  
And will be; it is never more nor less,  
Nor glad nor sad. Its name is Nothingness.  
Power walketh high; and misery doth crawl;  
And the clepsydron drips; and the sands fall  
Down in the hour-glass; and the shadows sweep  
Around the dial; and men wake and sleep,  
Live, strive, regret, forget, and love, and hate,  
And know it. This spectre saith, I wait,  
And at the last it beckons, and they pass;  
And still the red sands fall within the glass,  
And still the shades around the dial sweep;  
And still the water-clock doth drip and weep.  
And this is all.’

The soul, like the bare and rayless moon, is left with only its rocks and its extinct volcanoes. Contemplating, in this darkness, the perpetual struggle for existence, it plunges into a lower deep,—*Pessimism*, the religion of the Unconscious, the philosophy of despair, whose end is the Byronic wail:

<sup>1</sup>A contradiction in terms. We know, if only it be in knowing that we do not know.

‘Count o’er the joys thine hours have seen,  
 Count o’er thy days from anguish free;  
 And know, whatever thou hast been,  
 ’Tis something better—not to be.’

True, possibly, when you mistake the meaning of pleasure and the object of life, which, as we shall forever insist, is not to derive the greatest enjoyment, but—

‘To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.’

Against this materialistic drift there have been protests. Poetry attests the strength and continuity of the supernatural. The satire that covers with ridicule the revived doctrine of Lucretius voices the imperishable instinct which refuses to abide in a vacuum or to accept a stone when it asks for bread:

‘From floating elements in chaos hurled,  
 Self-formed of atoms, sprang the infant world.  
 No great First Cause inspired the happy plot,  
 But all was matter,—and no matter what,—  
 Atoms attracted by some law occult,  
 Settling in spheres,—this globe was the result.  
 I sing how casual bricks, in airy climb,  
 Encountered casual cow-hair, casual lime;  
 How rafters, borne through wondering clouds elate,  
 Kissed in their slope blue elemental slate,  
 Clasped solid beams in chance-directed fury,  
 And gave to birth our renovated Drury.’<sup>1</sup>

The spiritual and inner, as distinguished from the exterior and carnal, find impassioned expression in Carlyle. Stirling, Martineau, and others, promise not a little in the way of qualifying favorably the metaphysics of Britain. The chief resistance has been offered by the hereditary moral tone. It is this that has made the name of *materialist* opprobrious,—a designation which few of the school are now willing to accept. The effort to spiritualize matter proves their reluctance, as well as the existence of a higher nature, which will not allow them to rest satisfied in their creed. They incline to say with Huxley, ‘If I were compelled to choose, I do not know whether I should express the facts of nature in terms of matter or terms of spirit.’

In America, admiring Tyndall discovers an authority in Dr. Draper, and Spencer has an accomplished expounder in Fiske; but materialism, on the whole, has little acceptance. Its entrance and progress have been opposed by the Concord transcendentalists,—**Emerson** and his associates; by our foremost scientists,

<sup>1</sup> *Rejected Addresses*; on the rebuilding of Drury Lane Theatre.



as Winchell, Gray, and Agassiz; by the entire class of metaphysicians, as **McCosh**, **Porter**, and **Bascom**; above all, by the religious sentiment, by democratic tastes which tend to create a more flowing and aspiring type of thought.

But the scientific current, as we before intimated, is moving more or less all schools of thought. Scientific methods are introduced into all parts of philosophical speculation.<sup>1</sup> Theories of mental processes which despise or ignore the disclosures of physiology and natural history, cannot hope to receive favor. The mistake is in making physiological investigation the sole or chief guide. All its achievements have only illuminated the old statement that soul and body are here intimately related. 'The problem of the connection of soul and body,' says Tyndall, 'is as insolvable in its modern form as it was in the pre-scientific ages.' No light has been shed upon the arcana of intellect and volition; nor can there be, by exclusive approaches from the outside. No sage of physical wisdom can bring word of solace or vision of peace to the troubled and weary who ask:

'Canst thou not minister to a *mind* diseased,  
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,  
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,  
And by some sweet oblivious antidote  
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of the perilous stuff  
Which weighs upon the heart?'

**Résumé.**—The many, growing intelligent, guide the world. The universal tendency is towards popular institutions. Government, it is now understood, exists not for the pomp or pleasure of a few, but for the good, the safety, the rights of all. Education becomes the work of nations. In religion, the tone of authority gives place to reason and persuasion. An enlarged and trustful philanthropy springs up amidst the prevalence of selfishness and crime. Benevolence gathers its armies. Beyond all former experience, evil awakens antagonistic effort. Woman becomes an evangelist. In one age a drudge, in another a toy, the inspirations of her genius, through the agency of the press, are now felt far and wide. Literature of an increasingly high order, sends its light into cottages. Discoveries and theories, once the monopoly of philosophers, become the property of the

<sup>1</sup> Notably illustrated in Mr. Bascom's late work, *Science of Mind*.

multitude. Science, passing, beyond precedent, from speculation into life, confers dominion over earth, sea, and air.

In bulk and quality of productiveness, the supremacy passes to prose. In historical labors the period is rich. The leading characteristics here are fulness of treatment, vividness of style, depth of insight, breadth of generalization. Fiction and journalism are preponderant. The newspaper addresses every age, class, and calling. Essayists of various schools,—Positive, Æsthetic, Agnostic, Satiric,—keep historical, religious, and social dogmas in perpetual agitation. A pronounced feature is literary criticism; not seldom false and malicious in fact, but fearless, flexible, ardent, cosmopolitan in tendency, seeking to find and propagate the best that is known and thought. The novel, pictorial and ethical, realistic and ideal, is cultivated with preëminent assiduity and success. From Scott to George Eliot it has been, in fruitfulness and favor, what the drama was to Elizabethan times. The number of singers is prodigious, but the great are few, and none reaches the level of the voices whose earlier music we have heard. As the average in every other department is higher, so never, on the whole, was so much good poetry produced; yet is it rather the literature of culture than the literature of power. It has exactness, finish, art, but lacks spontaneousness and glow. Taste has changed, inspiration has declined, the practical temper is dominant. Theological thought, whose controversies are the phases of its evolution, proves in the perpetual vicissitude of forms, the continuity and development of its spirit. Philosophy is disparaged. Its prevailing drift is on the side of material rather than spiritual interests. Aspiration that looks for guidance, finds it, not in the regular metaphysicians, but in the moral teachers,—Wordsworth, Carlyle, Emerson.

Not many years ago it was said in England that no one ever read an American book. Recently, in an address at the opening of Birmingham Library, Bright, the English statesman, dwelt particularly on the growth and importance of American literature. We have attained our majority. The bonds of foreign fashion are broken. Our excellences are being accorded candid recognition. We are less frequently reminded of our immaturity. Critics of the old country are dropping the aristocratic

*l'auteur* with which they were wont to bear down upon the writers and thinkers of the new. Some of the ablest English scholars, on the contrary, express a preference to publish originally in American periodicals. Bryant, Whittier, Longfellow, Emerson, and Hawthorne, are the leaders of the select band who have signed the declaration of intellectual independence, and are raising the nation above the 'rustic murmur' of provincial life into 'the great wave that echoes round the world.'

Two important characteristics of the day merit emphasis. One is the activity and universality of scientific influence. The idea of law has been so extended and generalized as to dwarf its former proportions. It is diffused throughout the mental atmosphere, and powerfully affects every department of thought. Again, literature, English and American, is distinguished by a profounder moral consciousness than ever before, a greater delicacy of analysis, a deeper ground of sentiment and reflection. High and low run the race of accumulation, but human interest circles with growing appreciation about the moral man,—his origin, his possibilities, his aspirations, his destiny.

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## DICKENS.

We doubt whether there has ever been a writer of fiction who took such a real and loving interest in the world about him.—*Sir Arthur Helps*.

**Biography.**—Born at Landport, in 1812, second in a family of eight; at two, was brought to London, but soon removed to Chatham, where he lived till the age of nine. Here, debarred from boyish sports by a delicate constitution, he sought the companionship of books:

'My father had left a small collection of books in a little room up-stairs to which I had access, and which nobody else in our house ever troubled. From that blessed little room, "Roderick Random," "Peregrine Pickle," "Humphrey Clinker," "Tom Jones," "Vicar of Wakefield," "Don Quixote," "Gil Blas," and "Robinson Crusoe," came out, a glorious host, to keep me company. They kept alive my fancy, and my hope of something beyond that place and time.'<sup>1</sup>

From Chatham back to London, where his father was imprisoned for debt. By degrees the furniture was sold or pawned, the

<sup>1</sup>*David Copperfield*.

library with the rest; and the boy, weakly and sensitive, was put to work in a blacking-house at six or seven shillings a week, his occupation being to cover the blacking-pots with paper. He has described his sense of degradation, which grew larger and more ghastly in the retrospect:

‘No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I sunk into this companionship: compared these every-day associates with those of my happier childhood; and felt my early hopes of growing up to be a learned and distinguished man crushed in my breast. The deep remembrance of the sense I had of being utterly neglected and hopeless; of the shame I felt in my position; of the misery it was to my young heart to believe that, day by day, what I had learned, and thought, and delighted in, and raised my fancy and my emulation up by, was passing away from me, never to be brought back any more, cannot be written.’

The family resources improving, he was sent to school, where ‘the boys trained white mice much better than the master trained the boys’; at fifteen, an office-lad to attorneys, then a student of short-hand, frequenting the British Museum and reading diligently. ‘Pray, Mr. Dickens,’ said a friend to the father, ‘where was your son educated?’ ‘Why, indeed, sir — ha, ha! — he may be said to have educated himself.’ In a similar strain, Weller in *Pickwick* speaks of his hopeful Sam: ‘I took a good deal o’ pains with his eddication, sir; let him run in the streets when he was very young, and shift for his-self.’ At nineteen, in the Gallery of the House of Commons, where he was quickly acknowledged the best of eighty or ninety reporters. Three years later, having ventured one evening to drop a story into the letter-box of the *Old Monthly Magazine*, he saw himself in print. ‘On which occasion I walked down to Westminster Hall, and turned into it for half an hour, because my eyes were so dimmed with joy and pride that they could not bear the street, and were not fit to be seen there.’ Other sketches followed, signed ‘Boz’; and in 1836 these were collected into two volumes,—his first work, the copyright of which was sold for one hundred and fifty pounds, and shortly repurchased for two thousand pounds! On the thirty-first of March he began the *Pickwick Papers*; on the second of April, married; in August, quit the Reporter’s Gallery, and entered literature as a profession. Travelled in the Highlands, visited Switzerland and the United States, resided in Italy and France, engaged in public readings from his novels, and in this way alone gained forty thousand pounds in Britain and America. Health declined, but love of money and love of applause urged

him on, till at last he was stricken with apoplexy, and died in a state of unconsciousness on the evening of the ninth of June, 1870. Though he had desired to be laid quietly in the old church-yard amidst the scenes that were dear to memory, the national cemetery claimed him, and he was buried in Westminster Abbey.

**Writings.**—It was the mission of Dickens as an artist to give a masterly realism to the good and ill of every-day life. *Oliver Twist* is the story of a child born in a workhouse and brought up by the parish, thrown amid scenes of vice, wretchedness, and misery, yet preserved from pollution by an exquisite delicacy and strength of natural sentiment. Call it a series of pictures,—portraits of associates in crime, who forever skulk uneasily, with the ghastly gallows closing up their prospect. Here is the ruffian Sykes, who has horribly murdered a trusted girl that betrayed him:

‘The sun—the bright sun, that brings back, not light alone, but new life, and hope, and freshness to man—burst upon the crowded city in clear and radiant glory. Through costly colored glass and paper-mended window, through cathedral dome and rotten crevice it shed its equal ray. It lighted up the room where the murdered woman lay. It did. He tried to shut it out, but it would stream in. If the sight had been a ghastly one in the dull morning, what was it now, in all that brilliant light!

He had not moved; he had been afraid to stir. There had been a moan and motion of the hand; and, with terror added to rage, he had struck and struck again. Once he threw a rug over it: but it was to fancy the eyes, and imagine them moving toward him, then to see them glaring upward, as if watching the reflection of the pool of gore that quivered and danced in the sunlight on the ceiling. He had plucked it off again. And there was the body—mere flesh and blood, no more—but such flesh, and so much blood!

He struck a light, kindled a fire, and thrust the club into it. There was hair upon the end, which blazed and shrunk into a light cinder, and, caught by the air, whirled up the chimney. Even that frightened him, sturdy as he was; but he held the weapon till it broke, and then piled it on the coals to burn away, and smoulder into ashes. He washed himself, and rubbed his clothes: there were spots that would not be removed, but he cut the pieces out, and burnt them. How those stains were dispersed about the room!’

In vain he flies, hither and thither, from memory and himself. The very children seem to view him with suspicion. Waking or sleeping, the dreadful vision is before him,—the room with its familiar contents, each well-known object in its accustomed place; above all, the widely staring eyes, so lustreless and so glassy:

‘He went on doggedly; but as he left the town behind him, and plunged into the solitude and darkness of the road, he felt a dread and awe creeping upon him which shook him to the core. Every object before him, substance or shadow, still or moving, took the semblance of some fearful thing; but these fears were nothing compared to the sense that haunted him of that morning’s ghastly figure following at his heels. He could trace its shadow in the gloom, supply the smallest item of the outline, and note how stiff and solemn it seemed to stalk along. He could hear its garments rustling in the leaves;



and every breath of wind came laden with that last low cry. If he stopped, it did the same. If he ran, it followed—not running too; that would have been a relief; but like a corpse endowed with the mere machinery of life, and borne on the slow melancholy wind that never rose or fell.

At times, he turned, with desperate determination, resolved to beat this phantom off, though it should look him dead; but the hair rose on his head, and his blood stood still: for it had turned with him and was behind him then. He had kept it before him that morning, but it was behind him now—always. He leaned his back against a bank, and felt that it stood above him, visibly out against the cold night-sky. He threw himself upon the road—on his back upon the road. *At his head it stood, silent, erect, and still—a living gravestone, with its epitaph in blood.*

Since Shakespeare there has been no such depicture—so lucid and so powerful. Fagin, the abhorred Jew, overwhelmed by a sense of the grave that opens at his feet, has heard mechanically, like a marble figure, the sentence that dooms him to die, and, hurried to one of the condemned cells, is left—alone:

‘He sat down on a stone bench opposite the door, which served for seat and bedstead; and casting his bloodshot eyes upon the ground, tried to collect his thoughts. After a while he began to remember a few disjointed fragments of what the judge had said: though it had seemed to him, at the time, that he could not hear a word. These gradually fell into their proper places, and by degrees suggested more; so that in a little time he had the whole, almost as it was delivered. To be hanged by the neck, till he was dead—that was the end. To be hanged by the neck till he was dead.

As it came on very dark, he began to think of all the men he had known who had died upon the scaffold, some of them through his means. They rose up, in such quick succession that he could hardly count them. He had seen some of them die,—and had joked too, because they died with prayers upon their lips. With what a rattling noise the drop went down; and how suddenly they changed, from strong and vigorous men to dangling heaps of clothes!

Some of them might have inhabited that very cell—sat upon that very spot. It was very dark; why didn't they bring a light? The cell had been built for many years. Scores of men must have passed their last hours there. It was like sitting in a vault strewn with dead bodies—the cap, the noose, the pinioned arms, the faces that he knew, even beneath that hideous veil—Light, light!’

In *The Old Curiosity Shop* we have the like wealth and fulness of individual oddities and striking contrasts. Dick Swiveller is worthy of a high place in English comedy. He is a good-natured vagabond, a clever compound of conceit and assurance. He purchases, notoriously without means to pay, promising with dignified carelessness to call and settle when he ‘should be passing presently.’ To spare himself unnecessary annoyance, he makes a memorandum of the locality:

‘I enter in this little book the names of the streets that I can't go down while the shops are open. This dinner to-day closes Long Acre. I bought a pair of boots in Great Queen Street, and made that no thoroughfare too. There's only one avenue in the Strand left open now, and I shall have to stop up that to-night with a pair of gloves. The roads are closing so fast in every direction, that in about a month's time, unless my aunt sends me a remittance, I shall have to go three or four miles out of town to get over the way.’

His head is stored with scraps of songs and plays, ready for the sentiment of the moment. Jilted, as he thinks, by Miss Wackles, he takes leave of her in the following style:

‘My boat is on the shore and my bark is on the sea, but before I pass this door I will say farewell to thee. . . . I believed you true, and I was blest in so believing, but now I mourn that e’er I knew a girl so fair yet so deceiving. . . . I came here . . . with my bosom expanded, my heart dilated, and my sentiments of a corresponding description. I go away with feelings that may be conceived but cannot be described; feeling within myself the desolating truth that my best affections have experienced, this night, a stifler! . . . I wish you a very good night; concluding with this slight remark, that there is a young lady growing up at this present moment for me, who has not only great personal attractions, but great wealth, and who has requested her next of kin to propose for my hand, which having a regard for some members of her family, I have consented to promise. It’s a gratifying circumstance which you’ll be glad to hear, that a young and lovely girl is growing into a woman expressly on my account, and is now saving up for me. I thought I’d mention it. I have now merely to apologise for trespassing so long upon your attention. Good night!’

In the pangs of disappointed love, he exhibits to Quilp, the wolfish dwarf, a piece of the indigestible wedding-cake:

“What should you say this was?” demanded Mr. Swiveller.

“It looks like bride-cake,” replied the dwarf, grinning.

“And whose should you say it was?” inquired Mr. Swiveller, rubbing the pastry against his nose with a dreadful calmness. “Whose?”

“Not—”

“Yes,” said Dick, “the same. You needn’t mention her name. There’s no such name now. Her name is Cheggs, now, Sophy Cheggs. Yet loved I as man never loved that hadn’t wooden legs, and my heart, my heart is breaking for the love of Sophy Cheggs.”

In his own bed-chamber, having divested himself of one boot and forgotten the other, he falls into deep cogitation:

“These rubbers,” said Mr. Swiveller, putting on his night-cap in exactly the same style as he wore his hat, “remind me of the matrimonial fireside. . . . By this time, I should say,” added Richard, getting his left cheek into profile, and looking complacently at the reflection of a very little scrap of whisker in the looking-glass; “by this time, I should say, the iron has entered into her soul. It serves her right!”

With a vast opinion of his own abilities, he is the victim of every knave he encounters. His life is a series of failures and defeats, but all his woes are beguiled with this cheerful philosophy:

“No money; no credit; . . . notice to quit the old lodgings—staggerers, three, four, five, and six! Under an accumulation of staggerers, no man can be considered a free agent. No man knocks himself down; if his destiny knocks him down, his destiny must pick him up again. Then I’m very glad that mine has brought all this upon itself, and I shall be as careless as I can, and make myself quite at home to spite it. So go on, my buck,” said Mr. Swiveller, taking his leave of the ceiling with a significant nod, “and let us see which of us will be tired first!”

In contrast with these grotesque and reckless characters is the trusting and loving little Nell, a frail and charming child, with a sad maturity of experience, much-wandering, much-suffering, yet

always patient, always helpful, a ministering angel that wins and holds all hearts:

‘The roughest among them was sorry if he missed her in the usual place upon his way to school, and would turn out of the path to ask for her at the latticed window. If she were sitting in the church, they perhaps might peep in softly at the open door; but they never spoke to her, unless she rose and went to speak to them. Some feeling was abroad which raised the child above them all.

So, when Sunday came. They were all poor country people in the church, for the castle in which the old family had lived was an empty ruin, and there were none but humble folks for seven miles around. There, as elsewhere, they had an interest in Nell. They would gather around her in the porch, before and after service; young children would cluster at her skirts; and aged men and women forsake their gossips to give her kindly greeting. None of them, young or old, thought of passing the child without a friendly word. Many who came from three or four miles distant brought her little presents; the humblest and rudest had good wishes to bestow.’

There is but one way in which forms so young, so good, so beautiful, may be immortal to the fancy in their youth, innocence, and beauty,—they must die. Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. Decrepit age and helpless infancy, the pride of strength, the bloom of promise, the deaf, the blind, the lame, the palsied, gather round her tomb:

‘One called to mind how he had seen her sitting on that very spot, and how her book had fallen on her lap, and she was gazing with a pensive face upon the sky. Another told how he had wondered much that one so delicate as she should be so bold; how she had never feared to enter the church alone at night, but had loved to linger there when all was quiet, and even to climb the tower stair, with no more light than that of the moon’s rays stealing through the loopholes in the thick old wall. A whisper went about among the oldest, that she had seen and talked with angels; and when they called to mind how she had looked, and spoken, and her early death, some thought it might be so, indeed.’

Dickens is said never to have closed a tale with such a sorrowful reluctance. ‘I tremble to approach the place a great deal more than Kit. . . . I sha’n’t recover it for a long time. Nobody will miss her like I shall.’ All his sorrow and the wisdom of it are told in this burst of pathetic eloquence:

‘When Death strikes down the innocent and young, for every fragile form from which he lets the panting spirit free, a hundred virtues rise, in shapes of mercy, charity, and love, to walk the world, and bless it. Of every tear that sorrowing mortals shed on such green graves, some good is born, some gentler nature comes. In the Destroyer’s steps there spring up bright creations that defy his power, and his dark path becomes a way of light to Heaven.’

Hypocrisy and selfishness are the central themes of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Pecksniff is one of those who affect piety because it is serviceable, who regard morality as a needful coin:

‘Perhaps there never was a more moral man than Mr. Pecksniff; especially in his conversation and correspondence. It was once said of him by a homely admirer, that he

had a Fortunatus' purse of good sentiments in his inside. In this particular he was like the girl in the fairy tale, except that if they were not actual diamonds which fell from his lips, they were the very brightest paste, and shone prodigiously. He was a most exemplary man: fuller of virtuous precept than a copy-book. Some people likened him to a direction-post, which is always telling the way to a place, and never goes there: but these were his enemies; the shadows cast by his brightness; that was all. His very throat was moral. You saw a good deal of it. You looked over a very low fence of white cravat (whereof no man had ever beheld the tie, for he fastened it behind), and there it lay, a valley between two jutting heights of collar, serene and whiskerless before you. It seemed to say, on the part of Mr. Pecksniff, "There is no deception, ladies and gentlemen, all is peace, a holy calm pervades me." So did his hair, just grizzled with an iron-gray, which was all brushed off his forehead, and stood bolt upright, or slightly drooped in kindred action with his heavy eyelids. So did his person, which was sleek though free from corpulency. So did his manner, which was soft and oily. In a word, even his plain black suit, and state of widower, and dangling double eye-glass, all tended to the same purpose, and cried aloud, "Behold the moral Pecksniff!"

He names his daughters Mercy and Charity. When visited, he displays the family virtues." All desirable qualities are blended in a flexible adaptability to persons and occasions. He receives, for instance, a speculator and capitalist:

"Welcome, respected sir," said Mr. Pecksniff, "to our humble village! We are a simple people; primitive clods, Mr. Montague; but we can appreciate the honor of your visit, as my dear son-in-law can testify. It is very strange," said Mr. Pecksniff, pressing his hand almost reverentially, "but I seem to know you. That towering forehead, my dear Jonas," said Mr. Pecksniff aside; "and those clustering masses of rich hair—I must have seen you, my dear sir, in the sparkling throng."

With the plea of usefulness to his fellow-creatures, he enters into a compact with the two rascals, which must succeed 'as long as there are gulls upon the wing'; then passes out, and soars above the earth into the region of pure ideas:

"How glorious is this scene! When I look up at those shining orbs, I think that each of them is winking to the other to take notice of the vanity of men's pursuits. My fellow-men!" cried Mr. Pecksniff, shaking his head in pity, "you are much mistaken; my wormy relatives, you are much deceived! The stars are perfectly contented (I suppose so) in their several spheres. Why are not you? Oh! do not strive and struggle to enrich yourselves, or to get the better of each other, my deluded friends, but look up there, with me!"

Mrs. Lupin shook her head, and heaved a sigh. It was very affecting.

"Look up there, with me!" repeated Mr. Pecksniff, stretching out his hand; "with me, an humble individual who is also an Insect like yourselves. Can silver, gold, or precious stones, sparkle like those constellations! I think not. Then do not thirst for silver, gold, or precious stones; but look up there, with me!"

He moralizes on cream, sugar, tea, toast, ham, and eggs. 'How they come and go! Every pleasure is transitory.' When he can eat no more, he rises to lofty contemplations on the process of digestion:

"I do not know how it may be with others, but it is a great satisfaction to me to know, when regaling on my humble fare, that I am putting in motion the most beautiful machinery with which we have any acquaintance. I really feel at such times as if I was

doing a public service. When I have wound myself up, if I may employ such a term," said Mr. Pecksniff with exquisite tenderness, "and know that I am going, I feel that in the lesson afforded by the works within me, I am a Benefactor to my Kind!"

Jonas Chuzzlewit has had from his cradle the precept and example which engender cunning, treachery, and avarice. As we sow, we reap. 'Is that my father a-snoring, Pecksniff? Tread upon his foot, will you be so good? The foot next you's the gouty one.' He has been born and bred to the vices which make him odious, and which recoil upon his sire's unhonored age:

'The very first word he learnt to spell was "gain," and the second (when he got into two syllables), "money." But for two results, which were not clearly foreseen perhaps by his watchful parent in the beginning, his training may be said to have been unexceptionable. One of these flaws was, that having been long taught by his father to overreach everybody, he had imperceptibly acquired a love of overreaching that venerable monitor himself. The other, that from his early habits of considering everything as a question of property, he had gradually come to look, with impatience, on his parent as a certain amount of personal estate, which had no right whatever to be going at large, but ought to be secured in that particular description of iron safe which is commonly called a coffin, and banked in the grave.'

He treacherously murders his enemy, and the recollection is like a nightmare. He becomes in a manner his own ghost and phantom. He has a horror of his dwelling, approaches it stealthily, using every by-way near his course, gliding swiftly through this one, and stopping to survey the next; steals on tiptoe to the door of his chamber, turns the key with trembling hand, beset by a monstrous fear lest the murdered man be there before him! At last he enters, removes his disguise, ties it in a bundle ready to be sunk in the river, then buries himself in the bed:

'The raging thirst, the fire that burnt within him as he lay beneath the clothes, the augmented horror of the room, when they shut it out from his view; the agony of listening, in which he paid enforced regard to every sound, and thought the most unlikely one the prelude to that knocking which should bring the news; the starts with which he left his couch, and looking in the glass imagined that his deed was broadly written in his face, and lying down and burying himself once more beneath the blankets, heard his own heart beating Murder, Murder, Murder!'

It is not contrition or remorse that moves him, but alarm. One dread question is forever present—When will they find the body in the shadowy wood?—

'He tried—he had never left off trying—not to forget it was there, for that was impossible, but to forget to weary himself by drawing vivid pictures of it in his fancy: by going softly about it and about it among the leaves, approaching it nearer and nearer through a gap in the boughs, and startling the very flies that were thickly sprinkled all over it, like heaps of dried currants. His mind was fixed and fastened on the discovery, for intelligence of which he listened intently to every cry and shout; listened when any one came in, or went out; watched from the window the people who passed up and down the street; and mistrusted his own looks and words. And the more his thoughts



were set upon the discovery, the stronger was the fascination which attracted them to the thing itself: lying alone in the wood. He was forever showing and presenting it, as it were, to every creature whom he saw. "Look here! Do you know of this? Is it found? Do you suspect *me*?"

In *Dombey and Son*, as in his other novels, the characters are more than the story. Mr. Dombey, a London merchant, is an English picture of the aristocratic spirit. For twenty years he has been the sole representative of an ancient firm, to perpetuate the name of which is the one idea of his life:

'The earth was made for Dombey and Son to trade in, and the sun and moon were made to give them light. Rivers and seas were formed to float their ships; rainbows gave them promise of fair weather: winds blew for or against their enterprises; stars and planets circled in their orbits, to preserve inviolate a system of which they were the centre.'

He has never been known to use a term of endearment but once — at the birth of the infant Paul, when exultation betrayed him into 'Mrs. Dombey, my — my dear.' Hides he has dealt in largely, but hearts he has left as fancy-ware to boarding-schools and books. He would reason: 'That a matrimonial alliance with himself *must*, in the nature of things, be gratifying and honorable to any woman of common sense.' His little Florence's conception of a father is embodied in a blue coat and a stiff white cravat, with a pair of creaking boots and a loud ticking watch. When it is hinted that the mother, whose happiness is in the past, a broken spirit bound to a meek endurance of the present, may not survive, he is neither shocked nor startled, though he certainly has a sense within him 'that if his wife should sicken and decay, he would be very sorry, and that he would find something gone from among his plate and furniture, and other household possessions, which was well worth the having, and could not be lost without sincere regret.' His second wife is a proud and defiant beauty, linked to him, but arrayed with her whole soul against him. He asserts his greatness, and she regards him with ineffable disdain. He is arrogant, and she repays him in kind. He determines to bind her to his magnificent will, and she is only urged on to hate him. She flees on the anniversary of her marriage, neglect and desolation drive away his daughter. Eaten up by a sense of dishonor, by the haunting demon of public ridicule, he hides the world within him from the world without, haughty as ever, impenetrable though altered. By a fatal infatuation, he launches out into

rash, venturesome schemes of business, and is bankrupted,—fallen, never to be raised up any more:

‘For the night of his worldly ruin there was no to-morrow’s sun; for the stain of his domestic shame there was no purification; nothing, thank Heaven, could bring his dead child back to life. But that which he might have made so different in all the Past—which might have made the Past itself so different, though this he hardly thought of now—that which was his own work, that which he could so easily have wrought into a blessing, and had set himself so steadily for years to form into a curse: that was the sharp grief of his soul.’

Thought goads him to the verge of suicide. On the moment, Florence arrives, entreats him, redeems him: ‘O my God, forgive me, for I need it very much!’ The storm that passes on forever, leaves a clear evening in its track.

‘Like many fond parents,’ says Dickens, ‘I have in my heart of hearts a favorite child; and his name is *David Copperfield*.’ This is a masterpiece, marked throughout by a free and cheery style, much autobiography in disguise, a prodigal wealth of detail, an unusual variety of incident, a profusion of distinct people: the country undertaker, who dares not even inquire after friends that are ill, for fear of misconstruction; the brutal school-master, who is ultimately converted into the tender magistrate; a carrier, all of whose vicissitudes are condensed into three words, ‘Barkis is willin’; a mountebank who abandons his daughter, his only joy, lest he may bring her into disrepute; old Peggotty, who walks, stick in hand, over France, Germany, and Italy, to find and reclaim his lost niece; Micawber, who sells his bedstead to entertain a friend, dulling the edge of poverty by rhetorical exuberance; Mell, the musician, who blows on his flute ‘until I almost thought he would gradually blow his whole being into the large hole at the top, and ooze away at the keys’; Rosa Dartle, a monstrous imagination; Agnes, patient, sensible, self-sacrificing, an angel-wife; Dora, ever a little girl, a pretty, pouting, chirping, loving child-wife; above all, the hero David, born into the world a posthumous waif, whose warm nest of love is changed by a second marriage into a scene of hard dependence and servile treatment, but whose griefs, privations, and other varieties of experience during the growth of emotions and faculties into manhood, discipline his ideal and real parts for a successful cultivation of letters. We cannot refrain from quoting here an illustration of Dickens’ artistic faculty. It is David’s recollection from the blank of infancy:

‘On the ground-floor is Peggotty’s kitchen, opening into a back-yard; with a pigeon-house on a pole, in the centre, without any pigeons in it; a great dog-kennel in a corner, without any dog; and a quantity of fowls that look terribly tall to me, walking about, in a menacing and ferocious manner. There is one cock who gets upon a post to crow, and seems to take particular notice of me as I look at him through the kitchen window, who makes me shiver, he is so fierce. Of the geese outside the side gate who come waddling after me with their long necks stretched out when I go that way, I dream at night; as a man environed by wild beasts might dream of lions.

Here is a long passage — what an enormous perspective I make of it! — leading from Peggotty’s kitchen to the front-door. A dark store-room opens out of it, and that is a place to be run past at night; for I don’t know what may be among those tubs and jars and old tea-chests, when there is nobody in there, with a dimly-burning light, letting a mouldy air come out at the door, in which there is the smell of soap, pickles, pepper, candles, and coffee, all at one whiff. Then there are the two parlors; the parlor in which we sit of an evening, my mother and I and Peggotty — for Peggotty is quite our companion, when her work is done and we are alone — and the best parlor where we sit on a Sunday; grandly, but not so comfortably. There is something of a doleful air about that room to me, for Peggotty has told me — I don’t know when, but apparently ages ago — about my father’s funeral, and the company having their black cloaks put on. On Sunday night my mother reads to Peggotty and me in there, how Lazarus was raised up from the dead. And I am so frightened that they are afterwards obliged to take me out of bed, and show me the quiet churchyard out of the bedroom window, with the dead all lying in their graves at rest, below the solemn moon.’

The following is a noble piece of description:

‘The tremendous sea itself, when I could find sufficient pause to look at it, in the agitation of the blinding wind, the flying stones and sand, and the awful noise, confounded me. As the high watery walls came rolling in, and, at their highest, tumbled into surf, they looked as if the least would engulf the town. As the receding wave swept back with a hoarse roar, it seemed to scoop out deep caves in the beach as if its purpose were to undermine the earth. When some white-headed billows thundered on, and dashed themselves to pieces before they reached the land, every fragment of the late whole seemed possessed by the full might of its wrath, rushing to be gathered to the composition of another monster. Undulating hills were changed to valleys, undulating valleys (with a solitary storm-bird sometimes skimming through them) were lifted up to hills; masses of water shivered and shook the beach with a booming sound; every shape tumultuously rolled on, as soon as made, to change its shape and place, and beat another shape and place away; the ideal shore on the horizon, with its towers and buildings, rose and fell; the clouds flew fast and thick; I seemed to see a rending and upheaving of all nature.’

*Hard Times* is the combat of the oppressor and the plea for the oppressed. Mr. Gradgrind, a splendid specimen of his class, represents the positive mercantile spirit, which rails at enthusiasm and compassion, would extinguish all that is warming, and would educate children as they raise hogs, by placing them in favorable circumstances to fatten:

“Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. . . . Stick to Facts, sir!”

The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a school-room, and the speaker’s square forefinger emphasized his observations by underscoring every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster’s sleeve. The emphasis was helped by the speaker’s square

wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows for its base, while his eyes found commodious cellerage in two dark caves, overshadowed by the wall. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's mouth, which was wide, thin, and hard set. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's voice, which was inflexible, dry, and dictatorial. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's hair, which bristled on the skirts of his bald head, a plantation of firs to keep the wind from its shining surface, all covered with knobs, like the crust of a plum pie, as if the head had scarcely warehouse-room for the hard facts stored inside. The speaker's obstinate carriage, square coat, square legs, square shoulders,—nay, his very neckcloth, trained to take him by the throat with an unaccommodating grasp, like a stubborn fact, as it was—all helped the emphasis.

“In this life, we want nothing but Facts, sir; nothing but Facts!”

The speaker, and the schoolmaster, and the third grown person present, all backed a little, and swept with their eyes the inclined plane of little vessels then and there arranged in order, ready to have imperial gallons of facts poured into them until they were full to the brim.’

Take a view of human miseries in the great manufacturing towns. Stephen, an honest factory-hand, has refused, conscientiously, to join a combination of operatives. They renounce him, and he is commanded into the presence of his master to tell what he knows. But he will be faithful to the last, even to those who have repudiated him, and only states, in a general way, their grievance:

““Sir, I never were good at showin o't, though I ha had'n my share in feelin o't. 'Deed we are in a muddle, sir. Look round town—so rich as 'tis—and see the numbers o' people as has been broughten into bein heer, fur to weave, an to card, an to piece out a livin, aw the same one way, somehows, twixt their cradles and their graves. Look how we live, an wheer we live, an in what numbers, an by what chances, and wi' what sameness; and look how the mills is awlus a goin, and how they never works us no nigher to ony dis'ant object—ceptin awlus, Death. Look how you considers of us, an writes of us, an talks of us, and goes up wi' yor deputations to Secretaries o' State 'bout us, and how yo are awlus right, and how we are awlus wrong, and never had'n no reason in us sin ever we were born. Look how this ha grownen an grownen, sir, bigger an bigger, broader an broader, harder an harder, fro year to year, fro generation unto generation. Who can look on't, sir, and fairly tell a man 'tis not a muddle?’”

He is misunderstood, calumniated, accused of theft, and, on his way to answer the summons, falls into a pit, from which, after lingering six days at the bottom, he is, at last rescued, maimed, and dying:

‘A low murmur of pity went round the throng, and the women wept aloud, as this form, almost without form, was moved very slowly from its iron deliverance, and laid upon the bed of straw. At first, none but the surgeon went close to it. He did what he could in its adjustment on the couch, but the best that he could do was to cover it. That gently done, he called to him Rachel and Sissy. And at that time the pale, worn, patient face was seen looking up at the sky, with the broken right hand lying bare on the outside of the covering garments, as if waiting to be taken by another hand.’

Rachel, his only friend, is there; and she bends over him until her eyes are between him and the sky, for he cannot so much as turn them to look at her. He takes her hand, and faintly, without anger, merely as speaking the truth, says:

“I ha’ fell into th’ pit, my dear, as have cost wi’ in the knowledge o’ old fok now livin, hundreds and hundreds o’ men’s lives—fathers, sons, brothers, dear to thousands an thousands, an keepin ’em fro’ want and hunger. I ha’ fell into a pit that ha’ been wi’ th’ Fire-damp crueller than battle. I ha’ read on’t in the public petition, as onny one may read, fro’ the men that works in pits, in which they ha’ pray’n an pray’n the law-makers for Christ’s sake not to let their work be murder to ’em, but to spare ’em for th’ wives and children that they loves as well as gentlefok love theirs. When it were in work, it killed wi’out need; when ’tis let alone, it kills wi’out need.”

His accuser, the Hard Fact man is there; but Stephen, in whose bosom is no bitterness, merely asks him to ‘clear me an mak’ my name good wi’ aw men.’ His eyes are fixed upon a star which he has seen from his bed of stones, shining serenely and tenderly, soothing the anguish of body and mind:

“It ha’ shined upon me,” he said reverently, “in my pain and trouble down below. It ha’ shined into my mind. I ha’ look’n at’t an thowt o’ thee, Rachael, till the muddle in my mind have cleared awa, above a bit, I hope. If soom ha’ been wantin in unnerstan’in me better, I, too, ha’ been wantin in unnerstan’in them better. . . . In my pain an trouble, lookin up yonder,—wi’ it shinin on me—I ha’ seen more clear, and ha’ made it my dyin prayer that aw th’ world may on’y coom together more, an get a better unnerstan’in o’ one another, than when I were in’t my own weak seln. . . . Often as I coom to myseln, and found it shinin on me down there in my trouble, I thowt it were the star as guided to our Saviour’s home. I awmust think it be the very star!”

They lifted him up, and he was overjoyed to find that they were about to take him in the direction whither the star seemed to him to lead.

“Rachael, beloved lass! Don’t let go my hand. We may walk together t’night, my dear!”

“I will hold thy hand and keep beside thee, Stephen, all the way.”

“Bless thee! Will somebody be pleased to coover my face!”

They carried him very gently along the fields, and down the lanes, and over the wide landscape; Rachael always holding the hand in hers. Very few whispers broke the mournful silence. It was soon a funeral procession. The star had shown him where to find the God of the poor; and through humility, and sorrow, and forgiveness, he had gone to his Redeemer’s rest.’

**Style.**—On the whole, spontaneous, easy, free, idiomatic; now simple and vivid, partaking the genial flow of spirits, the full, abundant tide of life, which runs throughout the man; now impassioned and potent, springing from a lucid and energetic imagination in which objects are made visible and indelible; sometimes careless and languid, or level and redundant, where his feelings are not moved, but always rising to great purity and power before the concentrating force of passion.

**Method.**—In his walks, in his recreations, in his labor, he was governed by rules, from which he seldom departed. His hours for writing were regular, commencing about ten and ending about two. At his compositions, which are so easily read, he labored prodigiously, in conception and execution. Not a wearisome, but a happy process—the enjoyment of his own



fancies, nursed to their utmost growth. His precision and accuracy, the elaborate notes, comments, and plans, which form the basis of his works, refute the idle notion that men of genius dash off their efforts without forethought or preparation. It was one of his theories, that a main difference in men is in their power of attention.

**Rank.**—He is to be classed among the very first of the noble company to which he belongs. He does not probe so profoundly as Fielding, and—less a spectator of his personages—delineates with less exquisite art; but is superior to him in pathos and humanity, in sweetness and purity of feeling. Others have had greater power of generalization, few have had equal comprehensiveness of sympathy. Everything he touches, speaks; stones, flowers, clouds, seem happy or sad. The instinctive perception of individual character is his unique faculty. In evolving beautiful and heroic qualities from humble souls, he is excelled only by Wordsworth. His forte is not to enter into and represent the higher phases of existence, to form lofty or universal types, but to give cheerful, clear, and graphic pictures of persons and things as he sees them, especially among the vulgar and poor. If, having viewed them realistically, he somewhat exaggerates their natural features, so much the more striking and impressive do the realities become to the majority of readers who yawn much. Were his books destroyed, a score of figures would remain, our indestructible acquaintances. No writer has carried such an amount of observation, fun, and humor into the lowest scenes; none has so largely increased for the language its stores of harmless pleasure.

He is more luxuriant, perhaps more versatile, than Thackeray, but less compact and penetrating; of wider range as an artist, and more ideal, but less reflective, careful, and sure; more kindly, genial, and sentimental, less tart, pungent, and satirical. Both paint the manners of a day and a class, the one doing for middle and lower what the other does for upper London; the one having his mind more occupied with conditions, the other with foibles; the one more bent on defending the weak, the other on censuring man; yet both ministering to the same cause, either by contrast completing the other.

**Character.**—Not eminently profound, nor eminently erudite, far less indebted to books than to a diligent scrutiny of actual life. Perhaps his master faculty was an ardent and tenacious imagination, which immersed him in an idea, animated the vulgar and ridiculous, beset him with visions, displayed an object under a hundred forms. Hence his minute description, as here:

‘It was small tyranny for a respectable wind to go wreaking its vengeance on such poor creatures as the fallen leaves; but this wind happening to come up with a great heap of them just after venting its humor on the insulted Dragon, did so disperse and scatter them that they fled away, pell-mell, some here, some there, rolling over each other, whirling round and round upon their thin edges, taking frantic flights into the air, and playing all manner of extraordinary gambols in the extremity of their distress. Nor was this enough for its malicious fury: for, not content with driving them abroad, it charged small parties of them and hunted them into the wheelwright’s saw-pit, and below the planks and timbers in the yard, and, scattering the sawdust in the air, it looked for them underneath, and when it did meet with any, whew! how it drove them on and followed at their heels!

The scared leaves only flew the faster for all this, and a giddy chase it was: for they got into unfrequented places, where there was no outlet, and where their pursuer kept them eddying round and round at his pleasure; and they crept under the eaves of houses, and clung tightly to the sides of hay-ricks, like bats; and tore in at open chamber windows, and covered close to hedges; and, in short, went anywhere for safety.’

Hence, too, his dramatic gift of identifying himself with his creations. In them he could forget himself, enter into all their peculiarities, make their joys and sorrows his own. He says:

‘It would concern the reader little, perhaps, to know how sorrowfully the pen is laid down at the close of a two-years’ imaginative task; or how an Author feels as if he were dismissing some portion of himself into the shadowy world, when a crowd of the creatures of his brain are going from him forever. Yet, I had nothing else to tell; unless, indeed, I were to confess (which might be of less moment still) that no one can ever believe this narrative, in the reading, more than I believed it in the writing.’

His comic power is pervading. His tragic power appears in his skilful depiction of the soul stained with crime, in his delineation of remorse, avarice, fear, hatred, revenge.

His almost feminine sensibility had, in the main, a twofold issue—humor and pathos. His instinct was always for the pure and beautiful—unsullied simplicity and moral beauty. Witness the character of little Nell, framed from the finest and fairest elements of human nature. The picturesque in the lower or middle ranks won his eye, the suffering there won his heart, and he drew the good, rather than the bad, because he delighted to find diamonds in the hidden and far-away. ‘I have yet to learn,’ he says, ‘that a lesson of the purest good may not be drawn from the vilest evil.’ The good Samaritan was native to him.

In his presence was perpetual sunshine. To company he was

only the pleasantest of companions, never bookish, but unaffected and natural. His talk was simple and direct. Boyishness, so often remarked in men of genius, was exuberant in him; ever ready for leap-frog, or other frolic, upon the lawn.

He estimated men and women so thoroughly by moral and intellectual worth, that he was equally at home with all kinds of society, the highest and the lowliest. As a metaphysician, he would have been of the intuitional school. 'All kind things,' he wrote to his children, 'must be done on their own account, and for their own sake, and without the least reference to any gratitude.' He was, though not a saint, benevolently and essentially Christian. 'Do you ever pray?' asked a dying lady. 'Every morning and evening,' was the answer. In the year of his death, he wrote a reader of *Edwin Drood*:

'I have always striven in my writings to express veneration for the life and lessons of our Saviour; because I feel it; and because I re-wrote that history for my children — every one of whom knew it, from having it repeated to them, long before they could read, and almost as soon as they could speak. But I have never made proclamation of this from the house-tops.'

Doubtless there were grave defects. How many of them are implied in the infatuation which led to separation from an amiable wife and the mother of ten children, we do not undertake to say. This is his complaint:

'Poor Catherine and I are not made for each other, and there is no help for it. It is not only that she makes me uneasy and unhappy, but that I make her so too — and much more so. She is exactly what you know, in the way of being amiable and complying; but we are strangely ill-assorted for the bond there is between us. . . . I am often cut to the heart by thinking what a pity it is, for her own sake, that I ever fell in her way; and if I were sick or disabled to-morrow, I know how sorry she would be, and how deeply grieved myself, to think how we had lost each other. But exactly the same incompatibility would arise the moment I was well again; and nothing on earth could make her understand me, or suit us to each other.'

And this his confession:

'I claim no immunity from blame. There is plenty of fault on my side, I dare say, in the way of a thousand uncertainties, caprices, and difficulties of disposition; but only one thing will alter all that, and that is the end which alters everything.'

Much is to be forgiven to such as have done much for their kind; but how much higher and nobler were his place, had he been true and strong straight through, living the fair and sweet ideals which he conceived.

**Influence.**—He wrote for the multitudé, pleased them, and secured a popularity seldom permitted to man. Who else of the

great has been in his own day the inmate of so many homes? The greatest, indeed, have written for the few, and their merits have not been appreciated until after-ages; yet, however far the world may progress, it can never outgrow the best of Dickens. His characters are a part of literature, and his works will furnish to all future times an important commentary on the nineteenth century; while in mirth-moving jest, in his words of good cheer, in the benevolence, the charity, the holy lessons, which he inculcates, he will be an ever-welling spring, from which the generations will drink. Thirty years ago, Daniel Webster said that Dickens had done more to ameliorate the condition of the English poor than all the statesmen Great Britain had sent into Parliament. It is impossible to calculate the harm he might have done; but his weight is always thrown into the scale of goodness. It was his mission to make people happy, and he did what he could 'to lighten,' as he says, 'the lot of those rejected ones whom the world has too long forgotten and too often misused.' He has also made them better; for this is the substance of his novels—their sentiment and their exhortation: *'Be good, and love; there is genuine joy only in the emotions of the heart; sensibility is the whole man. Leave science to the wise, pride to the nobles, luxury to the rich; have compassion on humble wretchedness; the smallest and most despised being may in himself be worth as much as thousands of the powerful and the proud. Take care not to bruise the delicate souls which flourish in all conditions, under all costumes, in all ages. Believe that humanity, pity, forgiveness, are the finest things in man; believe that intimacy, expansion, tenderness, tears, are the finest things in the world. To live is nothing; to be powerful, learned, illustrious, is little; to be useful is not enough. He alone has lived and is a man who has wept at the remembrance of a benefit, given or received.'*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Taine.

## CARLYLE.

No literary man in the nineteenth century is likely to stand out more distinct, both for flaws and genius, to the centuries which will follow.—*R. H. Hutton.*

**Biography.**—Born in Dumfriesshire in 1795; his father first a stone-mason, then a farmer, a ‘pithy bitter-speaking body’; his mother a careful and industrious woman, a great reader, deeply religious, sweet-tempered; the one teaching by his battle reminiscences, the other by her reverent look and habitude; sent to the parish school while yet little more than an infant, and declared fit for the learned professions; transferred to an academy at eight, where in three months he was able to translate Virgil and Horace with an ease that astonished his tutor; entered the University of Edinburgh at fourteen, where he learned to ‘read fluently in almost all cultivated languages, on almost all subjects and sciences,’ while from the chaos of the library he also ‘succeeded in fishing up more books, perhaps, than had been known to the very keepers thereof’; was designed by his parents for the Church, and studied Divinity, suffering unspeakable agonies of doubt, added to which were ‘earthly distresses—want of practical guidance, want of sympathy, want of money, want of hope’; concluded at last that his vocation did not lie in the direction of the pulpit:

‘The voice came to me, saying, “Arise and settle the problem of thy life.” I had been destined by my father and my father’s minister to be myself a minister. But now that I had gained man’s estate, I was not sure that I believed the doctrines of my father’s kirk; and it was needful I should now settle it. And so I entered into my chamber and closed the door, and around me there came a trooping throng of phantasms dire from the abysmal depths of nethermost perdition. Doubt, Fear, Unbelief, Mockery, and Scorn were there; and I arose and wrestled with them in travail and agony of spirit.’

A new plan of life had to be formed, and he turned to the scholastic profession, but abandoned it shortly, to devote himself to literature. In 1826 he married an attractive and amiable lady of vigorous intellect and varied culture, to whom, when his course should be nearly run, he was to ascribe all of worth he had ever achieved. Her dowry, though not large, delivered him from compulsory drudgery; and they made their home in solitude, among the granite hills, where he could dream and meditate. In a letter addressed to Goethe, he says:

‘In this wilderness of heath and rock, our estate stands forth a green oasis, a tract



of ploughed, partly enclosed and planted, ground, where corn ripens and trees afford a shade, although surrounded by sea-mews and rough-woolled sheep. Here, with no small effort, have we built and furnished a neat, substantial dwelling; here, in the absence of a professional or other office, we live to cultivate literature according to our strength, and in our own peculiar way. We wish a joyful growth to the roses and flowers of our garden; we hope for health and peaceful thoughts to further our aims. The roses, indeed, are still in part to be planted, but they blossom already in anticipation. Two ponies which carry us everywhere, and the mountain air, are the best medicines for weak nerves. This daily exercise, to which I am much devoted, is my only recreation; for this nook of ours is the loneliest in Britain, six miles removed from any one likely to visit me. Here Rousseau would have been as happy as on his island of St. Pierre. . . . I came hither solely with the design to simplify my way of life, and to secure the independence through which I could be enabled to remain true to myself. This bit of earth is our own: here we can live, write, and think as best pleases ourselves.'

The mountain fastness, with its stern yet tender beauties, was congenial to the recluse; and here, from time to time, he was visited by friends and strangers desirous of seeing the new genius who had so profoundly touched their spirits. To have the best libraries within easy reach, he moved to a suburb of London, 1834, where till the day of his death he continued to reside, thence known to the English-speaking world as 'the sage of Chelsea.' He died from a general failure of vital power, February 5, 1881, regretted and mourned by an entire nation.

**Writings.**—Open at random any of Carlyle's works, and you shall perceive yourself at once in the presence of a new and extraordinary species of mind. His earliest—*Sartor Resartus*—begins in the manner of an innovator or anomaly:

'Considering our present advanced state of culture, and how the Torch of Science has now been brandished and borne about, with more or less effect, for five thousand years and upwards; how, in these times especially, not only the Torch still burns, and perhaps more fiercely than ever, but innumerable Rush-lights and Sulphur-matches, kindled thereat, are also glancing in every direction, so that not the smallest cranny or doghole in Nature or Art can remain unilluminated,—it might strike the reflective mind with some surprise that hitherto little or nothing of a fundamental character, whether in the way of Philosophy or History, has been written on the subject of Clothes.'

We soon discover that this unique book, which professes to be a review of a German treatise on dress, is a veiled metaphysics, according to which all things visible, especially we ourselves, are a vesture of sensuous appearance:

'For Matter, were it never so despicable, is Spirit, the manifestation of Spirit: were it never so honourable can it be more? The thing Visible, nay the thing Imagined, the thing in any way conceived as Visible, what is it but a Garment, a Clothing of the higher celestial Invisible, unimaginable, formless, dark with excess of bright?'

**Man** is a symbol, capable of two interpretations:

'To the eye of vulgar Logic, what is man? An omnivorous Biped that wears Breeches. To the eye of Pure Reason, what is he? A soul, a Spirit, and divine Appari-

tion. Round his mysterious Me, there lies, under all those wool-rags, a Garment of Flesh (or of Senses), contextured in the Loom of Heaven; whereby he is revealed to his like, and dwells with them in Union and Division; and sees and fashions for himself a Universe, with azure Starry Spaces, and long Thousands of Years. Deep-hidden is he under that strange Garment, amid Sounds and Colours and Forms, as it were, swathed in and inextricably overshadowed: yet it is skywoven, and worthy of a God.'

Every object has a double significance:

'The Universe is but one vast Symbol of God; nay, if thou wilt have it, what is man himself but a Symbol of God: is not all that he does symbolical; a revelation to Sense of the mystic God-given Force that is in him. . . . Not a Hut he builds but is the visible embodiment of a thought; but bears visible record of invisible things; but is, in the transcendental sense, symbolical as well as real.'

Abysmal Space and Time are but forms of thought, world-enveloping illusions:

'These, as spun and woven for us from before Birth itself, to clothe our celestial Me for dwelling here, and yet to blind it,—lie all-embracing, as the universal canvas, or warp and woof, whereby all minor illusions, in this Phantasm Existence, weave and paint themselves. In vain, while here on earth, shall you endeavor to strip them off; you can, at best, but rend them asunder for moments and look through.'

The great weaver of these vain raiments which conceal or obstruct the spiritual nature, is custom:

'Philosophy complains that Custom has hoodwinked us, from the first; that we do everything by Custom, even Believe by it; that our very Axioms, let us boast of Free-thinking as we may, are oftenest simply such Beliefs as we have never heard questioned. Nay, what is Philosophy throughout but a continual battle against Custom; an ever-renewed effort to *transcend* the sphere of blind Custom, and so become Transcendental?'

Of all the garnitures of human existence, the most important is religion; but pierce through the garment to the inner, moral sense of it, and you will see, in any age, the need of reformation:

'In our era of the World, those same Church-Clothes have gone sorrowfully out at elbows: nay, far worse, many of them have become mere hollow Shapes, or Masks, under which no living Figure or Spirit any longer dwells; but only spiders and unclean beetles, in horrid accumulation, drive their trade; and the Mask still glares on you with its glass eyes, in ghastly affectation of Life,—some generation and half after Religion has quite withdrawn from it, and in unnoticed nooks is weaving for herself new Vestures, wherewith to reappear, and bless us.'

But far down in the centre, under every apparition, is the fair and indestructible reality, whereof nature is the changing and living robe:

'Oh, could I . . . transport thee direct from the Beginnings to the Endings, how were thy eyesight unsealed, and thy heart set flaming in the Light-sea of celestial wonder! Then sawest thou that this fair Universe, were it in the meanest province thereof, is in very deed the star-domed City of God; that through every star, through every grass-blade, and most through every Living Soul, the glory of a present God still beams. But Nature, which is the Time-vesture of God, and reveals Him to the wise, hides Him from the foolish.'

Rites, ceremonies, liturgies, creeds, Pagan and Christian, are

embodiments of the same essential Idea — births of the troubled heart before the august and infinite Mystery:

‘Knowest thou that “*Worship of Sorrow?*” The Temple thereof, founded some eighteen centuries ago, now lies in ruins, overgrown with jungle, the habitation of doleful creatures: nevertheless, venture forward; in a low crypt, arched out of falling fragments, thou findest the Altar there, and its sacred Lamp perennially burning.’

Inspiration is unceasing, prophets there are in our own day, and without some inspired Orpheus was no city built nor work done that man glories in:

‘Our highest Orpheus walked in Judea, eighteen hundred years ago; his sphere-melody, flowing in wild native tones, took captive the ravished souls of men; and, being of a truth sphere-melody, still flows and sounds, though now with thousandfold Accompaniments, and rich symphonies, through all our hearts, and modulates, and divinely leads them.’

Our lives are portions of this Divine Essence, and we have our root in eternity:

‘And seest thou therein any glimpse of Immortality? — O Heaven! is the white Tomb of our Loved One, who died from our arms, and had to be left behind us there, which rises in the distance, like a pale, mournfully receding Milestone, to tell how many toilsome uncheered miles we have journeyed on alone, — but a pale spectral Illusion! . . . Know of a truth that only the Time-shadows have perished, or are perishable; that the real Being of whatever was, and whatever is, and whatever will be, *is* even now and forever.’

We have called this book a metaphysics, a psychology: it is also an autobiography, ‘written in star fire and immortal tears’; a picture of the soul bravely battling with haggard Doubt and Fear in a Pilgrim’s Progress to the Celestial City of light and truth. Quitting the faith of his fathers, he wanders wearisomely through the death-shadows, looking ‘vaguely all around into a dim copper firmament, pregnant with earthquake and tornado,’ shouting question after question ‘into the Sibyl-cave of Destiny,’ and receiving no answer but an echo:

‘It is all a grim Desert, this once fair world of his; wherein is heard only the howling of wild beasts, or the shrieks of despairing, hate-filled men; and no Pillar of Cloud by day, and no Pillar of Fire by night, any longer guides the Pilgrim. To such length has the spirit of inquiry carried him.’

This is the gulf of ‘the everlasting *No.*’ What next? The sum-total of the worst is death. Therefore defy Destiny, and in your defiance you shall have at least a fixed point of revolution — ‘the centre of Indifference’:

‘Thousands of human generations, all as noisy as our own, have been swallowed up of Time, and there remains no wreck of them any more; and Arcturus, and Orion and Sirius and the Pleiades are still shining in their courses, clear and young, as when the Shepherd first noted them as in the plain of Shinar. Pshaw! what is this paltry little

Dog-cage of an Earth; what art thou that sittest whining there? Thou art still Nothing, Nobody: true; but who then is Something, Somebody? For thee the Family of Man has no use; it rejects thee; thou art wholly as a dis severed limb: so be it, perhaps it is better so!

Beyond 'the enchanted forests, demon-peopled, doleful of sight and of sound,' are the sunlit slopes of the Mountain whose summit is in Heaven. Here the way-weary may find rest sweeter than dayspring to the shipwrecked:

'Like the mother's voice to her little child that strays bewildered, weeping, in unknown tumults, . . . came that Evangel. The Universe is not dead and demoniacal, a charnel-house with spectres: but Godlike, and my Father's!

With other eyes, too, could I now look upon my fellow-man; with an infinite Love, an infinite Pity. . . . Truly, the din of many-voiced Life, which in this solitude, with the mind's organ, I could hear, was no longer a maddening discord, but a melting one: like inarticulate cries, and sobbings of a dumb creature, which in the ear of Heaven are prayers. . . . Man, with his so mad Wants and so mean Endeavours, had become the dearer to me; and even for his sufferings and his sins, I now first named him brother.'

Temptations in the Wilderness! Have we not all to be tried with such? Is not our life a warfare? And to what end?—

'Man's Unhappiness, as I construe, comes of his Greatness; it is because there is an Infinite in him, which with all his cunning he cannot quite bury under the Finite. . . . There is in man a Higher than Love of Happiness: he can do without Happiness, and instead thereof find Blessedness! Was it not to preach forth this same Higher that sages and martyrs, the Poet and the Priest, in all times, have spoken and suffered; bearing testimony, through life and through death, of the Godlike that is in Man, and how in the Godlike only has he Strength and Freedom. . . . On the roaring billows of Time, thou art not engulfed, but borne aloft into the azure of Eternity. Love not Pleasure; love God.'

This is 'the everlasting *Yea*,' wherein all contradiction is solved, and—

'The mad primeval Discord is hushed; the rudely-jumbled conflicting elements bind themselves into separate firmaments: deep silent rock-foundations are built beneath; and the skyey vault with its everlasting Luminaries above: instead of a dark wasteful Chaos, we have a blooming, fertile, Heaven-encompassed World.'

Through all this gloom, vision, and ecstasy there runs the sentiment of German Idealism,—that existence is divine and mysterious; that beyond the reach of experience is a spiritual force, manifested through time and space, the principle and substance of concretes, the source of things, the only reality, the grand Unfathomable. It animates you, it subsists in me; it moves in the millions, but, above all, in the great mountain-peaks of the historic landscape—in a Mahomet, a Dante, a Shakespeare, a Luther, a Cromwell, a Napoleon. Such is the fundamental conception of *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, a course of six lectures understood to have been delivered, without previous composition,

to the 'distinguished and accomplished, the beautiful and the wise,' of London. The great man is a natural luminary of Heaven:

'Ever, to the true instincts of men, there is something godlike in him. Whether they shall take him to be a god, to be a prophet, or what they shall take him to be? that is ever a grand question; by their way of answering that, we shall see, as through a little window, into the very heart of these men's spiritual condition. For at bottom the Great Man, as he comes from the hand of Nature, is ever the same kind of thing: Odin, Luther, Johnson, Burns; I hope to make it appear that these are all originally of one stuff; that only by the world's reception of them, and the shapes they assume, are they so immeasurably diverse.'

Genius is of the skies, with its voice from the unknown Deep. In it we may see ourselves in higher forms. The greatest is the nameless One—the ultimate perfection or fountain of the Me. Hence the uses of great men and of hero-worship. We increase our stature by doing reverence to what is really above us:

'No nobler feeling than this of admiration for one higher than himself dwells in the breast of man. It is to this hour, and at all hours, the vivifying influence in man's life. Religions I find stand upon it; not Paganism only, but far higher and truer religions,—all religion hitherto known.'

Say not that the hero is a mere creature of the times, which are only as dead fuel waiting for the heroic lightning, direct of God, that shall kindle it:

'The Time call forth? Alas, we have known Times *call* loudly enough for their great man; but not find him when they called! He was not there; Providence had not sent him; the Time, *calling* its loudest, had to go down to confusion and wreck because he would not come when called. For if we will think of it, no Time need have gone to ruin, could it have *found* a man great enough: wisdom to discern truly what the Time wanted, valour to lead it on the right road thither; these are the salvation of any Time.'

Thus the history of what man has accomplished, is at bottom the history of the few great men who have wrought:

'They were the leaders of men, these great ones; the modellers, patterns, and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or to attain; all things that we see standing accomplished in the world are properly the outer material result, the practical realisation and embodiment, of Thoughts that dwelt in the Great Men sent into the world: the soul of the whole world's history, it may justly be considered, were the history of these.'

Hence the history of Puritanism, the spiritual and political conflict of the seventeenth century, may be comprised in *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*. The greatest of the Puritans is the abstract of all the rest—their original characteristics and noblest features—their terrible energy and flaming conscience. Here he is, face to face:

'Does the reader see him? A rather likely figure, I think. Stands some five feet ten or more: a man of strong, solid stature, and dignified, now partly military carriage:



the expression of him valour and devout intelligence — energy and delicacy on a basis of simplicity. Fifty-four years old, gone April last; brown hair and moustache are getting gray. A figure of sufficient impressiveness — not lovely to the man-milliner species, not pretending to be so. Massive stature; big, massive head, of somewhat leonine aspect; wart above the right eyebrow; nose of considerable blunt-aquiline proportions; strict yet copious lips, full of all tremulous sensibilities, and also, if need were, of all fierceness and rigours; deep, loving eyes — call them grave, call them stern — looking from under those craggy brows as if in life-long sorrow, and yet not thinking it sorrow, thinking it only labour and endeavour: on the whole, a right noble lion-face and hero-face; and to me royal enough.'

With like devotion to the epic sentiment, in the same luminous style, with all the force of his heart and sympathy, he writes the *French Revolution*, a most original book, fresh from the soul, original in its complete sincerity, in its disregard of conventionalism. In fact, a new fashion. Men and events pass before us, not as shadows and abstractions, but as beings of flesh and blood. Never was the general spirit of an age expressed with such intensity and splendor. Was ever the state of an agitated nation made thus present and palpable?—

'How the whole people shakes itself as if it had one life; and, in thousand-voiced rumor, announces that it is awake, suddenly out of long death-sleep, and will thenceforth sleep no more! The long looked-for has come at last; wondrous news, of victory, deliverance, enfranchisement, sounds magical through every heart. To the proud strong man it has come; whose strong hands shall no more be gyved; to whom boundless unconquered continents lie disclosed. The weary day-drudge has heard of it; the beggar with his crust moistened in tears. What! To us also has hope reached; down even to us? Hunger and hardship are not to be eternal? The bread we extorted from the rugged glebe, and, with the toil of our sinews, reaped and ground, and kneaded into loaves, was not wholly for another, then; but we also shall eat of it, and be filled? Glorious news (answer the prudent elders), but all too unlikely!—Thus, at any rate, may the lower people, who pay no money taxes and have no right to vote, assiduously crowd round those that do; and most halls of assembly, within doors and without, seem animated enough.'

Almost anywhere you will find examples of this unique power—this mode of comprehending life, and this gift of resuscitating the past. Take his description of Marie Antoinette from the 'Diamond Necklace' of his *Miscellanies*:

'Oh, is there a man's heart that thinks, without pity, of those long months and years of slow-wasting ignominy; — of thy Birth, soft-cradled in Imperial Schönbrunn, the winds of heaven not to visit thy face too roughly, thy foot to light on softness, thy eye on splendour; and then of thy Death, or hundred Deaths, to which the Guillotine and Fouquier Tinville's judgment-bar was but the merciful end? Look *there*, O man born of woman! The bloom of that fair face is wasted, the hair is gray with care; the brightness of those eyes is quenched, their lids hang drooping, the face is stony pale, as of one living in death. Mean weeds (which her own hand has mended) attire the Queen of the World. The death-bundle, where thou sittest, pale motionless, which only curses environ, has to stop: a people, drunk with vengeance, will drink it again in full draught looking at thee there: far as the eye reaches, a multitudinous sea of maniac heads; the air deaf with their triumph-yell! The Living-dead must shudder with yet one other pang:

her startled blood yet again suffuses with the hue of agony that pale face, which she hides with her hands. There is, then, *no* heart to say, God pity thee? O think not of these; think of Him whom thou worshippes, the Crucified,—who, also, treading the wine-press *alone*, fronted sorrow still deeper; and triumphed over it, and made it Holy; and built of it a "Sanctuary of Sorrow," for thee and all the wretched! Thy path of thorns is nigh ended. One long last look at the Tuileries, where thy step was once so light,—where thy children shall not dwell. The head is on the block; the axe rushes—Dumb lies the World: that wild-yelling World, and all its madness, is behind thee.'

**Style.**—New and strange, but like the man himself,—rugged, forceful, disjointed, gnarled, lurid, Titanic, marvellously vivid. Glib words, smooth periods, simple expression, do not suffice for the sparkling or gloomy images that besiege and haunt his brain. Fancy the chapters of a historical work with such captions as 'Realized ideals,' 'Petition in Hieroglyphs,' 'Windbags.' German speculations are 'transcendental moonshine.' The analytic thinkers of the eighteenth century are 'logic-choppers.' Servile imitators are 'apes of the Dead Sea.' The cocks and hens in his neighbor's yard are 'demon fowls.' The mess served up by an objectionable cook can only be described as 'Stygian,' with 'Tartarean' for a variant. Democracy is 'the gradual uprise and rule of all things of roaring, million-headed, unreflecting, darkly-suffering, darkly-sinning Demos.'

Between his early reviews in the *Edinburgh* and his later productions there is an obvious difference, which some critics have attempted to explain by the corrections of Jeffrey. Says Charles Sumner: 'I observed to Lord Jeffrey that I thought Carlyle had changed his style very much since he wrote the article on Burns. "Not at all," said he; "I will tell you why that is different from the other articles—*I altered it.*"' The alterations, however, could scarcely have been so radical and constant. Let us rather suppose that, if he then used English more nearly as others, it was his natural voice. The like simplicity is apparent in his remarks on the death of Goethe:

'So, then, our greatest has departed. That melody of life, with its cunning tones, which took captive ear and heart, has gone silent; the heavenly force that dwelt here victorious over so much is here no longer; thus far, not farther, by speech and by act, shall the wise man utter himself forth. The end! What solemn meaning lies in that sound, as it peals mournfully through the soul, when a living friend has passed away! All now is closed, irrevocable; the changeful life-picture, growing daily into new coherence, under new touches and hues, has suddenly become completed and unchangeable; there, as it lay, it is dipped, from this moment, in the æther of the Heavens, and shines transfigured, to endure even so—forever Time and Time's Empire; stern, wide devouring, yet not without their grandeur! The week-day man, who was one of us, has put on the garment of Eternity, and become radiant and triumphant; the present is all at once the

past; Hope is suddenly cut away, and only the backward vistas of Memory remain, shone on by a light that proceeds not from this earthly sun.'

Gradually, as convictions deepen, and doubts multiply, and shadows thicken, and the ferment increases, the style becomes more crowded, contrasted, contorted, phosphorescent. Form is little, the basis alone is important. The essential thing is to grasp the central truth, to strike at the inmost, to exhibit strongly a few focal points of light which may be clearly discerned against the illimitable darkness. When thought is a tempest, when the intellect foams and gasps, simplicity must go to the wall. The conventional costume of ordinary mortals was not made for this man, altogether too limpid and feeble for 'the great fiery heart of him.' Doubtless there may be something of preconceived intention, but the affectation, if any such, is thrice redeemed by rare advantages—wonderful suggestiveness and photographic power.

**Rank.**—One after another, critics have repeated that Carlyle's manner is atrocious, that he is not great as a thinker, but only as a word-painter, that he is merely destructive, with no definite plan of rectification or improvement. Strange and anomalous as his style may appear, it is, as we have said, indubitably natural, and incomparably vigorous, having the inspiration of the Sybil and the strength of the oak. If he is not an analyst, like Spencer or Mill, he is something higher,—a seer, a revealer, like Bacon or Shakespeare; intuitive rather than scientific, not decomposing notions into regular series, and verifying the steps, but perceiving them in their entirety and reproducing them by divination. If he is critical and negative, consider that the ideal compels it, that the tallest-minded must be so in proportion to their gift of insight. Consider of how great service this function has been to mankind. Consider, moreover, that the office of diffusing through the social atmosphere great generalities of truth and justice is in itself a loftier one than that of initiating specific social remedies.

The most recognized and the most original of the interpreters who have introduced German ideas into England. Doubtless from temperament, he views life and the world through an imperfect and distorting medium, and is not equally at home in all directions; but he has seen, with unexampled intensity, the central spots in the surrounding gloom, and has made others see

them with unexampled vividness. No one has spoken deeper words about human life, or seen more penetratingly into the mysterious grandeur of 'the mighty All,' into the divine idea which underlies the phenomenal. He is beyond all rivalry, since Shakespeare, in minute characterization. What distinguishes the one as a dramatist, distinguishes the other as a historian,—that the 'forms of things unknown,' or known by their names only, are bodied forth, not as algebraical symbols which present no image to the fancy, but as realities of soul-inviting warmth and completeness.

Prophecy fails. Carlyle does not sustain himself. He is less readable in wholes than in parts. Plenitude and depth of insight, fervor and exaltation of feeling, make his least successful volumes teem with passages noteworthy, beautiful, and wise. Here are some diamonds in the rough:

'*Genius* is an immense capacity for taking trouble.'

'The fearful unbelief is unbelief in yourself.'

'Always there is a black spot in our sunshine; it is the shadow of ourselves.'

'Pin thy faith to no man's sleeve; hast thou not two eyes of thy own?'

'Do the duty which liest nearest thee! Thy second duty will already have become clearer.'

'One Life; a little gem of Time between two Eternities; no second chance to us forevermore!'

'We will not estimate the Sun by the quantity of gas-light it saves us; Dante shall be invaluable, or of no value.'

'Wouldst thou plant for Eternity, then plant into the deep infinite faculties of man, his Fantasy and Heart.'

'History is a mighty drama, enacted upon the theatre of time, with suns for lamps, and eternity for a background.'

'No magic *Rune* is stranger than a Book. All that mankind has done, thought, gained, or been,—it is lying in magic preservation in the pages of Books.'

'All true work is sacred; in all true work, were it but true hand-labor, there is something of divineness. Labor, wide as the earth, has its summit in heaven.'

'To sit as a passive bucket, and be pumped into, can, in the long run, be exhilarating to no creature, how eloquent soever the flood of utterance that is descending.'

'In books lies the *Soul* of the whole past time; the audible voice of the Past, when the body and material substance of it has altogether vanished like a dream.'

'Ghosts! There are nigh a thousand million walking the earth openly at noon-tide; some half-hundred have vanished from it, some half-hundred have arisen in it, ere thy watch ticks once.'

With all his limitations, after all deductions, Carlyle remains one of the few most profound, most dramatic, most imaginative,

most original writers of modern times,—one of the fixed stars whose glory is not dimmed by the greatness of the rest.

**Character.**—‘I have never met with a question yet,’ says Ruskin, ‘which did not need, for the right solution of it, at least one positive and one negative answer, like an equation of the second degree. Mostly, matters of any consequence are three-sided, or four-sided, or polygonal; and the trotting round a polygon is severe work for people any way stiff in their opinions. For myself I am never satisfied that I have handled a subject properly till I have contradicted myself at least three times.’ Carlyle, who has the simplicity and complexity of nature, may appear to be full of contradictions, but these we believe to be mainly of the superficial sort; and it shall be our endeavor, without pursuing all his apparent aberrations and intersections, to indicate the secret of his unity, the fundamental and prevailing truth of him, and the man in his prime rather than in his decay.

From the first he had the stamp of sadness on his countenance. Little is known of him as a student. By the scant testimony of his few personal acquaintances, he was lonely and contemplative in his habits. While a child, he was thoughtful and studious, preferring the society of his grandfather to that of the village children. He was ‘noted as a still infant that kept his mind much to himself; above all, that seldom or never cried.’ On the orchard wall, at eve, he loved to take his porringer of bread and milk. ‘There many a sunset have I, looking at the distant western mountains, consumed, not without relish, my evening meal. Those hues of gold and azure that hush the world’s expectation as day dies, were still a Hebrew speech for me; nevertheless, I was looking at the fair illuminated letters, and had an eye for their gilding.’ He tells us that he could not remember ever to have learned to read—‘so perhaps had it by nature.’ His memory was extraordinary. At the age of five, it is said, he could give an outline of any sermon he heard. While yet a boy, he astonished the audience, including his father, by a burst of oratory on the occasion of some local discussion.

A profound sense of the Eternal brooded ceaselessly over him. His eyes were fixed habitually on the vague shoreless Universe, the gloomy abyss which closes upon troubled and shuddering mortality. ‘Remember now and always that life is no idle



dream but a solemn reality, based upon Eternity and encompassed by Eternity.' A little while ago you were not; a little while you are not, sunk beyond plummet's sounding into the Bottomless. The ages waited for your birth, the ages wait to see what you will do when born.

Spirit is the substance, all else is dust and shadow. The earth is but a film; the warrior and his war-horse are a vision, nothing more—a symbol of the Everlasting, whose highest revelation is keen insight, exclusive devotion to some worthy end, indomitable will, valor in defiance of the darkness, as in the struggling, sombre, sorrow-stricken Johnson, the rugged, silent, inarticulate Cromwell. If you will but consider this, and the inadequacy of human struggle against the world-embracing element of mournful *black*, you may understand how it was natural to this grim Norseman to venerate the intelligence that could see into the heart of things, and the energy that could get the mastery over things. Not mere force of martyrdom, but marrowy vigor of soul, moral and intellectual inclusive. 'Without hands a man might have feet and still walk; but, consider it, without morality intellect were impossible for him, he could not know anything at all.' Impatience with indecision in the midst of chaos, enthusiasm over stoical endurance or heroic success, despondency under manifold doubts, the much that was hoped, the little performed, may seem at times to make him a mere power-worshipper; but we are bound to read all in the light of his calmer utterances, and essential nature. 'That Goethe was a great teacher of men means already that he was a good man.' Again: 'Voltaire was not the wisest of men, because he was not the best. Because the thinking and the moral nature are but different phases of the same indissoluble unity—a living mind.' There could be no falser proposition, he would say, than that might is right. '*Bad* is by its nature negative, and can do *nothing*; whatsoever enables us to *do* anything is by its very nature *good*.' The only might is moral. An Austerlitz is not Heaven's stamp of approval. 'If the thing is unjust, thou hast not succeeded.' Below all resemblances or single phrases are the guiding convictions of Carlyle's thought:

'In this God's-world, with its wild-whirling eddies and mad foam-oceans where men and nations perish as if without law, and judgment for an unjust is sternly delayed, dost thou think that there is therefore no justice? It is what the fool hath said in his heart.

It is what the wise, in all times, were wise because they denied, and knew forever not to be.'

In one of his cynical or despairing moods, he may be driven into the preaching of Fate, but do not imagine that he is only a fatalist:

'I would wish all men to know and lay to heart, that he who discerns nothing but mechanism in the universe has in the fatalest way missed the secret of the universe altogether. That all Godhood should vanish out of man's conception of the universe seems to me precisely the most brutal error,—I will not disparage heathenism by calling it a heathen error,—that men could fall into. It is not true; it is false at the very heart of it. A man who thinks so will think *wrong* about all things in the world; this original sin will vitiate all other conclusions he can form.'

Necessity and free-will are in a sense reconcilable and true. It is the immediate consciousness of freedom that saves Carlyle from a pessimistic philosophy:

'Evil, what we call evil, must ever exist while man exists: evil, in the widest sense we can give it, is precisely the dark disordered material out of which man's farewell has to create an edifice of order and good. Ever must pain urge us to labor; and only in free effort can any blessedness be imagined for us.'

Renounce pleasure, adore pain, comprehend holiness, exalt virtue, which is the divine part. A profound sentiment is a finer thing than a beautiful form. A serious soul, wholly intent upon its goal, yet feeling the Cimmerian night of our present being, is the one attractive object. Have little regard, he would say, for the artists,—sculptors, painters, poets, novelists. To a writer of Scotch stories, who called upon him, he said, 'When are you going to begin some honest, genuine work?' and to a popular wit, 'When, sir, do you bring out the Comic Bible?' Of verse, he was intolerant. When Mrs. Browning sent him one of her earliest books, he advised her 'to say rather than to sing.' On being asked by a lady if he had read her poems, he replied, 'Nae, I've not, and I dare say they're sad trash. If you have anything to say to the world, put it down in prose, and the less of it the better.'

When to this haunting sense of the infinities we add the galling burden of ill-health, 'the cursed hag of dyspepsia,' his inheritance of an austere creed, his untoward circumstances, and the early neglect of him, and the attentions afterwards lavished upon him, we may understand and pardon his violence, his idolatry of the past, his depreciation of the present, his objec-

tionable manners,<sup>1</sup> his superior air,<sup>2</sup> his treatment of contemporaries,<sup>3</sup>—scorn of some, condescension to others, meagre praise of the best. The same considerations account for sulky or sour ebullitions like these: ‘In fifty years, I should guess, it will be a credit to declare, “I never tried literature.”’ ‘There are south of the Tweed some thirty millions of Englishmen, chiefly fools’; and, ‘our American cousins have begotten, with a rapidity beyond example, eighteen millions of the greatest bores ever seen in the world before.’ To one who had made a ship and named it after him in honor of the good he had done in the world: ‘I don’t believe it, maun! I never did any gude in the warld!’ It is when he enters politics that he is most irritating. There, like Swift, he takes a fierce delight in laceration. Here is a picture of the modern age,—plunged in materialism, he conceives; Pigdom, he calls it:

‘1. The Universe, so far as sane conjecture can go, is an immeasurable Swine’s-trough, consisting of solid and liquid, and of other contrasts and kinds;—especially consisting of attainable and unattainable, the latter in immensely greater quantities for most pigs.

2. Moral evil is unattainability of Pig’s-wash; moral good, attainability of ditto.

3. “What is Paradise, or the state of Innocence?” Paradise, called also State of Innocence, Age of Gold, and other names, *was* (according to Pigs of weak judgment) unlimited attainability of Pig’s-wash; perfect fulfilment of one’s wishes, so that the Pig’s imagination could not outrun reality; a fable and an impossibility, as Pigs of sense now see.

4. “Define the Whole Duty of Pigs.” It is the mission of universal Pighood, and the duty of all Pigs, at all times, to diminish the quantity of unattainable and increase that of attainable. All knowledge and device and effort ought to be directed thither and thither only: Pig science, Pig enthusiasm and Devotion have this one aim. It is the Whole Duty of Pigs.

5. Pig poetry ought to consist of universal recognition of the excellence of Pig’s-wash and ground barley, and the felicity of Pigs whose trough is in order, and who have had enough: Hrumph!

6. The Pig knows the weather; he ought to look out what kind of weather it will be.

7. “Who made the Pig?” Unknown;—perhaps the Pork-butcher.

8. “Have you Law and Justice in Pigdom?” Pigs of observation have discerned that there is, or was once supposed to be, a thing called justice. Undeniably at least there is a sentiment in Pig-nature called indignation, revenge, etc., which, if one Pig provoke another, comes out in a more or less destructive manner: hence laws are necessary, amazing quantities of laws. For quarrelling is attended with loss of blood, of life, at any rate with frightful effusion of the general stock of Hog’s-wash, and ruin (temporary ruin) to large sections of the universal Swine’s-trough; wherefore let justice be observed, that so quarrelling be avoided.

9. “What is justice?” Your own share of the general Swine’s-trough, not any portion of my share.

<sup>1</sup> To a lady whose poems he declined to read: ‘I can’t read your poems, but you’ve a beautiful nose. I like to look at your nose.’

<sup>2</sup> To a self-confident editor who had just delivered an opinion at a dinner-party: ‘Eh, but you’re a pair cratur, a pair wratched meeserable cratur!’ Then with a sigh, he relapsed into silence.

<sup>3</sup> See *Reminiscences*.

10. "But what is 'my' share?" Ah! there, in fact, lies the grand difficulty; upon which Pig science, meditating this long while, can settle absolutely nothing. My share—hrumph! my share is, on the whole, whatever I can contrive to get without being hanged or sent to the hulks.'<sup>1</sup>

Primarily, this is only excess of indignation at the hollow, the insipid, the corrupt, the carnal, the love of comfort, and the lust of gain. It is the furious tension of the moral Scandinavian, the lava discharged by the Vesuvian fire within.

He satirized Coleridge for his endless harangues, yet was himself an orator in conversation. 'You are a perfect prisoner,' wrote Margaret Fuller, 'when he has once got hold of you.' Personally, one of the kindest of men, helpful and tender. His friendships, his domestic affections, the passionate attachment to his wife, the loving reverence of her memory, impart the chief interest to the *Reminiscences*. He might turn against an opinion, but not against a friend. He was at home with the humblest, in whom he saw courage, sincerity, or resolute faith. No man has given more explicit recognition to the infinitude of each wayfaring soul:

'Of those multitudes there is no one but has an immortal soul within him, a reflex and living image of God's whole universe; strangely, from its dim environment, the light of the Highest looks through him; for which reason, indeed, it is that we claim a brotherhood with him, and so love to know his history, and come into clearer and clearer union with all that he feels, and says, and does.'<sup>2</sup>

Altogether, a colossal spirit, fearless, pure, and true; proud, sensitive, and suffering; manfully earnest, concentrated, and devout; undisciplined, unequal, paradoxical; persistent with 'desperate hope,' predestined to sadness, full of radiant sublimities.

**Influence.**—Never has an Englishman swept through the souls of a generation with such power, though, like every one eminently original and aggressive, he has fought hard to obtain pardon for his originality. He has stamped himself upon historical method, upon ways of thought, and modes of expression. In thousands of books his expression is traceable, into thousands of lives his fire has penetrated, and thus does he pass out into the wide sphere of constant and incalculable forces. If he has produced no tangible fruits, like those of the scientific discoverer, he has given a mighty impulse to the intellectual and moral activity which underlies all practical results. To his glory will it

<sup>1</sup>Latter-Day Pamphlets.

<sup>2</sup>Miscellanies: Johnson.

ever be, that in opposition to the tendencies of materialism, he maintained the spiritual dignity of man. What there is of one-sided or exaggerated, of false or of evil, will fail; but the best of him will be a perpetual anthem to kindle a noble discontent. In every age hearts will be touched, and intellects will be exalted by his oracular words: *'Remember now and always that life is no idle dream, but a solemn reality based upon Eternity, and encompassed by Eternity. Find out your task: stand to it: the night cometh when no man can work.'*

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### GEORGE ELIOT.

Duty divine and Thought with eyes of fire,  
 Still following Righteousness with deep desire,  
 Shone sole and stern before her and above,  
 Sure stars and sole to steer by: but more sweet  
 Shone lower the loveliest lamp for earthly feet,  
 The light of little children, and their love.—*Swinburne.*

**Biography.**—Born in a prosaic country district of Warwickshire, in 1819, the youngest of three children by a second marriage. Her father, Robert Evans, was first a carpenter, then a land surveyor and steward of estates. Her Christian name was Mary Ann, which in conversation and correspondence with her intimate friends was changed to Marian. When she was about fifteen years of age, her loving mother died. When the elder children married, she presided over her father's household, accompanied him in his drives during the day, and entertained him during the evening by reading aloud the novels of Scott. Her education, long pursued with unwearied industry, was exceptionally good, including Greek, Latin, French, German, Italian, Hebrew, and music. After her father's death in 1849, she went abroad with some literary friends, tarried at Geneva to perfect herself in foreign tongues, on her return visited London, met the editor of the *Westminster Review*, and there, as his assistant, began her memorable career as a writer. Meanwhile she had become a dissenter, even a free-thinker, had translated Strauss' *Life of Jesus*, had read liberalist books, had been introduced to



men of note and expansive thought,—transcendentalists like Froude and Emerson; positivists like Spencer, who found her ‘already distinguished by that breadth of culture and universality of power which have since made her known to all the world’; versatile speculators like Lewes, to whom, in 1853, without the social sanction, she became a devoted helpmate.<sup>1</sup>

In the years during which she was enriching English literature with her incomparable fictions, her life, on the whole, was quiet and uneventful. Her brilliant and accomplished consort died in 1878, and in 1880 she married a former acquaintance, a Mr. Cross. After a few months of companionship, mostly spent in continental travel, she sank rapidly from the effects of a cold, and on the 22d of December passed calmly and painlessly away.

**Writings.**—Every conscience, as well as every imagination, will be clarified and invigorated by the perusal of *Adam Bede*, the first work of the author that attracted wide public attention. A novel of the real school, humble in its characters, faithful in its portraiture, and beyond praise in its moral spirit. The epoch is of the eighteenth century. The opening sentences, descriptive of a village workshop scene, constitute a fine piece of English painting:

‘The afternoon sun was warm on the five workmen there, busy upon doors and window-frames and wainscoting. A scent of pine wood from a tent-like pile of planks outside the open door mingled itself with the scent of the elder-bushes which were spreading their summer snow close to the open window opposite; the slanting sunbeams shone through the transparent shavings that flew before the steady plane, and lit up the fine grain of the oak panelling which stood propped against the wall. On a heap of those soft shavings a rough gray shepherd dog had made himself a pleasant bed, and was lying with his nose between his fore paws, occasionally winking his brows to cast a glance at the tallest of the five workmen, who was carving a shield in the centre of a wooden mantelpiece. It was to this workman that the strong barytone belonged which was heard above the sound of plane and hammer, singing,

“Awake, my soul, and with the sun  
Thy daily stage of duty run;  
Shake off dull sloth . . .”

Here some measurement was to be taken which required more concentrated attention, and the sonorous voice subsided into a low whistle; but it presently broke out again with renewed vigor

“Let all thy converse be sincere,  
Thy conscience as the noonday clear.”

Such a voice could only come from a broad chest, and the broad chest belonged to a large-boned, muscular man, nearly six feet high, with a back so flat and a head so well

<sup>1</sup>The earlier married life of Lewes had terminated suddenly and irreversibly. A divorce required an Act of Parliament, the difficulty of obtaining which was in most cases insuperable.

poised that when he drew himself up to take a more distant survey of his work he had the air of a soldier standing at ease. The sleeves rolled up above the elbows showed an arm that was likely to win the prize for feats of strength; yet the long, supple hand, with its broad finger-tips, looked ready for works of skill. In his tall stalwartness Adam Bede was a Saxon, and justified his name; but the jet-black hair, made the more noticeable by its contrast with the light paper cap, and the keen glance of the dark eyes that shone from under strongly-marked, prominent, and mobile eyebrows, indicated a mixture of Celtic blood.'

As the story begins, so it culminates to a natural end, like the actual tragedies of life, without evil omens or extraneous machinery, keeping close to the broad stream of human interests. We feel it to be not a romance, but a history, in which the personages are more than the action. Perhaps a more typical English group has never been delineated than is formed by the practical, secular, energetic, manly Adam; the visionary, brooding, absent-minded Seth; the pretty, vain, pleasure-loving, light-headed dairymaid Hetty; the sweet, unselfish, saintly Methodist Dinah; the good-natured, weak, self-deceiving Arthur; the tricky, smooth-tongued, well-chiselled squire; the noble, easy-minded, tolerant rector; the keen, fond, fretful Lisbeth; the plain, quick-witted, audacious Mrs. Poyser; the grizzled, cheery, helpful bachelor schoolmaster, Bartle Massey. All these are perfectly handled—none better than the last. What a unique picture is that of the night-school,—the bare rafters, the white-washed walls, the eight or nine heads bending over the desks lighted with thin dips, the class of three laboring painfully through the reading lesson, the spectacled teacher, with his gray, inch-long, bristly hair, saying mildly: 'Nay, Bill, nay, begin that again, and then perhaps it'll come to you what d-r-y spells. It's the same lesson you read last week, you know.' Bill, remember, is a sturdy fellow, aged four-and-twenty:

'An excellent stone-sawyer, who could get as good wages as any man in the trade of his years; but he found a reading lesson in words of one syllable a harder matter to deal with than the hardest stone he had ever had to saw. The letters he complained were so "uncommon alike, there was no tellen' 'em one from another," the sawyer's business not being concerned with minute differences such as exist between a letter with its tail turned up and a letter with its tail turned down. But Bill had a firm determination that he would learn to read, founded chiefly on two reasons: first, that Tom Hazelow, his cousin, could read anything "right off," whether it was print or writing, and Tom had sent him a letter from twenty miles off, saying how he was prospering in the world, and had got an overlooker's place; secondly, that Sam Phillips, who sawed with him, had learned to read when he was turned twenty; and what could be done by a little fellow like Sam Phillips, Bill considered, could be done by himself, seeing that he could pound Sam into wet clay if circumstances required it. So here he was, pointing his big finger toward three words at once, and turning his head on one side that he might keep better hold with his eyes of the one word which was to be discriminated out of the group. The

amount of knowledge Bartle Massey must possess was something so dim and vast that Bill's imagination recoiled before it; he would hardly have ventured to deny that the schoolmaster might have something to do in bringing about the regular return of daylight and the changes in the weather.'

This amiable cynic and the farmer's voluble wife, who 'keeps at the top o' the talk like a fife,' are fellow-immortals. The following dialogue is full of the humorous revelation, the ideal comedy, which is a peculiarity of George Eliot's prose dramas:

"What!" said Bartle, with an air of disgust. "Was there a woman concerned? Then I give you up, Adam." "But it's a woman you've spoke well on, Bartle," said Mr. Poyser. "Come, now, you canna draw back; you said once as women wouldna ha' been a bad invention if they'd all been like Dinah." "I meant her voice, man,—I meant her voice, that was all," said Bartle. "I can bear to hear her speak without wanting to put wool in my ears. As for other things, I dare say she's like the rest o' women,—thinks two and two 'll come to make five, if she eries and bothers enough about it."

"Ay, ay!" said Mrs. Poyser; "one 'ud think, an' hear her some folks talk, as the men war 'cute enough to count the corns in the bag o' wheat wi' only smelling at it. They can see through a barn door, they can. Perhaps that's the reason they can see so little o' this side on't."

Martin Poyser shook with delighted laughter, and winked at Adam, as much as to say the schoolmaster was in for it now.

"Ah!" said Bartle, sneeringly, "the women are quick enough,—they're quick enough; they know the rights of a story before they hear it, and can tell a man what his thoughts are before he knows 'em himself."

"Like enough," said Mrs. Poyser; "for the men are mostly so slow, their thoughts overrun 'em, and they can only catch 'em by the tail. I can count a stocking-top while a man's getting's tongue ready; an' when he outs wi' his speech at last, there's little broth to be made on't. It's your dead chicks takes the longest hatchin'. However, I'm not denyin' the women are foolish; God Almighty made 'em to match the men."

"Match!" said Bartle; "ay, as vinegar matches on's teeth. If a man says a word, his wife 'll match it with a contradiction; if he's a mind for hot meat, his wife 'll match it with cold bacon; if he laughs, she 'll match it with a whimpering. She's such a match as the horse-fly is to the horse; she's got the right venom to sting him with,—the right venom to sting him with."

"Yes," said Mrs. Poyser, "I know what the men like,—a poor soft, as 'ud simper at 'em like the picture o' the sun, whether they did right or wrong, an' say thank you for a kick, an' pretend she didna know which end she stood nppermost, till her husband told her. That's what a man wants in a wife, mostly; he wants to make sure o' one fool as 'll tell him he's wise. But there's some men can do wi'out that,—they think so much o' themselves 'ready; that's how it is there's old bachelors."

"Come, Craig," said Mr. Poyser, jocosely, "you must get married pretty quick, else you'll be set down for an old bachelor; and you see what the women 'll think on you."

"Well," said Mr. Craig, willing to conciliate Mrs. Poyser, and setting a high value on his own compliments, "I like a cleverish woman,—a woman o' spirit,—a managing woman."

"You're ont there, Craig," said Bartle, dryly; "you're ont there. You judge of your garden-stuff on a better plan than that; you pick the things for what they can excel in,—for what they can excel in. You don't value your peas for their roots, or your carrots for their flowers. Now that's the way you should choose women; their cleverness will never come to much,—never come to much; but they make excellent simpletons, ripe and strong-flavored."

"What dost say to that?" said Mr. Poyser, throwing himself back and looking merrily at his wife.

"Say!" answered Mrs. Poyser, with dangerous fire kindling in her eyes, "why, I say

as some folks' tongues are like the clocks as run on strikin', not to tell you the time o' day, but because there's summat wrong i' their own inside."'

The greatest artistic success of the book is the sustained and powerful, yet unobtrusive, contrast between Dinah, the real heroine of the tale, and Hetty, the rustic coquette; the one tender, generous, earnest,—wholesomely, not morbidly, spiritual; the other confiding, bewitching, yet sterile, frivolous, and earthly:

'It is of little use to tell you that Hetty's cheek was like a rose-petal, that dimples played about her pouting lips, that her large, dark eyes had a roguishness under their long lashes, and that her curly hair, though all pushed back under her round cap while she was at work, stole back in dark, delicate rings on her forehead, and about her white, shell-like ears; it is of little use for me to say how lovely was the contour of her pink and white neckerchief, tucked into her low, plum-colored stuff bodice, or how the linen butter-making apron, with its bib, seemed a thing to be imitated in silk by duchesses, since it fell in such charming lines, or how her brown stockings and thick-soled, buckled shoes lost all that clumsiness which they must certainly have had when empty of her foot and ankle—of little use, unless you have seen a woman who affected you as Hetty affected her beholders, for otherwise, though you might conjure up the image of a lovely woman, she would not in the least resemble that distracting, kitten-like maiden. I might mention all the divine charms of a bright spring day, but if you had never in your life utterly forgotten yourself in straining your eyes after the mounting lark, or in wandering through the still lanes when the fresh opened blossoms fill them with a sacred, silent beauty like that of fretted aisles, where would be the use of my descriptive catalogue? I could never make you know what I meant by a bright spring day. Hetty's was a spring-tide beauty; it was the beauty of young, frisking things, round-limbed, gamboling, circumventing you by a false air of innocence—the innocence of a young star-browed calf, for example, that, being inclined for a promenade out of bonnds, leads you a severe steeple-chase over hedge and ditch, and only comes to a stand in the middle of a bog.'

The harvest is the fruit of the seed sown. With no apparent leaning towards the depraved and vicious, she is intent only on present enjoyment; and, preoccupied with self, she flutters to her ruin like a moth into the candle, unrestrained in danger as in delight, sorry for herself, not repentant of her sin, meditating suicide, yet shrinking violently from the dark gulf:

'The horror of this cold, and darkness, and solitude—out of all human reach—became greater every long minnte; it was as if she were dead already, and knew that she was dead, and longed to get back to life again. But no; she was alive still; she had not taken the deadly leap. She felt a strange contradictory wretchedness and exultation; wretchedness, that she did not dare to face death; exultation, that she was still in life—that she might yet know light and warmth again. She walked backward and forward to warm herself, beginning to discern something of the objects around her, as her eyes became accustomed to the night; the darker line of the hedge, the rapid motion of some living creature—perhaps a field-mouse—rushing across the grass.

She no longer felt as if the darkness hedged her in; she thought she could walk back across the field, and get over the stile: and then, in the very next field, she thought she remembered there was a hovel of furze near a sheepfold. If she could get into that hovel, she would be warmer; she could pass the night there, for that was what Alick did at Hayslope in lambing-time. The thought of this hovel brought the energy of a new hope; she took up her basket and walked across the field, but it was some time before she got in the right direction for the stile. The exercise, and the occupation of finding



the stile, were a stimulus to her, however, and lightened the horror of the darkness and solitude. There were sheep in the next field, and she started a group as she set down her basket and got over the stile; and the sound of their movement comforted her, for it assured her that her impression was right; this was the field where she had seen the hovel, for it was the field where the sheep were. Right on along the path, and she would get to it. She reached the opposite gate, and felt her way along its rails, and the rails of the sheepfold, till her hands encountered the pricking of the gorsy wall. Delicious sensation! She had found the shelter; she groped her way, touching the prickly gorse, to the door, and pushed it open.

It was an ill-smelling, close place, but warm, and there was straw on the ground. Hetty sank down on the straw with a sense of escape. Tears came—she had never shed tears before since she left Windsor—tears and sobs of hysterical joy that she had still hold of life, that she was still on the familiar earth, with the sheep near her. She turned up her sleeves, and kissed her arms with the passionate love of life.'

Slowly, by the dull pressure of mingled shame and hardship, a feeling of remorse and a sense of the divine are wrung from the wrecked and wasted soul, till, under the influence of the seraphic Dinah, the inarticulate stirring becomes a confession of guilt and a cry for mercy.

Inferior in concentration, unity, and depth, though displaying other powers almost equally great, is the *Mill on the Floss*, a love-tragedy pure and simple. Tom and Maggie, brother and sister, the central figures in the novel, are complementary opposites; the one utilitarian, narrow, and prejudiced, while rigidly upright, subordinating every consideration to that of personal honor and family pride, postponing every interest to the one sovereign aim of winning or retaining a good name, implacable when supposing himself to be in the line of duty, distinguished in boyhood by 'the justice that desires to hurt culprits as much as they deserve to be hurt, and is troubled with no doubts concerning the exact amount of their deserts'; the other bright, handsome, impulsive, high-hearted, musically attuned to all that is beautiful and heroic, craving affection, mingling in her nature the inexplicable forces which make existence a perpetual struggle and, externally, an ultimate failure. The portrayal of their childhood is inimitable. With what marvellous force and fidelity are the traits and incidents of Maggie's early years presented,—her bitter griefs over wounded love or slighted merit, the attic in which she frets out her ill-humors, the doll which she punishes for her misfortunes, her visits to the mill, her sorrow over her *brown* complexion, her flight to the Gypsies, to become their queen, and to forget her troubles in the noble labor of regenerating that race of wanderers, then the rapid evanescence of



her romance, and the dread of giving offence by the betrayal of her unfavorable opinion:

'Maggie Tulliver, you perceive, was by no means that well-trained, well-informed young person that a small female of eight or nine necessarily is in these days: she had only been to school a year at St. Ogg's, and had so few books that she sometimes read the dictionary, so that in travelling over her small mind you would have found the most unexpected ignorance as well as unexpected knowledge. She could have informed you that there was such a word as "polygamy," and being also acquainted with "polysyllable," she had deduced the conclusion that "poly" meant "many"; but she had had no idea that gypsies were not well supplied with groceries, and her thoughts generally were the oddest mixture of clear-eyed acumen and blind dreams.

Her ideas about the gypsies had undergone a rapid modification in the last five minutes. From having considered them very respectful companions, amenable to instruction, she had begun to think that they meant perhaps to kill her as soon as it was dark, and cut up her body for gradual cooking: the suspicion crossed her that the fierce-eyed old man was in fact the devil, who might drop that transparent disguise at any moment, and turn either into the grinning blacksmith or else a fiery-eyed monster with dragon's wings.'

She visits the boarding-school to see Tom, who finds no difficulty in discerning a pointer from a setter, but calls Latin 'beastly stuff,' and who can throw a stone right into the centre of a given ripple, but is in a state bordering on idiocy when he attempts to demonstrate the equality of two given triangles:

"Well, my lad, . . . you look rarely! School agrees with you."

Tom wished he had looked rather ill.

"I don't think I am well, father," said Tom; "I wish you'd ask Mr. Stelling not to let me do Euclid; it brings on the toothache, I think." . . .

"Euclid, my boy,—why, what's that?" said Mr. Tulliver.

"Oh, I don't know; it's definitions, and axioms, and triangles, and things. It's a book I've got to learn in,—there's no sense in it."

"Go, go!" said Mr. Tulliver, reprovingly, "you mustn't say so. You must learn what your master tells you. He knows what it's right for you to learn."

"I'll help you now, Tom," said Maggie, with a little air of patronizing consolation. "I'm come to stay ever so long, if Mrs. Stelling asks me. I've brought my box and my pinafores,—haven't I, father?"

"You help me, you silly little thing!" said Tom, in such high spirits at this announcement that he quite enjoyed the idea of confounding Maggie by showing her a page of Euclid. "I should like to see you doing one of *my* lessons! Why, I learn Latin too! Girls never learn such things. They're too silly."

"I know what Latin is very well," said Maggie, confidently. "Latin's a language. There are Latin words in the dictionary. There's bonus, a gift."

"Now you're just wrong there, Miss Maggie!" said Tom, secretly astonished. "You think you're very wise! But 'bonus' means 'good,' as it happens,—bonus, bona, bonum."

"Well, that's no reason why it shouldn't mean 'gift,'" said Maggie, stoutly. "It may mean several things,—almost every word does. There's 'lawn,'—it means the grass-plot, as well as the stuff pocket-handkerchiefs are made of."

Her womanhood is saddening. Self-renunciation alone redeems it from irrevocable loss. In her moments of strongest temptation, perplexed by opposing desires, she does not forget what is

due to those who have trusted her. Herein lies the moral of the whole matter:

'If life did not make duties for us before love comes, love would be a sign that two people ought to belong to each other.'

In *Middlemarch* the peculiar powers of the author are exhibited in the highest and widest play of their development. None of her books is so deeply thoughtful, none commands so broad a view of the human horizon, none is so rich in personal portraiture. What a rich variety of moral and intellectual life is presented in the learned and sanctimonious Casaubon, who always delivers himself with as careful precision as if he were a diplomatic envoy, groping in hopeless, helpless confusion in the bewildering fog of antiquity, seeking to show that all the mythical systems of the world are corruptions of a tradition originally revealed, and dying while only his notes, still accumulating, make a formidable range of volumes; the good-natured Garth, with his chivalrous devotion to labor, preferring good work with little pay to bad work with more money, but endangering the future of his children in order to oblige the self-indulgent, extravagant Fred; his clever, capable wife, who, with no false shame of poverty, continues to wash the dishes while the vicar makes his call; their open and genial daughter Mary, with her quaint, sarcastic impulsiveness; the benevolent Brooke, of miscellaneous opinions and uncertain vote, who will run into any mould, but won't keep shape; the elastic Chettam, the blooming Englishman of the red-whiskered type; the match-making Mrs. Cadwallader, whose mind, active as phosphorus, bites into the form that suits it everything that comes near; the generous Farebrother, wisely-speaking, but not always wisely-acting, with 'as little of the parson about him as will serve to carry orders'; the self-complacent Rosamond, with her worldly arts and aims, her exquisite manners, her talent for precise rendering of noble music, making herself from morning till night her own standard of perfect ladyhood,—a rare compound of beauty and amiability, of 'correct sentiments, of music, dancing, drawing, elegant note-writing, private album for extracted verse, and perfect blonde loveliness,' whose ideal includes a marriage that shall raise her to that celestial condition in which she shall be quite equal to the aristocrats of the county who look down on the Middlemarchers; the sub-

dued, deferential Bulstrode, with his tragical self-delusion, cajoling himself into the belief of his innocence, while the secret self declares his guilt; the ardent Lydgate, hopeful of achievement, a professional enthusiast, who dreams of himself as a discoverer in anatomy and a reformer in medicine, a little too self-confident, too disdainful of others and their influence, protuberant here and there with native prejudices, liable also to lapse down the wrong channel,—a nobly ambitious soul, foiled by its own mistakes, entangled in the web of adverse and sordid circumstances, limited and maimed by the meanness of opportunity; the yearning and theoretic Dorothea, longing to know the truths of life, eager to be useful, sure that she would have accepted Hooker to save him from that wretched mistake in matrimony, or Milton when his blindness had come on; enamored of intensity and greatness, rash in embracing whatever seems to have those aspects; finding in Mr. Casaubon one who could think with her, or, rather, whose thought is ‘a whole world, of which my thought is but a poor twopenny mirror,’ seeing reflected in that ungauged reservoir every quality which she herself brought, convinced by each succeeding visit that he is all she first imagined him to be, treasuring his remarks like specimens from a mine, or inscriptions on the door of a museum; marrying him at length, sadly to discover that her admiration was misplaced, that feeling as well as intellect is essential in a husband, exemplifying in her history ‘the mixed results of young and noble impulse struggling amidst the conditions of an imperfect social state, in which great feelings will often take the aspect of error, and great faith the aspect of illusion’; reading, for the inspiration of all good women, a helpful lesson in the thought that ‘however just her indignation might be, her ideal was not to claim justice, but to give tenderness.’ Here is the keynote to the entire story:

‘Who that cares much to know the history of man, and how that mysterious mixture behaves under the varying experiments of time, has not dwelt, at least briefly, on the life of Saint Theresa, has not smiled with some gentleness at the thought of the little girl walking forth one morning hand-in-hand with her still smaller brother, to go and seek martyrdom in the country of the Moors? Out they toddled from rugged Avila wide-eyed and helpless-looking as two fawns, but with distinctly human hearts, already beating to a national idea, until domestic reality met them in the shape of uncles, and turned them back from their great resolve. That child-pilgrimage was a fit beginning. Theresa’s passionate, ideal nature demanded an epic life: what were many-volumed romances of chivalry and the social conquests of a brilliant girl to her? Her flame quickly burned up that light fuel, and, fed from within, soared after some illimitable satisfaction, some object which would never justify weariness, which would reconcile

self-despair with the rapturous consciousness of life beyond self. She found her epos in the reform of a religious order. That Spanish woman, who lived three hundred years ago, was certainly not the last of her kind. Many Therasas have been born who found for themselves no epic life wherein there was a constant unfolding of far-resonant action; perhaps only a life of mistakes, the offspring of a certain spiritual grandeur ill-matched with the meanness of opportunity; perhaps a tragic failure which found no sacred poet and sank unwept into oblivion. With dim lights and tangled circumstances they tried to shape their thoughts and deeds to noble agreement; but after all, to common eyes their struggle seemed mere inconsistency and formlessness; for these later-born Therasas were helped by no coherent social faith and order which could perform the function of knowledge for the ardently willing soul. Their ardor alternated between a vague ideal and the common yearning of womanhood; so that the one was disapproved as extravagance, and the other condemned as a lapse. . . . Here and there is born a Saint Theresa, foundress of nothing, whose loving heart-beats and sobs after an unattained goodness tremble off and are dispersed among hindrances, instead of centring in some long-recognizable deed.'

*Romola* is a masterly historical novel, a classic picture of Florence in the fifteenth century, an age in which faith and culture contended passionately for preëminence, an age that shared the enthusiasm of the incomparable Lorenzo and the ecstasies of the fiery Savonarola. What a vivid glimpse of the rapturous regard for the New Learning is given in the blind old Bardo, who all his days 'hung over the books and lived with the shadows,' and the vindictive Baldassarre, whose paralyzed memory is electrified by a thrill of revenge:

'He leaned to take up the fragments of the dagger; then he turned towards the book which lay open at his side. It was a fine large manuscript, an old volume of Pausanias. . . . In old days he had known Pausanias familiarly; yet an hour or two ago he had been looking hopelessly at that page, and it had suggested no more meaning to him than if the letters had been black weather-marks on a wall; but at this moment they were once more the magic signs that conjure up a world. That moonbeam falling on the letters had raised Messina before him, and its struggle against Spartan oppression. He snatched up the book, but the light was too pale for him to read further by. No matter; he knew that chapter; he read inwardly. He saw the stoning of the traitor Aristocrates—stoned by a whole people, who cast him out from their borders to lie unburied, and set up a pillar with verses upon it, telling how time had brought home justice to the unjust. The words arose within him, and stirred innumerable vibrations of memory. He forgot that he was old: he could almost have shouted. The light was come again, mother of knowledge and joy! In that exultation his limbs recovered their strength. He started up with his broken dagger and book, and went out under the broad moonlight. It was a nipping, frosty air, but Baldassarre could feel no chill—he only felt the glow of conscious power. He walked about and paused on all the open spots of that high ground, and looked down on the domed and towered city, sleeping darkly under its sleeping guardians, the mountains; on the pale gleam of the river; on the valley vanishing towards the peaks of snow, and felt himself master of them all. That sense of mental empire which belongs to us all in moments of exceptional clearness was intensified for him by the long days and nights in which memory had been little more than the consciousness of something gone. That city, which had been a weary labyrinth, was material that he could subdue to his purposes now. His mind glanced through its affairs with flashing conjecture; he was once more a man who knew cities, whose sense of vision was instructed with large experience, and who felt the keen delight of holding all things in the grasp of language. Names! Images! His mind rushed through its wealth without pausing, like one who enters on a great inheritance.'



Tito, the Greek, is a figure to live in the imagination; brilliant, insinuating, worldly, calm as a faithless summer sea, not originally false, but bent on pleasure and power; swerving continually from the direct path in his cowardly recoil from pain, or in the consistent desire to compass, with the least resistance, the pleasant end which suggests itself; sliding easily into foulest treachery, yet spurred at last, by fear, into a sort of desperate energy,—a being that at once fascinates and repels. Judge him by the first impressions of the Florentine artist, who is eager to paint his face for that of the traitor Sinon, and, being rebuked, offers this equivocal explanation:

‘A perfect traitor should have a face which vice can write no marks on—lips that will lie with a dimpled smile—eyes with such agate-like brightness and depth that no infamy can dull them—cheek that will rise from a murder and not look haggard. I say not this young man is a traitor: I mean, he has a face that would make him the more perfect traitor if he had the heart of one, which is saying neither more nor less than that he has a beautiful face, informed with rich young blood, that will be nourished enough by food, and keep its color without much help of virtue. He may have the heart of a hero along with it; I aver nothing to the contrary.’

Romola herself, a shade more modern, is the incarnation of nobleness; stately in body; stately in soul; realizing, with the emphasis of habitual action, the angelical ideal of humanity, which holds ‘that life to be the highest which is a conscious voluntary sacrifice.’ Finally, nothing could be more impressive than Savonarola’s exhortation to her to return to the home from which she is flying:

‘What! the earth is full of iniquity—full of groans—the light is still struggling with a mighty darkness, and you say, “I can not bear my bonds; I will burst them asunder; I will go where no man claims me?” My daughter, every bond of your life is a debt; it can lie nowhere else. In vain will you wander over the earth; you will be wandering forever away from the right. . . . You seek to break your ties in self-will and anger, not because the higher life calls upon you to renounce them. The higher life begins for us, my daughter, when we renounce our own will to bow before a divine law. That seems hard to you. It is the portal of wisdom, and freedom, and blessedness. And the symbol of it hangs before you. That wisdom is the religion of the cross. . . .

You would leave your place empty, when it ought to be filled with your pity and your labor. If there is wickedness in the streets, your steps should shine with the light of purity; if there is a cry of anguish, you should be there to still it. My beloved daughter, sorrow has come to teach you a new worship: the sign of it hangs before you. . . . Make your marriage sorrows an offering too, my daughter—an offering to the great work by which sin and sorrow are being made to cease. The end is sure, it is already beginning. Here in Florence it is beginning, and the eyes of faith behold it. And it may be our blessedness to die for it: to die daily by the crucifixion of our selfish will—to die at last by laying our bodies on the altar. My daughter, you are a child of Florence—for your own people, whom God is preparing to bless the earth. Bear the anguish and the smart. The iron is sharp—I know, I know—it rends the tender flesh. The draught is bitterness on the lips. But there is rapture in the cup—there is the vision which makes all life below it dross forever. Come, my daughter, come back to your place!’



The spirit of the age has found no fuller and broader expression than in *Daniel Deronda*, a study of Jewish life in its best aspects; analytical, severe, scientific; fine, strong, brilliant. The hero, a happy, hopeful boy, is suddenly transformed by the brooding suspicion of a blot upon his origin, discovers himself to be a *Jew*, yet a Jew rationalized by a Christian education, and devotes his manhood to the problem of restoring his people to the land of their ancestors. His greatness lies in his persistent choice of the highest motive,—in steadfast and noble human endeavor. The heroine is a moral paradox, introduced to us as a ‘Nereid in sea-green robes and silver ornaments,’ singularly fascinating by her rare beauty, enigmatical conduct, and purgatorial experience; a spoiled child, idolized by a widowed mother, served like a ‘princess in exile’ by her younger sisters; wedding a rich suitor, and living in splendid misery; compelled to an outward obedience, yet stirred with bitter hate and suppressed passion, with which is mingled a gnawing remorse for her folly in marrying a man she did not love; turning in her agony to Deronda, who becomes her confidant, her instructor, her ideal of rectitude, declaring the curse upon her to be, that ‘all passion is spent in the narrow round—the small drama of personal desires—for want of ideas and sympathies to make a larger home for it’; gradually renewing her distressed and erratic spirit with such counsels as these:

‘Looking at your life as a debt may seem the dreariest view of things at a distance; but it cannot really be so. What makes life dreary is the want of motive; but once beginning to act with that penitential, loving purpose you have in your mind, there will be unexpected satisfaction—there will be newly opening needs—continually coming to carry you on from day to day. You will find your life growing like a plant. . . . This sorrow, which has cut down to the root, has come to you while you are so young—try to think of it, not as a spoiling of your life, but as a preparation for it. . . . You have been saved from the worst evils that might have come from your marriage, which you feel was wrong. You have had a vision of injurious, selfish action—a vision of possible degradation; think that a severe angel, seeing you along the road of error, grasped you by the wrist, and showed you the horror of the life you must avoid. And it has come to you in your spring-time. Think of it as a preparation. You can, you will, be among the best of women, such as make others glad that they were born.’

Mordecai is the ideal incarnate, whose expectant and heavenly dream is the revived unity of the dispersed and despised race, whose light in the gathering shadows of dissolution is the assurance that his vision and passion—his immortal flame—have entered into Deronda:

‘Death is coming to me as the divine kiss which is both parting and reunion—which

takes me from your bodily eyes and gives me full presence in your soul. Where thou goest, Daniel, I shall go. Is it not begun? Have I not breathed my soul into you? We shall live together.'

No laughing humor here, and gone forever the luminous wit which we heard in *Adam Bede*, which lingered still, as glimpses of sunlight, in *Middlemarch*. The indescribable glow of youth has vanished before the disenchantments of a hard, unyielding, compelling universe. Believe that character is a process under immutable law. You are surrounded by a wall of external condition; yet oppose to the shocks of fate a stoical resolution. Man lives in man. Personal continuance there is none. Believe that human life is a sorrowful riddle; yet believe, with Fichte, in the moral order of the world. Above all, believe in human sympathy in the hour of overpowering calamity.

**Style.**—Pure and homogeneous, intense and life-like, broad and steady, full of majesty when deepest, unique in the absolute fitness of the phrase to the thought. A living organism, whose every particle tingles with the fine vibration of heart and brain. George Eliot was one of the most careful among authors. Her manuscript is said to have been free from blur or erasure, every letter delicately and distinctly drawn. A conspicuous feature of her excellent literary method is perfection of dialect. Thus: 'It's your inside as isn't right made for music; it's no better nor a hollow stock'; and, 'I hate the sound of women's voices; they're always either a-buzz or a-squeak—always either a-buzz or a-squeak. Mrs. Poyser keeps at the top o' the talk like a fife.' Seldom cumbrous, with an occasional false note in the music or venial neglect in the diction and arrangement, notwithstanding the usual elaborate finish of the sentences. Thus: 'Presently Baldassarre *began to move*. He threw away the broken dagger, and slowly and gradually, still trembling, *began to raise himself from the ground*. Tito put out his hand to help him, and so strangely quick are men's souls that in this moment, when he *began to think his atonement was accepted*, he had a darting thought of the irksome efforts it entailed.'

**Rank.**—She belongs neither to the school of fiction which is a partisan of passion, nor to that which is a worshipper of conventionality; the one representing the excess of feeling and impulse under the attractive title of Nature, the other deifying

custom and depicting a code of manners woven of the latest fashion. Surpassing the truth and beauty of both, she deals with the permanent heart of humanity, and represents, beyond all others, the moral type of to-day, which brings into prominence character, as active and passive, struggling with temptation, and perfecting itself through trivial cares and besetting trials.

She has not the vigorous movement, the serene tone, of Scott; she may not have the exquisite finish of Miss Austen, nor the concentrative intensity of Miss Brontë; she cannot sketch with the rapidity of Fielding: but none of them combines in equal splendor the power of painting the external, and the insight into the life of the soul. Above them all is she distinguished by the constant reference of things to facts and laws which are universal — always the condition of highest literature. She stands at the confluence of the real and the ideal, looking from the less into the larger, with finer and stronger vision than Dickens or Thackeray. With Shakespeare, she has the gift of the dramatist — narrower than his in range, but, within its limits, equal; with him, she has the gift of analysis — less in quantity, superior in quality. Like him, she enters sympathetically into minds and opinions quite opposite to her own. How admirably can she draw a lively, a shallow, or a flippant personage, — herself grave even to melancholy; or a believing and devout Christian, — herself a naturalist, an eclectic in religion! The figures on her canvas, especially the earlier, are known as directly and intimately as any in real or fictitious history. And who has approached her in the ability to seize the essential characteristics and exhibit the real charm of that quiet English country life which is her sphere?

As with the great Elizabethan, form is subordinate to content. The motive is supreme over all. How large a space in the whole bulk of her volumes does she usurp for her own interspersed interpretation and comment! This may seem to Taine and Matthew Arnold very inartistic; but we are rather glad that, not content to be a mere anatomist or spectator, she has ventured not only to *exhibit* human nature in action, but to explain the motives of the action, and to speculate lovingly and vividly on human life. Possibly, in her later works she may sometimes be too discursive. Perhaps, also, her finest moral effects may there be injured by a too fatalistic conception of things, by a certain vagueness and doubt,

as of a world hopelessly and irrecoverably dark; but this is no reproach to her art, except so far as it may be partial. Mistake, frustration, doom, dimness of perception and waste of force, are indisputable phases of mortality; and judgments can differ only as to the *degree* in which the destiny of mankind shall be painted justly in hues of gloom.

Noteworthy as a poet, she will be remembered as a novelist. It is in the latter function that she has wrought upon the taste and conscience of her age. She will continue to be read in the former by those who desire to know the fulness of her genius.

One of the rare human souls whom we account our loftiest—one who neither carries the feminine quality to its height, like Mrs. Browning; nor transcends the limitations of her sex, like Madame de Staël. Fixing our estimate of success by humor, pathos, thought, portraiture, and mastery of language,—what woman has touched so high a point in literature? Shakespeare enables us to dispense with Jonson and Beaumont, but who has rendered George Eliot superfluous?

**Character.**—Of the calm, contemplative order; of opulent imagination, profound humor, delicate selective talent; supreme over all English novelists in rich and multifarious culture; uniting to a truthful realism a poetic idealism, and to the largeness of conception that views the simplest and homeliest object in broad relationship, a psychological insight that pursues life to its inmost solitude.

Her sympathy with human suffering and human limitation was elemental. She was fond of children, had a deep, catholic love for mankind, appreciated all varieties of character, believing that in the humblest are sublime promptings. Her nature was thoroughly feminine—sensitive, deeply and nobly affectionate. If she could expound the broad claims of universal brotherhood, and comprehend the ‘high necessities of art,’ she could also feel and express with simplicity the intensity of personal devotion:

‘Sweet evenings come and go, love,  
They came and went of yore:  
This evening of our life, love,  
Shall go and come no more.

When we have passed away, love,  
All things will keep their name;  
But yet no life on earth, love,  
With ours will be the same.

The daisies will be there, love,  
The stars in heaven will shine:  
I shall not feel thy wish, love,  
Nor thou my hand in thine.

A better time will come, love,  
And better souls be born:  
I would not be the best, love,  
To leave thee now forlorn.’

To the highest gifts she united the noblest purposes. How grateful was she for every moulding and elevating influence! and she yearned to be helpful! Her glowing prayer was to—

‘Be to other souls  
The cup of strength in some great agony;  
Enkindle generous ardor, feed pure love;  
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty;  
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,  
And in diffusion ever more intense.’

Profoundly devout, she was unable to accept much of what is usually held as religious belief. Her works, eminently among those of the day, embody the central ethics of Christ, yet without any intellectual acceptance of Christianity as a dogmatic scheme. Her religion appears to have been in general harmony with that of Auguste Comte,—the religion of Humanity. Her creed is, ‘Religion is kindness.’ ‘The first condition of human goodness is something to love; the second, something to reverence.’ The soul ascends to a divine life by self-surrender to its own highest intimations. Man lives in man—so much, at least, is certain. An assured blessing of Death, if not the final one, is, that it destroys the selfish egotisms of the flesh, and leaves us an impersonal immortality in human gladness for gifts bestowed. With sad incompleteness she says:

‘The only better is a Past that lives  
On through an added Present, stretching still  
In hope unchecked by shaming memories  
To life’s last memories.’

If not an optimist, neither is she a pessimist. If she neither affirms nor denies, she *hopes*. Of the sweet Methodist in *Adam Bede*: ‘When she came to the question, Will God take care of us when we die? she uttered it in such a tone of plaintive appeal that the tears came into some eyes.’ The idea of Destiny, which environs us like a drop of dew in the heart of a rock, seems in her latter years *almost* to master her, yet does she continue a writer of generous aims, who would carve out larger space for every soul imprisoned in pettiness, doubt, or convention:

‘Nay, never falter; no great deed is done  
By falterers who ask for certainty.  
No good is certain; but the steadfast mind,  
The undivided will to seek the good,—  
’Tis that compels the elements, and wrings  
A human music from the indifferent air.  
The greatest gift the hero leaves his race



Is to have been a hero. Say we fail?—  
*We feed the high tradition of the world,  
 And leave our spirits in Zincalo breasts.'*

**Influence.**—A moral teacher of the purest and noblest tone, not incidentally or artistically, but purposely and distinctly. She has afforded the deepest speculation to the few, while she has impressed upon the many the excellence of patient work, the beauty of self-sacrifice, the sovereignty of duty; and to all she has brought exalting inspiration.

While we do not doubt that the total effect is beneficent, we must believe that the nobleness she inculcates is hindered by her agnosticism. The utmost manhood and womanhood can never be developed without the clear appeal to eternity. The strongest will feel at last the oppression of that mournful philosophy whose lights of gayety seem but foil to the overhanging gloom; whose sweetest, grandest creatures—ill-matched with the environment of their life—struggle so often to a pitiable or sorrowful end; and which, in abortive answer to human entreaty, peeps over the edges of our planet, to discover for the Gethsemane of life only an illimitable void.

Besides the choral strain of moral piety, consider the wealth of wit and wisdom which the mind and heart of the race inherit forever. Where can be found in works of the same kind so rare a mine of thought for the worshipper to take to his bosom, for the writer to enrich his discourse, for the thinker to ponder, for the divine to quote,—for all to assimilate and to use? Here are some examples:

'It is hard to be wise on an empty stomach.'

'It is never too late to be what you might have been.'

'Speech is but broken light upon the depths of the unspoken.'

'It's easy finding reasons why other people should be patient.'

'Genius, at first, is little more than a great capacity for receiving discipline.'

'When God makes His presence felt through us, we are like the burning bush.'

'I've never any pity for conceited people, because I think they carry their comfort about with them.'

'The tale of the Divine pity was never yet believed from lips that were not felt to be moved by human pity.'

'When Death, the great reconciler, has come, it is never our tenderness that we repent of, but our severity.'

'Every man's work, pursued steadily, tends to become an end in itself, and so bridges over the loveless chasms of his life.'

‘There is no sorrow I have thought more about than to love what is great, and try to reach it and yet to fail.’

‘Th’ young men nooadays, th’re poor squashy things,— the’ looke weel enoof, but the’ woon’t wear, the’ woon’t wear.’

‘So our lives glide on: the river ends, we don’t know where, and the sea begins, and then there is no more jumping ashore.’

‘There’s no pleasure in living if you’re to be corked up forever, and only dribble your mind out by the sly, like a leaky barrel.’

‘Our deeds are like children born to us; they live and act apart from our own will. Children may be strangled, but deeds never.’

‘We look at the one little woman’s face we love as we look at the face of our mother earth, and see all sorts of answers to our own yearnings.’

‘Our guides, we pretend, must be sinless; as if those were not often the best teachers, who only yesterday got corrected for their mistakes.’

‘Things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.’

‘It’s poor work, allus settin’ the dead above the livin’. It ’ud be better if folks ’ud make much on us beforehand instid o’ beginnin’ when we’re gone.’

‘By desiring what is perfectly good, even when we don’t quite know what it is, and cannot do what we would, we are part of the divine power against evil.’

‘Tito was experiencing that inexorable law of human souls, that we prepare ourselves for sudden deeds by the reiterated choice of good or evil that gradually determines character.’

‘Men and women make sad mistakes about their own symptoms—taking their vague, uneasy longings, sometimes for genius, sometimes for religion, and oftener still for a mighty love.’

‘A child, more than all other gifts  
That earth can offer to declining man,  
Brings hope with it and forward-looking thought.’

‘Our caresses, our tender words, our still rapture under the influence of autumn sunsets or calm majestic statues, or Beethoven symphonies, all bring with them the consciousness that they are mere waves and ripples in an unfathomable ocean of love and beauty. Our emotion in its keenest moment passes from expression into silence, our love at its highest flood rushes beyond its object, and loses itself in the sense of divine mystery.’

The temptation to quote further must be resisted. The prayer of this good and gifted woman is answered. Her place is secure among those—

‘Immortal dead who still live on  
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.’

## TENNYSON.

Not of the howling dervishes of song,  
 Who craze the brain with their delirious dance,  
 Art thou, O sweet historian of the heart!  
 Therefore to thee the laurel-leaves belong,  
 To thee our love and our allegiance,  
 For thy allegiance to the poet's art.—*Longfellow.*

**Biography.**—Born at Somersby, Lincolnshire, in 1810; one of a numerous and gifted family; the youngest in a poetical brotherhood of three—Frederick, Charles, and Alfred—sons of a clergyman, said to have been remarkable for strength, stature, and energy; educated at Cambridge, where in 1829 he gained the Chancellor's medal for a prize poem; the next year, while still an undergraduate, published his first volume, under the title of *Poems Chiefly Lyrical*, hailed by the *Westminster* as the promise of higher things than recent literature had seen, and by the *Blackwood's* as dismal drivel; his second volume in 1832, under the name simply of *Poems*; his third, partly compiled from the *débris* of his earlier ones, in 1842, from which date he entered upon the enjoyment of a growing and select popularity; received the decoration of D.C.L. from Oxford; appointed Laureate, upon the death of Wordsworth in 1850, continuing to exhibit by successive works the progressive widening and deepening of his mind. He lives in the country, amid books and flowers, mostly in the Isle of Wight, free from the burdens and disturbances of society. When he dies, we shall know more of him. Meanwhile, we console ourselves with the reflection that his intellectual biography is more important than the rather uneventful story of his life.

**Writings.**—From the first, Tennyson has shown himself to be a born artist, a master of charm, a lover of form and color, a builder of imaginary castles, an ethical instructor. The *Palace of Art* is an allegory of a soul whose purpose is to enjoy Beauty always and only for herself, within a 'lordly pleasure-house,' on a huge crag-foundation, high above the herds of human swine, in command of all delights save spiritual, and exulting in her isolation:

'I take possession of man's mind and deed,  
 I care not what the sects may brawl,  
 I sit as God, holding no form of creed,  
 But contemplating all.'

After a time, lest she should perish utterly, Heaven smites her with an inward sense of poverty and misery:

'Back on herself her serpent pride had curled.  
 "No voice," she shrieked in that lone hall,  
 "No voice breaks through the stillness of this world:  
 One deep, deep silence all!" . . .  
 And death and life she hated equally,  
 And nothing saw, for her despair,  
 But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,  
 No comfort anywhere.'

Four years the agony endures, then she quits her royal solitude, with its haunting horrors, in pursuit of a higher life:

"Make me a cottage in the vale," she cried,  
 "Where I may mourn and pray."

The imagery and rhythm of the *Lotos-Eaters* are marvellously beautiful and expressive. How exquisitely does the poem represent the luxurious sleepiness said to be produced in those who feed upon the lotus! How perfectly are the deep quietude, the dreamy haze, the lulling spell, of the enchanted land, reflected in the verse:—

'A land of streams! Some, like a downward smoke,  
 Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;  
 And some through wavering lights and shadows broke,  
 Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below. . . .  
 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 gentlier 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 ledge the poppy hangs in sleep. . . .  
 Lo! in the middle of the wood.  
 The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud  
 With winds upon the branch, and there  
 Grows green and broad, and takes no care,  
 Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon  
 Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow  
 Falls, and floats adown the air.  
 Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,  
 The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,  
 Drops in a silent autumn night.  
 All its allotted length of days,  
 The flower ripens in its place,  
 Ripens and fades, and falls, and bath no toil,  
 Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.'

Since the *Fairy Queen*, there has been no such melodious effeminacy. And how felicitously is the plaintive or languid mood of the weary or enervated soul given in that which follows!—

'Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,  
And in a little while our lips are dumb.  
Let us alone. What is it that will last?  
All things are taken from us, and become  
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.  
Let us alone. 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 toward the grave  
In silence; ripen, fall, and cease:  
Give us long rest or death; dark death, or dreamful ease.  
How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,  
With half-shut eyes ever to seem  
Falling asleep in a half dream! . . .  
To hear each other's whispered speech;  
Eating the lotus day by day,  
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,  
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;  
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly  
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy:  
To muse and brood and live again in memory,  
With those old faces of our infancy  
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,  
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!'

Quite naturally, the companions of Ulysses forget their country, renounce action, and nervelessly resolve to 'lie reclined on the hills like gods.'

Now and then over the calm and correct surface pours the high tide of emotion, with a billowy splendor and a glorious freedom, as in these verses of *Locksley Hall*:

'And I said, "My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the truth to me,  
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee."

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a color and a light,  
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.

And she turned—her bosom shaken with a sudden storm of sighs—  
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes—

Saying "I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do me wrong":  
Saying "Dost thou love me, cousin?" weeping, "I have loved thee long." . . .

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the copses ring,  
And her whisper thronged my pulses with the fulness of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,  
And our spirits rushed together at the touching of our lips.

O my cousin shallow hearted! O my Amy, mine no more!  
O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the barren, barren shore!

In the *Princess*, Tennyson essayed a masterpiece. A mix-



ture of modern ideas and manners with mediæval chivalry and romance, of the farcical with the sentimental, of the conventional with the real,—it is styled ‘a medley.’ A story of a prince and princess affianced in childhood by their parents. The lady, when the appointed time has arrived, repudiates the alliance; but after a series of adventures and incidents culminating in a combat, she relents, pities, then loves. The wounded prince, received into her palace, sees the fair *Ida* before him when consciousness returns, and says, painfully:

“If you be, what I think you, some sweet dream,  
I would but ask you to fulfil yourself;  
But if you be that *Ida* whom I knew,  
I ask you nothing: only if a dream,  
Sweet dream, be perfect; I shall die to-night,  
Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die.” . . .

She stooped; and out of languor leapt a cry;  
Leapt fiery Passion from the brink of death;  
And I believed that in the living world  
My spirit closed with *Ida*’s at the lips;  
Till back I fell, and from mine arms she rose  
Glowing all over noble shame; and all  
Her falsèr self slipt from her like a robe,  
And left her woman, lovelier in her mood  
Than in her mould that other, when she came  
From barren deeps to conquer all with love.’

The beautiful enthusiast, irritated against the rule of men, had resolved upon a social revolution; and, to liberate her sex, had founded a university on the frontiers, designed to be the colony of future equality. The failure of the enterprise suggests the true philosophy of the ‘woman question’:

“For woman is not undeveloped man,  
But diverse; could we make her as the man,  
Sweet Love were slain: his dearest bond is this,  
Not like to like, but like in difference.  
Yet in the long years liker must they grow;  
The man be more of woman, she of man;  
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,  
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world. . . .  
Till at the last she set herself to man,  
Like perfect music unto noble words;  
And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,  
Sit side by side, full-summed in all their powers,  
Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,  
Self-reverent each, and reverencing each.” . . .  
“May these things be!” Sighing she spoke, “I fear  
They will not.” “Dear, but let us type them now  
In our own lives, and this proud watchword rest  
Of equal; seeing either sex alone  
Is half itself; and in true marriage lies

Nor equal, nor unequal; each fulfils  
 Defect in each, and always thought in thought,  
 Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,  
 The single pure and perfect animal,  
 The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full stroke,  
 Life."'

*In Memoriam* is an elegiac of sorrow-brooding thought, a series of meditations circling around the recollection of a gifted friend who died young, a cry of the bereaved soul into the dark infinite after the vanished love. The gloom, the utter stillness, the apparent nothingness, of Death, raise, before the mind that looks beyond the bourne, questions relating to the being of God, the immortality of the soul, the nature and conditions of future existence. Thus the soliloquist speaks typically in behalf of humanity, and teaches deep lessons of life and conscience. Immortal Love is the true conception of the adorable Sovereign, yet the world of realities does not seem to be that of unmixed benevolence:

'Are God and Nature then at strife,  
 That Nature lends such evil dreams?  
 So careful of the type she seems,  
 So careless of the single life.'

Driven by an awful pain of need, he cuts the Gordian knot, and betakes himself reverently to faith:

'I falter where I firmly trod,  
 And falling with my weight of cares  
 Upon the great world's altar-stairs  
 That slope through darkness up to God,  
 I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,  
 And gather dust and chaff, and call  
 To what I feel is Lord of all,  
 And faintly trust the larger hope.'

Can man who trusts, who battles for the true, be only the product of material forces, 'blown about the desert dust, or sealed within the iron hills'?—

'No more? A monster then, a dream,  
 A discord. Dragons of the prime,  
 That tare each other in their slime,  
 Were mellow music matched with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!  
 O for thy voice to soothe and bless!  
 What hope of answer, or redress?  
 Behind the veil, behind the veil.'

The hereafter is guaranteed by its being the complement of the present. Listen then to the voice of the spirit, inarticulate, yet

intense, and the haunting problem of human destiny shall become the glad promise of joy, the memory of the dead shall be changed to a sense of the living:

'What art thou, then? I cannot guess;  
But though I seem in star and flower  
To feel thee, some diffusive power,  
I do not therefore love thee less.

My love involves the love before;  
My love is vaster passion now;  
Though mixed with God and Nature thou,  
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;  
I have thee still, and I rejoice;  
I prosper, circled with thy voice;  
I shall not lose thee though I die.'

Therefore:

'Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
The flying cloud, the frosty light:  
The year is dying in the night:  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind  
For those that here we see no more;  
Ring out the fend of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
And ancient forms of party strife;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times;  
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease:  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.'

In the long roll of Christian heroes there is not a truer one than that of *Enoch Arden*, a sweet depiction of 'hearts centred in the sphere of common duties.' Two children, Enoch and Philip, love their playmate Annie Lee. She is willing to be 'a little wife to both,' though secretly she loves Enoch the better. At twenty-one he marries her, and they are prospered until he falls from a mast and breaks a limb. Then, though a God-fearing man, doubt and gloom fall upon him:

'He seemed, as in a nightmare of the night,  
To see his children leading evermore  
Low, miserable lives of hand to mouth,  
And her he loved, a beggar: then he prayed,  
"Save them from this, whatever comes to me."'

While he prays, the ship-master comes, and offers to take him as boatswain. He consents joyfully, and bids his wife farewell,

who entreats him not to go, sure that evil will come of it. He bids her cheer up and be comforted:

“And fear no more for me; or if you fear  
Cast all your cares on God: that anchor holds.  
Is He not yonder in those uttermost  
Parts of the morning? If I flee to these  
Can I go from Him? and the sea is His,  
The sea is His: He made it.”

Years go by, and no tidings of the voyager, who has been wrecked upon a tropic island. There, with infinite yearning, he thinks of the domestic heaven far away:

‘Once likewise, in the ringing of his ears,  
Though faintly, merrily—far and far away—  
He heard the pealing of his parish bells;  
Then, though he knew not wherefore, started up  
Shuddering, and when the beauteous hateful isle  
Returned upon him, had not his poor heart  
Spoken with That, which being everywhere  
Lets none, who speak with Him, seem all alone,  
Surely the man had died of solitude.’

At last he is rescued by a passing vessel, returns whence he had sailed, reaches home, where his Annie lived, and babes, ‘in those far-off seven happy years’; but, ‘finding neither light nor murmur there (a bill of sale gleamed thro’ the drizzle),’ the sad wanderer seeks a tavern which he knew of old. The good and garrulous hostess, never suspecting the identity of her guest—‘so brown, so bowed, so broken’—tells him, with other annals of the port,—

‘All the story of his house:  
His baby’s death, her growing poverty,  
How Philip put her little ones to school,  
And kept them in it, his long wooing her,  
Her slow consent, and marriage and the birth  
Of Philip’s child: and o’er his countenance  
No shadow passed, nor motion: anyone,  
Regarding, well had deemed he felt the tale  
Less than the teller: only when she closed  
“Enoch, poor man, was cast away and lost”  
He, shaking his gray head pathetically,  
Repeated, muttering, “cast away and lost”;  
Again in deeper inward whispers “lost!”’

Longing to look once more upon her sweet face, in the darkness he goes and peeps in at the window, sees them all in perfect comfort, retraces his steps, feeling along the garden-wall lest he should swoon, then falls prone, and prays:

“Too hard to bear! why did they take me thence?  
O God Almighty, blessed Saviour, Thou

That didst uphold me on my lonely isle,  
 Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness  
 A little longer! aid me, give me strength  
 Not to tell her, never to let her know.  
 Help me not to break in upon her peace."'

The *Idyls of the King* may in future be rated as an epochal composition. It is the renewed legend of Arthur, Merlin, and the knights of the Round Table, in which the poet not only restores the primitive age, purified and elevated, but gives noble expression to the aspirations of man, the hopes of religion, and the harmonies of Nature. It is subdivided into ten distinct poems, some of which, for imaginative passion and admirable art, must be classed as belonging to the mountain-summits of English poetry. Lancelot, though he swerves from virtue, is at heart heroic, deeply in sympathy with righteousness and honor, just, brave, and generous, with love and compassion, enough and to spare, for every living creature. The 'lily maid Elaine' is smitten with an absorbing fondness for the great warrior:

'The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,  
 In battle with the love he bare his lord,  
 Had marred his face, and marked it ere his time.  
 Another sinning on such heights with one,  
 The flower of all the west and all the world,  
 Had been the slecker for it: but in him  
 His mood was often like a fiend, and rose  
 And drove him into wastes and solitudes  
 For agony, who was yet a living soul.  
 Marred as he was, he seemed the goodliest man  
 That ever among ladies ate in Hall,  
 And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.  
 However marred, of more than twice her years,  
 Seamed with an ancient sword-cut on the cheek,  
 And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes  
 And loved him, with that love which was her doom.'

She keeps his shield, a precious token, counting daily 'every dint a sword had beaten in it, and every scratch a lance had made upon it.' He is wounded: she seeks him out, 'brain-feverous in his heat and agony,' heals him, and he is grateful:

'And the sick man forgot her simple blush  
 Would call her friend and sister, sweet Elaine;  
 Would listen for her coming and regret  
 Her parting step, and held her tenderly,  
 And loved her with all love except the love  
 Of man and woman when they love their best,  
 Closest and sweetest, and had died the death  
 In any knightly fashion for her sake.'



His heart is another's, she suspects the truth, and sorrow dims her sight:

'She murmur'd "vain, in vain: it cannot be.  
He will not love me: how then? must I die?"  
Then as a little helpless innocent bird,  
That has but one plain passage of few notes,  
Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er  
For all an April morning, till the ear  
Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid  
Went half the night repeating, "Must I die?"'

She confesses her secret, prays to be his wife, or—when that cannot be—to remain with him, to wait upon him. This refused, she droops and fades, mixing her fancies with the moanings of the wind, her flower of life passing away in the measures of this little song:

'Love, art thou sweet? Then bitter death must be;  
Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me,  
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.  
  
Sweet love that seems not made to fade away,  
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay,  
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.  
  
I fain would follow love, if that could be;  
I needs must follow death, who calls for me;  
Call and I follow, I follow! let me die.'

Her body, by her own prayer, is floated in a barge to Arthur's palace, with only a steerer old and dumb, bearing in her hand the written announcement of her fate:

'Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead,  
Steered by the dumb, went upward with the flood,—  
In her right hand the lily, in her left  
The letter,—all her bright hair streaming down,—  
And all the coverlid was cloth of gold  
Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white,  
All but her face; and that clear-featured face  
Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead,  
But fast asleep, and lay as though she smiled.'

The illicit loves of Lancelot and Guinevere are detected, not, however, till the dark shadows of repentance have begun to cross between him and his idol. They have had a last meeting, and she has fled the court to take sanctuary at Almesbury, without making known her name. There the persistent allusions of a simple child to the golden days of the Round Table 'before the coming of the sinful queen' force from her this solemn, fateful burst of passion:

"But help me, heaven, for surely I repent.  
For what is true repentance but in thought,—

Not ev'n in inmost thought to think again  
 The sins that made the past so pleasant to us:  
 And I have sworn never to see him more,—  
 To see him more.”

Where in modern verse is there anything finer than the interview between Arthur and his remorseful wife? Where, in history or in letters, is there a nobler, grander conception of man as he might be, than in this resplendent king who says to the penitent and stricken queen:

“Lo! I forgive thee, as Eternal God  
 Forgives; do thou for thine own soul the rest.  
 But how to take last leave of all I loved?  
 O golden hair, with which I used to play,  
 Not knowing! O imperial-moulded form,  
 And beauty such as never woman wore,  
 Until it came a kingdom's curse with thee.  
 I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine. . . .  
 My love through flesh hath wrought into my life  
 So far that my doom is, I love thee still.  
 Let no man dream but that I love thee still.  
 Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,  
 And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,  
 Hereafter, in that world where all are pure,  
 We two may meet before high God, and thou  
 Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and know  
 I am thine husband,—not a smaller soul. . . .

Leave me that,  
 I charge thee, my last hope. Now must I hence.  
 Through the thick night I hear the trumpet blow;  
 They summon me their King to lead mine hosts  
 Far down to that great battle in the west,  
 Where I must strike against the man they call  
 My sister's son—no kin of mine, who leagues  
 With lords of the White Horse, heathen, and knights—  
 Traitors—and strike him dead, and meet myself  
 Death, or I know not what mysterious doom.  
 And thou remaining here wilt learn the event;  
 But hither shall I never come again,  
 Never lie by thy side, see thee no more,  
 Farewell!”

Never will the air of sublimity pass from this, nor the air of nobleness from her apostrophe of recalled and revived affection:

“Now I see thee what thou art,  
 Thou art the highest and most human too,  
 Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there none  
 Will tell the King I love him though so late?  
 Now—ere he goes to the great Battle? none:  
 Myself must tell him in that purer life,  
 But now it were too daring. *Ah, my God,*  
*What might I not have made of thy fair world,*  
*Had I but loved thy highest creature here?”*

In that 'cloudy battle,' King Arthur is deeply 'smitten through the helm.' Feeling himself about to die, he bids the last of his knights fling his sword 'far into the middle-meer.' He had received it from the sea-nymphs, and after him no mortal must handle it. Sir Bedivere, dazzled by the wondrous jewelled hilt, hesitates,—

'This way and that dividing the swift mind,  
In act to throw.'

Twice he returns, pretending to have cast it away. The third time he hurls it, and 'flashing round and round,' 'whirled in an arch,' it —

'Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,  
Seen when the moving isles of winter shock  
By night, with noises of the northern sea.  
So flashed and fell the brand Excalbur:  
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
And caught him by the hilt, and brandished him  
Three times, and drew him under in the meer.'

Then Arthur bids the knight quickly 'bear me to the margin.' Through 'icy caves and barren chasms' they reach the shores of the 'great water':

'Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,  
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
Beneath them; and descending they were ware  
That all the decks were dense with stately forms  
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream — by these  
Three Queens with crowns of gold: and from them rose  
A cry that shivered to the tingling stars.  
And, as it were one voice, an agony  
Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills  
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,  
Or hath come, since the making of the world.'

'Place me in the barge,' says the shattered King. The Queens, weeping, receive him; one, the fairest and tallest, lays his head upon her lap, chafes his hands, 'complaining loud.' Then, ere the barge drifts out, he speaks these solemn and heroic words to the desolate Sir Bedivere, who sees himself companionless amid darkening days and strange faces,—the whole Round Table dissolved, 'which was an image of the mighty world':

'The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.  
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me? . . .  
If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
Pray for my soul. . . .  
But now farewell. I am going a long way

With these thou seest—if indeed I go  
 (For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)  
 To the island-valley of the Avilion:  
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
 Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies  
 Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard-lawns  
 And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,  
 Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'"

Could anything be more imposing than this farewell, or more pathetic than this spectacle?—

'Long stood Sir Bedivere  
 Revolving many memories, till the hull  
 Looked one black dot against the verge of dawn,  
 And on the meer the waiting died away.'

In his minor key, Tennyson has perhaps produced nothing finer than this little song:

'Break, break, break, On thy cold gray stones, O Sea! And I would that my tongue could utter The thoughts that arise in me.	And the stately ships go on To the haven under the hill; But oh for the touch of a vanished hand, And the sound of a voice that is still!
O well for the fisherman's boy, That he shouts with his sister at play!	Break, break, break, At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
O well for the sailor lad, That he sings in his boat on the bay!	But the tender grace of a day that is dead Will never come back to me.'

**Style.**—Pure, simple, correct, polished, elegant, ornate; wanting the variety and freedom of the forest-like Shakespeare and the impassioned Byron, yet not unfrequently rising to the level of the former in expressiveness; sometimes Homeric in severity and elevation, sometimes Spenserian in splendid imagery and cloying music; mingling in chaste harmony the flowers of all ages, native and exotic.

**Rank.**—His method, which is not that of the most inspired periods, is essentially descriptive—idyllic. He delights in minutely finished pictures, felicities of expression, and subtle harmonies of sound. His verse is more remarkable for finish than for fervor. In technical execution, he has no living superior. In the mastery of language, few have been so highly favored. He affords samples of English which, for strength and beauty, can hardly be rivalled. For instance, consider the following:

'The hard-grained muses of the cube and square.'

'With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless noon  
 Was clashed and hammered from a hundred towers.'

'A rose-bud set with little wilful thorns,  
 And sweet as English air could make her.'

'Clothed with his breath, and looking as he walked,  
Larger than human on the frozen hills.'

His chief limitations are excessive elaboration—over-anxiety in regard to unimportant details, and inability to catch the life of action—to depict sublime height or depth of mood. His dramas, though noble examples of ambition, are theatrical failures, written for the brain, not for the eye; forced, not intuitive; intellectual exercises, destitute of dramatic spirit in the Shakespearean sense.

Without the sweep or power of the great wits—Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, and the Elizabethans, to whom the natural taste of mankind will recur forever—he is the first of present English poets in the union of intellect, imagination, and literary form; in wisdom, melody, adroitness, in faith and doubt, in the poetic use of scientific materials, he is, by eminence, the representative of our refined, speculative, and composite age.

**Character.**—Reading him we may not guess his life and story so easily and reliably as we trace those of Byron; nevertheless, his essential qualities are in his work, not of head alone, but also of heart. From no other data than his verses, we conclude with confidence that he is a tranquil, well-proportioned soul, who rarely attains to the fire of the strongest; that he possesses a rare combination of the critical faculty and the producing power; that he is endowed with an earnest capacity for reflection, with a luxurious sense of rhythm, color, and form; that he has an exquisite perception of beauty, a deep ethical insight, associated with a turn for metaphysical analysis; that he is a sympathetic and close observer of Nature; that he is a painstaking, hardworking poet; that he has the culture of the university; that his humanity is not a passion; that he is never carried away by theories; that he is not the man to lead a reform; that, unlike the great novelists and dramatists who have studied character in the thick of the crowd, he—like Wordsworth—has cultivated calm reverie in the seclusion of rural haunts; that he is at least moderately prosperous in externals, leading a life of exclusive devotion to art; that without being an enthusiast he is nobly and tenderly moral. How much personal purity and thoughtfulness, delicacy of feeling, constancy of faith, ideality of conception, are revealed in these touches alone:



'Look through mine eyes with thine. True wife,  
Round my true heart thine arms entwine;  
My other dearer life in life,  
Look through my very soul with thine!'<sup>1</sup>

'Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,  
Tears from the depth of some divine despair  
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,  
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,  
And thinking of the days that are no more.'<sup>2</sup>

'More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of. . . .  
For what are men better than sheep or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?  
*For so the whole round earth is every way,  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.'*<sup>3</sup>

'Love took up the glass of Time, and turned it in his glowing hands;  
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.  
Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might;  
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, passed in music out of sight.'<sup>4</sup>

**Influence.**—Novel and despised at first, he has become a classic in his own lifetime. His aim has been pure and lofty, his teaching wholesome and elevating. He has claims upon our gratitude as a purifier and guardian of our language. Not many writers have given such delight to the reading world of their day. Byron has ministered to the appetite for poetry in the people by warmth and force of passion; he, by weight of thought and richness of poetic speech. How many of his lines and phrases, noble or wise, like the following, have become fixed in the popular memory:

'Tis better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all.'

'For words, like Nature, half reveal,  
And half conceal, the soul within.'

'There lives more faith in honest doubt,  
Believe me, than in half the creeds.'

'Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
And simple faith than Norman blood.'

Doubtless there will be, as there have been, periods of favor and rejection. Taste will change. Fashions fly. But when new generations have revised the judgment of the present, there will surely remain for him a high and abiding place.

<sup>1</sup>*The Miller's Daughter.* <sup>2</sup>*The Princess.* <sup>3</sup>*The Passing of Arthur.* <sup>4</sup>*Locksley Hall.*

## HAWTHORNE.

There was something of strangeness even in his cherished intimacies, as if he set himself afar from all, and from himself with the rest; the most diffident of men, as coy as a maiden, he could only be won by some cunning artifice, his reserve was so habitual, his isolation so entire, the solitude so vast.—*A. Bronson Alcott.*

**Biography.**—Born on the Fourth of July, 1804, in Salem, Massachusetts, a village famous in Puritan annals for its persecutions; his mother beautiful, with remarkable eyes, and a mind of singular purity; his father warm-hearted and kindly, of a reticent disposition, a sea-captain, who spent all his leisure time over books; early accompanied his widowed mother and his sister to Maine, where, amid the shadows of the pine forests, he ‘lived like a bird of the air,’ and developed his ‘cursed habits of solitude’; was sent by his uncle to the ‘best schools,’ one of his instructors being Worcester, the author of the Dictionary; graduated in 1825 from Bowdoin College, where he did ‘a hundred things that the Faculty never heard of’; returned to his native town, as to ‘the inevitable centre of the universe,’ and devoted his days to solitary reverie amid the ghostly scenes of witch trials and hangings; started a paper—‘price twelve cents per annum, payment to be made at the end of the year’; became a periodical contributor, threw wild fancies into dim, dreamy tales, under the alluring spell which kindled his imagination; held office in the Boston Custom-House under Bancroft; joined with some friends in a socialistic scheme called the ‘Brook Farm Community,’ which ended in failure; married, and lived in the ‘old manse’ at Concord; appointed Surveyor of Customs at the port of witch-haunted Salem; removed to Lenox, in Berkshire, where he lived in ‘the ugliest little old red farm-house that you ever saw’; back to Concord, then to Liverpool as consul; travelled in Europe, came home, and settled forever under the Concord hill, where he passed delectable hours, ‘in the hottest part of the day, stretched out my lazy length with a book in my hand or an unwritten book in my thoughts.’ He died suddenly—as had been his lifelong desire—on the 19th of May, 1864; and now rests, with Thoreau and Emerson, in the cemetery of Sleepy Hollow, on a pine-covered slope overlooking historic fields and the reposeful Concord,—the river of peace.

**Writings.**—If you would understand the secret of his genius and his power, imagine a contemplative mind, with a predilection for rusty parchments and the days of Puritan witchcraft; a mind that inclines to the analysis and representation of moral anomalies, that revels in the mixture of dark and bright which produces the ‘blazes of the infernal regions’; a mind that delights to explore mysteries, carefully, deliberately, stating to itself a problem, then proceeding calmly, coolly to its solution; a mind that seizes upon some phase of human experience, withdraws it from the atmosphere of actual life into the twilight of its own reserve, and clothes it there with concrete and living form; a mind that selects for its task the development of effects on character of an absorbing idea or conviction, and, inverting the process of De Foe, suppresses outward incident in order to concentrate attention upon inner movement. Thus *Edward Fane’s Rosebud* is the story of a blooming damsel who, with the revengeful hope of breaking her false lover’s heart, imprisons her buoyant youth with the torpid age of another who sickens and dies, his brain so palsied with his body that its utmost energy is peevishness. But his groans and misery have proved a more potent spell to knit her affections than gayety and grace:

‘When the palsied old man was gone, even her early lover could not have supplied his place. She had dwelt in a sick-chamber, and been the companion of a half-dead wretch, till she could scarcely breathe in a free air, and felt ill at ease with the healthy and the happy. She missed the fragrance of the doctor’s stuff. She walked the chamber with a noiseless footfall. If visitors came in, she spoke in soft and soothing accents, and was startled and shocked by their loud voices. Often in the lonesome evening, she looked timorously from the fireside to the bed, with almost a hope of recognizing a ghastly face upon the pillow. Then went her thoughts sadly to her husband’s grave.’

She loves even infirmity for the sake of the dead; in his semblance disease itself wins her for a bride, and she gains a home in every chamber of pain or woe, thoroughly imbued with all that is saddest in the doom of mortals:

‘An awful woman! She is the patron saint of young physicians, and the bosom friend of old ones. In the mansions where she enters, the inmates provide themselves black garments, the coffin-maker follows her, and the bell tolls as she comes away from the threshold. Death himself has met her at so many a bed-side, that he puts forth his bony hand to greet Nurse Toothaker.’

At bottom, again, every man is solitary; and the crape which hides the countenance of the mild parson in *The Minister’s Black Veil* is but a symbol of the veil which is on all faces. By the visible assertion of his isolation, he becomes an object of

thrilling wonder or fear to beholders. A preternatural horror seems interwoven with the threads of his mysterious emblem. Like Pythagoras behind his screen or in his sable robes, he acquires an awful power over souls. Yet not from caprice or vanity had he chosen to wear the dismal shade:

‘In truth, his own antipathy to the veil was known to be so great, that he never willingly passed before a mirror, nor stooped to drink at a still fountain, lest, in its peaceful bosom, he should be affrighted by himself. . . . With self-shuddering and outward terrors, he walked continually in its shadow, groping darkly within his own soul, or gazing through a medium that saddened the whole world.’

Even on his dying bed:

‘In his most convulsive struggles, and in the wildest vagaries of his intellect, when no other thought retained its sober influence, he still showed an awful solicitude lest the black veil should slip aside.’

After all, the solitude of another, if you think of it deeply, is less incomprehensible, less startling, than your own. With the breath rattling in his throat, the old man cries to the pale and wondering spectators:

“‘Why do you tremble at me alone? . . . Tremble also at each other! Have men avoided me, and women shown no pity, and children screamed and fled, only for my black veil? What, but the mystery which it obscurely typifies, had made this piece of crape so awful? When the friend shows his inmost heart to his friend; the lover to his best beloved; when man does not vainly shrink from the eye of his Creator, loathsomely treasuring up the secret of his sin; then deem me a monster, for the symbol beneath which I have lived, and die! I look around me, and, lo! on every visage a Black Veil!’”

So in *Rappacini's Daughter*, where a philosopher who has devoted himself to occult studies, nourishes, in his zeal for science, his beautiful child upon the same poisons which have given so rich a lustre and so sweet but deadly a perfume to the rare flowers which fill his garden. The malignant influence, gradually administered, becomes essential to health and conducive to loveliness; but the insect that comes within the atmosphere of her breath instantly dies, and her very touch is fatal. Gentle, pure, worthiest to be worshipped, she shudders at herself. She loves, and by Rappacini's skill her lover is likewise bewitched. He suspects the fearful truth, and, resolving to institute some decisive test, hastens to the florists, purchases a bouquet, and retains it in his hand:

‘A thrill of indefinable horror shot through his frame on perceiving that those dewy flowers were already beginning to droop; they wore the aspect of things that had been fresh and lovely yesterday. Giovanni grew white as marble, and stood motionless before the mirror staring at his own reflection there as at the likeness of something frightful. He remembered Baglioni's remark about the fragrance that seemed to pervade the chamber. It must have been the poison in his breath!’

His passion seems blended equally of love and horror. He seeks Beatrice, and his rage, quelled for a moment by the presence of the heavenly angel, breaks forth from its sullen gloom as lightning from the cloud:

“Thou hast done it! Thou hast blasted me! Thou hast filled my veins with poison! Thou hast made me as hateful, as ugly, as loathsome and deadly a creature as thyself,—a world’s wonder of hideous monstrosity! Now, if our breath be happily as fatal to ourselves as to all others, let us join our lips in one kiss of unutterable hatred, and so die!”

Innocent that he has been imbued with the poison, she bids him mingle with his race and forget her. He breathes upon a swarm of insects circling round his head, and smiles bitterly as a score of them fall to the ground:

“I see it! I see it!” shrieked Beatrice. “It is my father’s fatal science! No, no, Giovanni; it was not I! Never! never! I dreamed only to love thee and be with thee a little time, and so to let thee pass away, leaving but thine image in mine heart.”

A mournful sense, not without tenderness, of their separation from humanity comes over him, and he mentions a redeeming medicine, which may restore them within the ‘limits of ordinary nature.’ The powerful antidote kills her; and as she sinks she murmurs:

“I would fain have been loved, not feared. . . . But now it matters not. I am going, father, where the evil which thou has striven to mingle with my being will pass away like a dream,—like the fragrance of these poisonous flowers, which will no longer taint my breath among the flowers of Eden. Farewell, Giovanni! Thy words of hatred are like lead within my heart; but they, too, will fall away as I ascend. O, was there not, from the first, more poison in thy nature than in mine?”

The *Blithedale Romance*, founded on the experiment at Brook Farm, depicts the perilous and often ruinous effects of philanthropy on the individual, when it becomes, in one exclusive channel, a ruling enthusiasm. A knot of transcendental dreamers separate themselves from the greedy, self-seeking, ‘swinish multitude,’ and undertake the establishment of a modern Arcadia, the basis of the institution being the purpose ‘to offer up the earnest toil of our bodies as a prayer no less than an effort for the advancement of our race.’ But the Arcadians find that the desired solitude charms only by its contrast with the civilization they have left:

‘While our enterprise lay all in theory, we had pleased ourselves with delectable visions of the spiritualization of labor. It was to be our form of prayer and ceremonial of worship. Each stroke of the hoe was to uncover some aromatic root of wisdom heretofore hidden from the sun. Pausing in the field, to let the wind exhale the moisture from our foreheads, we were to look upward, and catch glimpses into the far-off soul of



truth. In this point of view, matters did not turn out quite so well as we anticipated. It is very true that, sometimes, gazing casually around me, out of the midst of my toil, I used to discern a richer picturesqueness in the visible scene of earth and sky. There was at such moments a novelty, an unwonted aspect, on the face of Nature, as if she had been taken by surprise and seen at unawares, with no opportunity to put off her real look, and assume the mask with which she mysteriously hides herself from mortals. But this was all. The clods of earth which we so constantly belabored and turned over and over, were never etherealized into thought. Our thoughts, on the contrary, were fast becoming cloddish. Our labor symbolized nothing, and left us mentally sluggish in the dusk of the evening. Intellectual activity is incompatible with any large amount of bodily exercise. The yeoman and the scholar—the yeoman and the man of finest moral culture, though not the man of sturdiest sense and integrity—are two distinct individuals, and can never be melted or welded into one substance.'

The real interest, however, depends upon the delineation of the tender passion under the modified forms it assumes in Zenobia, a high-spirited woman, whose life is hopelessly entangled with a villain's; in Priscilla, a butterfly maiden, whose nerves are fragile harp-strings, endowing her with 'sybilline attributes'; in Coverdale, a generous poet, who begins his career with strenuous aspirations, which are extinguished with his youthful fervor; in Hollingsworth, a Hercules, of noble impulse but narrow range of sympathy and thought, whose castle in the air is the construction of an edifice for the reformation and mental culture of criminals,—a bond-slave to a theory.

The *House of the Seven Gables* is a history of retribution. In the long past a Colonel Pyncheon, a grasping Puritan, had been instrumental, with invidious acrimony, in one Matthew Maule's execution for the crime of witchcraft; and the condemned had uttered a prophecy from the scaffold: 'God will give him blood to drink!' On the soil for which he had disputed with the dead—over the spot first covered by the log-built hut of the wizard,—the relentless persecutor erects a spacious mansion, and dies suddenly in one of its rooms at the appointed hour of its consecration. A shadow henceforth hangs, like a murky pall of judgment, over the heads of his descendants, who cling to the seven-gabled house from father to son, from generation to generation. The rustiness and infirmity of age gather over it. A large dim mirror is fabled to contain within its depths all the shapes of the departed Pyncheons. The progenitor's half-effaced picture remains affixed to the wall of the room in which he died. Every detail points backward. The most considerable reality seems to be, not the white-oak frames, the boards,

shingles, and crumbling plaster, but the story of human existence latent in the upreared venerable peaks:

'So much of mankind's varied experience had passed there,—so much had been suffered, and something, too, enjoyed,—that the very timbers were oozy, as with the moisture of a heart. It was itself like a great human heart, with a life of its own, and full of rich and sombre reminiscences.'

The distinctive traits of the founder live in the blood and brains of his posterity, and the curse flung from the scaffold becomes a part of their inheritance. If one of them gurgles in his throat, a by-stander is likely to whisper, 'He has Maule's blood to drink!' The sudden demise of a Pyncheon a hundred years ago is held as giving additional probability to the current opinion. Thirty years before the story opens, one member of the family is sentenced to perpetual imprisonment for the murder of another. The little shop which 'old maid Pyncheon' now reopens, was opened a century since by a miserly ancestor who is supposed to haunt it:

'The old counter, shelves, and other fixtures of the little shop remained just as he had left them. It used to be affirmed that the dead shopkeeper, in a white wig, a faded velvet coat, an apron at his waist, and his ruffles carefully turned back from his wrists, might be seen through the chinks of the shutters, any night of the year, ransacking his till, or poring over the dingy pages of his day-book. From the look of unutterable woe upon his face, it appeared to be his doom to spend eternity in a vain effort to make his accounts balance.'

The principal representative of the family, worldly, hardened, outwardly respectable, is stricken dead by apoplexy, in the ancestral arm-chair, while he is bent on the most wicked project of his life. Even the exhausted breed of aristocratic fowls form a tragic aspect of the law of descent, embodying the traditional peculiarities of their whole line, 'derived through an unbroken succession of eggs':

'Chanticleer himself, though stalking on two stilt-like legs, with the dignity of interminable descent in all his gestures, was hardly bigger than an ordinary partridge; his two wives were about the size of quails; and as for the one chicken, it looked small enough to be still in the egg, and, at the same time, sufficiently old, withered, wizened, and experienced, to have been the founder of the antiquated race. Instead of being the youngest of the family, it rather seemed to have aggregated into itself the ages, not only of these living specimens of the breed, but of all its fore-fathers and fore-mothers, whose united excellences and oddities were squeezed into its little body. Its mother evidently regarded it as the one chicken of the world, and as necessary, in fact, to the world's continuance, or, at any rate, to the equilibrium of the present system of affairs, whether in church or state. No lesser sense of the infant fowl's importance could have justified, even in a mother's eyes, the perseverance with which she watched over its safety ruffling her small person to twice its proper size, and flying in everybody's face that so much as looked toward her hopeful progeny. No lower estimate could have vindicated the indefatigable zeal with which she scratched, and her nuscrapulousness in digging up

the choicest flower or vegetable, for the sake of the fat earth-worm at its root. Her nervous cluck, when the chicken happened to be hidden in the long grass or under the squash leaves; her gentle croak of satisfaction, while sure of it beneath her wing; her note of ill-concealed fear and obstreperous defiance, when she saw her arch-enemy, a neighbor's cat, on the top of a high fence:—one or other of these sounds was to be heard at almost every moment of the day. By degrees, the observer came to feel nearly as much interest in this chicken of illustrious race as the mother-hen did.'

The characters are described, not self-manifested. Clifford is 'an abortive lover of the beautiful,' whose artist-instinct reduces his entire nature to a refined, unconscious selfishness, a forlorn voyager from the Islands of the Blest, his tendencies hideously thwarted, the records of infinite sorrow across his brow. Hepzibah is a mixture of pathos and humor, whose undying remembrance of vanished affection dries up the well-springs of being. The beam of sunshine in the dismal picture is Phœbe, so cheery, so natural, so innocent, so sweet:

'Natural tunefulness made Phœbe seem like a bird in a shadowy tree; or conveyed the idea that the stream of life warbled through her heart as a brook sometimes warbles through a pleasant little dell. It betokened the cheeriness of an active temperament, finding joy in its activity, and, therefore, rendering it beautiful; it was a New England trait,—the stern old stuff of Puritanism with a gold thread in the web.'

Eternal and illimitable are the consequences of human action. This, also, is the fundamental conception of the *Scarlet Letter*,—the fruits of wrong-doing as displayed in two natures, intrinsically fine, marred by their joint sin; Hester Prynne, who is publicly branded with the shame, and the Rev. Dimmesdale, whose guilt is not published, but who is frantic with the stings of conscience. Add to these, subordinately, the elfish Pearl, who is the offspring of the transgression, and Chillingworth, the injured and vindictive husband.

The unfortunate Hester is sentenced to stand in the market-place, on the platform of the pillory, exposed to a thousand unrelenting eyes, all concentrated at the ignominious letter,—a scarlet A, wrought elaborately on the bosom of her dress, and to be worn there for the remainder of her days. She does not betray the partner of her iniquity, and the magistrates lay their heads together in vain. She realizes that she will become the symbol at which the preacher and the moralist will point. Children creep nigh enough to behold her in the thatched cottage on the outskirts of the town, then scamper off with a strange, contagious fear; or they pursue her with shrill cries as she glides silently through the streets. The poor, upon whom she bestows

her charity, often revile her. The rich contrive drops of anguish for her. Maidens glance at the symbol, shyly and aside. The vulgar aver that it may be seen glowing all alight in the dark, 'red-hot with infernal fire'! What scrutiny, what inquisition!—

'It seemed to argue so wide a diffusion of her shame, that all nature knew of it; it could have caused her no deeper pang, had the leaves of the trees whispered the dark story among themselves,—had the summer breeze murmured about it,—had the wintry blast shrieked it aloud! Another peculiar torture was felt in the gaze of a new eye. When strangers looked curiously at the scarlet letter,—and none ever failed to do so,—they branded it afresh in Hester's soul; so that, oftentimes, she could scarcely refrain, yet always did refrain, from covering the symbol with her hand. But then, again, an accustomed eye had likewise its own anguish to inflict. Its cool stare of familiarity was intolerable. From first to last, in short, Hester Prynne had always this dreadful agony in feeling a human eye upon the token. The spot never grew callous; it seemed, on the contrary, to grow more sensitive with daily torture.'

Naturally, under this pitiless condemnation and scorn of the Puritan, she accepts her exclusion, but hardens, and sees the fabric of society somewhat awry:

'For years past she had looked from an estranged point of view at human institutions. . . . Shame, Despair, Solitude! These had been her teachers,—stern and wild ones,—and they had made her strong, but taught her much amiss.'

Hourly the unhappy minister abhors himself in dust and ashes. Ever the concealed sin rankles and festers. His trouble drives him to the vain practices of Romanism as penance. He keeps vigils, fasts, scourges himself. More than once he has gone into the pulpit with a purpose to confess himself a pollution and a lie, but falls instead into wild self-accusations of general depravity. His flock only reverence him the more. 'The godly youth,' they say. 'The saint on earth! Alas, if he discern such sinfulness in his own white soul, what horrid spectacle would he behold in thine or mine!' His very burden inspires a sad, persuasive eloquence:

'They fancied him the mouthpiece of Heaven's messages of wisdom, and rebuke, and love. In their eyes, the very ground on which he trod was sanctified. The virgins of his church grew pale around him, victims of a passion so imbued with religious sentiment that they imagined it to be all religion, and brought it openly, in their white bosoms, as their most acceptable sacrifice before the altar. The aged members of his flock, beholding Mr. Dimmesdale's frame so feeble, while they were themselves so rugged in their infirmity, believed that he would go heavenward before them, and enjoined it upon their children, that their old bones should be buried close to their young pastor's holy grave.'

His misery is intensified unspeakably by the refined torture of the husband, who, under the same roof, in the character of physician, seeks revenge like an artist who probes calmly to the bottom of the wound to paint with joy a living agony.

Chillingworth, the student and recluse, is transformed into a fiend by the wrong that turns his learning and experience into a curse. He lives only to keep the destroyer of his happiness on the rack. When his wasting patient — creeping to the scaffold where Hester had stood — confesses his infamy to the horror-stricken multitude, and sinks exhausted, he kneels, with a blank countenance, from which the life seems to have departed, and repeats, again and again, ‘Thou hast escaped me!’ Thenceforward, strength and energy desert him. He withers, shrivels, and fades from the circle of human activities. Hatred and love may leave us alike forlorn and desolate.

Little Pearl is an almost anomalous creature, illustrating with infinite variety the truth that what is sown must be reaped. Partly from wanton mischief, partly from the singular fascination of the subject, she is the ‘messenger of anguish’ to her parents, constantly fretting the ever open wounds of both. She is at once a pain and a solace. Though affectionate, her delight is in the scarlet A. Her first baby smile was at the gold embroidery, which becomes the curiosity of her childhood. She throws wild-flowers at it, dancing with glee whenever she hits it. She associates it with the minister’s custom of putting his hand over his heart when agitated. She seeks pertinaciously to force his public acknowledgment of herself and her mother. ‘But wilt thou promise to take my hand, and mother’s hand, to-morrow noontide?’ When he kisses her, she runs to the brook, and bathes her forehead till the unwelcome impress is ‘diffused through a long lapse of gliding water.’ When she misses the flaming stigma from Hester’s breast, she will not approach till it has been fastened on again. Then:

‘In a mood of tenderness that was not usual with her, she drew down her mother’s head, and kissed her brow and both her cheeks. But then — by a kind of necessity that always impelled this child to alloy whatever comfort she might chance to give with a throb of anguish — Pearl put up her mouth, and kissed the scarlet letter too!’

A bud plucked from a wild-rose bush, or a tropic bird of rich plumage, ever poised for flight; a wayward, impulsive, imperious being, whose elements, beautiful and brilliant, are ‘all in disorder,’ the untempered effluence of a passionate moment, the reflex of the medium through which had been transmitted the rays of its moral life.

The central idea of the *Marble Faun* — called by the English



publishers *Transformation*—is the necessity of sin to convert the ‘natural’ man into a moral agent. Its whole ideal essence is the imaginative rendering of this notion—that a perfect culture is impossible to a state of simple, unconscious innocence; that we are but imperfect and partial so long as our condition is one of mere guilelessness; that the higher humanity can be evolved only through moral and spiritual struggle. The characters are drawn to exhibit the development of the doctrine: Donatello, rumored to be descended from an ancient Faun, sportive, joyous, instinctive, unreflectingly, spontaneously happy, awakened to higher responsibilities and a higher destiny by his remorse for an impulsive crime—his personal fall and his repentance; Miriam, an artist, with whom he falls in love, ardent and gifted, in whom—enthralled to a sinister personage—there is one of ‘those fatalities which are among the most insoluble riddles propounded to mortal comprehension’; Hilda, who is the silver lining to the cloud, a fair, sweet, sanctifying presence, ‘whom God has set here in an evil world, and given her only a white robe, and bid her wear it back to Him, as white as when she put it on.’ Here, as in the other romances, little is made of outward actualities. Incident plays a comparatively insignificant part. The crisis is reached in the middle, where Donatello, walking with Miriam on a moonlight night, discovers her persecutor under the shadow of an archway, seizes him, reads in her eye a fierce assent, then hurls him over the precipice of the Tarpeian rock. In the description of this scene we have an instance of Hawthorne’s fondness for studying and dissecting a mixture of emotions mutually repellent:

“‘Did you not mean that he should die?’ sternly asked Donatello, still in the glow of that intelligence which passion had developed in him. “‘There was short time to weigh the matter; but he had his trial in that breath or two while I held him over the cliff, and his sentence in that one glance, when your eyes responded to mine! Say that I have slain him against your will,—say that he died without your whole consent,—and, in another breath, you shall see me lying beside him.’” “O, never!” cried Miriam. “My one, own friend! Never, never, never!” She turned to him,—the guilty, blood-stained, lonely woman,—she turned to her fellow-criminal, the youth, so lately innocent, whom she had drawn into her doom. She pressed him close, close to her bosom, with a clinging embrace that brought their two hearts together, till the horror and agony of each was combined into one emotion, and that a kind of rapture.

“Yes, Donatello, you speak the truth!” said she; “my heart consented to what you did. We two slew yonder wretch. The deed knots us together for time and eternity, like the coil of a serpent!”

The subsidiary and extraneous portions—criticisms on Art, delin-

eations of Italian scenery and Roman antiquities—possess an interest and a value of their own. His analysis of the marble Faun of Praxiteles affords the key-note to the book:

'The Faun is the marble image of a young man, leaning his right arm on the trunk or stump of a tree; one hand hangs carelessly by his side; in the other he holds the fragment of a pipe, or some such sylvan instrument of music. His only garment—a lion's skin, with the claws upon his shoulder—falls half way down his back, leaving the limbs and entire front of the figure nude. The form thus displayed is marvellously graceful, but has a fuller and more rounded outline, more flesh, and less of heroic muscle than the old sculptors were wont to assign to their types of masculine beauty. The character of the face corresponds with the figure. . . . The whole statue—unlike anything else that ever was wrought in that severe material of marble—conveys the idea of an amiable and sensual creature, easy, mirthful, apt for jollity, yet not incapable of being touched by pathos. . . . Perhaps it is the very lack of moral severity, of any high and heroic ingredient in the character of the Faun, that makes it so delightful an object to the human eye and to the frailty of the human heart. The being here represented is endowed with no principle of virtue, and would be incapable of comprehending such; but he would be true and honest by dint of his simplicity. We should expect from him no sacrifice or effort for an abstract cause; there is not an atom of martyr's stuff in all that softened marble; but he has a capacity for strong and warm attachment, and might act devotedly through its impulse, and even die for it at need. It is possible, too, that the Faun might be educated through the medium of his emotions, so that the coarser animal portion of his nature might eventually be thrown into the back-ground, though never utterly expelled.'

With a loftier aim and a wider range, this work lacks the intensity of the *Scarlet Letter*, which, for concentrated power, sustained tone, and culminating effect, is the greatest production of this genius.

**Style.**—Simpler, clearer, more elegant English has never—even by Swift, Addison, or Goldsmith—been made the vehicle of thought and emotion equally profound, delicate, variant, and tortuous. Singularly choice and appropriate in diction; flowing and placid in movement, always sweet and pellucid, giving to objects a subtle ethereal aspect. His pen is a magician's wand, 'creating the semblance of a world out of airy matter, with the impalpable beauty of a soap-bubble.' We have all been exhorted to give days and nights to Addison. Rather, let us give days and nights to Macaulay, Carlyle and Hawthorne.

**Rank.**—Standing aloof from common interests, looking at the present with shaded eyes, into the past with a half-wistful gaze, attracted by the remote, strange, and unusual, with a style admirably adapted to produce the effect of weird-like mystery,—Hawthorne is not a novelist. His fictions, in conception and performance, are always and essentially romances. Yet have they

a character of fundamental trueness to spiritual laws, of harmony with time, place, and circumstance,—of realism existing in an ideal atmosphere, or invested with the halo of a poetic medium. We have not the worn-out paraphernalia of abbeys, castles, courts, gentry, aristocracy, and sovereigns; but we have types, mental conditions,—beyond the sphere of habitual experience, indeed, yet belonging profoundly to spirit and to man. No civilization has produced a romantic genius at all comparable in power to his. Other writers have been more learned, more dramatic, more versatile, more comprehensive. His stories are generally deficient in converging unity. His personages seldom reveal themselves; but, as in the *Marble Faun*, we are told what they are, in page upon page of description, keen, minute, finished,—marvellous workmanship. No one ever depended so little upon plot or incident. Facts are subordinated to the influences with which they are charged. He is not a portrait-painter who sets forth a complete individuality. His forte is not in adventure, not in movement; but in the depiction of the rare and the occult, in the operation and results of involved and conflicting motives, feelings, and tendencies. He is here a solitary original in English letters. It may be questioned whether the *Scarlet Letter*, as an example of imaginative writing, has its parallel in any literature.

We count him one of the elect spirits, and would take our chances of universality with him cheerfully. First in America as a writer of fiction, he has no superior in the language as a literary artist. He is something more than this. He is also an art-critic, of deep and thorough insight, of refined and liberal sympathies. Witness his criticisms of the Faun, the Dying Gladiator, or Guido's Archangel and the Dragon. Consider him also as a speculative observer, a psychologist, a moralist. How many of the select few who are placed at the fountain-head of the streams of culture, afford so large a number and variety of sentences equally elegant and wise? We quote briefly, limiting ourselves to *Mosses from an Old Manse*:

'Each sect surrounds its own righteousness with a hedge of thorns.'

'The fantasies of one day are the deepest realities of a future one.'

'The prophet dies, and the man of torpid heart and sluggish brain lives on.'

'Each human soul is the first-created inhabitant of its own Eden.'

‘When we desire life for the attainment of an object, we recognize the frailty of its texture.’

‘Old age is not venerable when it embodies itself in lilacs, rose bushes, or any other ornamental shrub.’

‘Persons who can only be graceful and ornamental,—who can give the world nothing but flowers,—should die young.’

‘Every author has imagined and shaped out in his thought more and far better works than those which actually proceeded from his pen.’

‘On the soil of thought and in the garden of the heart, as well as in the sensual world, lie withered leaves—the ideas and feelings that we have done with.’

‘It is as we grow old in life, when objects begin to lose their freshness of hue and our souls the delicacy of perception, that the spirit of beauty is most needed.’

‘Some persons assimilate only what is ugly and evil from the same moral circumstances which supply good and beautiful results—the fragrance of celestial flowers—to the daily life of others.’

‘Sweet must have been the spring-time of Eden, when no earlier year had strewn its decay upon the virgin turf, and no former experience had ripened into summer and faded into autumn in the hearts of its inhabitants.’

**Character.**—Of sombre, retrospective temperament and tendencies, cultivated by solitude, pursuits, and studies. He could pass delicious hours among the old advertisements in the Boston newspaper files. The English State Trials were enchanting reading. In Maine, during the moonlight nights of winter, he would skate until midnight all alone on the Sebago Lake. He liked better to meet the sexton of a church than the rector, and loved to wander among graves, reading the epitaphs on moss-grown slabs. He had a predilection for the remote, the shadowy, the vague. We discover, in his introduction to the *Scarlet Letter*, the element congenial to him:

‘Moonlight, in a familiar room, falling so 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 book-case; the picture on the wall;—all these details, so completely seen, are so spiritualized 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 fairy-land, where the actual and the imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other.’

The atmosphere he demands is not that of broad and simple daylight, but of a poetic or fairy precinct. ‘Romance and poetry,

ivy, lichens, and wall-flowers, need ruin to make them grow.' Or a far-off cloud-land, the debatable border between the natural and the supernatural: 'Fain would I search out the meaning of words, faintly gasped with intermingled sobs, and broken sentences, half audibly spoken between earth and the Judgment-seat!' Hence the fascination which the occult and mysterious had for him. His pages remind us continually of the unseen and inscrutable; of secret associations linking things the most improbable; of unsuspected properties in Nature, which affect us hourly; of strange, subtle sympathies between individuals, between ourselves and inanimate objects:

'The sympathy or magnetism among human beings is more subtle and universal than we think; it exists, indeed, among different classes of organized life, and vibrates from one to another. A flower, for instance, as Phœbe herself observed, always began to droop sooner in Clifford's hand, or Hepzibah's, than in her own; and by the same laws converting her whole daily life into a flower-fragrance for these two sickly spirits, the blooming girl must inevitably droop and fade much sooner than if worn on a younger and happier breast.'

This suggests his inclination to fatalistic views, due to inherited Puritanism on the one hand, and to his training in a school of mystic idealism on the other. The present ever springs from the past. An evil deed is invested with the character of doom; always vital, though it may slumber here; finally irresistible, though it may be ineffective there, obedient ever to eternal law. The universe will keep it in remembrance: 'All the powers of nature call so earnestly for the confession of sin, that these black weeds have sprung up out of a buried heart to make manifest an unspoken crime.' The idea of relentless justice, of the implacableness of a holy God towards the guilty, of the impassable chasm between innocence and sin,—was the soul of the Greek Nemesis; it has been central to the most profound discussions of Pagan theology; it was prominent in the austere code of Puritanic faith; it pervades the romances of Hawthorne. Turn to the *Scarlet Letter* or the *Marble Faun*. Miriam the fallen appeals to Hilda the pure for sympathy; but a voiceless, everlasting gulf yawns between them:

'Standing on the utmost verge of that dark chasm, she might stretch out her hand and never clasp a hand of theirs; she might strive to call out, "Help, friends! help!" but, as with dreamers when they shout, her voice would perish inaudibly in the remoteness that seemed such a little way. This perception of an infinite, shivering solitude, amid which we cannot come close enough to human beings to be warmed by them, and where they turn to cold, chilly shapes of mist, is one of the most forlorn results of any



accident, misfortune, crime, or peculiarity of character that puts an individual ajar with the world.'

One effect of these darker traits is apparent in his peculiar humor, which, always fanciful, is often grotesque, and sometimes grim. One of his notes, suggesting a theme for a story, assumes that two persons make their wills in each other's favor, each waiting patiently for the death of the other, till informed that the long-desired event has occurred, then hasten to be present at each other's funeral, and meet in perfect health. Again, 'Curious to imagine what murmurings and discontent would be excited if any of the great so-called calamities of human beings were to be abolished,—as, for instance, death.' Elsewhere we have the case of a man who tries to be happy in love, but is unable really to give his heart, or to prevent the affair from seeming a mere dream. The degenerated aristocratic hens lay now and then an egg, and hatch a chicken, 'not for any pleasure of their own, but that the world might not absolutely lose what had once been so admirable a breed of fowls.' Of his secluded study in the Old Manse he says:

'When I first saw the room, its walls were blackened with the smoke of unnumbered years, and made still blacker by the grim prints of Puritan ministers that hung around. These worthies looked strangely like bad angels, or at least like men who had wrestled so continually and so sternly with the Devil that somewhat of his sooty fierceness had been imparted to their own visages.'

Of the monkish practice at Rome of taking the longest-buried skeleton out of the oldest grave to make room for a new corpse of the brotherhood, then building the disinterred bones into architectural devices, he says:

'Thus each of the good friars, in his turn, enjoys the luxury of a consecrated bed, attended with the slight drawback of being forced to get up long before daybreak, as it were, and make room for another lodger.'

Thus constituted, it is not surprising that he regarded human beings as psychological phenomena, observed and studied from some speculative outpost. He is a spectator of the drama, sympathetic, but curious and interpretative. His part is like that of Miles Coverdale in the Blithedale enterprise:

'It resembles that of the chorus in a classic play, which seems to be set aloof from the possibility of personal concernment, and bestows the whole measure of its hope or fear, its exultation or sorrow, on the fortunes of others, between whom and itself this sympathy is the only bond.'

He was constitutionally shy, recluse. Gossip represents him as inaccessible to invitations; that he would scale a fence and

take to the fields, to avoid a stranger on the highway. 'During all the time he lived near me,' says Alcott, 'our estates being separated only by a gate and shaded avenue, I seldom caught sight of him; and when I did, it was but to lose it the moment he suspected he was visible.' 'Destiny itself,' he tells us, 'has often been worsted in the attempt to get me out to dinner.'

He strove against his peculiar moods, his reticence and his melancholy. He assures his publisher: 'When I get home, I will try to write a more genial book (than the *Marble Faun*); but the Devil himself always seems to get into my inkstand, and I can only exorcise him by pensful at a time.' Yet the sunny and genial scenes of childhood and natural beauty, which abound in his works, prove his general healthiness. Read *Little Annie's Ramble* or *The Old Manse* for the May-morning freshness of a calm peaceful soul that looks upon all things with the spirit of love. For example, the following:

'In August the grass is still verdant on the hills and in the valleys; the foliage of the trees is as dense as ever and as green; the flowers gleam forth in richer abundance along the margins of the river, and by the stone walls, and deep among the woods; the days, too, are as fervid now as they were a month ago; and yet in every breath of wind and in every beam of sunshine we hear the whispered farewell, and behold the parting smile of a dear friend. There is a coolness amid all the heat, a mildness in the blazing noon. Not a breeze can stir but it thrills us with the breath of autumn. A pensive glory is seen in the far, golden beams, among the shadows of the trees. The flowers—even the brightest of them, and they are the most gorgeous of the year—have this gentle sadness wedded to their pomp, and typify the character of the delicious time each within itself. The brilliant cardinal-flower has never seemed gay to me. Still later in the season Nature's tenderness waxes stronger. It is impossible not to be fond of our mother now; for she is so fond of us! At other periods she does not make this impression on me, or only at rare intervals; but in those genial days of autumn when she has perfected her harvests and accomplished every needful thing that was given her to do, then she overflows with a blessed superfluity of love. She has labor to caress her children now. It is good to be alive and at such times. Thank Heaven for breath,—yes, for mere breath,—when it is made up of a heavenly breeze like this? It comes with a real kiss upon our cheeks; it would linger fondly around us if it might; but, since it must be gone, it embraces us with its whole kindly heart, and passes onward to embrace likewise the next thing that it meets. A blessing is flung abroad and scattered far and wide over the earth, to be gathered up by all who choose. I recline upon the still unwithered grass and whisper to myself, "O perfect day! O beautiful world! O beneficent God!" And it is the promise of a blessed eternity; for our Creator would never have made such lovely days, and have given us the deep hearts to enjoy them, above and beyond all thought, unless we were meant to be immortal.'

He saw things on too many sides, heard too many voices within him, to be dogmatic, or even to render a decision on the questions he was prone to raise. An insoluble mystery faced him everywhere. Possibly, a natural indolence, as well as a natural timidity and a wise humility, may have had a share in his oscilla-

tion between divergent or opposing views of life and motives of conduct. This seems to be a characteristic attitude:

'The greatest obstacle to being heroic is the doubt whether one may not be going to prove one's self a fool; the truest heroism is, to resist the doubt; and the profoundest wisdom to know when it ought to be resisted, and when to be obeyed.'

Meditative, dreamy, coy, sincere, gentle, reverent; of refined taste, of tenderest affection in the domestic circle, of rare kindliness in personal intercourse; so shrinking, so exquisite.

'There is Hawthorne, with genius so shrinking and rare  
That you hardly at first see the strength that is there;  
A frame so robust, with a nature so sweet,  
So earnest, so graceful, so solid, so fleet,  
Is worth a descent from Olympus to meet. . . .  
When Nature was shaping him, clay was not granted  
For making so full-sized a man as she wanted,  
So, to fill out her model, a little she spared  
From some finer-grained stuff for a woman prepared.  
And she could not have hit a more excellent plan  
For making him fully and perfectly man.'<sup>1</sup>

**Influence.**—The drift and weight of his thought and art are on the side of purity, tenderness, and aspiration. He has too little sympathy with action and its responsibilities to be soon, if ever, widely popular. He is too ideal, too reflective, too deficient in excitement, to be relished by readers of the matter-of-fact type, or by such as require stirring incident, glittering brilliance, or whirlwind power. Like the greatest, he has had tardy recognition. To-day his position among men of imagination is commanding. His popularity will extend with the refinement of taste. By his unique vision and its inimitable form, he mounts into the silent blue of the constellations.

<sup>1</sup> *Fable for Critics.*

## LONGFELLOW.

His gracious presence upon earth  
 Was as a fire upon a hearth;  
 As pleasant songs, at morning sung,  
 The words that dropped from his sweet tongue  
 Strengthened our hearts, or, heard at night,  
 Made all our slumbers soft and light.—*Golden Legend.*

**Biography.**—Born in Portland, Maine, in 1807; his father, a man of some note in law and in politics, one of the early members of the House of Representatives; graduated from Bowdoin in 1825, in the same class as Hawthorne; was immediately appointed to the chair of Modern Languages and Literature in his *alma mater*, and, to fit himself more fully for his professorship, spent the next four years in Germany, France, Spain, and Italy; in 1837, having again visited Europe, removed to a similar chair in Harvard University, made vacant by the resignation of his friend Professor Ticknor; continued in the discharge of his official duties until 1854, when he resigned; received the degree of D.C.L. from the University of Oxford in 1869, and a complimentary vote for the Lord Rectorship of the University of Edinburgh in 1874. He died in March, 1882, mourned in two hemispheres by the greatest and the least, whose common experience and sentiments he had sung; in talent and fame, a man of steady growth; having had, beyond most, the satisfaction and joy of existence:

‘Type of the wise who soar but never roam,  
 True to the kindred points of heaven and home.’

**Writings.**—Living in the heart of the transcendental movement, yet apparently untouched by it, Longfellow wrote his first important work—*Hyperion*, a romance in poetic prose, vivid and beautiful from the vividness and beauty of the author’s own mind; charged with the sentiment and lore of storied and picturesque Europe, enriched, almost every page, with his fondness for color, his passion for music, or fine intimations of the gentle faith in which he lived. Thus:

‘When I take the history of one poor heart that has sinned and suffered, and represent to myself the struggles and temptations it has passed, the brief pulsations of joy, the feverish inquietude of hope and fear, the tears of regret, the feebleness of purpose, the pressure of want, the desertion of friends, the scorn of a world that has little charity, the desolation of the soul’s sanctuary, and threatening voices within; health gone, happiness gone; even hope, that stays longest with us, gone,—I have little heart for anything

but thankfulness that it is not so with me, and would fain leave the erring soul of my fellow-man with Him from whose hands it came.'

And still better, though of like tone,—neither optimistic nor pessimistic, simply submissive:

'Tell me, my soul, why art thou restless? Why dost thou look forward to the future with such strong desire? The present is thine, and the past; and the future shall be! Oh, that thou didst look forward to the great hereafter with half the longing wherewith thou longest for an earthly future, which a few days, at most, will bring thee!—to the meeting of the dead as to the meeting of the absent! Thou glorious spirit land! Oh, that I could behold thee as thou art, the region of light and life and love, and the dwelling-place of those beloved ones whose being has flowed onward, like a silver-clear stream into the solemn-sounding main, into the ocean of Eternity!'

*Evangeline*, based upon a legend of Acadia; a story of unsuccessful love, in which the heroine, exiled by the fortunes of war, seeks for her lover with pathetic constancy of purpose:

'Like a phantom she came, and passed away unremembered.  
Fair was she and young, when in hope began the long journey;  
Faded was she and old, when in disappointment it ended.'

She finds him at last, among the sick, in a plague-stricken city, where she had taken upon herself the duties of nurse:

'Then there escaped from her lips a cry of such terrible anguish,  
That the dying heard it, and started up from their pillows.'

*Golden Legend*, a mediæval tale, in form and design resembling *Faust*, but without symmetry, and not very intelligible; an ornament, as it were, in which, side by side with inferior substances some gems of the purest lustre are set; for example, the virginal prayer of Elsie:

'My Redeemer and my Lord,  
I beseech thee, I entreat thee,  
Guide me in each act and word,  
That hereafter I may meet thee,  
Watching, waiting, hoping, yearning,  
With my lamp well-trimmed and burning!'

Her reply to her parents when she communicates to them her resolution to offer her life for that of her Prince:

'Thou wilt not see it. I shall lie  
Beneath the flowers of another land;  
Far at Salerno, far away  
Over the mountains, over the sea;  
It is appointed me to die!  
And it will seem no more to thee  
Than if at the village on market-day  
I should a little longer stay  
Than I am used.'

Perhaps Longfellow's fame rests most securely on *Hiawatha*, the dirge of a departing race, in strains that sometimes recall



the passing of Arthur. Its best episodes are the accounts of the Son of the Evening Star, of the Ghosts and the Famine, of the hero's childhood, his wooing of Minnehaha, with its sorrowful sequel, so beautifully told:

“Farewell,” said he. “Minnehaha!  
Farewell, O my Laughing Water!  
All my heart is buried with you,  
All my thoughts go onward with you!  
Come not back again to labor,  
Come not back again to suffer,  
Where the Famine and the Fever  
Wear the heart and waste the body.  
Soon my task will be completed,  
Soon your footsteps I shall follow  
To the Islands of the Blessed.”

The poem, it may be said, sings the parable of human life,—its birth, love, death, civilization, and decay.

But Longfellow throws himself not more completely into the spirit of aboriginal Western life than into that of Northern Paganism in the *Challenge of Thor*—

‘Thou art a God, too,  
O Galilean!  
And thus single-handed  
Unto the combat,  
Gauntlet or Gospel,  
Here I defy thee!’

Or the *Skeleton in Armor*—

‘Once as I told in glee  
Tales of the stormy sea,  
Soft eyes did gaze on me,  
Burning yet tender;  
And as the white stars shine  
On the dark Norway pine,  
On that dark heart of mine  
Fell their soft splendor.’

Longfellow's earliest strains preluded the music of his prime, and his essential qualities, familiar emotion, clear thought, pure aspiration, simple melody, reappear in all his verse; in his longer as in his shorter pieces; in his translations, as in his originals; in the *Occultation of Orion*, in the *Building of the Ship*, in *Resignation*, in *Excelsior*, in the *Psalm of Life*.

**Style.**—Various but simple, choice, musical, sincere, vitalized with sympathy; clear as crystal, pure as snow; admirable in prose as in poetry. We have seen the quality of the former, but the following passage is remarkably pleasing:

'The voice within us is more distinctly audible in the stillness of the place; and the gentler affections of our nature spring up more freshly in its tranquillity and sunshine—nurtured by the healthy principle which we inhale with the pure air, and invigorated by the genial influences which descend into the heart from the quiet of the sylvan solitude around, and the soft serenity of the sky above.'

None studied rhythm more thoroughly. Few have bestowed more pains. He has himself expressed the rule that prevails in all his works: 'In character, in manners, in style, in all things, the supreme excellence is simplicity.'

**Rank.**—In extent of popularity, the central figure in American poetry. In respect of airy grace, elegance, melody, pathos, naturalness, he stands unsurpassed, if not unequalled, among the poets of the age. In scholarship, in polite culture, he must be classed among the learned; yet he has not the strong pinion to dive into the abyss of thought or soar into the empyrean of speculation. He does not approach the concentration and intensity of the grand masters, nor their dramatic movement and variety. He is not the bard of passion, as Byron; nor of ideality, as Shelley; nor of high contemplation, as Wordsworth; but of daily life, familiar experience, domestic affection. The form is artistic, the ideas are mediocre. In his verse we see the cheer, the glow, the benevolence, of a sunny and benignant spirit in sympathy with the universal life of men; but where is the insight into the deeper passages of the soul? Magnificent almost never; creative rarely. Cut out Germany, it has been said, and you cut out nearly one half. His version of Dante aside, he has given us forty or fifty translations from the European tongues. As a clear and elegant, though uninspired, translator, he is well-nigh incomparable. Loving humanity is the secret of his magnetism. 'Be kind, be patient, be hopeful,' seems the perpetual refrain of his songs. Hence his impregnable position as the laureate of women, children, and gentle folk,—his the desire and the power—

'To quiet  
The restless pulse of care  
And come like the benediction  
That follows after prayer.'

**Character.**—As a boy, modest, refined, studious, of gentle manners, and personal charm; as an instructor, mild, sympathetic, generous, helpful; as a man, the most urbane of men, capable of uniform courtesy to an endless procession of pilgrims; meditative, interior, the soul of charity and of kindness, a benign lover

of children; destitute of vanity, and without envy, as without guile; independent, without being aggressive or self-assertive; devout, trusting and submissive before the veiled problems of faith; a poet—

‘Whom all the Muses loved, not one alone.’

Like Hawthorne, but without his intense imagination, he had a genuine fondness for the mellow, the distant, the old. His poems indicate the region of his habitual thought,—the legendary of the Old World or the New. The man is more than his work.

**Influence.**—In this country, by general consent, he is a pervading, purifying, and beneficent agency. He is hardly less extensively read in England, where his death was pronounced a national loss. It is doubtful whether any singer of this generation has so wide a circle of present admirers. But we remember that the most popular are not always the most enduring. Many who once stirred the hearts and touched the fancies of a day, have disappeared in the night, or are names only. Others who were disparaged in their own age, have made the earth wholesome in a succeeding one, and men have travelled into foreign parts to find their works. The veneration of mankind has selected for the highest place one whom the influential of the contemporary world despised or ignored, if they knew of him at all. The sentiments common to races and centuries are the most likely to live. Building upon these with consummate art, Longfellow has qualities which guarantee him against oblivion. His immortality is secure in the bosoms of the bereaved, the tired, the lonely, the desponding, the aspiring, the struggling.

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## EMERSON.

He has not uttered a word that is false to his own mind or conscience; has not suppressed a word because he thought it too high for man's comprehension. . . . Nothing impedes him in his search for the true, the lovely, and the good; no private hope, no private fear, no love of wife or child or gold or ease or fame. . . . He takes care of his being, and leaves his seeming to take care of itself. Fame may seek him; he never goes out of his way a single inch for her.—*Parker*.

**Biography.**—Born in Boston, in 1803, the second of five sons; his father a liberal and accomplished pulpit-orator, descended from a ministerial ancestry; his mother a woman of

great sensibility, placid temper, and devout life; sent to school at eight, and at eleven was in correspondence with his aunt, who says, in a letter of inquiry:

'You love to trifle in rhyme a little now and then; why will you not complete this versification of the fifth bucolic? You will answer two ends, or, as the old proverb goes, kill two birds with one stone,—improve in your Latin as well as indulge a taste for poetry. Why can't you write me a letter in Latin? But Greek is your favorite language; *epistola in linguâ Græcâ* would be still better. All the honor will be on my part to correspond with a young gentleman in Greek. Tell me what most interests you in Rollin; in the wars of contending princes under whose banner you enlist, to whose cause you ardently wish success. Write me with what stories in Virgil you are most delighted.'

Entered Harvard College at fourteen; graduated in 1821, taught school five years, then studied divinity, and in 1829 was ordained minister of the Second Unitarian Church in his native city; resigned in 1832, because his purely spiritual interpretation of religion could not sanction the communion service as commonly observed; failed in health, visited Sicily, Italy, France, and England, met Landor, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Carlyle, his visit to the latter resulting in a warm friendship and mutual admiration; entered upon his career as a lecturer, selecting his home in historic Concord, since the Mecca of literary pilgrims; meantime had twice married; began to study the English idealists and German mystics, became prominent in the new philosophical movement under the leadership of Channing; preached occasionally until he was troubled with doubts as to public prayer, when he ceased; joined Margaret Fuller, Alcott, Parker, and kindred spirits, in the conduct of the *Dial*, a short-lived but famous quarterly, known as the organ of the Transcendentalists; took an active interest in the work of reform, achieved recognition as a thinker, wrote some of his best essays, again crossed the Atlantic, delivered a course of lectures in London; welcomed Kossuth to Concord in 1852, addressed societies and fraternities, continued to write, to lecture, and to publish; was presented with the degree of LL.D. by his *alma mater* in 1869; shortly set out for Europe once more,—on this occasion, with his daughter; was cordially received, on his return, with music and a procession by his neighbors; in 1874, was put in nomination by the independents of Glasgow University for the office of Lord-Rector, and won the fair laurel of five hundred votes against seven hundred for Disraeli; lived in meditative seclusion, as hitherto, seeing few, enjoying a comfortable income, a growing reputation, and a

widening circle of listeners. He died in May, 1882, of acute pneumonia, contracted during exposure to the inclement weather at Longfellow's grave.

**Writings.**—'It is one central fire which, flaming now out of the lips of Etna, lightens the capes of Sicily, and now out of the throat of Vesuvius, illuminates the towers and vineyards of Naples. It is one light which beams out of a thousand stars. It is one soul which animates all men.'<sup>1</sup> Thus early, in a Harvard discourse, nearly a half century ago, did Emerson strike the keynote of his philosophy. The principle had been announced by Plato, and by the succession of grandees who followed in the wake of that inexhaustible fountain of speculation,—Plotinus, Fichte, Schelling, Coleridge, Carlyle. Matter is a garment of spirit. Mind is the sole reality, whose symbol is Nature:

'There seems to be a necessity in spirit to manifest itself in material forms; and day and night, river and storm, beast and bird, acid and alkali, preëxist in necessary Ideas in the mind of God, and are what they are by virtue of preceding affections, in the world of spirit. The visible creation is the terminus or the circumference of the invisible world.'<sup>2</sup>

Ideas are the uncreated essences, necessary, immortal. In their presence, the outward is an appearance, a dream:

'Culture inverts the vulgar views of nature, and brings the mind to call that apparent, which it uses to call real, and that real, which it uses to call visionary. Children, it is true, believe in the external world. The belief that it appears only, is an afterthought; but with culture, this faith will as surely arise on the mind as did the first.'<sup>3</sup>

Hence the first and last lesson of religion, as of ethics: 'The things that are seen, are temporal; the things that are unseen, are eternal.' Under the ceaseless ebb and flow of circumstance is the abyss of real Being, whose currents circulate through you and me. The animate and the inanimate are its expression,—the one in a lower, the other in a higher form. Our thoughts are its manifestations:

'Man is conscious of a universal soul within or behind his individual life, wherein, as in a firmament, the natures of Justice, Love, Freedom, arise and shine. This universal soul, he calls Reason. That which, intellectually considered, we call Reason, considered in relation to nature, we call Spirit. Spirit is the Creator.'<sup>4</sup>

A great act, a new truth, or a sublime emotion, is a pulse from that surging sea. It flows into individual life, and makes genius. In it we exist. In us it tends evermore to become wisdom, virtue, power, beauty. Subject and object are one,—shining parts of

<sup>1</sup> *The American Scholar.*

<sup>2</sup> *Nature.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*



this sovereign energy whose organs we are, this moral beatitude which we incarnate, and which inspires the vision of illimitable possibilities:

'I, the imperfect, adore my own Perfect. I am somehow receptive of the great soul, and thereby I do overlook the sun and the stars, and feel them to be the fair accidents and effects which change and pass. More and more the surges of everlasting nature enter into me, and I become public and human in my regards and actions. So come I to live in thoughts, and act with energies, which are immortal.'

Mind and matter are the polar opposites of the Absolute, the first positive, the second negative. 'Everything in nature is bipolar.' 'Body and spirit are not two separate, independent things, but are necessary to each other, and are only the inward and outward conditions of one and the same being.' The laws of the moral nature answer to those of matter as face to face in a glass. So intimate is this relation, so identical, that man can know the external by self-revelation. 'Man carries the world in his head, the whole astronomy and chemistry suspended in a thought. Because the history of nature is characterized in his brain, therefore is he the prophet and discoverer of her secrets.' This may seem to blot out all distinctions. But it avoids alike the anthropomorphism of theistic faiths and the fatalism of the pantheistic. God, though the substance of the universe, is an Intelligence, a Will, the transcendent Unity in the midst of endless diversity. 'The glory of the One breaks in everywhere.' The individual is not submerged in the universal. We find eternity affirmed in the promise of our faculties:

'A man who has read the works of Plato and Plutarch and Seneca and Kant and Shakespeare and Wordsworth would scorn to ask such school-dame questions as whether we shall know each other in the world beyond the grave. Men of genius do not fear to die; they are sure that in the other life they will be permitted to finish the work begun in this; it is only mere men of affairs who tremble at the approach of death.'

True, law is omnipresent, with invariable methods, because the Over-soul is always in universal process of self-evolution. There is no chance, no anarchy. The wilful and the fantastic, the low and the lofty, are encircled by a necessity. Touch the ring on many sides, and you learn its arc. In its highest ascension it is impassable:

'Whatever limits us, we call Fate. If we are brute and barbarous, the fate takes a brute and dreadful shape. As we refine, our checks become finer. If we rise to spiritual culture, the antagonism takes a spiritual form. In the Hindoo fables, Vishnu follows Maya through all her ascending changes, from insect and craw-fish up to elephant; what-

<sup>1</sup> *The Over-Soul.*

<sup>2</sup> *Immortality*; a lecture before the Parker Fraternity, 1870.

ever form she took, he took the male form of that kind, until she became at last woman and goddess, and he a man and a god. The limitations refine as the soul purifies, but the ring of necessity is always perched at the top.<sup>1</sup>

Yet the world is dual. There is more than natural history. Power antagonizes Fate. Limitation has its limits. Freedom is necessary. Forever wells up the impulse of choosing and acting. Talk much of Destiny, and you invite the evils you fear. 'If there is omnipotence in the stroke, there is omnipotence of recoil.' Show your lordship by manners and deeds on the scale of adamantine force. By the polarity of being, whatever paralyzes you draws in with it the divinity to strengthen you. The central intention of all is harmony and joy. Therefore:

'Let us build altars to the Blessed Unity which holds nature and souls in perfect solution, and compels every atom to serve a universal end. Let us build altars to the Beautiful Necessity. If in thought men were free in the sense, that, in a single exception, one fastastical will could prevail over the law of things, it were all one as if a child's hand could pull down the sun. If, in the least particular, one could derange the order of nature,—who would accept the gift of life?'<sup>2</sup>

Such conceptions involve optimism. The direction of the whole, and of the parts, is melioration—a constant, everlasting effort from better to best. The indwelling All-fair seeks forever to realize its own largeness and excellence. Therefore at heart all things are good, and the Divine methods are perfect:

'All things are moral. That soul, which within us is a sentiment, outside of us is a law. We feel its inspiration; out there in history we can see its fatal strength. . . . Justice is not postponed. A perfect equity adjusts its balance in all parts of life. . . . Every secret is told, every crime is punished, every virtue rewarded, every wrong redressed, in silence and certainty. What we call retribution is the universal necessity by which the whole appears wherever a part appears. . . . Crime and punishment grow out of one stem. Punishment is a fruit that unsuspected ripens within the flower of the pleasure which concealed it. Cause and effect, means and ends, seed and fruit, cannot be severed; for the effect already blooms in the cause, the end preëxists in the means, the fruit in the seed.'<sup>3</sup>

Evil is not an entity: it is merely privative, like cold, which is the privation of heat. From the point of view of the intellect, sin is the absence of light. The bad is superficial and evanescent. The good and the true are positive and imperishable. Pain, hardship, humiliation, defeat, are disciplinary, and teach the lessons of spiritual loyalty:

'Passions, resistance, danger, are educators. We acquire the strength we have overcome. Without war, no soldier; without enemies, no hero. The sun were insipid, if the universe were not opaque. And the glory of character is in affronting the horrors of depravity, to draw thence new nobilities of power: as Art lives and thrills in new use and combining of contrasts, and mining into the dark evermore for blacked pits of night.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Fate.*<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*<sup>3</sup>*Compensation.*<sup>4</sup>*Considerations by the Way.*

To say that the majority are wicked, means simply 'that the majority are unripe, and have not yet come to themselves.' To purify is to live onward. To advance is to abandon grossness. Beheld from a greater elevation, virtues become vices; for no virtue is final—all are initial. Therein are you adapted to infinity. You are only a suggestion of what you ought to be. Reform and aspire, be an endless seeker after the starry possible; so shall you renew your spirit perpetually:

'Whilst we converse with what is above us, we do not grow old, but grow young. Infancy, youth, receptive, aspiring, with religious eye looking forward, counts itself nothing, and abandons itself to the instruction flowing from all sides. But the man and woman of seventy assume to know all, they have outlived their hope, they renounce aspiration, accept the actual for the necessary, and talk down to the young. Let them then become organs of the Holy Ghost; let them be lovers, let them behold truth; and their eyes are uplifted, their wrinkles smoothed, they are perfumed again with hope and power.'<sup>1</sup>

Man, a portion of the Universal Mind, is the channel through which heaven flows to earth. Enthusiasm is the thrilling mixture of the private soul with the adorable Over-soul, which has various names; as, Power, Goodness, Holy Ghost, Comforter, Dæmon. However designated, it is thoroughly a unit; and the flood of it is the same, whether it appear as the trances of Socrates, the conversion of Paul, or the illuminations of Swedenborg. Representative men are its specific Revelations. The inward attraction for it, the worship of it, is religion—a motive, an impulse, a trust, an obedience. Systems are different, not the fact which they endeavor to embody. The same religious sentiments recur under whatever garb of sect—Unitarian, Trinitarian, Romanist, Protestant. All faiths are fundamentally identical—'the same wine poured into different glasses.' The highest is that which has the profoundest conviction and sense of spiritual realities. Ceaseless progression turns the oldest into myths. On the ruins of creeds and churches the temple of God is built. It is the Spirit that endures, and the purpose that imports. The central, surviving core is the moral sentiment:

'The changes are inevitable; the new age cannot see with the eyes of the last. But the change is in what is superficial; the principles are immortal, and the rally on the principle must arrive as people become intellectual. I consider theology to be the rhetoric of morals. The mind of this age has fallen away from theology to morals. I conceive it an advance. I suspect, that, when the theology was most florid and dogmatic, it was the barbarism of the people; and that, in that very time, the best men also fell away from theology, and rested in morals. I think that all the dogmas rest on morals,

<sup>1</sup> *Circles.*

and that it is only a question of youth or maturity, of more or less fancy in the recipient; that the stern determination to do justly, to speak the truth, to be chaste and humble, was substantially the same, whether under a self-respect, or under a vow made on the knees at the shrine of Madonna.' <sup>1</sup>

Let these principles be applied to the conduct of life. Holiness is health. Incapacity of melioration is distemper. Calamity, resistance, weight, are wings and means. The soul of Fate is also yours. Be self-reliant. It is the attribute of Deity, whose nature you share. Know your worth, and carry yourself in the presence of pretension and opposition as if all else but you were ephemeral. *Be, not seem.* Postpone yourself to none:

'The man that stands by himself, the universe stands by him also. It is related of the monk Basle, that, being excommunicated by the Pope, he was, at his death, sent in charge of an angel to find a fit place of suffering in hell; but, such was the eloquence and good humor of the monk, that, wherever he went he was received gladly, and civilly treated, even by the most uncivil angels; and when he came to discourse with them, instead of contradicting or forcing him, they took his part, and adopted his manners: and even good angels came from far, to see him, and take up their abode with him. The angel that was sent to find a place of torment for him attempted to remove him to a worse pit, but with no better success; for such was the contented spirit of the monk, that he found something to praise in every place and company, though in hell, and made a kind of heaven of it. At last the escorting angel returned with his prisoner to them that sent him, saying, that no phlegethon could be found that would burn him; for that, in whatever condition, Basle remained incorrigibly Basle. The legend says, his sentence was remitted, and he was allowed to go into heaven, and was canonized as a saint.'<sup>2</sup>

The perpetual effort of Nature is to attain beauty, which is not on the surface, but under it,—an emanation from the creative Radiance. Hence a beautiful person was thought by the Greeks to have some secret favor of the gods. Hence, too, nothing is truly beautiful—however rich, elegant, or pretty—until it have suggestiveness, as of the immeasurable and divine:

'The new virtue which constitutes a thing beautiful is a certain cosmical quality, or, a power to suggest relation to the whole world, and so lift the object out of a pitiful individuality. Every natural feature—sea, sky, rainbow, flowers, musical tone—has in it somewhat which is not private but universal, speaks of that central benefit which is the soul of Nature, and thereby is beautiful. And, in chosen men and women, I find somewhat in form, speech, and manners, which is not of their person and family, but of a humane, catholic, spiritual character, and we love them as the sky. They have a largeness of suggestion, and their face and manners carry a certain grandeur, like time and justice.'<sup>3</sup>

The highest beauty has in it a moral element, like fine music or antique sculpture, convincing the beholder of his unworthiness, and suggesting gleams of the unattainable. Therefore is highest friendship no other than love of the celestial good and fair, as was taught by Plato, Petrarch, Angelo, Milton. Its bond is

<sup>1</sup> *Character.*<sup>2</sup> *Behavior.*<sup>3</sup> *Beauty.*



interior, and takes hold upon the upper world. Real marriage is union of the soul with the Over-soul, and hence a purification of the intellect and heart from year to year:

'By conversation with that which is in itself excellent, magnanimous, lovely, and just, the lover comes to a warmer love of these nobilities, and a quicker apprehension of them. Then he passes from loving them in one to loving them in all, and so is the one beautiful soul only the door through which he enters to the society of all true and pure souls. In the particular society of his mate, he attains a clearer sight of any spot, any taint, which her beauty has contracted from this world, and is able to point it out, and this with mutual joy that they *are* now able, without offence, to indicate blemishes and hindrances in each other, and give to each all help and comfort in curing the same. And, beholding in many souls the traits of the divine beauty, and separating in each soul that which is divine from the taint which it has contracted in the world, the lover ascends to the highest beauty, to the love and knowledge of the Divinity, by steps on this ladder of created souls. . . . Thus are we put in training for a love which knows not sex, nor person, nor partiality, but which seeks virtue and wisdom everywhere, to the end of increasing virtue and wisdom. We are by nature observers, and thereby learners. That is our permanent state. But we are often made to feel that our affections are but tents of a night. Though slowly and with pain, the objects of the affections change, as the objects of thought do. There are moments when the affections rule and absorb the man, and make his happiness dependent on a person or persons. But in health the mind is presently seen again,—its overarching vault, bright with galaxies of immutable lights, and the warm loves and fears that swept over us as clouds, must lose their finite characters and blend with God, to attain their own perfection. But we need not fear that we can lose anything by the progress of the soul. The soul may be trusted to the end. That which is so beautiful and attractive as these relations, must be succeeded and supplanted only by that which is more beautiful, and so on forever.'<sup>1</sup>

Carlyle regards the great man as a controlling force, and resolves history into a series of biographies; Emerson, as a finger-post for the future, a rare spirit possessed of a larger share of the Over-soul, an inspired mouth-piece of universal or national ideas, not to be obeyed but to be followed, more serviceable by his example than by his acts,—an imperfect approximation of the ideal of the multitude:

'All that respects the individual is temporary and prospective, like the individual himself, who is ascending out of his limits, into a catholic existence. We have never come at the true and best benefit of any genius, so long as we believe him an original force. In the moment when he ceases to help us as a cause, he begins to help us more as an effect. Then he appears as an exponent of a vaster mind and will. The opaque self becomes transparent with the light of the First Cause. Yet, within the limits of human education and agency, we may say, great men exist that there may be greater men. The destiny of organized nature is amelioration, and who can tell its limits? It is for man to tame the chaos, on every side, whilst he lives, to scatter the seeds of science and of song, that climate, eorn, animals, men, may be milder, and the germs of love and benefit may be multiplied.'<sup>2</sup>

Since each individual is an incarnation of the Supreme, there is one mind common to all men. What a philosopher has thought, we may think. What a saint has felt, we may feel.

<sup>1</sup>Love.      <sup>2</sup>Representative Men.



You are interested, for example, in Greek letters and art, because you pass through the whole cycle of experience, and have been personally a Grecian. You may see the first monks and anchorites without crossing seas or centuries, because your nature is thus central and wide-related. The totality of history is in you,—the Age of Gold, the Argonautic Expedition, the Advent of Christ, the Dark Age, the Reformation, the Renaissance. So should the student read, and the historian write:

'The student is to read history actively, and not passively; to esteem his own life the text, and books the commentary. Thus compelled, the muse of history will utter oracles, as never to those who do not respect themselves. I have no expectation that any man will read history aright, who thinks that what was done in a remote age, by men whose names have resounded far has any deeper sense than what he is doing to-day.'

Emerson's philosophy explains his poetry, which is first of all an insight—a vision of the identity of nature and mind—a more or less nebulous embodiment of idealism. At the outset we perceive the idealist in the exultant joy with which the college graduate escapes from the Boston school-room to rustic solitude:

'O, when I am safe in my sylvan home,  
I tread on the pride of Greece and Rome;  
And when I am stretched beneath the pines,  
Where the evening star so holy shines,  
I laugh at the lore and pride of man,  
At the sophist schools, and the learned clan;  
For what are they all, in their high conceit,  
When man in the bush with God may meet?'<sup>1</sup>

We perceive his elevation of motive and mysticism of mood in the sustained beauty and symbolism of lines like the following:

'Long I followed happy guides;  
I could never reach their sides. . . .  
Keen my sense, my heart was young,  
Right good-will my sinews strung,  
But no speed of mine avails  
To hunt upon their shining trails.  
On and away, their hasting feet  
Make the morning proud and sweet;  
Flowers they strew—I catch the scent;  
Or tone of silver instrument  
Leaves on the wind melodious trace;  
Yet I could never see their face. . . .  
Fleetest couriers alive  
Never yet could once arrive,  
As they went or they returned,

<sup>1</sup> *Sylvan Home.*

At the house where these sojourned. . . .  
 Their near camp my spirit knows  
 By signs gracious as rainbows,  
 I thenceforward, and long after,  
 Listen for their harp-like laughter,  
 And carry in my heart for days,  
 Peace that hallows rudest ways.<sup>1</sup>

Though never far distant, the ideal forever eludes us. We perceive his seership, also, in half-eastern rhapsodies such as these:

'The fate of the man-child,  
 The meaning of man;  
 Known fruit of the unknown;  
 Dædalian plan;  
 Out of sleeping a waking,  
 Out of waking a sleep;  
 Life death overtaking;  
 Deep underneath deep?'<sup>2</sup>

In poem after poem, in forms continually varied and ever new, this is the flame-image of his inspiration,—the incarnated Divine, the Real shining through the apparent, seeking constantly higher and clearer expression of itself. Thus:

'A subtle chain of countless rings  
 The next unto the farthest brings;  
 The eye reads omens where it goes,  
 And speaks all languages the rose;  
 And striving to be man the worm  
 Mounts through all the spires of form.'<sup>3</sup>

This is an anticipation of Evolution, not from Darwin's but from Plato's point of view,—nature struggling everywhere to reach consciousness. Again, 'Bring me,' he says,—

'Wine which Music is,—  
 Music and wine are one,—  
 That I, drinking this,  
 Shall hear far Chaos talk with me;  
 Kings unborn shall walk with me;  
 And the poor grass shall plot and plan  
 What it will do when it is man.'<sup>4</sup>

Eternal development is the primordial law. At the root of all mutations is an orderly Intelligence. All change is progress. Rapturously he declares:

'All the forms are fugitive,  
 But the substances survive.  
 Ever fresh the broad creation,  
 A divine improvisation,  
 From the heart of God proceeds,  
 A single will, a million deeds.

<sup>1</sup> *Forerunners.*<sup>2</sup> *Sphinx.*<sup>3</sup> *Elements.*<sup>4</sup> *Bacchus.*

Once slept the world an egg of stone,  
 And pulse, and sound, and light was none;  
 And God said "Throb!" and there was motion,  
 And the vast mass became vast ocean.  
 Onward and on, the eternal Pan,  
 Who layeth the world's incessant plan,  
 Halteth never in one shape,  
 But forever doth escape,  
 Like wave or flame, into new forms  
 Of gem and air, of plants and worms.<sup>1</sup>

A keen susceptibility to Beauty, a deep delight in it, were never more elemental to poet:

'The leafy dell, the city mart,  
 Equal trophies of thine art;  
 E'en the flowing azure air  
 Thou hast touched for my despair;  
 And, if I languish into dreams,  
 Again I meet the ardent beams.  
 Queen of things! I dare not die  
 In Being's deeps past ear and eye;  
 Lest thee I find the same deceiver,  
 And be the sport of Fate forever.  
 Dread Power, but dear! If God thou be,  
 Unmake me quite, or give thyself to me!'<sup>2</sup>

One more example of the seer's ecstasy, which, mounting to the divine dark like the eagle towards the sun, admits the mind to the constitution of things, and announces truths that, from the moment of their emergence, are carried hither and thither till they work revolutions:

'Subtle rhymes, with ruin rife,  
 Murmur in the house of life,  
 Sung by the sisters as they spin:  
 In perfect time and measure they  
 Build and unbuild our echoing clay,  
 As the two twilights of the day  
 Fold us, mnsic-drunken, in.'<sup>3</sup>

**Method.**—Holding all things subservient to thought, his mind was perpetually alert, and its suggestions were jotted on the instant. Gossip tells that his wife, before she knew his habits, was suddenly aroused in the night by his movements in the room. She inquired anxiously if he were ill. 'Only an idea,' was the reply. Observation and experience, conversation and wayside reverie, thus contributed to fill his note-books. The separate memoranda were then at intervals copied into larger commonplaces, and there classified, the subject of each being

<sup>1</sup> *Wood-Notes.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ode to Beauty.*

<sup>3</sup> *Merlin.*

written in the margin. Desiring to prepare an essay, he turned to his chronicles, and transcribed all the paragraphs on the given theme. A friend once found him in his study, on the eve of a lecture, in the midst of scattered manuscripts which he was endeavoring to reduce to coherence and system for the occasion. After the exigencies of the platform, the lectures are wrought over, unsparingly pruned, carefully corrected, sentence by sentence, revised again and again, until only the most pregnant and perfect parts remain.

The cost of excellence is an old story. Sheridan, urged by his publisher to finish the *School for Scandal*, declared that he had spent nineteen years in the vain attempt to satisfy himself. Lamb's humor was the result of intense labor. Tennyson made the first draught of *Locksley Hall* in two days, then devoted the better part of six weeks, eight hours daily, to its alteration and improvement. Goldsmith occupied ten years with the *Traveller*, setting down his ideas in prose, turning them into rhyme, and retouching with infinite pains. Buffon's *Natural History* was recopied eighteen times before it was sent to the printer. He wrote on a page of five columns. His thoughts were jotted in the first, corrected in the second, enlarged, pruned, and so on to the fifth, where the result was entered. He once searched fourteen hours for a word to round a period.

**Style.**—Tersely refined in phrase, trenchant and subtle in illustration; compact, epigrammatic, all armed with points and antitheses. Here is a specimen:

'Our strength grows out of our weakness. . . . A great man is always willing to be little. While he sits on the cushion of advantages, he goes to sleep. When he is pushed, tormented, defeated, he has a chance to learn something; he has put on his wits, on his manhood; he has gained facts; learns his ignorance; is cured of the insanity of conceit, has got moderation and real skill. The wise man always throws himself on the side of his assailants. It is more his interest than it is theirs to find his weak point. The wound cicatrizes, and falls off from him like a dead skin; and when they would triumph, lo! he has passed on invulnerable.'

Usually elegant, often poetical by an imaginative sympathy with Nature, as in this passage:

'I see the spectacle of morning from the hill-top over against my house, from day-break to sunrise, with emotions which an angel might share. The long, slender bars of cloud float like fishes in the sea of crimson light. From the earth, as a shore, I look out into that silent sea. I seem to partake its rapid transformations: the active enchantment reaches my dust, and I dilate and conspire with the morning wind. How does Nature deify us with a few and cheap elements! Give me health and a day, and I will make the

pomp of emperors ridiculous. The dawn is my Assyria; the sunset and moonrise my Paphos, and unimaginable realms of faerie; broad noon shall be my England of the senses and the understanding; the night shall be my Germany of mystic philosophy and dreams.'

Always calm, as with the serenity of Jove; oracular rather than sequacious. His method of composition secured a marvellous conciseness of expression and condensation of thought. Aphoristic, he sacrifices unity—what we are accustomed to consider such—to richness of detail. Logical order, in the common sense of dependence, is not infrequently wanting. His sentences have been compared to Lucretius's 'fortuitous concourse of atoms.' The connection is really in the supreme idea. Their relation is organic in the central theme. Read them in view of this capital image, and interpret them in accordance with the writer's philosophy of the Over-soul.

Unavoidably, such a style lacks repose. There is also, with the author's characteristic disdain of rule, an occasional contempt or disregard of grammar; as, in the use of 'shined' for 'shone,' and of 'shall' for 'will.' In coining terms, he is not always felicitous. A more offensive defect, if not a more serious one, is his undignified mannerism in the employment of *'tis*; as *'Tis certain that worship stands in some commanding relation to the health of man.'*

We must think, however inspirational they may appear, that his poems underwent the same patient elaboration as his essays:

'I hung my verses in the wind,  
Time and tide their faults may find.  
*All were winnowed through and through,  
Five lines lasted sound and true.'*

Yet how many of his verses have the rush of fever heat, quite worthy of the greatest masters by their fantasies and energy! If sometimes obscure, irregular, unmelodious, these peculiarities are referable to the lack of lyric spontaneity, the remoteness or weight of the spiritual element. Judge them by the artist's conception of his art:

'Great be the manners of the bard.  
He shall not his brain encumber  
With the coil of rhythm and number;  
But, leaving rule and pale forethought,  
He shall aye climb  
For his rhyme.  
"Pass in, pass in," the angels say,  
Into the upper doors,



Nor count compartments of the floors,  
 But mount to paradise  
 By the stairway of surprise.'

**Rank.**—We say at once that he belongs, first of all, to the intuitive order of minds, that extend their penetrating surmises beyond the region of observation, and discern the vast, indistinct, but populous abyss behind visible phenomena; not a dialectician, like Hobbes, apt in arranging ideas, but a revealer, like Bacon, productive of conceptions; a diviner who casts a comprehensive view over the provinces of thought, condenses universals into maxims, and speaks after the manner of prophets, without proof, with no effort to convince, relying upon simple faith in the highest; not a discursive thinker, like Locke or Hume, not a clear and graduated logician, like Mill, nor a pure classifier, like Spencer; not of those who dispose notions in a continuous series, but of those who have vision of remote causes and distant effects; a spectator of Being, like Plato, Shakespeare, Goethe, who are essentially poetical, who perceive objects in a lump—in their entirety, with the sovereignty of an unique faculty. These are the seers. Theirs is the organ of the Godlike. Striving to assimilate all in the circle of knowledge, they hold themselves aloof from particular schools and societies, while friendly to each.

Beyond any poet of the age, he has subtle insight and cosmopolitan breadth. Not a jingling serenader, but a kingly bard, whose gift it is to 'make the wild blood start in its mystic springs.' He is some generations ahead, and hence must be unappreciated by a large class of readers. He is wanting in the lyric warmth, too, and the sensuous charm, which the general taste will long demand. Like all who have seen into the heart of things, he is attracted by the freshness and wildness of Nature, whose boundless resources suggest a transcendence over rule. His poems are of the Vedic and Orphic class, sure to gain in fame as the years roll on. It accords with his philosophy to say, 'The poet discovers that what men value as substances have a higher value as symbols; that nature is the immense shadow of man.' It accords with his art to say, 'Poetry is the perpetual endeavor to express the spirit of the thing; to pass the brute body, and search the life and reason which cause it to exist.'

Unequal as a critic; chiefly from his strong transcendental or spiritual bias, and his inability to place himself dramatically in

the position of another. He must underrate utilitarians. 'Tis of no importance what bats and oxen think.' Himself as undeviating and unperturbed as a planet, he could see in Byron only perversion, excluded Shelley from the list of singers, and eulogized Whitman. Too fond of epigram to be consistent; too limited in sympathy to be just. While some of his characterizations of men have never been surpassed, while he is at all times penetrating, vigorous, and genuine, he is too liable to be either a censor or a panegyrist.

Between Emerson and Carlyle, contemporaries and friends, there are some points of resemblance, and many of divergence. Both are similarly related to their period. Both have drawn from the same German masters. Both are protestants against materialism. Both have the sentiment of actuality and of the sublime. Both believe that sensible things are but appearances. Both feel the divine and mysterious character of existence. Both decry too much analysis, too careful calculation. Both are sincere and fearless. Both are revolutionary,—disdainful of the traditional and stereotyped. The one is tragic—sometimes grotesque; the other is neither. The one *feels* more profoundly, the other *sees* more truly: rather, the one looks into the abyss, and is overwhelmed; the other looks in, and is sustained. 'With the ideal is immortal hilarity, the rose of joy.' The one doubts, darkens, and circles round the Centre of Indifference alternately from the Everlasting No to the Everlasting Yea; the other ranges freely, is tranquil, and never falters,—his head in the empyrean, his feet on the solid earth. The one is gloomy, the other hopeful. The one sees deterioration in the midst of progress; the other sees melioration in the midst of conflict. The one adores men of action and intensity—Odin, Mahomet, Dante, Luther, Cromwell. The other venerates preëminently men of intellectual grasp—Plato, Swedenborg, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Goethe. What contrasted styles! The one impetuous, oratorical, sweeping, fairly connected even when most abrupt; the other aphoristic and complacent, seemingly unsystematic and without emphasis.

Who among English writers of the nineteenth century has had wider wisdom in human affairs? Who has possessed in larger measure the national realism and the craving for profound belief? Who has penetrated more deeply into the moral sense

of things, with greater extent of survey? What poet has in so catholic a spirit accepted the scientific discoveries of his day, or so happily interpreted as poetic revelation of the Over-soul those abstract laws which are supposed to make poetry impossible? How many have bequeathed to posterity an equal number of quotable sentences, so pithy, so wise, so suggestive, so stimulating,—jewels all? We venture to select a few:

‘Hitch your wagon to a star.’

‘Every man’s task is his life-preserver.’

‘Beauty is the mark God sets upon virtue.’

‘The joy of the spirit indicates its strength.’

‘The hero is he who is immovably centred.’

‘If there ever was a good man, be certain there was another, and will be more.’

‘If you believe in Fate to your harm, believe it, at least, for your good.’

‘Thefts never enrich; alms never impoverish; murder will speak out of stone walls.’

‘The relations of the soul to the Divine Spirit are so pure, that it is profane to seek to interpose helps.’

‘Jesus and Shakespeare are fragments of the soul, and by love I conquer and incorporate them in my own conscious domain.’

‘Rings and other jewels are not gifts, but apologies for gifts. The only gift is a portion of thyself.’

‘We fancy men are individuals; so are pumpkins; but every pumpkin in the field goes through every point of pumpkin history.’

‘The life of every man is the true romance, which, when it is valiantly conducted, will yield the imagination a higher joy than any fiction.’

‘A breath of will blows eternally through the universe of souls in the direction of the Right and the Necessary.’

‘A great man is a new statue in every attitude and action. A beautiful woman is a picture which drives all beholders nobly mad.’

‘A just thinker will allow full swing to his scepticism. I dip my pen in the blackest ink, because I am not afraid of falling into my inkpot.’

‘How shall a man escape from his ancestors, or draw off from his veins the black drop which he drew from his father’s or his mother’s life?’

‘If your eye is on the eternal, your intellect will grow, and your opinions and actions will have a beauty which no learning or combined advantages of other men can rival.’

‘No man can write anything, who does not think that what he writes is for the time the history of the world; or do anything well, who does not esteem his work to be of importance.’

‘Wherever snow falls, or water flows, or birds fly, wherever day and night meet in twilight, wherever the blue heaven is hung by clouds, or sown with stars, wherever are forms with transparent boundaries, wherever are outlets into celestial space, wherever is danger, and awe, and love, there is Beauty, plenteous as rain, shed for thee, and though thou shouldst walk the world over, thou shalt not be able to find a condition inopportune or ignoble.’

Among men there is no such thing as pure originality—the initiation of materials absolutely new. The least live by constraint; the greatest by assimilation. The ages play into the tutelage of genius. Literature is the ever-renewing flower of antiquity:

‘For out of olde felde, as men saith,  
Cometh al this newe corn from yere to yere,  
And out of olde bookes, in good faith,  
Cometh al this newe science that men lere.’

Emerson converted all his predecessors into nutriment for himself. ‘What is a great man,’ he asks, ‘but one of great affinities, who takes up into himself all arts, sciences, all knowables, as his food?’ Elsewhere he affirms that the great man must be a great reader, and possess great assimilating power. Many of his leading ideas are derived from Plato, who seems to have impressed him strongly. He was an early and earnest student of Plotinus. His debt to the Platonists of the Elizabethan era is large. He drew liberally from the Oriental mystics, in particular those of Persia and India. The aggregate influence of the representative Germans—Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Schelling, Herder, Lessing, Goethe—has been considerable. With Carlyle’s moral aspiration he was ever in warm sympathy. His style, and even his phraseology, were affected not a little by Landor, of whom he was a hearty admirer.

No man’s resources are wholly in himself. ‘Every book,’ says our author, ‘is a quotation; and every house is a quotation out of all forests, and mines, and stone quarries; and every man is a quotation from all his ancestors.’ ‘Very little of me would be left,’ says Goethe, ‘if I could but say what I owe to my great predecessors and contemporaries. Molière, accused of theft, replied that he recovered his property wherever he found it. Virgil conveys images, epithets, and paragraphs from Homer and Hesiod. Spenser borrows heavily from Tasso, and Johnson thought Milton a wholesale plagiarist. Byron is only excelled by Pope as an adopter and adapter of ideas and diction. Emerson masters his acquisitions, and organizes them into other and higher forms, like Plato, Aristotle, Shakespeare,—all sublime borrowers. The unfailing fountains of literature have had the tribute of a hundred rivers.

**Character.**—In relation to the ultimate ends of life, a mystical idealist; in relation to its means, a discriminating man of action.<sup>1</sup> A thinker, without being a recluse; a scholar, without being a pedant. Self-poised, yet modest, never cynical. ‘The great man is he who, in the midst of a crowd, keeps, with perfect sweetness, the independence of solitude.’ Simple, though profound. Calmly cordial, never demonstrative. Benignant, always accessible. His heaven-lit face set the shyest at their ease, while it forbade the undue familiarity or conventional compliment of any. His humblest neighbor received from him a smile of recognition. ‘It was good,’ says Hawthorne, ‘to meet him in the woodpaths, or sometimes in our avenue, with that pure intellectual gleam diffused about his presence like the garment of a shining one.’ Carlyle compared his presence to a heavenly vision. In persons, he liked the plain, preferred the earnest, shunned the egotistic. August and serene, yet intense. Have we not seen how like a sun-worshipper he could gaze on the morning sky? And who could sing more finely of the remedial life in the season of birds and buds? Who has divined more justly, more clearly, and uttered more appropriately, the sentiment of affection? See *Celestial Love* for a scientific study of this passion; the *Amulet* and the lines *To Eva*, for a love that is not ‘celestial,’ but human: and *Threnody*, for a grief ‘too deep for tears’:

‘O child of paradise,  
 Boy who made dear his father’s home,  
 In whose deep eyes  
 Men read the welfare of the times to come,  
 I am too much bereft:  
 The world dishonored thou has left.  
 O truth’s and nature’s costly lie!  
 O trusted broken prophecy!  
 O richest fortune sourly crossed!  
 Born for the future, to the future lost!’

Though a master of expression, he was not fluent. In a swift company, he was mute or hesitating. Yet ‘Fortunate the visitor,’ says Alcott, ‘who is admitted of a morning for the high discourse, or permitted to join the poet in his afternoon walks.’ He talked as he wrote,—not continuously,—logically, but abruptly, intuitively, which was his mental process.

Report says that he lived irreproachably, devoted to human

<sup>1</sup> Read the essays on *Power* and *Wealth*.



good, loyal to his own precepts. He reposed on the attributes of Infinity with an unfaltering trust. He held uniformly to the Platonic elevation of view. 'Everything is beautiful seen from the point of the intellect, or as truth. But all is sour, if seen as experience. Details are melancholy; the plan is seemly and noble.' Hence the chivalric ideal which formed the goal, the sanction, and the motive of his example and teaching. 'Always do what you are afraid to do.' 'If I will stand upright, the creation cannot bend me.' Be self-reliant, he would say, because you are the agent of the Over-soul. Keep to your orbit with the steadfastness of Nature to her plan. Live to the level of your thought. Insist forever upon the sovereignty of personality. The present is thousand-eyed. Why let the corpse of memory scare you from the pursuit of truth, which is many-sided? Dwell ever in a new day:

'A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard words and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict everything you said to-day.'

Guard your individuality with jealous care. Reject authority without running into license. Be not the organ of a party. Let nothing provoke you into controversy. Oppose formalism, without being intolerant. Be frank, fair-speaking, but not dogmatic. Say, 'I desire no man to take anything I write or speak upon trust without canvassing, and would be thought rather to propound than to assert.' You may be an unbeliever in the orthodox sense—lead a perfectly orthodox life, devout toward your Maker, brotherly toward your kind. 'The happiest man is he who learns from Nature the lesson of worship.' 'No man ever prayed heartily without learning something.' What more, O fearful, troubled mortal? Help for the living, hope for the dead, reverence for the Creator, love for the creature,—is not this better than all burnt-offering and sacrifice?

**Influence.**—Such was the charm of his personal character, that those who knew him loved him with the love almost of a devotee,—he was so gentle, so willing to advise, so kindly in reproof. 'Tell Emerson I loved and revered him,' said Sumner when dying; which voiced the feeling of a large section of educated Americans. The curious, the admiring, the anxious,

the worshipful, thronged to Concord, as to a shrine, to see or hear the oracle, 'a beauty and a mystery,' whose master-word seemed to many worth the world. 'Young visionaries,' says Hawthorne, 'to whom just so much of insight had been imparted as to make life all a labyrinth around them, came to seek the clew that should lead them out of their self-involved bewilderment. Gray-headed theorists—whose systems, at first air, had imprisoned them in an iron frame-work—travelled painfully to his door, not to ask deliverance, but to invite the free spirit into their own thralldom.'

A noble antithesis to all meanness, flippancy, and sensuality, he has been a forcible protestant against materialism, has thrown his weight into the scale of justice, has fortified men against temptation, and taught them nobly to aspire. In the mountain atmosphere of his thought, how many have been deepened and enlarged, stronger by his strength, greater by his greatness! In how many breasts has he kindled an ardent desire for improvement! How many has he inspired with a finer, higher, keener sense of the purposes of existence! Even where inconclusive, what a tonic to the will and the understanding, by his intense suggestiveness!

We are not likely to be at a loss for practical energy. In an age when commercial interests are strong, in a country where brains are zealously expended on the farm or exchange, there is pressing need of men who lay a chief stress upon the divine symbolism of material existence, that the home may not sink into a house, nor the grave into a pit, nor the fairer elements of human nature become incredible from their foul environment. This has been the mission of Emerson, as of all the sages. He has been light to the illuminators—ministers, instructors, writers. For half a century his ethical and prophetic utterance has been an active and growing power to keep the eyes of people on the strain of rare and noble visions. He has founded no school, he has left behind him no Emersonian system, but fragments of him are scattered everywhere—germs of bloom that will perish never. A great book is a ship deep freighted with immortal treasures, breaking the sea of life into fadeless beauty as it sails, carrying to every shore seeds of truth, goodness, piety, love, to flower and fruit perennially in the soil of the heart and mind.

## EPILOGUE.

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We have seen a numerous and powerful society, in the enjoyment of material splendor and a complete literature, develop from the ravaging tribes that issued from the German forests, crossed the intractable sea in their pirate boats, and settled in a land of marsh and fog; ill-housed, fierce, carnivorous, long buried in grossness and brutality, but importing, with their savage and transient manners, redeeming and persistent sentiments—their native fidelity and love of freedom, their instinct of the serious and sublime, their inclination for devotion, their worship of heroism, their tragi-heroic conception of the world and man. From the Saxon barbarian to the Englishman of to-day, what a transformation! From the Heptarchy to the ‘Model Republic,’ how vast the change! Yet in the child was the promise of the youth and adult, as a thousand forests are potentially in the acorn. The nomadic Scandinavian bore within him the germ of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Bacon, Carlyle, and Emerson. A perennial miracle—Causal Power creating forever—Providential Power conserving forever—the visible proceeding from the Unseen, like an odor of incense, like a strain of music—the Over-soul in active and perpetual accomplishment.

But is progress to stop here? Who knows where we are in the duration and development of the race? In the cradle still, or in opening manhood? By the same Divine law of evolution, we too, in turn, shall be outstripped. Our boundary is movable and elastic. Around any circle, another may be drawn. Each end is a beginning, and must be superseded by a better. The latest civilization will be a suggestion of new and higher possibilities. The golden ages are before us. On, ever on, toward the flying Perfect!—

‘Deeper, deeper  
Man’s spirit must dive,  
To his eye-rolling orbit  
No goal will arrive.

The heavens that now draw him  
 With sweetness untold,  
 Once found, for new heavens  
 He spurneth the old.'

At the centre of succession is the energizing mind. *Beowulf* and *Paradise Lost*, St. Peter's and the Pyramids, cities and institutions, have their roots there. History is the multiform representation of it. Other things are external and fugitive. The web of events is its flowing robe. Ever young, ever ripening, ever advancing into the illimitable. The needle has its dip, and its variation,—

'But, though it trembles as it lowly lies,  
 Points to that light which changes not in heaven.'

For can we think of tendency without thinking of purpose? Are names and forces alone immortal, and not the souls which give them their immortality? O rich and various man, made of the dust of the earth, and living for the moment! in the majestic Past as a prophecy to the Future, in thy ceaseless discontent with the Present, in thine endless ascension of state, in thine unquenchable thirst for the Infinite, we find the blazing evidence of thine own eternity. Before the magnificent procession of History, forth-issuing from Cimmerian Night, and vanishing into Fathomless Silence, wonder and veneration are the true attitude:

'Like some wild-flaming, wild-thundering train of Heaven's Artillery, does this mysterious MANKIND thunder and flame, in long-drawn, quick-succeeding grandeur, through the unknown Deep. . . . Like a God-created, fire-breathing Spirit-host, we emerge from the Inane, haste stormfully across the astonished Earth, then plunge again into the Inane. . . . But whence?—O Heaven, whither? Sense knows not; Faith knows not; only that it is through Mystery to Mystery, *from God to God.*'

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