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A FORGOTTEN POET OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

THE poems of Nathaniel Wanley make no showing in the histories of English literature, but the omission can hardly be thought strange. Their existence was almost unrecognized, and there was no printed evidence that Wanley was a poet, apart from some mediocre verses which appeared in a broadside in 1668. More than a century and a half after his death four of his better pieces were published in an anthology, and one of these has been reprinted in a recent collection; but in neither instance was the editor in a position to give the author's name. When Wanley is remembered now it is chiefly as one who provided a liberal feast for lovers of the marvellous by compiling *The Wonders of the Little World, or a General History of Man* (1678); and as the father of Humphrey Wanley, librarian to the first and second Earls of Oxford and cataloguer of the famous Harleian Manuscripts. Yet Nathaniel's poems, both in themselves and for their historical interest, may fairly claim more than a passing regard. They comprise devotional lyrics by no means unworthy of our golden age of 'divine' poetry, and full of evidence that one poet at least was willing to take Henry Vaughan for his model. And Wanley's two narrative poems in the couplet form are marked by qualities of invention and technical mastery which raise them well above the average contemporary standards.

The single poem from Wanley's hand which is now easily accessible is in the anonymous group in Mr. H. J. Massingham's *A Treasury of Seventeenth Century English Verse* (1919). We learn from a note that Mr. Massingham's source was *Sacred Classics*, vol. 21, *Seventeenth Century Poetry*, edited by R. Cattermole (1835), and that the ultimate source was 'a manuscript of miscellaneous sacred poems of about 1620'.

The poem is quoted again now, as it provides perhaps the easiest justification for the present study. A poet who could write so well clearly deserves to be rescued from anonymity.

The Invitation.

Lord what unvalu'd Pleasures crown'd
 the Times of old
 When thou wer't so familiar found
 those daies were gold
 When Abram wishd thou couldst afford
 with him to feast
 When Lot but said, Turne in my Lord
 thou wert his guest.
 But ah this heart of mine doth pant
 and beate for thee
 Yet thou art strange and wilt not grant
 thy selfe to mee
 What shall thy people bee so deare
 to thee no more
 Or is not heav'n to Earth as neare
 as heretofore?
 The famishd Ravens hoarser cry
 finds out thine eare
 My soule is famish'd and I dye
 unlesse thou heare.
 O thou greate ALPHA king of Kings
 or bow to mee
 Or lend my soule Seraphick wings
 to gett to thee.

It was also thought that a poet who could show so much of the spirit and manner of Henry Vaughan might easily turn out to be Henry Vaughan himself; and it was in this hope that the attempt was made to discover the manuscript whence 'The Invitation' had originally been derived.¹ Recourse was

¹ Its first editor acknowledged a debt to James Montgomery, who had supplied the copy of this and of the three other poems then printed, 'The Farewell', 'Employment', and 'Advice' (seven stanzas only). But Montgomery had given no indication as to the whereabouts of the MS. which he used, and was at fault in ascribing it to the 'early part of the seventeenth century'.

had to the first-line index of English poems in MS. at the British Museum and the result was fortunate. Two MSS. in the Harleian Collection were shown to contain copies of 'The Invitation', Nos. 6646 and 6922; and in each of these some thirty other poems were found, evidently by the same author—a group of lyrics headed *Scintillulae Sacrae*, and two narrative poems, 'The Witch of Endor' and 'Lazarus'. No. 6646 was peculiar in including a Latin version of one poem, 'The Resurrection', and two elegies in the couplet form, one 'Upon the funeralls of the Reverend Mr. John Angell Lecturer at Leicester' (a distinguished preacher, inclined towards non-conformity¹) and the other 'Upon the funeralls of Mrs. E. D.' Collation of these two MSS. showed that the two poems in No. 6922, which is inscribed on its fly-leaf 'Wanley Wright. his Book. 1706', are otherwise copied, not too carefully or intelligently, from No. 6646.² *Scintillulae Sacrae* recalls Vaughan's title, *Silvæ Scintillans* (1650 and 1655), and it seemed that many of the lyrics might well have been written by Vaughan; but neither MS. gives any more positive clue to their authorship.

The elegy on John Angell, who died in 1655, shows evident knowledge of Leicester topography, and this circumstance is no doubt largely responsible for the only attribution of these poems known to have been made hitherto. In Joseph Hunter's *Chorus Vatum*, Add. MS. 24488, f. 181, it is suggested that they are from the hand of Thomas Pestell (? 1584–? 1659), vicar of Packington in Leicestershire, and the suggestion is incorporated in the article on Pestell in the *Dictionary of National Biography*: 'The volume of verse entitled *Scintillulae Sacrae*, of which two copies are among the Harleian MSS. (Nos. 6646 and 6692), is attributed to Pestell; but some part at least is probably by his son Thomas.'

The honour of establishing finally the identity of the author belongs to Mr. Robin Flower, of the Department of MSS. at

¹ See the article on Angell in *D. N. B.*

² It is probable that Montgomery used No. 6692, which reads 'days' in both ll. 2 and 4 of 'The Invitation' as he and Mr. Massingham do. No. 6646 reads 'Times' in l. 2.

the British Museum. Giving full weight to the Leicester association and to the apparent connexion with the Wanley family, Mr. Flower was able to bring to light a third MS. copy of the lyrical and narrative poems, this time with better evidence of their origin. The MS. is No. 22472 in the Additional series at the British Museum and is among the volumes of poems whose first lines have not yet been indexed. Its fly-leaf is inscribed with the words 'Sum ex libris Nath: Wanley December 1. 1667' and the motto on the same page and in the same writing would seem to identify the owner with the author:

— operosa parvus —
carmina fingo Horat.

That Wanley was a native of Leicester, a man of letters, and a divine with Puritan sympathies, lends a good deal of colour to this modest ascription. Moreover, the hand is the same throughout as that in which most of MS. Harl. 6646 is written, and the same again as that of a letter-book, also sought out by Mr. Flower, MS. Harl. 6430, inscribed 'Nath. Wanley his booke Anno 1651' and afterwards used by Humphrey. MS. Add. 22472 contains eight poems which do not appear elsewhere and gives the impression of a later date than that of MS. Harl. 6646. The two elegies are omitted and one poem which has twenty-nine stanzas in the Harleian MSS., and is there called 'Advice', is here reduced to twenty-three and called 'The Alphabet'; the first letters of the successive stanzas following alphabetical order. The new poems, as they seem to be, do not on the whole maintain the level of the others but seem clearly to be from the same hand. The authorship of the whole series may be thought sufficiently well proved by these circumstances; Wanley's claim, however, is strongly supported by literary evidence. In 'Advice', stanza 26, the poet writes 'I have seen Apes in silk and men in raggs', an expression used also by Wanley in *The Wonders of the Little World* (1678, p. 154), 'yet as we have sometimes seen Apes in silk, and men in Raggs'. And in the first poem in MS. Harl. 6646, 'The Philosopher', the poet describes his

communing, Hamlet-wise, with a skull upon which he has accidentally stumbled. He suggests different reasons for the encounter, and then asks

Or have I lost my count? Is not the day
Good Friday? And this Ægypt? for they say
That yearely thereabouts it is well knowne
There is a parcell (*vic.* partial) Resurrection.

This not very frequently mentioned superstition is described at some length in the same prose work, Book 8, Chap. xxxviii, p. 86 (1678), '*Of entombed Bodies, how found at the opening of their Monuments; and of the parcel Resurrection near Gran Cairo*'.¹

Nathaniel Wanley,² the son of a mercer, was born in 1634 at Leicester and died in 1680 at Coventry. He graduated from Trinity College, Cambridge, B.A. in 1653 and M.A. in 1657. He married in 1655 Ellen Burton, daughter of the coroner and town-clerk of Coventry, and had five children.³ On the title-page of Nathaniel's first published work, *Vox Dei, or the Great Duty of self-reflection upon a Man's own Wayes* (1658), he is described as 'N. Wanley, Minister of the Gospel at Beeby', and he apparently held this Leicestershire living until 1662, being then appointed vicar of Holy Trinity, Coventry, in succession to his nonconformist friend, John Bryan, who resigned. When Bryan died in 1676 Wanley preached the funeral sermon, published in 1681 with the title *Peace and Rest for the Upright*. Meanwhile Wanley had been the author of (i) *An ingenious contention by way of letter*

¹ The passage concludes, 'This Parcel Resurrection of Legs and Arms Etc. useth to be seen and believed upon Good Friday, and the Eve of that, saith Mr. Gregory, and then adds out of *Simon Goulartius*, from the relation of one *Stephen du Plais* an eye-witness, and a man of very good and sober note in his acknowledgement. And he told me moreover that he had (and that others had done so too) touched divers of these rising members. And as he was once so doing upon the hairy head of a child, a man of *Cairo* cryed out aloud, *Kali, kali ante materasde*, that is to say, *Hold, hold, you know not what you do.*'

² Most of the biographical facts and dates in this paragraph are derived from the article on Wanley in *D. N. B.*

³ Humphrey was born in 1672.

between Mr. Wanley, a son of the Church, and Dr. Wild a Non-conformist London 1668 (in verse, published as a broadside, and partly written by Wild); (ii) *War and Peace Reconciled* (1670 and 1672), a translation from Lipsius; and (iii) in 1678 the imposing folio already mentioned, of which the full title is *The Wonders of the Little World: Or, a General History of Man. In Six Books. Wherein By many thousands of Examples is shewed what Man hath been From The First Ages of the World to these Times. In respect of his Body, Senses, Passions, Affections: His Virtues and Perfections; and many other particulars not reducible to any of the former Heads. Collected from the Writings of the most approved Historians, Philosophers, Physicians, Philologists and others. By Nath. Wanley, M.A. and Vicar of Trinity Parish in the City of Coventry.*

The Preface to this work comprises a discreet but not uncalled-for disclaimer: 'if some of these Examples which I have set down may seem utterly incredible, or at best but improbable, let it be remembered that I am not the Inventor, but Reciter; not the Framers, but only the Collector of them.' The field upon which Wanley draws is very wide, many ancient, medieval, and recent authors being laid under contribution. Among the English works represented are Raleigh's *History*, Purchas his *Pilgrimes*, Lithgow's *Travels*, Fuller's *Worthies*, Burton's *Anatomy*, Sandys's *Ovid*, Hakewill's *Apology*, Howell's *Letters*, and Felltham's *Resolves*. And in view of the signs in Wanley's poems that he knew the works of Henry Vaughan it is interesting to find that he here quotes three passages from Vaughan's *Flores Solitudinis* (1654), giving the references, as usual, in the margin.

The more intimate qualities of Wanley's character appear most clearly in the short series of letters, of which he made his own copies in twenty-seven leaves of what is now MS. Harl. 6430. For all their rather contrived and conscious graces the letters represent him as he seems to have been, pious, kindly, liberal-minded, with a love of poetry and a true vein of sprightly wit and fancy. He valued his friendships and in their service was apparently a frequent and a somewhat exacting correspondent, welcoming his friends' letters

also because they might bridge the gulf between Coventry and the larger world of bustle and amusement; for there was nothing in him of the dedicated recluse. On one occasion (Feb. 3, 1667) he makes a spirited reply to a friend in London who has charged him with negligence, affirming at the same time that the most ordinary metropolitan news will be gratefully absorbed:

‘I perceiue Sr you haue not lickd your pawes yet into such a softnesse; but that they are able to scratch: But if your Freindship has bin so courselly dietted of late; I hope you will haue the conscience to provide more liberally for your freind. I tell you plainly I doe not like that when you write to mee; you should chuse the least quarter of a sheet in the citty; and that to compleate your mallice; you should write like a lawyer at that distance that I can scarce stride from line to line; some six lines with three words in them a peice is no such plentifull meale for a man that has *Appetitum caninum*; but that ere long hee may be glad to sitt downe with your Greenland beares without the feares of a surfett; I must tell you you haue more means then I to keepe a bountifull table; can you not at pleasure command a dish from the court; or if you thinke that too delicate a repast for us lubbers in the country; are all the coffee houses downe? Are the Temple and Grayes Inne walkes all depopulated? Are the playe houses blowne up; If none of these; let mee entreate you for the future not to stick your words in a paper at the distance of cloues in a gammon of Bacon; nor to send your letters into the country as seldome as wee doe those Gammons to the citty: But aboue all be sure that you continue to loue him who is

Yo^r faithfull freind. N. W.’

The English poets quoted or referred to in this series of thirty-one letters are Donne, Jonson, Suckling, and Vaughan, who is represented this time by the six lines of verse translated from the Latin of Bissellius in the Preface to *Flores Solitudinis* (Clarendon Press edition of Vaughan’s works, p. 213, ll. 4–9). But some of Wanley’s own poems must now be quoted.

The following selections, here printed, it is believed, for the first time, are given literatim as they appear in MS. Harl. 6646, save that long ‘f’ and the form ‘ff’ for ‘F’ are discarded throughout; a very few changes of punctuation &c. are intro-

duced, these being recorded in foot-notes. *The Witch of Endor* is given entire, and is preceded by twelve of the *Scintillulæ Sacrae*.

The Resurrection.

Can death be faithfull or the Grave be just
 Or shall my tombe restore my scattred dust
 Shall ev'ry haire find out its proper pore
 And crumbled bones be joined as before
 Shall long-unpractis'd pulses learne to beate
 Victorious rottennesse a loud retreat
 Or eyes eclipsed with a tedious night
 May they once hope to resalute the light
 What if this flesh of mine be made the prey
 Of scaly Pirates Caniballs at sea
 Shall living Sepulchres giue up there dead
 Or is not flesh made fish then perished
 What if the working of a subtile flame
 By an unkind embrace dissolve this frame
 To ashes; and the whistling winds convey
 Each atome to a quite contrary way
 Shall the small Pilgrims that perhaps may passe
 From grasse to flesh and thence from flesh to grasse
 Travell untill they meet and then embrace
 So strictly as to grow the former face
 My God I know thy powrefull word did frame
 Out of pure nothing all that hath a name
 From the bright Angells bathing in full streames
 Of Deathlesse joyes to moates that dance in beames
 And shall I doubt but such a word can call
 Flesh out of dust that out of lesse made all
 No no I am resolv'd that when poore I
 Shall slumb'ring in our Mothers bosome lye
 The circling wormes shall loose there fast embrace
 And kinder turfes that cover me giue place
 The bands of death shall burst at the shrill sound
 Of heavens summons and I shall bee found
 Then will I rise and dresse mee Lord for thee
 Who didst by death undresse thee Lord for mee.

The Deceite.

If doing would advance my claime
 To that great prize of heav'ns rest
 What Trophyes would I reare to fame
 High as the place to bee possest.

Were it beguirt with feircer flames
Then those that circle soules in hell
Or moated round with sea-like¹ Thames
When his proud waves doe highest swell.

Were death the porter and should stand
Arm'd with a never missing dart
Or blasting lightnings in his hand
Methinks all would not daunt this heart

But ha's not God proclaim'd this rest
The guerdon of farre lower paines
The starry mansions of the blest
At cheaper rates may bee my gaines
False heart that dost pretend to thrust
Through flames and Floods and death to Rest
Yet dar'st not quitt one bosome lust
For Gods or thine owne Interest.

The Fall.

Lord what a stately peice was man
How much was in that little span
 of old
What a sweet entercourse did hee
Some pretious howres maintaine with thee
 and hold
Things new come from their makers hand
In comely order then did stand
 and dresse ;²
That happy paradise for men
Was but a steppe from heaven then
 or lesse
But cursed tasting of blest fruite
Wither'd our happinesse at roote
 and Lord
The falling sicknesse there wee tooke
And fell almost below thy looke
 Abhorr'd
For nought wee by our selves were sold
Wee made a change of o' best gold
 for guilt
The weaker vessells first offence
Made way and so our innocence
 was spilt.

¹ There is no hyphen in the MS.

² There is no stop in the MS.

Lett the Creation bee all voice
 thus to rejoyce
 And thus to sing
 TE DEUM to the only King
 Till the noise spread and grow so high
 It drowne Sins hoarse and fullmouthd cry
 . Josuah like could I command
 the Sun to stand
 this only day
 Should then bee length'ned by its stay
 A day so sweete for certaine is
 More then a Type a tast of blisse

The Sigh.

Ah with what freedome could I once have prayd
 And drenchd in teares my supplications made
 Wing'd them with sighs to send them how I strove
 By wind or Water to my God aboue
 But now of late methinks I feele
 My selfe transforming into steele
 Nothing thats hard but doth impart
 Its stubborne hardnesse to my hart

Ah with what ardour could I once haue heard
 How hath this heart of mine bin sweetly stir'd
 Quickned and raisd to such a lively frame
 That I haue wondred how and whence it came
 But now alas those daies are done
 There is more life in stocks or stone
 Nothing more indispos'd can bee
 Ah! Leade it selfe is light to mee

Ah! when the beames of light on mee did shine
 How did I gaze on Heav'n and think it mine
 Then could I spurn at Earth as at a toy
 No such poore limitts then could bound my Joy
 But ah how are those white houres feldd
 That Earth I spurn'd now fills my head
 And I that aim'd then starres more high
 Now groveling in a dust heape lye

Ah mee! my God if a deepe sigh or grone
 May find thy gracious eare or reach thy throne
 O thence dispatch a word speake till I heare
 Henceforth be this your Posture. AS YOU WERE.

Feares.

I am deceiv'd or sure this brest
 Is with a holy flame possest
 At least some buisy sparkes conspire
 How to breake forth into a fire
 Methinks my soule thus warm'd with love
 Might prize it's Saviour farre above
 What Earth calls good and should be cleare
 From holding Life it selfe for deare.
 But in a sluggish flame to frye
 And ev'ry moment feele I dye
 Or to bee tortur'd on a rack
 Till my distended heartstrings crack
 Or fleyd alive to have the knife
 Not cutt but saw the thread of life
 While my whole body shall be found
 To bee but one continu'd wound
 So that my soule should seeme to doubt
 Which way untouchd to sally out
 Tis then my feares doe make mee think
 My fraile and weary'd flesh will shrink
 My heart will basely faint and I
 Shall want the courage for to dye
 Yet I will hope if Heaven shall
 To such a Tryall giue the call
 Its bounty may to mee extend
 And forces to my weaknesse lend
 Then I will challenge death to shew
 His face drawne in its dismal'st hue
 Which shall not so appall my heart
 But I will run upon his dart.

Eternity.

My thoughts quick as the glances of an eye
 Can from one Pole unto the other flye
 And in one moment like to skillfull DRAKE
 Can for this vaster globe a girdle make
 Outstrip those heavy slugs that tooke a day
 To bring Roome news from Macedonia
 But were my thoughts beyond all wonder fleet
 They cannot gaine one end where both doe meet

Eternity's a Circle or a Maze
 Where thoughts are tangled in the doubtfull waies
 Where Fancy's pos'd Conception at a stand
 A broad Abyesse whence none can ken the land
 Looke what a droppe is to the brimfull sea
 Or single sparke to greatest fires that be
 Or least of numbers to that full account
 Arithmetick can make her figures mount
 Or as a short liv'd minute would appeare
 To a long lease for the Platonick yeare
 Such will the longest date of ag'd Time be
 Compar'd with overgrowne Eternitye.

The Call.

When shall the Gloryes of that day
 Begin to dawne when I may say
 No more shall weary'd flesh complaine
 Of wearing out the houres in paine
 Wishing the sable visag'd Night
 Were banishd with the chearfull Light
 No more the briny teares shall rise
 From the full fountaines of these eyes
 Or my sick heart be almost spent
 With sighes that ev'ry breath hath sent
 To the reguardlesse winds which they
 Have in their pass-time puffed away
 Under the Altar not a tongue
 But sadly whispers Lord how long?
 The Spirit and the Bride agree
 And blessed Jesus call for thee
 Or were it that thy Saints were dumb
 The wickeds very sins say COME
 Come then at last and lett us see
 Our long desired Jubilee
 Nor can the day be lesse that brings
 At once our King & makes us Kings

Sinne.

Bewitching Sinne hadst thou not beene
 Blest Paradise had yet bin seene
 Majestick man had grac'd that bowre
 And bin the gardens choicest flow're

Wasting diseases that displace
 The Virgin beautyes of the face
 While Yorke thrives in the civill warre
 And treads on blushing Lancaster
 Had own'd no power to invade
 Bodies so firme and strongly made
 The trembling palsyes that ingage
 Most with the weaknesse of old Age
 Had then in vaine assay'd to make
 So well a temp'red fabrick shake.
 Nor was there any Art to show
 A poyson (before Sin) our foe.¹
 What's deadly now; was wholesome food
 While wee in Innocency stood
 And till himselfe his death did vote
 Mans selfe was his owne Antidote.

Royal Presents.

The off'rings of the Easterne Kings of old
 Unto our Lord were Incense, Myrrh and Gold
 Incense because a God; Gold as a king
 And Myrrh as to a dying man they bring:
 Instead of Incense blessed Lord if wee
 Can send a Sigh or fervent Pray're to thee
 Instead of Myrrh, if wee can but provide
 Teares that from penitentiall eyes do slide
 And though wee have no Gold if for our part
 Wee can present thee with a broken hart
 Thou wilt accept, and say those Easterne kings
 Did not present thee with more precious things

1 Cor. 2. 9.²

The curious searching eye of man hath seene
 Roome when her glories fullest ripe haue beene
 Paule thundring out the dread Jehovah's word
 And the blest Incarnation of our Lord
 What ever twinkling starre the heavens grace
 Or lovely feature dwells upon a face

¹ There is no stop in the MS.

² 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.'

What ever sparkling diamond has shedd
 It's beames of light from an Imperiall head
 What ever written studdyes challenge praise
 Those lines that Babells Prince did so amaze.
 What workes of wonder the Omnipotent
 Was penning while the first six dayes were spent
 What ever states are in or past theire growth
 What ever Art or Nature ha's brought forth
 Let Truth it selfe then speak if there may bee
 Hope of such sights to come as, EYE NE'RE SEE.¹

The eye stepps farre to things that have appear'd
 But reaches not the eare the Eare ha's heard
 Such notes as Musicks selfe could scarce compose
 Where Art wedd Admiration to the close
 The sugred straines of Swans when they expire
 The Sweeter Psalmes breathd from the Royall Lyre
 The sounds those trembling strings then quaver'd out
 Visited by learn'd fingers quick as thought
 The Rhetorick of Lawyers doubly fee'd
 What each Authentick Councell ha's decree'd
 Solomon's wisdom such a child dispute
 As learned Hebrew Doctours did confute
 Christ preaching christ whose sermons are all Text
 Words that did free ev'n such as Divells vext
 Jehovah in discourse with mortall men
 And Mortalls speaking unto god ag'en
 Say now where is the thing that shall appeare
 An equall stranger to the Eye and Eare

Such things perchance may be but where is ought
 Whose vastnesse swells above the graspe of thought
 The heart of man is wid'ned to receive
 More then Existencyes wee can conceive
 Clodds turn'd to starres each tender spire of grasse
 A Monarchy that should the Roman passe
 Jewells as bigge as earth and yet so bright
 The Sun's to theires should be the Junior light
 The sweets of all Relations join'd in one
 And that Relation never to be done
 A Prince as goode as greate though hee did sway
 The earth that's knowne and the Incognita
 Mankind as purely good as any hee
 Would either seeme or could desire to bee

¹ Still in Wanley's time a permissible past-tense form. See *O. E. D.*

Yea things beyond what highflowne Poets faigne
 As farre as they from truth their flight have ta'ne
 But cannot yet imagine where to find
 The Non-such to the Eye the Eare the Mind

RESP.

That blessed ONE in THREE, and THREE in	} ONE
Who fills all Places and yet is in n	
Tis' hee that passes thought and hee AL	

The Witch of Endor.

The dark and gloomy visag'd Night had hurl'd
 Her sable mantle round about the world
 When carefull Saule wrapt in his wish'd disguise
 With guilty steps post towards Endor flies
 Without the towne there was a shady wood
 Of Yew and Cypress where a cottage stood
 Simple and low and clogg'd with smoak and soot
 Onely a crooked footpath leading too't
 Perceiving hee drew neare hee soone forsakes
 His pamper'd steed whom straight a servant takes
 While hee himselfe assisted by a freind
 Assay's the path that to the place doth bend
 The starres did wink and twinkle as if they
 Were loath to light them in so ill a way
 The waters made a sadder murmur o're
 The smooth round pebbles then they us'd before
 The winds did whisper in the topps of trees
 And bred such kind of horroure by degrees
 That his misgiving heart seem'd to devine
 The fatall issue of his black designe
 Yet on hee goes and ceases not before
 His frequent paces bring him to the doore.
 Twas here hee knockd:¹ said hee if any are
 Within these walls speake to a passenger
 Forthwith a Beldame heares his hasty call
 And from a weather ruin'd part o'th wall
 Shee thrusts her hoary head, her furrow'd front
 With chapps and wrinckles deeply graven on't
 Her eye browes jutt'd o're, her hollow eyes
 Bestow a blast on almost all shee spies
 Her long discolour'd teeth at distance stand
 A blazing taper filld her trembling hand

¹ No stop in MS.

And who art thou said shee in an ill houre
 Whom wandring stepps have led unto this bowre
 For croaking Frogs, and shreeking Owles do tell
 Tis late at night and after Curfeu bell
 I am said hee a lost forsaken man
 Whom none can stead unlesse thy wisdome can
 Nor am I voyd of hope since the greate name
 Of Endor is so trumpetted by Fame
 They say if shee invoke the Gods below
 Shee may comānd what the black Prince can doe
 Or if shee frowne compells himselfe to twist
 A rope of sand; or make a Fad¹ I wist
 O let mee tast thy skill if magick can
 Performe her boasts; raise mee a certaine man
 Whom I shall name for this exploite be mine
 And call this brace of golden tallents thine
 Thou rash bold man said shee art thou alone
 So ignorant what princely Saule hath done
 Doe not his Edicts thunder sudden death
 To all that summon spiritts from beneath
 Breath any of those sages who were knowne
 To mutter charmes are not all Wizzards gone
 Say then why doth thy guilefull tongue intend
 Snares for my life why dost thou wish my end?
 Wisest of women said the troubled Saule
 Feare not the least of harmes no treason shall
 Divorce sweet Safety from thy happy dayes
 Favour my eager wishes; hee that prayes
 Assistance from thy Art; knowes to conceale
 What none but feared Endor can reveale
 Nor shall this heedlesse tongue let fall a word
 That may betray thee; to the sharpe edg'd sword
 Of blinded Justice; and forthwith doth sweare
 (Striking his brest) this secret shall rott here
 O thou perplexed carefull soule said shee
 Thou hast prevaild; and since I pittie thee
 Sound thou the name of the desired sprite
 And from the shades I'le dragge him to thy sight
 Deceased Samuel said the hasty Saule
 Is hee I seeke and him I praye thee call
 Shee stay'd not to reply but down shee ran
 And works her temples with the fatt of man

¹ *Fad*: a sheaf or bundle. Rather commoner, perhaps, in the form 'fawd', q.v. in *O. E. D.* Examples in the *English Dialect Dictionary* are chiefly from the northern counties.

Three times shee wafted round her blazing brand
And thrice touch'd Vervaine with her with'red hand
Thrice was shee trembling prostrate on the ground
And thrice her hideous yellings did resound
From grotts and caves which Satyres skulking there
Return'd in dolefull Ecchoes to her eare
At last shee loosd her snaky haire and shook
Her hoary head unclasp'd her dismall book
And thus shee read, Ye dreaded pow'ers that keepe
Your black courts in the vast unbottomd deepe
And thou infernall Prince whose dire comānd
Hell's swarthy Legions dare not to withstand
You meager visag'd Ghosts that wandring stray
In nights eternall shades and dread the day
Attend the Witch of Endor at her call
And send mee Samuel from amongst you all
When Endor speakes shee will not brooke delay
The proudest of you must and shall obey
Forthwith the trembling earth did hisse and heave
Her bowells murmur'd and at last did cleave
Into a wide mouth'd yawne the woman peeps
And sees the called Ghost rise from the deeps
At this shee starts and all transported cryes
Saul thou hast guld mee in a false disguise
And now o whither, whither shall I beare
This forfeit life? wise woman do not feare
(Reply'd the King) but say what hast thou seene
Or whether have thy charmes unanswer'd beene
I saw the Gods (said shee) from the earth ascend
And hither one his doubtfull steps doth bend
A long white beard adorne his fruitfull chin
And a large mantle is hee folded in
Rayse up thy sadden'd soule for hee is neare
And if thou fear'st not now hee doth appeare
Forthwith the King perceives that it is hee
And doth salute him with a bended knee
Sayd Samuel wherefore dost y^e mee molest
Sending disturbance to my peacefull rest?
Thrice Honour'd Samuel said dejected Saul
Impetuous blasts of fortune seeke my fall
For sons of Gath and Askelon conspire
With all the ruines of the sword and fire
To act their vengeance on my fruitfull land
And which is worst the lord himselfe doth stand
At a wide distance these disastrous dayes
Nor speakes by Prophet dreame or other wayes

And therefore have I sought for thee to show
Forsaken Saul what ti's hee ought to doe.
Fond Prince the other said dost thou not know
That man befreinds in vaine when God's a foe
The Lord hath done what once hee spake by mee
That hee would teare the Royaltie from thee
And set the Crowne on warlick Davids head
Because thou sav'd'st whom God had voted dead
That sin will tumble thee into thy grave
And make proud Isr'ell the Philistins slave
For er'e the morrows Sun concludes his race
Prevailing foes will conquerd Israel chace
And Kingly Saul with the yong Princes three
By the same time will doubtlesse be with mee
This said affrighted Saul lookes pale with feares
And feels his heart to throb at what hee heares
His sight turnes dinne hee faints and in a swoond
Greife and Amazement hurle him to the ground
Till at the last lowd clamours and the cryes
Of the by standers forc'd him to arise.
And what said hee shall then the morrows light
Be conscious to our fearfull shamefull flight
Shall those whom single Sampson us'd to foile
Enrich their Idol Temples with the spoile
Of our forsaken tents, Is Dagon hee
That must dispose of such a victorie
Well be it so, but yet it shall appeare
Saul ha's resolv'd to sell it very deare
This said away hee posts stung with despaire
And mad to bee where both the Armyes are
Arriv'd once at the camp hee will not stay
His owne refreshments nor endure delay
But in the transports of a fi'ry mood
Away hee cryes to them that neare him stood
And let the warlike Trumpett signifye
To our envaders that wee them defye
If Saul must downe hee will not fall alone
The bed of honour is another throne
Straight doth obedience meet the kings comānd
And straight both armyes in batalia stand
They march and with a rush that makes
The earth to tremble; and a shout that breakes
The very aire they meet; and now the dart
Of Death at ev'ry shot doth thrill a heart
Here lyes a head lopt from the uselesse trunk
And there the wounded reel like to the drunk

Here lyes a shiver'd lance and there a sword
Here one would speake but death cutts of the word
There captaines breathlesse fall and seem'd to bite
The bloodstain'd earth in death preserving spite
Here the torne ensignes lye rowld all in blood
And there broke bowes swimme downe the purple flood
Yet Victory doth hover in her flight
As doubtfull still upon whose crests to light
For wrathfull Saul where e're hee turn'd his sword
Broke ranks and there the half-lost feild restor'd
Each fledd his angry arme; as hee that feares
The sword of Justice or the fatall sheares
As when a Lyon hath escap'd the care
Of his feirce keeper; all the vulgar are
So frighted that on heapes they run away
And think the Lyon hath them if they stay:
So did the base borne wretches fly and fall
For very feare; soone as they saw twa's Saule.
For his brave arme it was that seem'd to stay
In equall poize the buisnesse of the day
At last a wary Captaine that had seene
Him force a troope as if his sword had beene
A flash of lightning calls a chosen band
Of skillfull Archers under his command
And here said hee my freinds here make a ring
And aime your featherd arrowes at a king
The Gods intend the Glory of this day
For you alone; now mark what I shall say
That happy arme that aimes a steady dart
And finds the way to thrill him to the hart
Shall have that pamper'd steed the king doth ride
And be the captaine of a band beside
Scarce had hee spoke when from among the rest
There stepps a sturdy youth whose raised chest
Bigg bones and sinnews spoke his strength said hee
Courage brave sparkes this prize is meant for mee
And grasping in his hand the fatall Yew
Forces the string; the arrow twittring flew
And lodg'd it's sharp empoison'd point betweene
The juncture of his armes; have you not seene
How when the pioneers have undermin'd
Some lofty Fort or Tower to them assign'd
It totters till anon the weighty fall
Makes the ground shake; so fell the Princ'ly Saul
Then twa's a loyall troope did make a ring
And fought it bravely till their wounded king

Was borne aside unto his Royall tent
Whence hee might veiw that doubtfull daies event
Nor had hee rested long when one doth crye
The feild is lost o king the Hebrews flye
They are not of my mind bold Saul replies
And on the grownd fixing his wrathfull eyes
Ye Pow'res above (said hee) but that wee must
Beleive that whatsoe're you doe is just
And that your wayes (although to our weake mind
They seeme like crooked Labyrinths to wind)
Have yet theire secret straighnesse; It would pose
A well disposed heart to see your foes
Thus quaffe the blood and triumph in the fate
Of such as daily at your Altars waite
But as for mee, since you demand the crowne
You once did giue mee here I lay it downe
And yet methinks methinks I should not fall
With lesse then that which wracks and ruines all.
This said hee calls his Armour-bearer and
My freind said hee lend mee thy loyall hand
This sluggish wound I haue ha's not the force
To give my soule a quick and wish'd divorce
I will not have them mock mee; strike and save
The king from being the Philisthines slave
The Gods forbid said hee that I should dare
To quench the light of Isr'ell; forbear
Greate sir forbear your vassaile only here
In all things else his duty shall appeare
Dull slave twa's only Death (the king reply'd)
I did demand; in that am I deny'd?
Ti's well I need you not, I haue a hand
That will not shrink mee at my last command
Ye Gods in this at least I giue you praise
That though you doe allott us dismall daies
You doe not force us for to live them out
But have so planted us with deaths about
And them so cheape; that hee that will not keepe
His station longer when hee please may sleepe
Tis that I would; scarce had hee spoke the word
But straight hee rushes on his pointed sword
And out there burst a crimson flood to dye
The Earth in blushes at the Tragœdye
His armour bearer who the while had stood
The sad spectatour of this scene of blood
Perceiuing that the king had sigh'd away
His stock of breath; veiwing him as hee lay

Alasse how low and little is hee now
(Said hee) to whom i'th morning all did bow
I see that crownes exempt not from the graves
The King of Terrours hath his sceptred slaves
Where are ye now Proud thoughts that once possesst
And swelld that haughty and ambitious brest
Where is the glory of y^e Royall front
Once girt with gold and honour writt upon't
Where is the lustre of that sparkling eye
That struck us with an awe of Majestye
Behold that tongue the gods did once intrust
With life and death; now licks the humble dust
Whose beck or nod whole Armyes once obey'd
Here at his vassailes foot is prostrate laid
In such a palenesse and so changd that wee
Who knew Saul best can scarce say this was hee
Dress'd in deaths liveryes wee doe appeare
But the dull mockeryes of what wee were
And yet Il'e put them on for who would dread
To take that path which kings are wont to tread
Make haste bold hand thy king before is gone
And it is fitt hee should be waited on
This said hee thrust his sword into his side
And falling at his Masters foot, hee dy'd
Meane while the Philisthines (proud of the fall
And fore'd departure of the wounded Saul)
Double their force and traversing the feild
Cutt all in peices that refuse to yeeld
So haue I seene the waves in a full tyde
With their curld heads beating against the side
Of a strong banke or damme till at the last
They turne it o're, and then with doubled hast
The torrent rushes out and overflows
Or beares away what ever doth oppose.
The cheife resistance which they mett was where
The three brave sons of Princ'ly Saul appeare
Whose keene edgd swords sent death or wounds to each
That press'd within the compasse of their reach.
Till the small plott they kept was rampir'd round
With bodyes lately fell'd unto the ground
And when their weary armes refus'd to weild
The sword, or longer to sustain the sheild.
Then did approued valour sink below
Th'oppressiue numbers of a baser foe
And the spent, weary Princes fell, and dy'd
While Victory lay bleeding by their side.

It is naturally in the lyrical pieces that the influence of Henry Vaughan is to be traced. It cannot be illustrated adequately from a selection but several of the poems given here are among those which show best how Vaughan's example seems to have entered into Wanley's choice of themes, phrases, and metrical forms. Thus the metre of 'The Invitation' (p. 6, above), 8484, rhyming a b a b, a rather uncommon seventeenth-century stanza used once by George Herbert and twice by Herrick, is one of Vaughan's favourites; practically five whole poems in *Silex Scintillans* follow this pattern. The theme of the same poem is no less characteristic. To look backward, whether to the infancy of the individual (as in 'The Retreat' or in 'Childhood') or to earlier and simpler periods in the history of the race (as in 'Corruption' or in 'Man's fall, and Recovery'), and to suggest that in those times heaven had been closer and more intimate in its dealings with men, was one of Vaughan's most frequent and distinctive mental habits. In the poem by Wanley the contrast is between the distance attributed to the modern relationship and the closer walk with God of the Jewish patriarchs; and the same contrast is emphasized in Vaughan's 'Isaacs Marriage' and 'The Rainbow'. But the poem by Vaughan which approaches these verses most nearly is 'Religion'. Here not only the theme but some of the verbal details of 'The Invitation' seem to be anticipated. It will be noticed also that Wanley's 'The Fall', 'The Sigh', and 'Sinne' also deplore, with similar feelings and gestures, the gulf between a former age, racial or individual, of innocence and familiarity with Heaven, and a present state of decadence. 'The Call' seems to have been suggested by Vaughan's 'The Dawning'.

Four of these pieces, 'The Resurrection', 'The Riddle', 'The Sigh', and 'The Call', may now be annotated with a view to bringing out some resemblances of phrase or incidental thought in the works of the two poets. Page and line references to Vaughan's works apply to the Clarendon Press edition.

The Resurrection (p. 12, above), ll. 1-2: *Can death be faithfull . . . dust*. Cp. Vaughan, 'Resurrection and Immortality', p. 401, ll. 17-18:

Or that he can endure to be unjust
Who keeps his Covenant even with our dust.

l. 28. *Shall slumb'ring in our Mothers bosome lye.* Cp. Vaughan, 'Death', p. 400, ll. 27-8:

But thou
Shalt in thy mothers bosome sleepe . . .

The Riddle (p. 14, above). (The theme is the same as that of Vaughan's 'The Incarnation and Passion'.)

ll. 9-10. *Vayling his rayes . . . in a fleshly cloud.* Cp. Vaughan, 'The Incarnation and Passion', l. 5, 'To put on Clouds instead of light'; and *The Mount of Olives*, p. 161, ll. 40-2: 'And how willingly (O blessed Jesus!) didst thou lay down thy robes of glory, and cloath thy self with flesh'.

ll. 21-2. *An Asses colt . . . Winds to ride.* Cp. Vaughan, *The Mount of Olives*, p. 162, ll. 10-12: 'Now again I meet thee on the Asse, made infinitely happy by so glorious a rider, by the God of Jeshurun who rideth on the heavens, and in his excellence on the skies.'

The Sigh (p. 15, above), l. 21: *those white houres.* The word 'white' employed in a spiritual sense, 'happy' or 'blessed' is perhaps the most genuinely characteristic single word in Vaughan's poetry. Thus he speaks of 'that first white age', 'those white days', 'those white designs which children drive'.

l. 23. *I that aim'd then starres more high.* Cp. Vaughan, *Primitive Holiness*, p. 384, ll. 73-4:

his Ayme is farre more high,
And stoopes to nothing lower than the skie.

and 'Disorder and Frailty', p. 445, ll. 21-2:

ayming at all
Thy stars, and spangled hall.

ll. 25-6. *grone . . . throne.* Cp. Vaughan, 'Misery', p. 474, ll. 107 and 111: 'O let my Crie come to thy throne!' 'With spirit sighs, and earnest grones'.

The Call (p. 17, above). (One of Herbert's titles in *The Temple*, used also by Vaughan, p. 416.)

ll. 1-2. *When . . . dawne.* Cp. Vaughan, 'The Dawning',
l. 1 sqq. 'Ah! what time wilt thou come? . . .'

ll. 3-6. *No more . . . chearfull Light.* Cp. Vaughan,
'Resurrection and Immortality', p. 402, ll. 65-8:

we shall there no more
Watch stars, or pore
Through melancholly clouds, and say
Would it were Day!

ll. 13-14. *Under the Altar . . . how long?* Vaughan uses
the same text in 'Abel's blood', p. 524, ll. 20-2:

Where souls behinde the altar move,
And with one strong, incessant cry
Inquire *How long?* of the most high.

Vaughan's delight in external nature is hardly paralleled
in the poems quoted above, but one of those for which MS.
Add. 22472 is the only known authority shows that in this
respect also there was a real community of interest between
the two poets:

Humaine Cares.

These pretty little birds see how
They skip from bough to bough
Tuning their sweet melod'ous notes
Through warbling slender throates
Nor caring where they next shall feed
Upon what little worme or seed

2

The glitt'ring sparkles of the night
How free they spend their light
As nimble Fairyes on the ground
They smile and dance the round
Carelesse where tis they shall repaire
That oyle that makes them shine so faire

3

The purling waters glide away
And o're blew pebbles stray
They leave their fountaines farre behind
And thousand circles wind
About the Flow'ry meadowes side
Not doubting but to be supply'd

4

The Trees doe budd and bloome and grow
 And boast theire plenty so
 As if they fear'd no pilfring hand
 Or blustering winds comānd
 Or nipping frosts should them undresse
 And make theire leavy glories lesse

5

But man alone poore foolish man
 Who scarce lives out a span
 Is stock'd with cares and Idle feares
 For full one hundred yeares
 And as if wanting greife hee must
 Goe take up sorrow upon trust.

It can hardly be claimed for Wanley, as it has been claimed for Vaughan, that he is among our great lyrical poets. He suffers in the comparison which his discipleship courts by the relative absence from his work of those sudden illuminations and 'glimpses' which give its chief glory to the poetry of Vaughan. Yet he was more than an imitator; and his own genuine inspiration and feeling, though less mystical and more equable than Vaughan's, should give him a secure place among the 'divine' lyrist's of his time.

His narrative works are hardly inferior to his lyrical pieces. In that age of epic enthusiasm, too little restrained by warnings that 'a heroic poem, truly such, is undoubtedly the greatest work the soul of man is capable to perform', it was something indeed that his narratives in verse were neither ingloriously finished nor discreetly left half told. The heroic poets accepted many handicaps, not the least or the least avoidable of which would seem to have been the want of sufficient initial training in less exacting forms of narrative art. For all the 'bookish theoric' generously made available by the critics, the ideals of proportion, economy, and inevitable movement were too seldom kept in view by the practitioners; and it seems probable that if the 'brief model' of the compass of *Absalom and Achitophel*, or even of *Paradise Regained*,

had been more frequently followed, success might oftener have attended the more 'diffuse' schemes. Two creditable examples of such exercise slumbered in Wanley's MSS.; and for more like these it were surely no bad bargain to give a *Gondibert* or *Davideis* in exchange. From the example just quoted it will be seen that Wanley had much of the true Augustan feeling for directness, propriety, and wise self-limitation, and none of the neo-classical servitude to ancient method and machinery. He launches straight into his story, informing it with new imaginative life and making the most, though not too much, of its dramatic moments and other possibilities; and he finishes it when its essentials have been presented. He manages the couplet with a good deal of ease and power; keeping it for the most part neither too taut nor too flexible, and avoiding the pitfall of monotony which was prepared for even the greatest of its manipulators.

Though both as lyrical and as narrative poet Wanley failed to reach the highest standards, he merits the praise of having used wisely and well some very real gifts; and the almost complete neglect of his verse, if not the verse itself, may take a modest place among the 'wonders of the little world'. An edition of his poems and letters is contemplated with a view to securing for his talents the more general recognition which they seem to deserve.

L. C. MARTIN.

THE WORDS AND THE PLAY

WE hear sometimes of the Art of the Theatre, but perhaps this does not mean the same thing to all of us. It may appear to some to be the writing of plays, to others the display of personality in acting; and, again, it may be the combination and reconciliation of various arts, the schooling of the actors to a general conception that may not be precisely the author's, and the presentation of the play in an imaginative envelope of scenery and setting that may be of more account than the written word.

Plays have always had actors to interpret them and there must always have been some kind of producer or, as we used to call him, stage-manager. His authority must have given some kind of direction to the performance; if there has not always been scenery there has commonly been at least some background or primitive indication of locality. Yet if stage performance has had constant elements the proportions and relations of these have been variable. We dispute nowadays about the value of the appeal to the ear or to the eye until it would appear that the authority of words is menaced, that the drama which becomes literature is in danger. And, indeed, he whom Mr. Gordon Craig calls the Man of the Theatre might resent as unfair and irrelevant the advantage given to words by printing and publication. The play becomes, or may become, literature and so gains a prestige that is not of the theatre; it lives a double life. It is true that the people of the theatre are not commonly overawed by the printed word when the author is not there to protect it; the scholar will take infinite pains to interpret or restore a line of Shakespeare which actor or producer ruthlessly cuts out. To be venerated may be to be neglected. This is not an age in which veneration runs to excess, and the dramatist

may be wise to exercise some caution in proclaiming that his work is permanent and sacrosanct. You cannot achieve finality even by printing your words in a book.

The menace of the cinema to words is so obvious and so widespread that it hardly appears as a danger; it is, rather, a condition. The play-writer may sometimes have reflected that if the cinema could clear away from the theatre all the coarse and stupid elements, if it could take over the lower end of dramatic or pseudo-dramatic entertainment, rid us of vapid and frivolous audiences, it might leave a drama purged of its dross, untrammelled by concessions. But it cannot be. We shall not have a great theatrical art without a base in humanity. The theatre will always have to struggle with inferiorities half-vitalized; if it becomes constricted and aloof it will lose its vitality as well as its vogue. And the cinema will not remain merely a means to popular enjoyment; it struggles to become a fine art and perhaps it will succeed. We must make room for it, but this is not to abandon the written play.

The drama is threatened now from another angle. Play-writers are sometimes invited to prepare their plays for broadcasting or to write plays suitable for it. A little time ago I read a book of plays by a writer of talent, and one of these was conspicuously inferior to the others, coarser in texture, more emphatic, full of vain repetitions. It had been written for broadcasting. Perhaps the production of such plays is to become an art, but one cannot conceive it as a fine art. Broadcasting is hardly a formidable rival to the theatre except in its social aspect, but there is some piquancy in the position when the play, as we have come to know it, is threatened on the one hand by the loss of words and on the other by the loss of action and scene.

A little time ago the editor of *The Playgoer*, which is 'the organ of the Liverpool Playhouse Circle', obtained 'a symposium of opinions' from persons of more or less eminence on the subject of broadcasting plays and its influence on the theatrical art. It is not surprising that opinions on the subject differed widely. Mr. Shaw liked the idea of sticking

to his fireside instead of going to an uncomfortable theatre, but he had not much confidence in broadcasting; Mr. Gordon Craig thought it might be a blessing if money-grubbing authors and actors would take to it; Mr. Belloc feared that it would 'degrade and simplify the complex fullness of emotion'. It was suggested, too, that broadcasting would abolish conversation in the home, that it would be a good advertisement for the theatre, that its lack of a vital relation with the audience must be a fatal defect, that, in any case, it would be useless to struggle against it. Perhaps it will become one of the lucrative branches of the dramatic art and authors may turn an honest penny by it while reserving their finer energies for other work. Perhaps the danger is that they may try to write plays which will do both for broadcasting and the theatre. I don't see how this could fail to bring about that degradation of emotion that Mr. Belloc warns us against. It does not seem probable that a fine drama can be evolved by the stimulus of broadcasting but, to be any good, a drama must conform to conditions. The conditions of broadcasting and of theatrical entertainment are quite different.

But there is an attack on the words of the play at once more formidable and more subtle than these. With something between insolence and jocosity the book of words is referred to as 'the literary fragment' and the author is told bluntly that his time of privilege is coming to an end. 'A play', says a writer in a recent story, 'isn't something you read; it's something actors do on a stage; and they can't afford to do it unless the public pays to watch 'em. If it won't buy tickets you haven't got a play; you've only got some typewriting.' Such is the brutal half-truth, and we may hasten to agree that between the completion of the manuscript and the production in a theatre there must be a gap the filling of which may greatly affect the value of the performance. The actor may give intelligent help but he may do more; his part may amount to collaboration and his share may be the greater in a play that will not live. The producer, too, may do more for the general effect than actors and dramatist together; he may be the presiding and imaginative genius of the affair.

And so we come to the conception of that Man of the Theatre who may or may not write, act, design scenery or dresses, but is competent to carry on a performance that includes all. He becomes supreme but he need not reject the idea of collaboration in production, of the comradeship of several or many artists working together, with a common aim, for the common good. Is the writer of the book of words to stand aside and say: 'No! My part is the essential thing; my share is a rigid, irreducible minimum; you may help me but I will not help you?'

This is not a simple question to answer; I cannot find a brief formula to dispose of it. There must be among the multiform activities of the theatre some happy combinations, some mutual concessions in the various elements of production. There are plays in which the actor or the producer is predominant and plays in which, clearly, the words matter far more than anything else; of course it is both actor's and producer's work to give the words their value. I suppose that in the theatre, as elsewhere, the strong man tends to be uppermost and there are laws or traditions to help the weak. The weak, in the particular case, may be the author who has no experience behind the curtain of the theatre. Doubtless he is often treated very kindly. But, again, it may be asked, are you to give him an artificial strength, an impregnable position; to accept his part of the work as a positive pre-occupation? In the case of a pantomime or other popular form of play there is often, of course, a good deal of tampering with the original words but even more exalted kinds are sometimes modified in rehearsal. I think that managers and producers generally are respectful to the text of eminent play-writers and that repertory theatre managers are—or were—respectful to that of all comers.

Certainly authors of some repute have often agreed, willingly or anxiously, to work under influence. The powerful manager or actor-manager is not a person to be trifled with and he must have spoilt a good many plays; possibly he has improved some. I knew an author who wrote a play under the expert help, the benevolent supervision, of the manager who was

to act in it. The play did not succeed but it lived as a memory of shame and misery in the author's mind. I know of a case, too, in which an author sent two plays to a manager who accepted them as one. They had nothing to do with one another but it appeared to the manager that both contained matter of theatrical effect. He suggested, therefore, that they should be telescoped, that the brighter parts of the two plays should be welded together. The task did not prove to be beyond expert capacity and the author, anxious for production on any terms, did the job well enough to give the composite play some measure of success. Such instances of collaboration may not be representative of all but they are not exaggerated and they are suggestive.

There is, too, the claim of the actor to more consideration. Theorists have maintained that in the future the actor will assert himself in the theatre—or would it be to reassert himself?—and claim a predominant share in the creation or, at least, in the shaping of his part. I don't say that such a thing can never be possible, but I fear that anything of the kind would degrade the play unless, indeed, some ideal race of actors, austere, sensitive, and remarkably reasonable, should arise. I remember an occasion when an actor wished for permission to make some slight excisions, to omit a few lines which he thought difficult or redundant. The author did not agree, for the proposed excisions were all to one effect; they were to make the character more sympathetic to the audience, to rid it of its saliences and pungencies.

All this does not constitute a positive condemnation of collaboration in play-writing or play-producing but it may serve to indicate some difficulties and dangers. I don't think that in the history of the theatre the play-writer has been haughtily aloof and impervious to reason. In modern conditions it is impossible that he should always be intimate with the routine of the theatre and competent to hold his own there. He cannot always take an active part in rehearsal, and if he does he may be too timid or inexperienced to assert himself fairly. The theatre would suffer a heavy loss if play-writing were confined to the Man of the Theatre or if the inexperienced

author had to struggle with actors and producer in perpetual compromise. He must stick to his words tightly if not rigidly. But he must be a reasonable man and not impervious to suggestion. His ideas must come from somewhere, and if sometimes he takes one that is suggested to him this becomes his choice. One has heard of the author who says: 'Yes, that would be an improvement but I didn't think of it. If I accept it the work is no longer mine.' This is the refuge of egoism but perhaps it is a question of degree. If you show a sonnet to a friend and he proposes a new sestet, clearly better than your own, what are you to do?

The literary man has been almost pathetically eager to compromise with the theatre in altering or abbreviating his completed work; unfortunately he has not been ready to make the more helpful compromises: to invent an acceptable diction, to study the audience and the conditions of performance. I don't know how Browning got on with Macready, but Tennyson was willing to let Irving have *Queen Mary* and *Becket* cut to the proportions of the stage; Mr. Hardy wrote *The Dynasts* for 'the theatre of the mind', but he was glad to have a stage play carved out of it; Henry James made his stories *The American* and *Daisy Miller* into plays, though the process was surely a vulgarization; Conrad turned fine stories into plays not so fine. Modern play-writers have been known to concede the happy ending after a brief excursion into austerity. The theatre fascinates us all and perhaps we are too ready to sell our souls for it. Our souls, such as they are, may be found in our words, and in dealing with these we may be reasonable but we must not be pliable.

One of the most interesting books on the theatre is Mr. Gordon Craig's *On the Art of the Theatre*, published first in 1911 and reissued lately with a new preface. We must not judge by unqualified extremes but it is fair to quote some of the things that Mr. Craig says, remembering that he is one of the imaginative men in the theatre and that he has that historical sense which is concerned with the future as well as with the past. One may agree or disagree with him in varying proportions. For instance, he says that you cannot have a work of art with

more than one directing brain, and there is something, if not everything, in this. He quotes Goethe's saying that 'Shakespeare belongs by rights to the history of poetry; in the history of the Theatre he only appears casually', and, again, he says: 'The poet is not of the theatre, has never come from the theatre, and cannot be of the theatre.' Indeed, he says that 'the plays of Shakespeare are unactable—they are a bore when acted', though this accompanies an explanation of why he produced *Hamlet* at the Moscow theatre. He says, too, that masks will be used again in the theatre in the near future, and also that 'the Theatre will continue its growth and actors will continue for some years to hinder its development'; the way to their immediate salvation, it seems, is in symbolical gesture. But he goes further than this. He says: 'I believe in the time when we shall be able to create works of art in the Theatre without the use of the written play, without the use of actors.'

This might seem to put Mr. Craig outside any fruitful discussion of immediate theatrical tendencies, but there is a significant qualification. He is an idealist but he is not an entirely unpractical man. 'But', he continues, 'I believe also in the necessity of daily work under the conditions which are to-day offered us.' Mr. Craig is not for the immediate abolition of actors and authors and, even when they lie under the shadow of annihilation, he would be their very good friend. It is interesting, however, to read his suggestive indication of a performance that would make its appeal to the eye and not to the ear:

'Let us take something as an example of what I mean: that part in the play of *Macbeth* where he prepares to nerve himself to rob King Duncan of his life. He is roaming about in and out of the dark corridors of his castle. Behind him, like his shadow, a servant moves, they pass and repass a window, and I think I see him gazing out a long time towards the heath. He continues his prowling, and then rests upon a stone bench. The servant, holding a trembling light, looks at him, and he looks back again. Once more he begins to pace the corridor; he is afraid to be left alone. . . . The servant departs. He continues to roam up and

down. . . . He will do it. The servant returns, startling him for an instant. "Get thee to bed." He watches the flame of the torch as it dwindles and dwindles, down the steps leading to the basement; a flame at first, it now becomes a streak—a streak.'

Then Mr. Craig quotes the famous dagger speech and he continues:

'Now for what I mean. This same idea, these same figures, these same visions, can be better brought before the eye and so into the soul of the audience if the artist concentrates on that which appeals to the eye, than if that which appeals to the brain, and that which appeals to the ear, is making simultaneous confusion.'

Mr. Craig, of course, is not insensible to Shakespeare's lines, but he does not think it helpful for Macbeth to cry out that

wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep.

These words may help him to his scene when he meditates in his study and he says finely: 'I let my scenes grow out of not merely the play, but from broad sweeps of thought which the play has conjured up in me.' And when Mr. Craig quotes again, as an accompaniment to a design for the play, the great lines into which Shakespeare translates Macbeth's agony—'To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow'—they stimulate him but he would not put them to the use for which Shakespeare devised them.

In justice to Mr. Craig it may be conceded that while he is a practical man, living to-day, he has every right to look into the future. His ideal includes the abolition of the word and of the actor who speaks, but he sees it as a distant ideal. He is ready to work with the tools at hand, to play a friendly part with actors and with play-writers. Our present conception of the art of the theatre must include words but it is not the writer, the scene-painter, the musician, the costumier, who is to prevail, but an art which embraces all these. Even this is an intermediate ideal; for the future Mr. Craig will have no use for words. And when the ultimate ideal is realized

and the theatre enshrines this art, which 'will unveil thought to our eyes, silently—by movements—in visions', when the words and the scene no longer compete and confuse, what is to become of our art of words, of our dramatic literature? I suppose it may continue in books, if poets and dramatists are so minded, or it may be modified into other forms. But shall we continue to have dramatic literature when it is banished from the theatre? Will our next Shakespeare be content to inspire even Mr. Craig?

There is some disadvantage in working in a medium when you are always conscious that it must and shall become obsolete; it is possible to look too far ahead. Yet change is common to man and all our enthusiasms must at last be dated, come into the historical perspective. It may be that in some distant future we shall not speak to one another, that words may be succeeded by thought communicated in shapes less rigid, more subtle. Still, Mr. Craig and all of us must work with what we have and continue our helpful pretences of permanence. We may agree with him that on occasion, in the theatre, words are forgotten or take a second place. It has been said that when Salvini played Othello the greatest impression was made when he bellowed like a bull. We may recall too the famous salute between the antagonists at the end of *Strife*. Yes, but in *Othello* as in *Strife* the spirit of the play is in its words; these actions are what they are by virtue of the words preceding them.

Even in the cinema there is yet a close connexion with words, and one may wonder sometimes what Mr. Craig makes of it. It is likely that he has made pronouncements on the subject but I have not seen much of them. If anybody could make a great effect with the cinema it should be Mr. Craig, far though it be from his ideal conditions. At least it might help him to get rid of those plaguy words, though I cannot see his Macbeth pattering about the Castle with the jerky step associated with the cinema. Perhaps a 'slow motion' might solve the difficulty. But of course one would expect Mr. Craig to hate the cinema like poison.

I cannot imagine a performance of Shakespeare, Molière,

Ibsen, Congreve, Shaw, Galsworthy, Masfield, or Benavente, in which the words are not the essential part, and I should shrink from the attempt to imagine a world in which they had not successors. I think that a drama must continue in which words are predominant, but that is not to say that it must exclude all other performance from the theatre. By all means let us give Mr. Craig opportunity for his imaginative experiments and let him develop his drama that will be seen and not heard. Even the despised 'realist' will welcome Mr. Craig in the theatre if not necessarily as a collaborator. He fulminates against this realist who has never, I think, made a claim for exclusive possession of the theatre. Of course, there is no such thing as realism. There are many approaches to life, and some, which may not be the noblest art, are nearer to it than others; but no man has been fool enough to make his map a mile to the mile.

Mr. Craig tells us not to confuse the dramatist with the dramatic poet, and I think his sympathies with those who write verse for the theatre are at best imperfect. They have not had great success in recent years. We may recall the vogue of Stephen Phillips; but this was too clearly sporadic, a fashion. Not long ago Mr. John Drinkwater spoke almost despairingly about the prospects of plays in verse. He said we had lost the trick of listening to it. I suppose that our plays in verse receive their impetus from Shakespeare, but this can hardly suffice to give us the poetical drama for all time. We have not now a drama imposed by connoisseurs upon people who must take what they can get and be thankful for a few amiable concessions. The poets have not an easy time in the theatre though they continue to hanker after the theatre. I think the play in verse may yet have a future, that it has great possibilities. To lose our present 'closet-drama' would be a real loss. That poetry is irrelevant in drama seems to me a hard saying and an untrue one. The drama is still a possibility for a poet of genius but he will want a patient audience. It may be significant that both Mr. Masfield and Mr. Drinkwater have made their chief successes in the theatre with prose; but the play in verse has

yet an estimable present with Mr. Abercrombie, Mr. Binyon, Mr. Bottomley, Mr. Gibson, and Miss Clemence Dane. Perhaps these distinguished writers, generally, lack a diction that might stimulate an audience quickly; they do not always grip and hold. Possibly simplification would detract from vitality; yet in the theatre it is the simple word that tells.

We cannot make out much of a case for the past in its treatment of Shakespeare's words. As Mr. Craig says, shrewdly enough, 'the people who hold that Shakespeare was a master of theatrical art cut away from these plays lines, passages—nay, whole scenes: these words, passages, and scenes which, they say, were written for the stage.' Must we go back to the Elizabethans to realize the reverence due to words? Commentators dispute endlessly about differences between folio and quarto, and nowadays if an actor changed one of the accepted words without critical backing he would be scorned. But producer or actor-manager may cut out half the play and nobody turns a hair. There seems no reason to suppose that words were treated with excessive consideration when Shakespeare's plays were in rehearsal. If Shakespeare hastily furbished up the work of other men, for stop-gaps were needed sometimes then as now, it is unlikely that his own work was never mutilated by manager or actor. Perhaps Shakespeare gained authority as time went on; perhaps to Burbage he was an adapter 'who adapted very well, considering'; perhaps, as some critics assert, he wrote up his parts to suit the actors just as dramatists do to-day. The theatre is a place of flux; it is the published play that gives an air of permanence, of finality. Shakespeare was established by the printing of his plays; many a modern play-writer has gazed at the book of his words with some dim illusion of immortality.

Perhaps it is all a delusion about the danger to our precious words; perhaps Mr. Craig is a visionary whom we may respect and disregard. But not long ago I read an address by Mr. Lennox Robinson, who was reported to advocate the 'fusion' of the parts of playwright, actor, and producer in the theatre. Mr. Robinson used to be manager of the Abbey

Theatre, he is a dramatist of talent, doubtless a producer, and possibly—I do not know—an actor. We must listen to what he says with respect and on the particular occasion his point was that we must rebel against 'the tyranny of the written word'. He did not see why 'if you had a really sincere and conscientious producer, who was thinking of the play as a whole, as a work of art, he should not be allowed to shape it a little to suit the company, the theatre, and, if you liked, the audience'. He thought it 'monstrous' that Mr. Shaw should want a play produced without cuts, and he believed that he could improve upon Mr. Shaw. And he tells us that the play-writer will have to bow his head and will be all the better for it.

We may thank Mr. Robinson for some simplification of the issue. He tells us what to expect. If he is to prevail, those who write plays and cannot acquire the technique of the producer and the authority of the manager have a difficult time before them. Nobody will deny that there is room for experiment and various kinds of collaboration, but self-respecting play-writers will shudder at the suggestion that they must hand over their plays to producers who claim a free hand. We must all try to be reasonable, but I think we must stick to our words until it is clear to us that change would be improvement. Shakespeare is not here to defend himself and anybody may mutilate him; of course, he may be edited for the stage with care and wisdom. You might say as much of Mr. Shaw and Mr. Galsworthy? But they are here and I think they may claim a period of immunity from these various producers each with his own notions of how to improve a play. In a century or two prohibitions may be relaxed.

It may be said, and I suppose it is said, that matters are desperate in the English theatre now and that something drastic is necessary; that it must be revolution, not evolution. And yet I think you must go back many decades—shall we say three hundred years?—to find a period in which as many interesting plays were written and performed. Those who knew the theatre forty or fifty years ago may wonder at the change from those days of tame acquiescence in such plays as

The Queen's Shilling, *Still Waters Run Deep*, *The Gamester*, or even *Diplomacy*, for our leading actors. Sir Arthur Pinero did something to disturb the inanities with *The Profligate* and *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, and even before that we had a play called *Forget-me-not* by Merivale and Grove, in which Miss Genevieve Ward astounded our chaste ears with such lines as 'There would be no room in creation for such women as I if it were not for such men as you'. It is strange to recollect that these plays once sounded freshly and ringingly. They have an honourable place in the history of the theatre, but it is as history and not as classics that they may survive. Probably they prompted the production of many plays of doubtful value but some of these represented an advance. An advance towards mere realism, Mr. Craig might say. It was time we advanced towards something.

It is said sometimes that when the hour comes you may count on the man and, indeed, we were ready and more than ready for Ibsen's intervention. He was unique and compelling; he conquered too thoroughly, he forced the English drama into a channel too narrow; let the 'realistic' dramatist concede that. Ibsen was an idealist but he compelled people to think, and thought is one element in the theatre though its share may be too big. The English theatre has housed plenty of bustle and high spirits but it has lacked the finer efflorescence, a flamboyancy of quality. It was high time for an infusion of intelligence and the influence of Ibsen was greatly beneficial; but we cannot live by intelligence alone. Ibsen, of course, brings far more than that and it is a misfortune that *Brand* and *Peer Gynt* are not precisely stage plays though they are capable of adaptation. A producer might have a glorious time with them and we should look the other way while he cut out great chunks of words as he had to do the other day when Oxford undergraduates boldly and successfully acted *Peer Gynt*. Something of the kind may presently happen to *Methusaleh*, but that must be respected as a stage play. Mr. Shaw has been another great influence on our drama. This great wit and inhuman humanist did positive work from the start, but he has also had his function of

deflation. The theatre would be a more stupid place than it is if Mr. Shaw had not compelled us to be wary, to test ourselves by his implacable irony. Post-Shaw dramatists who were inclined to be sentimental have been uneasily conscious of him. He, too, has been ranked among the realists and it is curious that our two most popular dramatists, Mr. Shaw and Sir James Barrie, that weaver of delicate fancies, are among the less human of their contemporaries in the theatre.

Mr. Galsworthy has the courage to be human. He may well be a target for Mr. Craig, who says: 'This flesh-and-blood life, lovely as it is to us all, is for me not a thing made to search into, or to give out again to the world, even conventionalized.' Not for Mr. Craig, perhaps, but why not for Mr. Galsworthy? Yet he has had his 'little dream', he, too, can weave fancies. He remains, in our clumsy classification, a realist, and I suppose there are those who think that Mr. Galsworthy's art should not exist, that all that wealth of humanity would be better locked up in an austere taciturnity. He might be permitted to write novels, or perhaps Mr. Robinson, with a free hand, might yet make something of his plays.

There are great assets in our theatre. It is not surprising that a critic has lately asked why it should provoke so much of lamentation and rebuke. Every art is clogged by loads of trash, but in the theatre there are fresh and keen young writers finding their chances and fortifying their elders. Some of their experiments are beyond the scope of any theatre known to us, but there is no great harm in that. Even Repertory is not dead though it has suffered much from condescending kindness, and insults have been provided for its funeral. Little Theatre movements and the like signify a growing intelligence and will help to provide an audience in the future. They breed some humbugs but every movement, every art, have these following in the cry. There has been a great increase in kinds and varieties but the possibilities of the prose play of modern life are yet almost unexplored. There is no realism in art, or at least no reality; happily the desires and temperaments of men are various. Some would come close to nature and even to the facts. When

St. Thomas would put his finger on Christ's wounds it was, in him, a spiritual craving.

The English theatre is fed by various streams, European and American. We may recall the bad old times when half the West-end productions were adaptations from the French, but now we are more truly cosmopolitan. The American theatre, encouraged by its Universities, is less cramped than it was by the lower efficiencies. It sends us plays which we may fairly rank as considerable. We are becoming alive to the drama of France, Russia, Italy, Spain, Germany, and even farther East. Such names as Chekhov, Claudel, Pirandello, Benavente, Kaiser, Čapek, may be heard in discussions on the English theatre, and we may even see their plays in it. Our insular stolidity is shaken by 'expressionism' and 'representational'. Democracy's revolt against the dominating individual may have some analogy in an art which would make the protagonist less the individual than the type or, it may be, the mass. Perhaps in art as in social life rebellion sometimes loses its connexion with reform. Yet expressionism, a critic tells us, is 'a challenge to the sovereignty of words in the theatre'; it is part of the struggle of the things to be seen against the things to be heard.

Well, there is always the printed play. Here the words have it to themselves and give us that illusion of security. The output of printed plays is becoming large and it is far from correspondence with the plays acted. Perhaps it does not sufficiently impress the manager or producer. It is to be feared that he is sometimes curiously ignorant of what is not positively forced upon his attention, and perhaps he has some prejudice against the assumption of print. You may alter manuscript, typescript, or proof, but the printed and bound has prestige if it is not quite hedged with divinity. If you take the list of English plays published during the last few years you may be reassured about the vitality, the permanence of the word. At least they make good reading and it is even suggested that the play may become a formidable competitor with the novel. Well, then, the Man of the Theatre may say that the dramatist, if he likes to call himself so, may be content

with that ; he may go on writing his plays to the last syllable of recorded time if it pleases him and he can find publishers. It is not so simple as this. Even the impetus from the Elizabethans is not infinite ; and we want the inducement of that queer, unsatisfactory, fascinating place, the theatre. The dramatist wants to be acted and his work is continuous and coherent. It might, it would, be fatal to his inspiration, to his quality, if the composition of his piece must be qualified, impelled, retarded by the consciousness of a colleague charged with its presentment on the stage. The effect on the stage, before an audience, is part of his business though he will not be arrogant with the stage-manager responsible for final arrangements. I am speaking, of course, of the play that is sometimes slightly described as 'literary'.

I cannot understand how the author of a play, unless he be beaten to his knees, can give a general consent to managers and producers to fit it to their needs and the supposed desires of the audience. It might be a curious interest to compare the alterations made by the various producers, but we can do without this interest. We cannot all produce, but even in the matter of words we may concede something to real difficulties. But our words are not a preparatory flux and the work of the 'literary' play-writer must not be confused with other perfectly legitimate forms. It must be reiterated that the play-writer makes no demand for an exclusive occupation of the theatre ; he will welcome many types of work which differ from his own, and even some which fortify his own. Let us have pageant, spectacle, plays without words, plays, too, in which a writer attempts a generous comradeship, a closeness of collaboration with other arts, such as has never been known before. There is room for much in the theatre.

But the written play, the play that, at its best, becomes a classic of literature, has yet a great future. Those who write plays must not put down their words tentatively with the thought that they may be reshaped at rehearsal ; better be dogmatic than do that. Perhaps we need not fear much for our words in the theatre. We shall not quell objectors by bawling 'Shakespeare' at them. I am very ready to admit

that I have got far more out of Shakespeare in reading than from the theatre. Of course, one reads him a hundred times for once one sees a play. Yet the theatre does a great deal and it helps to shape our reading. Shakespeare wrote for the theatre. Without it he would not have written his plays. Perhaps he would have fulfilled himself in some other way if there had been no theatre, but I don't know that. I cannot conceive a world without the Shakespeare we know; there is no Shakespeare without the words he wrote for the theatre though there might be a great writer of sonnets of the same name. It has been said that there is no place for the poet in the theatre, and doubtless there are lines of pure poetry to be culled from Shakespeare which do not contribute to dramatic action or effect. Yet Shakespeare at his greatest was poet and dramatist together. It was a poet who wrote:

‘Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters’,
and

‘Warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer’,
and

‘Young Arthur is my son, and he is lost’,
and

‘of one whose subdued eyes,
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinable gum,’

and yet each of these passages, even the last, is intensely dramatic. I cannot understand the contention that the poetry does not heighten the drama, that a poet has no place in the theatre. I don't think it would distract me if Othello's lovely lines were spoken in front of an imaginatively designed background, but if it were a great Othello I don't think it would matter much; perhaps the scenery might help to trim our minds before the actor came on. All those words which I have quoted have their place in the theatre, and I cannot conceive a nobler pleasure than to hear them well spoken there. And if our literature is to be deprived of the stimulus of the theatre it will be the worse for literature and for the theatre.

A. N. MONKHOUSE.

DICTION AND IMAGERY IN ANGLO-SAXON POETRY

IF in the following pages I have been too often lured away from the path I set out to pursue—a slight study of part of the poet's machinery—into expressing opinions upon what he made with it, in other words, into some sort of literary criticism, I ought to apologize to my readers. I have not the slightest pretensions to the art of the critic, my occupations having led me in quite other directions. I cannot expect to have avoided the pitfalls that await a trespasser on unfamiliar ground. My justification must be that in my excursions I may have gathered several flowers from the garden of Anglo-Saxon poetry which did not grow on the straight path I had originally marked out for myself.

I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Mr. Kenneth Sisam, who most kindly offered to read this article in proof. He sent me a number of very valuable suggestions on textual and interpretative questions, by far the larger number of which I accepted and incorporated in the article to its great advantage. In a few cases where more than one interpretation seemed possible, I have given, as an alternative, that proposed by Mr. Sisam. It is a pleasure to acknowledge help so generously given.

I

The considerable body of poetical literature, belonging to the earliest period of our history, that has come down to us is a remarkable expression of national and racial genius. The date of the composition of most of this poetry is a question of controversy, and it is safest to be content with round figures. We may say that most of it is from a thousand to twelve hundred years old, while some may incorporate, not merely stories and legends, and names of heroes whose memory might be preserved by tradition from the remotest ages, but even actual lines of verse which may have been shaped before our

ancestors came to these islands. Without insisting upon this, we are perfectly safe in asserting that the most important remains of Anglo-Saxon poetry are more than a thousand years old. Not only does this ancient literature, the creation of a people formerly regarded as barbarous, exhibit arresting qualities of elevation of thought, and a sustained intensity of poetic emotion, together with great delicacy and tenderness of feeling, but the form in which it is couched is often wrought to the last pitch of elaboration, with a wealth of ornament in the shape of metaphor and pictorial phrase. Here is a vocabulary of great richness and variety, of which many elements are reserved exclusively for poetry, as being remote from everyday familiar usage, and deliberately employed to beautify and lend dignity to the style. This usage, which appears in the oldest poems, is clearly based upon a long-descended literary tradition, while the general tone of thought and emotion, which is everywhere perceptible, must imply an ancient cultivation of the mind and of the heart. How far removed in the dim past of our race must that age be, in which the words that already twelve hundred years ago had become archaic, and had passed into the sacred treasury of the poet, belonged to the language of common life.

Such a collection of poetry must always possess a high archaeological interest, and hold an important place in the history of European culture, but for students of English poetry, that of the Anglo-Saxons has, apart from its intrinsic value as poetry, a peculiar claim on their attention.

I think that the more one reads this poetry the more one feels the community of spirit between it and our greatest poetry of every succeeding age. My friend, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, has said, 'in words that admit of no misunderstanding', so he puts it: 'From Anglo-Saxon Prose, from Anglo-Saxon Poetry, our living Prose and Poetry have, save linguistically, no derivation.' The saving clause, we may note in passing, is a comprehensive one. If the statement simply means that there is not an unbroken literary tradition between the Anglo-Saxons and Chaucer and his successors, in the sense that the later poets did not draw their inspiration either direct, or

through linking generations of singers, from the actual poems of the Anglo-Saxons, then I suppose that no one will question it seriously. But between the old native poets and those of much later days there is, nevertheless, a continuity, not of conscious inheritance, but 'of something far more deeply inter-fused', namely, of national genius. It may be said that in Chaucer and his successors there is a gaiety, an urbanity, a winning sweetness and grace of nature, a lightness of touch—a thousand other qualities for which you will look in vain in Cynewulf, or Cædmon (or whoever wrote the poems once attributed to the latter), or anywhere else in Anglo-Saxon poetry. We have derived these qualities, if you will, from France, or Italy, or Greece, but something remains, without which we could have made nothing of the gifts of the Greeks and the Celts and the Latins, and that is that strange thing, the English mind. This has, no doubt, developed new qualities and convolutions in a thousand years, but it still remains essentially the same.

There are three aspects of modern poetry which are, perhaps, most characteristically English. First, that which appeals to the more massive, solid, and serious sides of our character. These find their highest expression in Milton, in whose work this is raised to grandeur and sublimity. Secondly, often closely related to this, there is the love of the romantic, the mysterious, the vague, the half-expressed; a preference for those manifestations of nature which are but partially revealed to the senses, and seen dimly emerging from the mountain mists, or glimmering through a cloud of spray. Upon these shadowy forms, suspected rather than fully perceived, the mind dwells and the imagination works, often contriving from them visions of unearthly beauty. All our greatest poets abound in images of this suggestive kind, and it is from such passages that we should generally select, if we wished to illustrate a poet's peculiar magic. We should perhaps find this mysterious, suggestive beauty superabundantly in Peele, Keats, Wordsworth, and Tennyson—but when one begins to pick out names one wants to include them all. The third quality which I take to be engrained in the blood and fibre of our poetry is a wealth

of human sympathy, and a tenderness which embraces all living things, which

Maintains a deep and reverential care
For the unoffending creatures whom it loves.

These three qualities, a feeling for the mysterious in the loveliness of nature, a sense of the solemn and sublime, sympathy with the impulses of the human heart, pervade the whole of Anglo-Saxon poetry, and through them it establishes its kinship with that of later times. In all periods, too, our poets have found in the sights and sounds of the external world the mirror and symbol of spiritual experience, and have for ever gone to nature for their images and similes.

A striking example of this identity of feeling, treatment, and expression exists in the close resemblance of certain passages in *Paradise Lost*, dealing with the surroundings of Satan and his infernal peers after their rout by the heavenly host, and with the Temptation and Fall of Man, with corresponding passages in the Anglo-Saxon *Genesis*, formerly attributed to Cædmon, and also with some in another poem, known as the *Lament of the Fallen Angels*. It is not impossible, though no direct evidence is forthcoming, that Milton may have become acquainted with the Anglo-Saxon poems through Junius. If he had, he evidently at once felt the spiritual affinity between himself and the old poet, and wrought much of the former's work into his own poem. If Milton knew nothing of these poems, the coincidence in feeling, treatment, and general atmosphere between them and *Paradise Lost* is the more astonishing. In either case, the fact remains that nine hundred years before Milton England produced a poet who was capable of conceiving work on a great and majestic scale, one whose style, allowing for differences of language, reminds us so much of Milton's that the 'great language' of *Paradise Lost* would seem the only fitting form of Modern English into which to translate it. The grandeur and the peculiar impressiveness of the Anglo-Saxon *Genesis* are nearer, perhaps, to Milton than to any other English poet, and the emotional effect made on the reader by both seems identical. The writer

of the *Genesis* also shares with Milton that love of the mysterious in nature, and the tender humanity which we take to be characteristic traits of English poetry. The latter quality is particularly notable in the attitude of both poets to Eve, both before and after the Fall. It must be mentioned that *Genesis B*, or the 'later *Genesis*', as it is called, that is the portion of the poem which is so strongly Miltonic in character, is believed by many scholars, including the late Dr. Henry Bradley, to have been based upon an Old Saxon original, and indeed a fragment of MS. in this language was discovered in the Vatican Library, in which twenty-five lines correspond almost word for word with the Anglo-Saxon. While many scholars consider this conclusive proof that the Anglo-Saxon version is a translation from Old Saxon, others hold it more probable, seeing that the Old Saxons derived their Christianity and culture from the English, that the poem was of English origin, and was translated into Old Saxon, the version we possess being, so it is suggested, a retranslation from the latter.¹

I pass now to the more immediate purpose of these pages, namely, to discuss some of the leading features of Anglo-Saxon poetic diction.

It will be convenient to deal with these under three heads : (1) the use of distinctively 'poetical' words and phrases, that is, words and phrases which are either peculiar to poetry, and which evidently have traditionally a definitely poetical association and value ; or words which are traditionally used in poetry with a different meaning from that which they have in prose. (2) The figurative or metaphorical use of words, to express natural, inaterial, objects such as the sea, ships, swords, the sun, the body, the tomb, &c. ; ways of expressing Death and Dying ; and typical epithets, &c. used in connexion with these. (3) What appears to be a more or less individual use of words and phrases with striking poetic effect. Under this head I shall indicate some original poetic touches which are to

¹ Those unfamiliar with the story may consult Dr. Bradley's article : *The 'Cædmonian' Genesis* in Vol. VI of *Essays and Studies*.

be distinguished from the more conventional use of words and phrases as part of the traditional stock-in-trade of the poet.

It will appear, I believe, that although a word or phrase may occur in several passages, and must therefore be considered as conventional or traditional, this fact does not necessarily destroy its poetical value, nor detract from our estimate of the poet who uses it. Such *clichés*, although traditional, may be, and often are, expressive of a genuine emotion, and produce delight in the mind of the reader.

The use of words or phrases deliberately chosen because they differ from those used in everyday life is common in later English poetry. The justification of the practice depends upon the poetical effect in each passage where the 'poetical' word is used. It is certainly possible to employ such words without any poetical gain; it is also possible so to employ them that they are felt as appropriate to the context, and as adding beauty to the passage. Such gems of late poetic diction as the following have perhaps rarely a value superior to that attaching to more familiar words :

hoary pile 'old house', or 'building'; *zephyr, gale*, for 'breeze'; *swain* 'man, youth'; *tincture* (of the skies) for 'colour', or 'tint'; *nectareous* for 'delicious'; *briny main* 'sea'; *courser, steed*, 'horse'; *garbs succinct* 'tucked up skirts'; *respire* 'breathe', and so on.

Corresponding to these, in some degree, in Anglo-Saxon, we have :

hæleþ, beorn, freca, rinc. secg, 'hero, warrior, man'; *þengel, fengel, þeoden, aldor, brego, eodor, þeodcýning, land-fruma, ord-fruma, ræswa*, 'prince, king'; *ides* 'lady, woman', used of Eve, and of Queen Wealhþeow in *Beowulf*, but also of Grendel's mother, therefore also = 'hag'; *bill, mæl*, 'sword'; *fyr-gen-* 'mountain', in such compounds as *fyr-gen-holt, -wudu*, 'mountain wood'; *fyr-gen-stream* 'mountain stream'; *tungol* 'star, heavenly body'; *up-rodor* 'heavens, sky'; *swegl* 'sky, sun'; *hador* 'brightness, radiance' (of the sky); *bune* 'wine cup'; *geofon* 'ocean', &c.; *wær* 'sea'; *holm* 'ocean, sea, mere'; *wielm, wylm, &c.*, 'that which boils, surges', of the tossing waves, and of fire; *gar-secg* 'ocean'; *eagorstream, lagostream*, 'sea-stream'; *yð* 'wave, waves collectively, the sea'; *lagu* 'sea, water'.

We should be glad to know the exact meaning of some of these different words for 'sea', and to be certain which of the ever-changing aspects and conditions of the ocean each represents. Thus *holm*, though it appears often to be used in a perfectly general sense, probably originally meant 'the high, lofty sea; the billowy, wave-broken sea'; it may also have referred to the 'crest' or 'summit' of a wave. (Professor Chambers gives 'billowy sea' for *wægholm*, Beow. 317.) It is the same word as the Norse *holmr* 'sea island'. In English Place-Names it often means 'rising land near, or surrounded by, water'. The basal meaning was almost certainly 'something high, lofty'; whence 'mound, slope'. 'Island' appears to be a secondary meaning derived from the idea of something standing up above lower surroundings. The Gmc. base **hulm-* is no doubt cognate with Lat. *celsus* 'lofty, high', with *collis* 'hill', and is related more closely still to the almost exactly equivalent *culmen* 'top, summit'. I have taken the liberty of occasionally translating *holm* as 'crest, wave-crest', in some of the passages quoted below.

It is difficult for us to-day to reach back through the centuries and grasp the precise shade of meaning which each of these apparent synonyms once expressed, to recapture the mood or emotion which they called up, or to be fully alive to the grace or glamour with which, for our forefathers, this or that word may have lighted up a line. It may be possible in many cases to discover the remote origin of words by the light of etymology. But even when this is reliable for one particular purpose, it may be but a misleading guide to the poetical and emotional value of a word in the mouth of a poet. It is likely that the old poets often used words whose ancient, precise meaning they did not know; it is certain that many etymological relationships quite escaped them, and as Professor Tolkien well says in his admirable 'Contributions to Middle English Lexicography' in the *Review of English Studies*, April 1925, speaking in particular of the poetical synonyms for 'man': 'the original meanings were so far forgotten . . . as to be more apparent to the modern Germanic philologist than to the Old English poet himself.' This is

a depressing thought, but, after all, the position of the old poet had its compensations. If he did not know the etymology of the words he used, he had at least a feeling for them, and a direct tradition which the modern Germanic scholar can scarcely recover. The path of etymology is but rarely the path to poetry. The origin of a word may be lost in the misty past, but the succeeding generations of men, and in particular the poets, can give it new life and fresh power of beauty. The specifically 'poetical' elements in diction derive their value partly from their remoteness from common life and everyday usage, but chiefly from association. In fact, such words come from ancient habit to be regarded as essential elements in a poetic whole, and are felt to lend loftiness and distinction to the style of poetry because they are a kind of speech of the gods. But still more of their quality comes from their surroundings. They occur habitually in close union with lovely and gracious images, with serene and elevated thoughts; they are found in the grave utterances of great kings and heroes; they may depict scenes of strange and impossible beauty, or the throes of majestic terror; they tell of deeds that no human powers could accomplish. These words, then, become ennobled by the company they keep, and at last, their mere presence, in a line or a passage, by the half-sleeping memories which it evokes, by the various images of beauty or sublimity, which by some subtle power of association it conjures up, is often sufficient to invest a commonplace idea with dignity and charm, just as the appearance of some great and imposing figure on a public platform may sometimes serve to lift what promise to be dull proceedings above the level of vulgarity.

These 'poetical' words then are a vital element in the poet's properties, an important means for obtaining his effects, we might say his atmospheric effects. But these words depend for their value upon their history in poetry. Etymology may put us moderns on the track of their primary meaning, but it will not take us far. The real life of all words is made by usage; that of such as we are now considering has been made by a long line of poets, and so exuberant is that life, that at last these words may almost be said, in their turn, to make poetry.

We can only go about our business of interpretation patiently and humbly, and hope to learn, by constant and sympathetic study of our old poetry, gradually to group poetic associations round these ancient words till they become for us the symbols of particular moods and emotions

II

I pass on now to consider another aspect of Anglo-Saxon poetical diction, the habit namely of metaphorical expressions, the use of figurative phrases to denote things and actions. This is what Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch calls 'the besetting sin of the Anglo-Saxon gleeman—the pretentious trick of calling things "out of their right names" for the sake of literary effect'. Now the Anglo-Saxon poet undoubtedly does very often avoid calling a spade a spade. The question therefore arises whether a spade is, under all possible circumstances, the best name for a spade, or whether in a particular passage a poet does or does not secure a better poetical result by calling it something else.

Such figurative expressions as we now have in view may indeed be merely 'pretentious' and bombastic, or merely vulgar, as, for instance, when the sea is called 'the briny', or when men speak of 'lifting the light fantastic' instead of plain 'dancing'. Many readers nowadays condemn, and affect to despise, the Eighteenth-Century poets for artificiality of diction, as if this was all that, say, Mr. Pope had to his credit; others, more sympathetic, may smile indulgently, and not without enjoyment, at certain fantastic gambols, as at the harmless and endearing foibles of a beloved friend. Here are a few choice phrases from Eighteenth-Century poetry:

nectared urn 'wine cup'; *watery plains* 'sea'; *finny prey* 'fish'; *a lion's yellow spoils* 'lion's skin'; *balmy blessings of the night* 'sleep'; *restored the pleasing burden to her arms* 'handed the baby back to her'; *fuming liquor* 'hot coffee'; *fleecy breed, care, wealth*, 'sheep'; *briny torrent* 'tears'; *thundering tube* 'shot gun'.

Such fanciful phrases as these, which were formerly regarded as giving variety and elegance to the diction of poetry, are not

a permanent enrichment of the language. They express no emotion, they add nothing to our stock of vivid and beautiful images, they reveal no justness of observation or insight. They do not strike the imagination and set the mind 'voyaging on strange seas of thought'. They contain, indeed, nothing of the essence of true poetry. While it is certainly true that Anglo-Saxon poetry has many set phrases no more vital than these, it is none the less so that it exhibits also many others which possess qualities of a very different kind, and which are impressive by reason of their truth and beauty.

THE SEA. The sea is referred to in a large number of phrases of both classes. Of the former class we may recall the following :

swonrad 'swan's road' Jul. 675; *hranrad* 'whale road' Andr. 634; *fiscas bæþ* 'fish's bath' Andr. 293; *ganotes bæþ* 'gannet's bath' Beow. 1861; *hwæles eþel* 'country of the whale' Andr. 274; *mæwes eþel* 'country, home, of the (sea)-mew'; Husband's Message 25; *seolhpæð* 'seal path' Andr. 1714; *flotweg* 'sea way' Husband's Message 41; *egorstreamus* 'sea streams' Gen. 1374, and Andr. 379; *yða ful* 'cup, beaker of the waves' Beow. 1208.

Of quite a different order are the following :

ofer holmes hring 'across the circle of the sea' Gen. 1393; *wægholm* 'the wave (-covered) sea' Beow. 217; *purh wæges wylm* 'upon the wave surge' Jul. 680; *flodes wylm* 'the boiling, surging of the flood' Andr. 367; *yða swengas* 'blows of the waves' El. 239; *yða geþring* 'tumult of the waves' Andr. 368; *sealtyða geswing* 'the swing, roll, of the salt waves' Panther 8; *yða gevealc* 'rolling, heaving, of the waves' Chron. Ann. 975, 25; *sealtyða geluc* 'leaping of the waves' Seafarer 35; *merestreamu gemeotu* 'the clashing, meeting, of the sea currents' Andr. 454; *argeblond* 'mingling of the waves' Andr. 383, and Beow. 239; *flodes fæðm* 'the embrace of the flood' Andr. 252; *lagufæsten* 'sea fastness' Andr. 398; *wiðema gebind* Wanderer 24, usually translated 'frozen waves', but meaning literally 'the binding together, conglomeration, of the waves', which are here thought of as frozen into a solid mass.

The epithets applied to the sea, and the expressions used concerning it by the Anglo-Saxon poets, show that they had really felt and seen, by actual observation, many aspects of it;

they do not merely repeat, parrot-like, conventional common-places, but record a genuine emotion in words that evoke it in the reader.

Of the more general epithets may be mentioned :

sidne sæ 'the broad, spacious, sea' Beow. 507, Christ. 853; *sæs sidne fæðm* 'sea's broad bosom' El. 728; *sæs sidne grund* 'sea's spacious depths' or 'floor' W. of Creation, 40; *is-caldne wæg* 'the ice-cold wave' Seaf. 19; *sincalda sæ sealtum yðurn* 'the sea for ever cold, with its salt waves' Ex. 472. The noun *sincieldu* 'enduring cold' occurs in the description of the Land of the Blessed in the poem on the Phoenix. The prefix *sin-* meaning 'long-lasting, ever-enduring' is a very ancient Germanic word or base, and is found in the Gothic *sin-teins* 'daily' and *sin-teino* 'ever, continually', also in *sin-eigs* 'old' which is cognate with Lat. *senex*. Other aspects of the sea are expressed in such phrases as *ofer hreone hrycg* 'across its rough (rugged) back' Chr. 859 (cp. Wordsworth's 'The main flood roughened into hill and valley' Egyptian Maid, 42); *gyllende gryre* 'the yelling terror' Ex. 489; *garsecg wedde* 'the ocean raged (grew mad)' Ex. 489; *famig sæ* 'the foamy sea' Gen. 1452; *famige flodas* 'the foamy floods' Gen. 2213; *famige walcan* 'the foamy rollers' Andr. 1524; *flod famgode* 'the flood foamed' Ex. 481; *windige holmas* 'the windy crests, waves' Chr. 856; *ofer heanne holm* 'across the towering (lofty, mounting,) wave' El. 983, and Wand. 82.

The colour of the sea is variously described :

wonne wægus 'the dark waves'; *wonne wælstreamas* 'dark and deadly streams (currents)' Gen. 119, 1301; *sweart wæter* 'black water' Gen. 1300; *brune yða* 'the brown waves' Andr. 519; *on fealone flod* Brunanb. 36; *on fealone wæg* Gifts of Men, 53.

The word *fealu* is given in OE. Glossaries as equivalent to Lat. *gilvus*, *flavus*, *fulvus*, and even to *rubicundus*. It is applied in OE. to things as different as withered leaves and blossoms, fire, horses, and the horn of an ox. The word apparently expresses various shades of yellow, from pale to ruddy, and may probably be best translated 'dun' or 'tawny' when applied to the sea. The word *wann*, *wonn*, our *wan*, has undergone considerable change of meaning. It is used several times in Anglo-Saxon poetry and we shall return to it again.

A forcible and vivid image of toppling waves is called up in the passage in Ex. describing the catastrophe of the piled-up waters of the Red Sea, just in time to overwhelm Pharaoh and his host :

lagu land gefeol, lyft was onhrered,
wicon weallfæsten, wægas burston,
muldon meretorras, Ex. 482-4 :

' the sea fell back upon the land, the very air was stirred, the battlements crumbled, the waves were riven asunder, the sea-towers melted away '. The use of the word *weallfæsten* to describe the walls of water between which the Israelites had passed, and the phrase *meretorras muldon* are touches of true poetic genius. This, surely, is the real thing. The whole episode of the flight and pursuit is presented in this poem with infinite spirit and gusto.

The Anglo-Saxon poet uses the word *fæðm* ' the bosom, lap, or embrace ' of the sea, but he does not forget ' the deep, unfathomed caves of ocean '. In the poem known as the *Wonders of Creation*, the poet, speaking of the setting sun, tells how it

on æfenne utgarsecgas
grundas pæpæð, Wonders of Creation, 70-1,

' traverses at eve the abyss of furthest ocean ', and then

gescyndeð in gesceaft godes
under foldan fæpm, Wonders of Creation, 74-5,

' plunges, according to God's decree, beneath the lap of earth '.

' No man of his own wit can tell—

hu geond grund færeð gold toht sunne
in þæt wonne genip under wætra gefring,
oppe hwa þæs leohtes londbuende
brucan mote sibban heo ofer brim hweorfeð,
ibid. 78-81,

' how the sun, all glorious with gold, flashes across the ocean-bed, in that dim shade beneath the tumult of the waters, nor what inhabitant of earth enjoys its light, when once it sinks below the verge '. In the poem on the Whale, the plunging of the monster into the depths of the sea, carrying with him the

weary seamen, who, mistaking it for an island, have imprudently landed, and encamped upon his back, is likened to the overwhelming of an evil man's soul in hell, when the devil seizes and carries it away—

mid þam he færinga
heolophelme beþeagt helle seceð
gode geasne, grundleasne wylm
under mistglome. Whale, 44-7.

‘Suddenly, enshrouded in darkness, stripped of his possessions, he seeks hell, visits the bottomless surge beneath the misty gloom.’ It is evident from the context that the poet has really conjured up in his mind the journey of the whale itself to the ocean bed, although he is actually speaking of the passing of the lost soul to hell. We have in these passages a cluster of words which call up romantic and mysterious images :

grundas ‘depths’; *under foldan fæðm* ‘below earth’s bosom’; *wonne genip* ‘dim darkness’; *wætra gefring* ‘tumult of waters’; *heolophelm* ‘dusky covering’; *grundleasne wylm* ‘bottomless surge’—*wylm* ‘boiling, raging, swirl’ is used in A-S. both of fire and of water—; *mistglom* ‘misty gloom’.

As might be expected, the ship is very often mentioned SHIPS. in Anglo-Saxon poetry, and it has many names. I am not inclined to dispute with those who find nothing of great poetic value in most of the following :

wæggflota ‘wave-floater’ El. 246, Andr. 487; *hringed-stefna* ‘curved prow’ Beow. 32; *heahstefn naca* ‘high-prowed ship’ Andr. 266; *sægenga* ‘sea goer’ Beow. 1882; *brimwudu* ‘sea wood’ El. 244; *merehus* ‘sea house’ (of the Ark) Gen. 1364; *sæmearh* ‘sea horse’ El. 228, 245; Andr. 267; *sæhengest* ‘sea-stallion’ Andr. 488; *fearoðhengestas* El. 226; *wæghhengestas* ‘wave stallions’ El. 236, and Guthl. 1303; *ȝðmearas* Chr. 864; *sundhengestas* Chr. 863; *wægpel* ‘wave plank’ Gen. 1358; *brimþisa* ‘sea monster’ El. 238; *wæterþisa* Guthl. 1303; *brontstefn* ‘steep-prowed’ Andr. 504.

The epithets, however, applied to the ship, and of some of the passages concerning voyages are often of singular beauty. The ship is *famig scip* ‘foamy ship’ Gen. 1417; *isig ond utfus* ‘icy

and eager to be gone' Beow. 33, of a ship standing in port; men are said *neþan on nacan tealtum* 'to venture upon the heaving (unsteady, *lit.* tilting) ship', Runic Poem, 64. It is impossible not to recognize the vivid imagery of

Streamwelm hwiled
beateþ brimstædo: is se bat ful scrid,
færeð famigheals fugole gelicost,
glideð on geofone. Andr. 495-8.

'The eddying surge roars loud; it beats the shore. The boat with all sails set (literally, full shrouded, or clothed, or, simply 'very swift') flits foamy-throated, likest to a bird; glides across the sea.'

The same beautiful phrase had already been twice used in Beowulf:

gewat þa ofer wægholm winde gefysed
flota famig-heals fugle gelicost.

Beow. 217-18. See also below, p. 64.

'Departed then across the wave-crests, driven by the wind, the foamy-throated ship most like to a bird.'

In Wand. 81, a ship is not said to be *like* a bird, but becomes the bird itself—*fugel*.¹

We cannot deny to the poet who could write like this, qualities of a very high order. We may get rather tired of the *brimhengestas* and so forth, but when we find the poet saying *se brimhengest bridles ne gymeð* Runic Poem, 66, 'the sea-stallion heeds not the bridle', it is evident that the poet by a swift flash of imagination is identifying the thing with the image called up by the metaphor—he really sees the ship as a restive, uncontrollable steed. A similar vivification of the ship as a living thing is suggested by the verb *plegean* in Elene, 245, 'he who was looking on might behold' *sæmearh*

¹ Mr. Sisam suggests 'bird of prey' here, and if the phrase *sumne fugel opbaer ofer heanne holm* means 'one, the bird of prey carried off (that is, tore him to shreds when dead) far away, across the lofty wave', or something of the kind, it would indeed be parallel to the following phrase—*sumne se hara wulf deaðe gedælde*, but I am inclined all the same to Sweet's view that *fugel* in the context means 'ship', which was first suggested by Thorpe and supported also by Wülker.

plegean 'the sea-horse play (gambol, frolic)'. The noun is also used in reference to a ship's journey, which is called *sundplega* 'sea play, sea frolic, or sport', Guthl. 1308.

A common verb in connexion with a ship, used both transitively and intransitively, is *drīfan*:

þeah þe he ne meahle on mere drīfan
hringedstefnan: holm storme weol,
won wið winde; winter yfe belear
isgebinde. Beow. 1130-3.

'But he could not drive his curved ship forth upon the sea; the billows raged fiercely, contended with the wind; winter locked the waves in icy fetters.'

Or again—

Sum mæg fromlice
ofer sealtne sæ sundwudu drīfan.
 Chr. 676-7.

'One may vigorously drive his ship (sea-wood) across the salt sea.'

Beowulf with his dying breath commands that a lofty beacon shall be raised on the headland to his memory, which seafarers shall call Beowulf's cairn:

þa ðe brentingas
ofer floda genipu feorran drifað.

'Those who drive the high ships from afar through the darkness of the flood.' Beow. 2807-8.

Another pregnant word is *brecan*:

Oft þæt gesæled þæt we on sælade
brecað ofer bæðweg brimhengestum.

'Often it betides that in our voyaging we . . . break forth across the sea (bathway) on our sea-stallions.' Andr. 513.

It must be confessed that the effect is marred here by the fussy insistence on variety of phrase—*bæðweg* is almost as bad as the 'briny deep'.

Again, in El. 244, the 'sea horse' is said to *brecan ofer bæðweg*.

But it is time to leave the sea and ships—a whole article might easily be devoted to the Anglo-Saxon poets' treatment of them—and with two characteristic passages I must conclude

this part of my remarks. The first describes the homeward voyage of Beowulf from Heorot. I follow the text of Professor Chambers :

gewat him on naca
drefun deop wæter, Denaland ofgeaf.
ƿa was be mæste mere-hræglasum,
segl sales fast; sund-wudu þunedes;
no þær weg-flotan wind ofer yðum
sides getwæfde; sægenga for,
fleot famig-heals forð ofer yðe
bunden-stefna ofer brim-streamas,
þæt hie Geata clifu ongitan meah-ton,
cupe næssas; ceol up geþrang
lyft-geþwenced, on lande stod.

Beow. 1903-13.

‘And so the ship departed, and churned up the deep water, left the land of the Danes. The sea-garment was upon the mast, the sail held fast by its ropes; the sea-wood creaked. In no wise did the wind (blowing) across the billows impede the journey of the wave-floater; the sea-goer sped on, scudded foamy-throated forth across the main, the vessel, trim and taut (passed) through the ocean currents, till they could see the cliffs of the Gauts, the well-known headlands. The ship rose, wind-impelled, and came to rest upon the land.’

This passage, which the translation but poorly renders, illustrates nearly every feature and quality of Anglo-Saxon poetry: the extraordinary variety of phrase and word; the repetition of the same idea in different terms; the highly pictorial and vivid forms of expression; the beautiful epithet *famig-heals*, and finally the engaging human touch of the *cupe næssas*, winding up a piece of description in which every word throbs with life, calls up an image or a sound, and has a true poetic value both from its character and its associations.

The second passage is equally typical, though very different in character, and expresses another and more solemn aspect of the Anglo-Saxon spirit. It is pervaded by an atmosphere of serene yet wistful melancholy. This is probably the most elaborate simile in our old poetry, and is characteristic on the one hand from its moralization of experience drawn from actual

life, and on the other, from the way in which the poet turns to Nature for images to enforce his moral.

*Nu is þon gelicost, swa we on luguflode
ofer cald water ceolum liðan,
geond sūþne sǣ sunðhengestum,
flodwudu fergen : is þæt frecne stream,
yða ofermæta, þe we her on lacuð
geond þas wacan woruld, windge holmas
ofer deop geluð. Wæs se drohtuð strong,
ær þon we to lunde geliden hæjdon
ofer hreone hrycg : þu us help hīcwom,
þæt us to hǣlo hyfe gelædde
godes gæstsumu ond us giefes sealde,
þæt we oncnawan magan ofer ceoles bord,
hwær we sǣlū sceolon sunðhengestas,
ealde yðmeawas ancum fæste.* Chr. 851-64.

I must here, as in other passages, only attempt a more or less free translation which shall render as faithfully as I can the spirit of the original, but does not always abide by the actual words.

‘Our life is most like a journey in a ship across the sea-flood; when we sail upon the chill water, put forth on sea-stallions, upon the spacious ocean steer our bark.

That is a dangerous stream, its waves are huge,
On which in this frail life a while we toss,
On windy crests, across a plumbless track.
Our life was harsh ere we had come to land,
Brought safe to port o’er ocean’s rugged back.
God’s blessed Son gave us the grace to know,
While still aboard the ship, where we at last,
The journey done, should tie our horses up,
Tether the trusty coursers of the sea.’

I have had to alter the last line slightly in translation, as the metaphor of tying a horse to an anchor is rather more than the modern reader can stand. In this passage the old poet is using the favourite *sunðhengestas*, and *yðmeawas* simply as picturesque variants for ‘ship’, and appears to have lost sight of the literal sense altogether, so that what in Modern English would be a rather ludicrous mixture of metaphors was

almost certainly not felt as such by those who heard this line when it was composed.

LAND-
SCAPE.

The treatment of landscape and the ever-changing face of nature in the Anglo-Saxon poets is pervaded with a gentle, placid beauty when exhibiting the milder phases, but is less interesting here, than when the more sombre and mysterious aspects are revealed. No single poem, probably, has so much of sunlight, and of the sweetness of woods and rills as the *Phoenix*. The first 84 lines are well known to all beginners in Anglo-Saxon, from Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader. In this passage occurs the famous description of the Land of the Blest, parallels to which are pointed out in Homer, in Tennyson, and in Swinburne, to mention no other poets. There are other passages throughout the poem scarcely inferior in poetic quality, though none of the same sustained beauty. Although the subject of the poem is the fabulous phoenix which occasionally lends a kind of unreality to the descriptions, we feel that most of it could only have been written by a poet who knew and loved nature.

THE SUN. The poets make use of fewer metaphorical *clichés* in referring to earth and sky than when writing of the sea and ships. Still we have, for the sun :

wuldres gim 'gem of glory' Ph. 117; *heofones gim* 'heaven's gem' Ph. 183, and Beow. 2072; *gimma gladost* 'gladdest of gems' Ph. 289; *swegles tupur* 'taper of the sky' Ph. 114; *heofon-condel* 'candle of heaven' Andr. 243, Ex. 115, and Chr. 608; *swegl-condel* 'sky candle' Ph. 108; *wyn-condel* 'joy candle' Guthl. 1186; *godes condel* Ph. 91 and Brunanb. 15; *heofon-tungol* 'heaven's luminary' (*tungol* means 'heavenly body, luminary', and is used of the sun, stars, and planets); *forðmære tungol* 'most glorious star'; *swegles leoma* 'ray, brilliance, of the sky' Ph. 103; *wedertacen wearm* 'warm weather-token' Guthl. 1267; *torht tacen Godes* 'glorious token of God' Ph. 96; *beorht beacen Godes* 'bright beacon of God' Beow. 570; *se æðela glæm* 'the noble gleam' Guthl. 1252.

The epithets applied to the sun, apart from those occurring in some of the above phrases, are few in number, and not particularly interesting. *Gold-torht* 'glorious with gold'

Wonders of Creation, 78, *morgen-torht* 'morning-glorious' Andr. 241, are, I believe, the most striking. The rising of the DAWN. sun over land and sea is constantly referred to, often with much felicity of phrase. *Glud ofer grundus* 'glided across the earth' Beow. 2073 and Brunanb. 15. The same verb is used of the departure of darkness *nihthelm togled* 'the night shadows glided apart', or 'parted' El. 78.

*þu com morgen-torht,
beacna beorhtost ofer breomo sneowan
halig of heolstre, heofonrandel blac
ofer lagufloðus.* Andr. 241-4.

'Then all glorious with morning, the brightest of beacons came hastening over the sea; the holy thing from its secret place, the candle of heaven (came hastening), pale, across the sea-floods.'

The epithet *blac* 'pale' (which glosses *pallidus*, Napier, OE. Glosses, 11, 145) is a good touch to describe the newly-risen sun. It is, however, equally possible, and Mr. Sisam thinks it more probable, that *blac* here is the Pret. of *blīcan*, in which case I should render it 'glimmered'. The idea of the rapid coming on of day when once the sun rises above the horizon is again expressed, and by the same verb *sneowan* in Wonders of Creation, 59-63:

*and þis leohle beorht
cymed morgna gehwam ofer misthleofu
wadan ofer wægas wundrum gegierwed,
and mid ærdæge eustan snoweð
whitig and wynsum wera cneorissum.*

'And this bright being comes with its light each morning over the misty slopes, traverses the waves, adorned with splendour, and with the dawn hastens from the East, radiant, and delightful for the races of men.'

The Anglo-Saxon poet is perhaps even happier in describing SUNSET. the coming on of night. He revels in shadows, in mists and darkness and strange half-lights. For instance:

*swearc norðrodor
won under wolcnum, woruld miste oferteah
þystrum beþeahhte, þrong niht ofer tiht
londes frætwa.* Guthl. 1253-6.

‘The northern sky grew dark, black beneath its cloudy canopy, it curtained the world in mist, covered it with darkness; night pressed on and blotted out the beauty of the land.’

The latter portion of the passage is ambiguous in construction and meaning. The text is apparently corrupt. I have, however, rendered what appears to be the general meaning. The fine phrase *woruld miste oferteah*, with its picture of ‘drawing over’ as it were a curtain or veil of mist, recalls Collins’s

and marks o’er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil.

Here is the kind of picture which the poet loves:

sunne gewat to sete glidan
under niflan næs; niht helmade,
brunwann oferbræd beorgas steupe.
Andr. 1304–10.

‘The sun departed, sinking to its bed, (dropped) below the lofty headland; night dark and dun covered up, enshrouded, the steep hills.’

Or again, *nap nihtscua*, norðan *sniwde* ‘the shadow of night grew dark, and from the north it snowed’ Seaf. 31.

There is a vagueness in the lines which tell how Hrothgar half expected the monster to come on the night when Beowulf was waiting for him, which is in keeping with the atmosphere of mystery which the poet wishes to create:

wiste þam ahlæcan
to þam heah-sele hilde gefinged,
siddan hie sunnan leoht geseon ne meah-ton,
oððe nipende niht ofer ealle,
scadu-helma gesceapu scriþan cwoman.

Beow. 646–50.

‘He (Hrothgar) knew that battle was in store for the monster in the high hall, so soon as they could no longer see the light of the sun, when darkening night was over all things, and shadowy shapes would come stealing under the dusky sky!’

This appears to mean that in the dark, when strange creatures of the shadows are abroad, anything might happen. It is not

actually suggested or specifically implied that Grendel *will* be among these creeping shadows,—unless indeed, as is just possible, that *scadu-helma* refers to him and his mother—but he may be. Well, let him come, and he will meet his match to-night!

The old poets are fond of using the processes of nature as symbols of moods; it might indeed almost be said that for them

the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

Hu seo þrag gewat,

exclaims the Recluse,

genap under niht-helm swa heo no wære.
Wand. 95–6.

‘How that time’—that is, time of happiness—‘has fled, grown dark beneath the helm of night, as though it had never been.’

*Nu synt geardagas
æfter fyrstmearce forðgewitene,
lifwyrne geliden.* El. 1266–8.

*Landes frætwæ
gewitaþ under wolcnum winde gelicost.*
ibid. 1270–1.

‘Now in due time, the good old days have passed away, life’s joys are fled. The loveliness of earth shall flee away beneath the clouds like the wind.’

The cuckoo for the Anglo-Saxon is not usually a ‘blithe new-comer’, but

*geac monað geomran reorde,
singeð sumeres weard, sorge beodeð
bittre in breosthord,* Seaf. 53–5.

‘the cuckoo admonishes, summer’s guardian sings with lamentable voice, tells of bitter sorrow to come’;
or, again:

*þu gehyrde in hlipes oran
gylan geormorne geac on bearwe,*
Husband’s Message, 21–2.

‘Thou hast heard from the hillside the mournful cuckoo singing in the grove.’

But more cheerful is

fæger fugla reord folde geblowen
geacas gear budon. Guthl. 714-15.

‘Sweet were the notes of birds, the fields ablow, and cuckoos ushered in the year.’

The vocabulary for describing the milder aspects of nature is rich enough, but it cannot be said that these pictures are very convincing. They resemble too much a stage landscape, bathed in eternal sunshine, with trim cottages nestling by pastures for ever green, woodlands which ‘never bid the spring adieu’, and gleaming brooks meandering through the fields and groves.

Brade sind on worulde / grene geardas Gen. 510-11, ‘spacious upon the earth are the green enclosures’; *þæt is wynsum wong, wealdas grene* Ph. 13, ‘that is a gracious plain, its woods are green’; *wudu sceal on / foldan blædum blowan; beorh sceal on eorðan / grene stondan* Cott. Gnom. 33-5, ‘a wood shall be blowing with flowers and fruit in the land, a hill shall stand green upon the earth’; *geseah he geblowene bearwas standan, blædum gehrodene* Andr. 1448-9, ‘he saw the blossoming groves all gay with fruitage stand.’

Or take a couple of longer passages from the Phoenix :

ac þær lagustreamas
wundrum wrætlíce wyllan onspringað,
fægrum flodwylmum foldan leccaþ,
wæter wynsumu of þæs wuda midle,
þa mon þa gehwam of þære moldan tyrf
brimcald brecað, bearo ealne geondfarað
þragum þrymlíce. Ph. 62-8.

There springing from their source, smooth-flowing streams
 With gentle, eddying flood the champaign lave;
 Those waters fair, in some far woodland glade,
 Break through the turfy soil, cold as the sea,
 And sweep in stately windings through the grove.

The style of this passage in the original is so elaborate and highly wrought, every word being chosen to give variety and wealth of imagery, that it seems permissible to use a corresponding floweriness of language in translating it. No impression equivalent to that produced by the Anglo-Saxon can

possibly be gathered from a bald and literal rendering. Among the chief features of the diction we may note the following: the variety of words for water, stream, spring, &c.: *lagu-streamas*, *wyllan* 'well, spring, fount', *wæter*, *flodwylmum* literally 'flood-bubbings, eddyings', &c.; the use of the words *onspringað* 'spring forth, issue, gush out', &c., *brecað* 'break forth, burst out', *lecaþ* 'to water, irrigate, lave', &c., *geond-farað* 'flow through, traverse, wind through', and so on; to describe the movements of the water the adverbs *wundrum* 'marvellously', *wratlice* 'splendidly, with pomp and dignity', &c., *þrymlie* 'gloriously, splendidly, in a stately manner' from *þrymm* 'might, splendour, magnificence' and so on; the adjectives *wynsumu* (on which see below, pp. 73-4), *fægrym*, with the same poetical significance as its modern descendant 'fair', and *brimcald* 'sea-cold'. This is indeed one of those passages which abound in Anglo-Saxon poetry, on which the writer has lavished the treasures of his art, and piled word upon word, each pregnant with meaning and rich in poetical associations.

The other passage I propose to quote has the same smooth beauty, but from the nature of the scene described its atmosphere is more unreal.

*Smylte is se sigewong sun-bearo lixæð,
wuduholc wýntlic: wæstmas ne dreosaþ
beorhte blede, ac þa beamas a
grene stonlað swa him god bibeað;
wintres and sumeres wudu bið gelice
bledum gehongen; næfre brosniað
leaf under lyfte.*

Ph. 33-9.

Serene the plain, its sunny woodland gleams;
Fair wood whose foison ne'er declines, whose flowers
Eternal glow, on boughs for ever green.
So God ordained; and whatso'er the time,
Winter or summer, still the grove shall stand
All hung with fruit, and 'neath that placid sky
No leaf decays, no petal flutters down.

(Cp. also various other passages throughout the poem, notably lines 71-82, where the same unfading wood is further described.)

This is assuredly no English wood ; it has no more substance than

Those Hesperian gardens famed of old
Fortunate fields and groves and happy vales ;

it is indeed the wood in which the Phoenix built his nest.

This poem of the Phoenix, in spite of the unreality of the world which it depicts, is full of beauties ; the whole of the diction is sweet and varied. It deserves to be studied as a whole, and not merely in the short passage found in Sweet's and other Readers. We may take leave here of this fortunate island, where for ever the marvellous bird lives, perishes, and rises, refreshed and more brilliant from its own ashes, by quoting a brief reference to a genuine English Harvest Home to which there is no parallel in the Latin of Lactantius, of which the poem is a paraphrase :

*Swa mon to andleofne eorðan wæstmæs
on hærfeste hæm gelædeð,
wiste wynsume, ær wintres cyme
on rypes timan, þy læs hi renes scur
awyrde under wolcnum : þær hi wraðe metað
fodorþege gefean, þonne forst and snaw
mid oferwægne eorðan þeccað
wintergewærdum.*

Ph. 243-50.

‘So at the harvest in the time of reaping, men carry home the fruits of the earth, for their sustenance, a pleasant feast, ere the coming of winter, lest storms of rain from the clouds should injure them ; herein men find nourishment ; they rejoice over their banquet when frost and snow cover the earth abundantly, with a wintry mantle.’

This glimpse of reality is, however, only introduced to give the poet the chance of comparing the reproduction of fresh corn from the old, with the rise of a new phoenix from the ashes of the old.

There are several passages here and there in Anglo-Saxon poetry where the coming of Spring is alluded to with real feeling and with great delicacy of phrase ; for instance :

*Bearwas blostmum nimað, byrig fægriað,
wongas wlitigað, woruld onetteð. Seaf. 48-9.*

‘Groves put forth their blossoms, cities grow fair; the plains are jocund; all nature stirs.’

I take *woruld onetteð* here to mean, as we should now say, ‘things are moving’, ‘all Nature is quickening’. ‘The world hastens onward’, the literal translation, is meaningless in this passage.

A picturesque phrase occurs in Beowulf 1135–6, *ofer com / gear in geardas . . . þa wæs winter scacen, / fæger foldan bearm*; that is, ‘another year came into the courts (dwellings of men); winter was driven away, the bosom of the earth was fair’. Note the use of *scacen* here. I shall return later to this word. I conclude these instances of the old poets’ treatment of the milder moods of Nature by a passage full of sweetness from the poem on Daniel, which is (or ought to be) often quoted by those who write and lecture on Anglo-Saxon literature, because it contains one of the rare similes in this poetry. The reference is to the coming of the angel to deliver Daniel and his companions from the burning fiery furnace:

*þa wæs on þam ofne, þær se engel becwom,
windig and wynsum, wedere gelicost
þonne hit on sumeres tid sendeð weorðeð
dropena dreorung on dages hwile,
wearmlíc wolcna scur: swyðe bið wædera cyst,
swyðe wæs on þam fyre frean mihtum
halgum to helpe.* Dan. 346–52.

‘Then was it in the furnace, when the angel appeared, breezy and delightful, most like the weather when in the summer time, there comes from heaven a fall of drops, in the daytime, a genial shower of rain: just as is that best of weather, so was it in the fire, by God’s might, for the succour of his saints.’

It is difficult to find fit equivalents for *windig and wynsum*, a beautiful phrase in the original, the charm of which vanishes if it be rendered, as I have heard it, ‘windy and winsome’. The former word may refer in OE. equally to the gusts of a tempest (e.g. *windige weallas* ‘windy walls’, said of cliffs facing the sea, Beow. 572), or to the sighings of a gentle breeze, which latter is what is intended here. *Wynsum* is full of agreeable suggestiveness. It means ‘pleasant, delightful,

sweet, charming, gracious, graceful, comely', and it has a tinge also of gaiety and liveliness. In Professor Napier's OE. Glosses it is variously used to gloss *dulcis*, *suavis*, *venustus*, *egregius*, *jocundus*, *lepidus*, *amoenus*. It is much used in Anglo-Saxon poetry as an epithet for almost anything of which the poet approves. It is not always easy to find a suitable equivalent in Modern English having regard to the character of the passage as a whole. Milton's phrase *jocund and boon* would express it pretty well.

I turn now to the treatment of the mysterious and sombre in Nature. It is noteworthy that many of the words expressing *storm*, *mist*, *dark(ness)*, *gloom*, and the like, survive and still retain for us the old poetic association.

In Beowulf, everything relating to the home of the monsters, its surroundings, the stealthy comings and goings of Grendel and his avenging Mother, is dark and terrible. Of Grendel, it is said, *sin-nihte heold / mistige moras* Beow. 161-2, 'during the long night he held the misty moors'. *Com on warreniht, scripan sceadu-genga* Beow. 702-3, 'the shadow-lurker came stealing on, in the dark night'; *of more under mist-hleopum* Beow. 710, 'from the moor, beneath the misty slopes'; the Mother returns *ofer myrcan mor* 'across the dark (murky) moor' Beow. 1405, carrying the body of the murdered Æschere. After this last outrage the hunt is up, and Beowulf and Hrothgar track the monster to her lair guided by a trail of blood. They pass ovc

<i>steap stanhlido,</i>	<i>stige nearve,</i>
<i>enge an-paðas,</i>	<i>uncuð gelad,</i>
<i>neowle næssas,</i>	<i>nicor-husa fela.</i>

Beow. 1409-11.

<i>Op þæt he færinga</i>	<i>fyr-gen-beamas</i>
<i>ofer harne stan</i>	<i>hleonian funde,</i>
<i>wyn-leasne wudu ;</i>	<i>wæter under stod</i>
<i>dreorig und gedrefed.</i>	

Beow. 1414-17.

'Steep rocky slopes, toilsome upward tracks, narrow paths where only one can go, ways hard to find, towering headlands, and many a place where goblins dwell.'

'Till of a sudden he descried some mountain trees, which arched over a hoary rock, a joyless wood; below it stood a water, blood-stained and turbid.'

This horrible lake, in whose depths Grendel hid, had already been more particularly described by Hrothgar in a passage which is famous now, and which was still well known centuries after it was written, since a picture of the abode of lost souls in a Blickling Homily written in the last quarter of the Tenth Century is based upon it.

I must content myself with giving only a translation ; for the original, most readers of Anglo-Saxon poetry know it by heart. The reference is Beowulf, 1357-76.

That is a secret place in which they dwell :
 Wolf-haunted slopes and windy promontories ;
 A treacherous fenny track ; the mountain streams
 Fall sheer adown the headland's shadowy side,
 The flood sinks under ground. 'Tis not far hence,
 Bosomed in rimy thickets stands the mere—
 Deep-rooted trees that make a vault above.
 There every night an eerie sight is seen,
 A portent strange, a fire upon the flood.
 None lives so wise, of all the sons of men,
 That he may reckon out how deep it be.
 And the heath-rover, the strong-antlered stag,
 Though he may seek the wood when driven afar,
 And by the pack hard-pressed, yet will he rather
 Yield up his breath, his life, upon the bank,
 Ere he within those depths will hide his head.
 That is a dismal place ; the leaping wave
 Thence rises black, wind-driven, towards the sky ;
 Fierce tempests stir, and in the darkening air
 The very heavens weep.

The Anglo-Saxon poets know how to produce an atmosphere of gloom and mystery by the use of one or two words, as in this exclamation of the sorrowful lady in the Wife's Complaint, 30-2 :

*Sindon den dimme, dun up-hea,
 bittre burg-tunas brerum bewearne,
 wic wynna leas.*

' Dim are the valleys, the hills exceeding high,¹ the cities

¹ Mr. Sisam would render *burg-tunas* by 'walls', referring to the sides of the valley, and thus an echoing phrase to *dun up-hea*. This would also require *wic wynna leas* to be rendered—'mine', or 'this, is a joyless abode'.

are desolate, overgrown with briars, the dwellings emptied of delight.'

Note *dimme, wynna leus*, and the unexpected transference of meaning shown in the use of *bittre* 'bitter, grievous', here meaning 'causing bitterness of heart'. There is perhaps also a side glance at the cruel, trailing briars. Our phrase 'a dismal sight' would render the idea pretty well.

The poet of the Creation and the Fall has plenty of scope for descriptions of the sombre, the mysterious, and the terrible. He pictures the Creator in high heaven, looking out upon Chaos. Nothing was there as yet, i. e. where the earth was to be, but *heolstorsceado* 'enveloping shadow' Gen. 103; the wide abyss *stod deop and dim* Gen. 105. God gazed, and saw that place *dreama lease* 'void of joys';

*semian sinniht, geseah deorc gesweorc,
wonn and weste. sweart under roderum*
Gen. 108-10.

'He saw dusky cloud, and eternal night brooding, black beneath the heavens, dark and desolate.'

The rebellious angels are cast *on þa deopan dala* 'into the deep dales' (of hell). Here, for every fiend the fire is ever renewed.

*þonne cymð on ahtan easterne wind
forst fyrnum cald, symble fyr oððe gar.*
Gen. 315-16.

'Then comes from the east a wind in the morning, frost with fearful cold; ever either fire or the stab of frost.'

We read of *hatne heaðonvelm* 'hot battle-surge' Gen. 324; *brand and brade ligas swilce ear þa biteran recas, / þrosm and þystro* Gen. 325-6, 'burning, and broad flames, likewise bitter smoke, vapour, and darkness'. Satan exclaims in rage and agony:

*Ac licgað me ymbe irenbendas,
rideð racentan sal.*
Gen. 371-2.

'Bonds of iron lie about me,
A chain of fetters rides me.'

ic a ne geseah
laðran landscepe.
Ibid. 375-6.

'I never saw a loathlier region.'

Here is a passage which will go word for word into Modern English :

*hafað us god sylfa
forswapen on þus sweartan mistas.* Gen. 31.

‘God himself has swept us away into these black (swart) mists.’

The words and expressions for the human body, human death, and the tomb are very varied. The body is : THE BODY.

þæt earme flæsc Run. P. 62 ; *flæsc-homa* ‘fleshly covering’ Beow. 1568 ; *ban-cofa* ‘bony case’ Guthl. 927 ; *banfæt* ‘bony vessel’ Ph. 229 (of the body of the Phoenix) ; *ban-loca* ‘bony enclosure’ Chr. 769 ; *lic-hord* ‘body treasure’ Guthl. 1003 ; *feorh-hus* ‘life, spirit’s house’ Mald. 297 ; *sawel-hus* ‘soul’s house’ Guthl. 1003, 1114 ; cp. Waller’s *the soul’s dark cottage* ; *þæt fæne hus* El. 1236 ‘treacherous house (of the spirit)’ ; *lamfæt* ‘clay (lit. ‘loam’) vessel’. In Fates of the Apostles, the poet speaks of leaving behind him at death, ‘my body, that portion of earth, that garment of mortality’, *lic, eorþan dæl, wælreaf*, 94–5. Human life is *þis deaðe lif læne on londe* Seaf. 64–5, ‘this dead, this transitory life upon the land’ (cp. Vaughan’s ‘this dead and dark abode’, i. e. life here, contrasted with that hereafter) ; *þis nwe lif, þis læne* Death of Edgar, 3–4, ‘this frail, this transitory life’ ; *fyrst is æt ende lænes lifes* ‘the period of transitory life is at an end’ Exod. 267–8 ; *oflet liflagas, and þas lænan gesceaft* Beow. 1622, ‘he forsook his life-days, and this transitory being (existence)’ ; *hæfle ende gefered lænan lifes* Beow. 2844–5, ‘he had reached (journeyed to) the end of this fleeting life’.

Death is *feorh-geðal* ‘severance, cutting off, of life’ Andr. 181, DEATH. Guthl. 1173 ; *sawel geðal* Guthl. 1008 ; the soul is said to be ‘hurried away on its outward journey’ *afyssel on forðsið* Guthl. 1911 ; *æfter hinsiðe* ‘after the going hence’ Jud. 117. Death is called *deap se bitera* ‘bitter death’ Dth. of Edw. 26 ; *hælepa hryre* ‘fall of heroes’ Beow. 3005 ; *swyðtildæge* ‘the day of death’ Beow. 2798.

The tomb is *deaprevel* Ph. 48 ‘death chamber’ ; *hælepa* TOMB. *heolstorcofa* Ph. 49, ‘the dark retreat, secret chamber, of men (heroes)’. In Jul. 683 the phrase *in þam þystran ham* ‘in that dark home’, is applied to the place in which wicked men who have been drowned remain, and in the following line, *in þam neolan scræfe* ‘in that deep cavern’, it being evident from the context that, in a typically Anglo-Saxon manner,

both expressions are used at once of the depths of ocean which hold their bodies, and of the abyss of Hell to which their souls have fled.

In the passage in Judith, 105-21 which describes the death of Holofernes at the hands of the savage heroine, there is a similar identification of the fate of the body and soul; or rather the figurative language which is used of each appears to be applied almost indistinguishably to both at once. The 'foul carcass' lies gaping, and the spirit 'goes elsewhere'—*gæst ellor hwærf, under neowelne næs* 112-13 'his spirit went elsewhere, beneath the steep promontory' (i.e. 'into the abyss'), and is said to be 'held fast in torment, encompassed with worms' (115); *þystrum forðylmed* 'girt about with darkness' (118); he need not hope, we are told, ever to escape from the 'wormy abode', of *ðam wyrmsele*, but must remain eternally 'in that dark home', in *ðam heolstran ham* (121). It appears that the poet is speaking of the grave and of the place of the wicked soul, in the same breath, and in identical terms. In a moving passage at the end of the Fates of the Apostles, the poet asks those who love his song to pray for him after his death, that he may have peace and consolation. 'How much', he exclaims, 'shall I have need of friends, and loving ones, upon my journey, when I shall seek my long home, my unfamiliar dwelling-place, alone'.

hu ic freonda beþearf
liðra on lade, þonne ic langne ham
eardwic uncwð ana gesece. F. of A. 91-3.

Mr. Tolkien, in his article in R. E. S. cited above, points out that the phrase 'long home', so familiar to us now in the well-known chapter of Ecclesiastes, occurs not only in the above passage (as is recorded by Toller in the Supplement to Bosworth), and in *Handlyng Sinne* (as indicated by the Oxford Dictionary), but is also found in another place in OE., namely, in the Vision of Leofric, Napier, Trans. Phil. Soc. 1908. Mr. Tolkien quotes this last passage: *he sceolde cuman to cofantreo to his langan hame, þær he on restet*, which, he says, proves that the phrase means 'grave' and not 'future life'. It is quite certain that it means 'grave' in this instance,

but it is, I think, equally certain that in the passage just quoted from the Fates of the Apostles, the expression refers not only to the grave in which the body lies, but to the future life of the spirit as well. Here, as in the passages from Juliana and Judith, the poet, in speaking of death, has simultaneously in his mind the physical and the spiritual aspects; he blends them inextricably in thought, and uses his words, at the same time, both literally and metaphorically. Cp. also to *þam langan gefean* Jul. 670, quoted below, p. 80.

We have already mentioned several phrases used to express the DYING, act or process of dying, but one or two others call for mention. The commonest phrase, of a figurative character, though this is not confined to poetry, is *gewitan* 'to depart, go hence'. More strictly belonging to poetical usage is *on weg hweorfan* 'to go away', though *hweorfan* is much less colourless than 'go', meaning originally 'to turn, change, wander'. The word is used in Beow. 264-5:

*ær he on weg hwurfe,
gamol of gearum,*

'ere he went away, an old man, from his dwellings'.

Feorh ofgefon 'they gave up (relinquished) their lives', F. of Apost. 12, is commonplace, but *sume wig fornam, ferele in forðwege* 'some war has taken away, has carried them upon their outward journey', Wand. 80-1, has that touch of mystery which is so frequent in this poetry. We get this note again in the last words of Beowulf:

*ealle wyrd forswæp
mine nugas to metod-sceaft,
eorlas on elne; ic him æfter seal.*

Beow. 2814-16.

'Fate has swept them all away, my kinsmen, to their appointed doom—earls in their pride; I must after them.'

In Brunanb. 28-30, five young kings are said to lie low *sweordum aswefede* 'put to sleep by swords'.

A word several times used of dying is *cringan* (also *gringan*), which means apparently in the first instance 'to give way, yield, sink down, crumple up'. It is used of men falling in

battle, but has also a more extended use. For instance, *on here cringan* Maldon, 292, 'to fall among the troops', i. e. in the midst of battle; *wigend cruncon* 'warriors fell' Maldon, 302; *he on hilde gecranc* 'he sank down in the battle', *ibid.* 324; *he æt wige gecrang* Beow. 1337 (of Grendel) 'he has fallen in war'; *heo on flet gecrong* Beow. 1568, of Grendel's Mother under the blows of Beowulf, 'she sank down upon the floor'; *he* (Dæghrefn) . . . *in campe gecrong* Beow. 2505 'he sank down in the fight'. The word is used less specifically in the Wanderer, of the Prince and his retainers who have died, and left the mead-hall empty and ruinous: *duguð eal gecrong wlonc bi wealle* 'the doughty ones have all sunk down, the proud by the wall' Wand. 79-80.

The death of Beowulf himself is thus simply described: *him of hreðre / gewat sawol secean soðfæstra dom*, 'his soul departed from his bosom to seek the reward of the faithful' Beow. 2819-20. Of King Edgar it is said that he ended the joys of earth, and *geceas him oþer leoht* 'chose him another light'. *Leoht* is often used for the 'light of day, of life', and hence comes to mean simply 'life', but it is impossible not to feel that at least a suggestion of the literal meaning 'light' was present in the poet's mind, and not to be reminded of Hood's

Her tired eyelids closed, she had
Another morn than ours.

The phrase *geceas ecne ræd* Beow. 1201 'he sought eternal counsel', is thought by many to refer to death, though Professor Chambers is rather inclined to a different view. The use of *cēosan* 'to choose', in the sense 'seek, find' occurs also in Maldon, 113 *æðlæste geceas* 'he sought (or found) a bed of death'. The soul of S. Juliana is said to be *alæded of lice to þam langan gefean* 'led, (conducted) from her body to long (enduring) joy' Jul. 669-70. Of Edward the Confessor the poet says that,

sopfæste sawle *englas feredon*
 innan swegles leoht.
Dth. of Edw. 27-8.

'Angels bore his faithful soul into the light of heaven.'

Perhaps one of the most felicitous phrases used of the death of princes and nobles is that in *Wanderer*, 61. The poet, pondering upon the passing away of earthly splendour, and of those who once enjoyed it, remembers *hu hi færllice flet ofgeafon* 'how they (earls) suddenly gave up the floor' (of the hall). This exactly corresponds to the expression 'quit the stage', than which it has an even greater appropriateness, because the floor of the mead-hall was indeed the stage upon which the drama of life was enacted by our ancestors, when they were not hunting or fighting. *Flet* occurs a good many times in *Beowulf*, and nearly always in connexion with some important action or event. *Wealhtheow*, the noble queen, goes all along the floor (*flet*) bringing the cup to the guests. *Hrothgar's* daughter *Freawaru* ('so I heard those sitting in the hall, *flet-sittende*, call her'), 'young and gold-adorned' was betrothed to 'the genial son of *Froda*', and the poet speaks of the prince of the *Hathobards* 'walking with his bride across the floor' (*flet*) *Beow.* 2034. Across the floor (*flet*), too, were led the eight horses with gold-plated bits which *Hrothgar* gave to the hero, *Beow.* 1035-6. In *Beow.* 1085-6 the Frisians are described as making a bargain that *Hengest's* followers shall prepare for them *oðer flet* 'another floor', and the implication of this is shown by the echoing phrase *healle ond heah-setl* 'hall and throne' which immediately follows. It is said of *Widsith* that 'he often had received (standing) upon the floor, the lovely treasure' *Wid.* 3-4; *on flette gepah*, an expression identical with *Beowulf gepah ful on flette* *Beow.* 1024-5 'received the cup on the floor', otherwise, 'in the hall'.

I bring to an end this somewhat lengthy list illustrating the various ways in which the old poets called things 'out of their right names' with some instances of metaphorical expressions for *king*, *sword*, and *arrow*. As we should expect, the old heroic poetry, and the later imitations of this, have a great variety of phrases for king, prince, chief, lord, &c. The following are chiefly from *Beowulf*. The list makes no pretensions at completeness. The words have merely an associational poetic value, and are mainly interesting as exhibiting a particular and very ancient phase of culture.

The first group expresses that sovereign virtue of princes, generosity :

KING.

beaga brytta 'ring distributor' Beow. 35, 352; *sinces brytta* 'distributor of treasure' Beow. 1170; *sinc-gifu* 'treasure giver' Beow. 1012, 1342, &c., and Maldon, 278; *beah-gifa* 'ring giver' B. 1102; *goldwine gumena* 'gold friend of men' B. 1171. The next group refers to the no less essential kingly qualities of leadership, and power to protect dependants: *folces hyrde* 'shepherd of the people' B. 610; *heria hildfruma* 'battle chief of hosts' El. 101; *winia baldor* 'leader, bold one, of friends' B. 2567; *aðelinga hleo* 'protector of princes' El. 99; *wigendra hleo* 'protector of warriors' B. 899; *helm Scyldinga* (of Hrothgar) 'helm, covering, protection, of the Scyldings' (his people), B. 371, 456; *frea-drihten* 'lord and master' B. 796; *ealdor þegna* 'ruler of thanes' B. 1644; *folces alior* 'ruler of the people' El. 157. Finally, a few phrases expressive of the graciousness and friendliness of bearing which characterize a good prince: *freatwine folca* 'lordly friend of peoples' B. 2429; *freowine* B. 2438; *freowine folca* 'gracious friend of peoples' B. 430.

SWORD.

A sword is *bealu-leoma* 'battle ray, gleam, flash' Beow. 1523; *guð-wine* 'battle friend' B. 1810, 2735; *homera laf* 'leaving of hammers' Beow. 2829, in reference to the blows struck in forging it, though *laf* alone is sometimes used for a sword, as in Beow. 454, *Hrællan laf*, where it is generally rendered 'heirloom'. It is possible that the other association also existed here. Another designation for a sword is *drihtlic iren* 'noble, lordly, iron', B. 892. A phrase for weapons generally is *ord and ecg* 'point and edge', that is, 'spears and swords', e.g. Beow. 1549, Maldon, 60. A sword is said to 'bite in' *bitan* Beow. 1454, 1522. Another word, used of a spear, is *wadun þurh* 'go through, penetrate', our 'wade', Maldon, 140. Arrows (or darts) are *hildenædran* 'battle adders' El. 119, and we read of *flana scuras* El. 117 'showers, storms, of arrows'. A picturesque phrase is *hwinnende fleah giellende gar* Wids. 127-8, 'whining flew the yelling javelin'. In OE. the verb *giellan* implies a shriller cry than does its modern descendant 'yell'; it is used, for instance, Seaf. 24 for the cry of the eagle.

ARROW,
&c.

Battle is *lind-plega* 'shield play' Beow. 1073 ; *hand-plega* 'hand play' Brunnanb. 25 ; *grim guð-plega* 'grim war play' Mald. 61 ; *garmitting gumena* 'spear-meeting of men' Brunnanb. 50.

III

We have now examined a considerable number of the metaphorical circumlocutions which the Anglo-Saxon poets make use of in their efforts to avoid calling a spade a spade. It would be wrong, I think, to regard this habit as a mere mannerism, though it easily degenerates into one, and the 'kennings' too often seem to be dragged in where a simple and direct expression would be better. It seems sometimes as if the poet were trying to live up to his responsibilities, to show that he had learnt his lesson, and mastered the technique of his craft. It must be confessed that many of the metaphorical phrases become tedious from iteration and are mere frozen lifeless things. On the other hand, that is not an exhaustive criticism of them. Many of these phrases are full of life, and were certainly composed with the eye on the object. They appear to arise naturally and inevitably to the poet's lips, and at their best they are the creations of a lively and true imagination. It will be noticed how few are the similes in this poetry. We have referred to nearly all that occur, except that in Beow. 1608, which describes the sword melting away like ice, from the virulence of the monster's blood *hit eal gemealt ise gelicost* 'it melted all away, most like to ice'. Here the word *mealt*, a typical metaphorical expression, was quite enough to suggest the ice ; indeed 'to melt away like ice' may already have been a proverbial phrase. Simile, then, is a very rare ornament of our old poetry. The poet does not merely feel that things are *like* something else, his mind bridges the gulf, and he sees the two things as identical. We have seen several instances of the intermingling of the symbol and the thing symbolized. This habit of mind is very characteristic of English poets, and it is

no less foreign to the genius of many other peoples, such, for instance, as the French. To turn the daring metaphors of Shakespeare literally into French would probably be to render him unintelligible to French readers. When Shakespeare calls the leafless trees 'Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang'; when Milton desires to hear the lark 'singing and startle the dull night From his watch-tower in the skies'; when Wordsworth hears 'The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep'; are they not following the natural bent of the English genius, and doing just what the Anglo-Saxon poet did? I fancy that it would be found difficult to translate into French the passages just quoted, and hundreds of others, whether from Anglo-Saxon poetry, or from later English poets, without turning the metaphors into similes. The speech of ordinary life teems with metaphor, though this is often obscured by the fact that the original, etymological, sense of words is forgotten and only the secondary meaning survives. Again, many metaphors are so familiar that, although a moment's reflection reveals them as such, they cease to delight or surprise.

The noblest metaphors are new and fresh creations of poetic imagination. A sense of their truth, 'the moment that it is perceived, grows, and continues to grow, upon the mind'. Others, often delightful and exciting, are more transient in their effect, they belong to fancy, and have not the 'indestructible dominion' of those framed by the imagination. In this greatest of poetic acts, the imaginative creation, working in 'the plastic, the pliant, and the indefinite', 'the images', as a great poet says, 'invariably modify each other'.

Of this quality, often imparted by the use of a single word, are Vaughan's

all the way
Primros'd and *hung* with shade,

or,

Happy are the dead!
What peace doth now
Rock him asleep below?

Or Milton's

Anon out of the earth a fabric huge
Rose like an exhalation.

Or Peele's

Now comes my lover tripping like the roe,
And brings my longings *tangled in her hair*.

Or Keats's

But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is *with the breezes blown*.

The reader will not, perhaps, have failed to perceive something of this imaginative quality in many of the phrases from Anglo-Saxon poetry quoted in the foregoing pages.

The examples given in the preceding section, however, were not as a rule chosen primarily for their outstanding quality or originality, but were brought together to illustrate in a general way certain habits of diction as applied to a variety of objects or processes.

I want, in the present section, to illustrate some of the more individual touches of poetic imagination in Anglo-Saxon poetry. Limitations of space permit only a very brief, and, I fear, a rather desultory treatment here, and I have grouped my remarks chiefly, though not entirely, round the use of particular words.

SCACAN. This word has some very interesting uses in poetry. It is the ancestor of the Modern *shake*, which has itself been used with striking effect by modern poets. In OE. the word is both intransitive and transitive. It has the general sense of 'shake, agitate', and of rapid movement or action generally. When used intransitively of immaterial things, time, life, &c., the dictionaries say it means simply 'depart, pass away, hasten on', and so forth; used transitively of these, it is said to mean 'to dispatch, hasten (departure of)'. The question is whether in poetry the word has not a more specific, image-creating force.

The best way of bringing this point before the reader will be to cite a number of passages in which *scacan* is used of time, life, prosperity, light. I translate in the first instance by a colourless word which I italicize.

(1) intrans. (a) *þa seo tid gewat ofer timber scacan mid-dangeardes* 'now time passed *hastening* over the fabric of the earth' Gen. 135-6.

(b) *þa com beorht scacan* [*scima æfter sceaduwe*]. (The last words have been supplied by editors to fill a gap in the text; they are pretty generally accepted, but whether the suggestion be right or wrong is immaterial to our present purpose, as it is certain that something to this effect is necessary, and the essential words are there.) 'Then came *hastening*, the bright beam after darkness' B. 1802-3.

(c) *oþþæt eal sceaceð / leoht and lif somod* 'till all *passes away*, life and light together' Wids. 141-2.

(d) *þonne min sceaceþ / lif of lice* 'when my life *departs* from my body' Beow. 2742-3.

(e) *duguð ellor scoc* 'my trusty retainers have all *departed* elsewhere' (i. e. 'have died') Beow. 2254.

(2) trans. (a) *þa wæs winter scacen* 'now winter had been *sent away*' Beow. 1136.

(b) *þa wæs dæg sceacen* 'day had been *sent away*' B. 2306. (With this may be compared *Ðu wæs morgen-leoht / scofen and scyndel* 'Now the morning-light had been thrust forth and hastened on' B. 917-18.

(c)

	<i>wisse he gearwe</i>
<i>þæt he dæg-hwila</i>	<i>gedrogen hæfde</i>
<i>eorðan wynne;</i>	<i>ðu wæs eall sceacen</i>
<i>dogor-gerimes;</i>	<i>deað ungemete neah.</i>

Beow. 2725-8.

'Well he knew that he had lived out his hours of life, his earthly joy; now the span of his days was *all run out*; death was exceeding near.'

(d) *bið his lif scæcen* 'his life is *departed*' Fates of Men, 39.

(e) *Hu mæg ic þæt findan þæt swa fyrn gewearð*
wintra gangum? is nu worn sceacen
c.c. oððe ma geteled rimes. El. 632-4.

'How shall I find that which with the flight of winters has become so remote? The number of them now *passed* is two hundred or more.'

(f)

	<i>lig ealle forswearg,</i>
<i>gæsta gifrost,</i>	<i>þara þe þær guð fornam</i>
<i>bega folces;</i>	<i>wæs hira blæd scacen.</i>

B. 1122-4.

‘ Fire, that most ravenous of spirits, devoured all those of both peoples whom war had snatched away ; their glory had departed.’

Now as regards the passages in group 1, in several cases perhaps ‘ hurry, hasten ’, &c., are good enough, but in others, if we can preserve some of the ideas associated with ‘ shaking ’ the effect is distinctly enhanced. Thus in (1) (b) may not the idea be ‘ diffusing itself ’ or ‘ coming on by leaps and bounds ’ ? In (1) (c) and (d) may we not believe that the poet in using *sceaceþ* had at the back of his mind an idea of ‘ scattering, flinging out, dispersing, jerking ’ ? We might almost use Vaughan’s ‘ packs away ’, or ‘ is sent packing ’, if either of these were now consistent with serious poetry.

In group (2) it can hardly be doubted that the idea of ‘ shaking off, shaking out ’, and so on is present. There is a phrase in Vaughan which is closely parallel to (2) (a) and (b): ‘ The whole Creation shakes off night ’ (*The Dawning*); and another passage in the same writer which contains a figure such as I believe the old poet intended in (1) (b):

Awake ! awake !
The sun doth shake
Light from his locks. Chr. Nativity.

In the former of these passages the image of nature shaking off darkness, scattering it, shaking free from it, will cover, with certain amplifications or modifications, a number of figurative uses of *scacan* in OE. ; that in the latter, of the sun scattering as in largesse, the light, flinging it broadcast in profuse distribution, underlies others. A third sense, applicable to (1) (c) and (2) (c) (d) and (f), is ‘ to render, or become, unsteady, to rock, totter ; to upset, shatter ’, &c., which we still apply to action affecting immaterial as well as material things, e. g. to shake one’s confidence, resolution, &c.

BLÆD. The phrase in (2) (f) *wæs hire blæd scacen* is doubly figurative. As *blæd*, generally rendered ‘ prosperity, fame ’, and so on, is a poetical word, a few remarks on it will be in place here. The word is etymologically connected with *blāwan* ‘ to blow ’ (of wind), and is apparently often confused with an originally different word *blēd* from *blōwan* ‘ to blow as a

flower, flourish'. The two verbs, which are identical in all parts except the Infinitive and Present Indicative, are ultimately from the same base. The noun means 'a blowing, that which blows or flourishes', hence 'shoot of a plant, flower, fruit'. In a figurative sense it means 'period of flourishing, prosperity, fame'; it is equivalent to the German *blütezeit*. It also undoubtedly has the sense of 'flower of age, beauty', and so on. In the passage (2) (f) we might legitimately translate 'the flower of their life was shattered'. Vaughan again has the very phrase required to interpret *blæd*:

Let my youth, my *bloom of days*
Be my Comfort and thy praise.

The word is found in at least two other passages in Beowulf—*blæd is aræred geonl wiðwegas* 'thy fame is raised high, over far-lying ways' B. 1703-4; again, *nu is þines mærges blæd une hwile* 'now is the very flower of thy night, for a time' B. 1761-2. Of the angels hosts it is said, *wæs heora blæd micel* 'great was their glory' Gen. 14. The word occurs again in a beautiful passage in Juliana:

Min se swelesta sunnan scima
Juliana! hwæt þu glæm hafast,
ginfæste gief, geoguðes blæd. Jul. 166-8.

My Juliana, sunlight's sweetest ray!

Thou hast a bounteous dower, the gleam, the bloom of youth.

The last passage contains another word, GLÆM 'gleam', &c., which is several times used in a figurative sense in Anglo-Saxon poetry. In a physical sense the word, as now, means 'a gleam, flash, of light'. Thus in Guthlac 122 *se æpelu glæm* 'noble gleam', and in 123 *se leohta glæm* 'bright gleam' is applied to the sun. In the passage quoted from Juliana the word has the sense of 'radiant beauty, charm, glamour'. It is used in the same sense in the phrase *geoguðhudes glæm* 'gleam of youth' in Elene 1266. Both Juliana and Elene are by the same poet—Cynewulf. The last expression is the exact equivalent of Wordsworth's 'youth's golden gleam'.

The word MIST, which has ever been used by English poets

to call up a picture of sombre and shadowy beauty, has appeared already in several of the phrases and passages quoted in the preceding section (cp. pp. 61, 67, 74, 77). It is worth noting a rather new use of it applied to an exhalation or emanation which is not visible. In the Fates of Men, not the least vivid lines in a graphic and terrible description of a dead man hanging on the gallows are these :

*blac on beame bideð wyrdle
bevegen wælmiste.* F. of Men, 41-2.

‘Livid upon the gibbet he abides his fate, enveloped in a deadly mist.’

WAN(N), WON(N). This word is usually, and no doubt rightly, rendered ‘dark, dusky’, and so on, and I believe in all the passages hitherto noted in which it occurs, this is the proper rendering. But *se wonna leg* Tempt. of Chr. 50, can hardly mean ‘dark fire’. Cp. also: *Nu sceal gled fretan, / weaxan wonna leg* B. 3114-15; ‘Now must fire devour him, the wan flame wrap him round’. As a matter of fact, the word is recorded in Napier’s OE. Glosses 23.34 as a gloss for *pallidus*, which shows evidently that already in OE. it had acquired something like its present sense. It apparently denoted a rather vague shade neither very dark nor very bright, sometimes tending to one, sometimes to the other, a livid, pallid hue. It is interesting to note that in Prelude XIV. 11-12, Wordsworth appears to use the word with a suggestion of something rather darker than is implied by the ordinary modern use :

It was a close, warm, breezeless summer night,
Wan, dull and glaring, with a dripping fog.

Truly a detestable kind of night!

ÐICCE, ÐICLICE, ‘thick, thickly’. These words are used in Genesis of the eager, excited speech of Eve to Adam when she is urging him on ‘to that dim deed’ *on þa dimman dæd*, which had such unfortunate results for all of us. *Hio spræc him þicce* to Gen. 684; and again *heo spræc ðu to Adame idesa sceonost ful þiclice* Gen. 704-5. Sweet gives ‘frequent(ly)’ in his Dictionary, evidently with an eye to this passage. But

is not the phrase far more vivid than that? Does it not rather mean, and did not the poet intend, 'her words came thick and fast, thickly, one after the other', or something of that kind? This would be admirably suggestive of a panting rush of words.

SLITAN, 'to tear, slit up', &c. After the Fall Adam, in his despair for their future now that they have disobeyed God and will certainly lose Paradise, cries out :

*slit me hunger and þurst,
bittre on breostum.*

Gen. 802-3.

'Hunger and thirst *tear* me grievously in my bosom.'

It is worth mentioning, perhaps, that what some consider the Old Saxon *original*, in the Vatican fragment, has the much feebler word *thwingit* 'torments, oppresses'. The same expressive phrase is used by another Anglo-Saxon poet in the *Seafarer*: *hungor innan slat / mereverges mod* 11-12 'hunger within *tore* the heart of the sea-weary man'.

SWINGAN, 'to strike', also 'to swing'. The word is used with fine effect in *Beowulf*, in a passage in which the last survivor of a band of noble kinsmen deplores the death of the others, and contemplates the ruined hall :

*Nis hearpan wyn,
gomen gleo-beames, ne god hafoc
geond sæl swingeð, ne se swifta mearh
burh-stede beateð.*

Beow. 2262-5.

There is
No joyous harp, no mirthful sound of lyre;
Nor through the hall the gallant falcon swings;
Nor the fleet charger beats the court-yard now.

This seems to me at once to call up a vision of the powerful flight of the hawk wheeling and swooping backwards and forwards through the hall in short, rapid bursts, constantly brought up by the walls.

But the Anglo-Saxon poet is perhaps at his best when he presents a poignant situation in the simplest words. To illustrate this quality I select, as a final example, the passage from *Beowulf* which describes the hero and his retainers

preparing to spend their first night in Hrothgar's hall, where they fully expect to be attacked by the blood-thirsty monster Grendel. The translation conveys but a feeble idea of the simple and serene dignity of the original. Beowulf himself has already stripped off his armour and thrown himself upon his bed :

ond hine ymb monig

snelllic sƿrinc selereſte gebeaħ.
Nænig heora þohte þæt he þanon ſcōlde
eft eardlufan æfre geſecean,
folc oþðe freo-burh þær he afedel wæs.
Ac hie hæfdon gefrunen þæt hie ær to fela micles
in þæm win-ſele wæl-deaþ fornam
Denigea leode. Beow. 689-96.

Around him many a seaman, young and bold,
 Had stretched him on a bed within the hall.
 Not one had hope that he should e'er again
 Win out, or see once more his own dear land,
 His kin, or the fair house where he was bred.
 For they had heard, how in that banquet-hall,
 Grim death had snatched full many a Dane away.

In conclusion, I would appeal to students of English poetry to devote more attention to our oldest verse than they have been in the habit of giving. The more closely and sympathetically it is studied, the more clearly do the all-pervading qualities of imagination and sensibility in Anglo-Saxon poetry appear, the more overwhelming becomes the conviction that our ancient writers are in the true great line of English poets. The spiritual affinity between these and the later poets is no less indubitable than is their kinship in blood.

HENRY CECIL WYLD.

SENTIMENT AND SENSIBILITY IN THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY NOVEL

LADY LOUISA STUART, writing to Sir Walter Scott about *Old Mortality* (Dec. 5, 1816),¹ exclaims:

‘I have as yet only one great attack to make, and that upon a single word; but such a word! such an anachronism! Claverhouse says he has no time to hear *sentimental* speeches. My dear sir! tell Jedediah that Claverhouse never heard the sound of those four syllables in his life. We are used to them; but *sentiment* and *sentimental* were, I believe, first introduced into the language by Sterne, and are hardly as old as I am. Let alone the Covenanters’ days, I am persuaded you would look in vain for them in the works of Richardson and Fielding, authors of George II’s reign. Nay, the French, from whom they were borrowed, did not talk of *le sentiment* in that sense till long after Louis XIV’s reign. No such thing is to be found in Madame de Sévigné, La Bruyère, &c., &c., &c. At home or abroad I defy Lord Dundee ever to have met with the expression. Mr. Peter Pattieson had been reading *The Man of Feeling*, and it was a slip of his tongue, which I am less inclined to excuse than Mause’s abstruse Scotch, which I duly reverence, as she did Kettledrummle’s sermons, because I do not understand it.’

Scott acknowledged the justice of this attack by withdrawing the epithet in his second edition, but the word ‘sentimental’ is a generation older than Lady Louisa surmised. It was the popularity of *The Sentimental Journey*, published in 1768, which gave it general currency and introduced it into French and German; but the word was fashionable in certain circles at least twenty years earlier. Sterne uses it several times in his correspondence, the first occasion being in a letter, written before his marriage, which occurred in 1741:

¹ *Familiar Letters*, 1894, vol. i, pp. 394-5.

‘One solitary plate, one knife, one fork, one glass!—I gave a thousand pensive, penetrating looks at the chair thou hadst so often graced, in those quiet and sentimental repasts.’¹

Writing to Richardson, Mrs. Belfour (Lady Bradshaigh), in an undated letter, assigned by Mrs. Barbauld to 1749,² complains of the vagueness with which the new word is used:

‘Pray, sir, give me leave to ask you (I forgot it before) what, in your opinion, is the meaning of the word *sentimental*, so much in vogue amongst the polite, both in town and country? In letters and common conversation, I have asked several who make use of it, and have generally received for an answer, it is—it is—*sentimental*. Everything clever and agreeable is comprehended in that word; but [I] am convinced a wrong interpretation is given, because it is impossible everything clever and agreeable can be so common as this word. I am frequently astonished to hear such a one is a *sentimental* man; we were a *sentimental* party; I have been taking a *sentimental* walk. And that I might be reckoned a little in the fashion, and, as I thought, show them the proper use of the word, about six weeks ago, I declared I had just received a *sentimental* letter. Having often laughed at the word, and found fault with the application of it, and this being the first time I ventured to make use of it, I was loudly congratulated upon the occasion, but I should be glad to know your interpretation of it.’³

Richardson’s reply is not preserved, but he uses the word in *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753). Lady Louisa Stuart may be pardoned if her patience failed her before she reached the end of the sixth volume of this English *roman de longue haleine*, when Charlotte Grandison and Lucy Selby write a joint letter describing the wedding of Sir Charles and Harriet. The sprightly Charlotte surprises herself making moral reflections and stops short suddenly:

‘My dear girl, take the pen, I am too *sentimental*. The French only are proud of their sentiments at this day; the

¹ *Letters*, ed. by his daughter, 1776, p. 14.

² Lady Bradshaigh became personally known to Richardson in 1750 and dropped her pseudonym.

³ *Correspondence of Samuel Richardson*, ed. Mrs. Barbauld, 1804, iv. 282–3.

English cannot bear them. Story, story, story is what they hunt after, whether sense or nonsense, probable or improbable.' ¹

The comment reminds us of Johnson's dictum about Richardson: 'Why, Sir, if you were to read Richardson for the story, your patience would be so much fretted that you would hang yourself. But you must read him for the sentiment, and consider the story as only giving occasion to the sentiment.'² When Richardson, in a letter written during the composition of *Sir Charles Grandison*, remarks 'I am involved in *sentimentizing*,'³ the process is a different one from that for which Sterne invented the verb 'to sentimentalize'. Richardson was merely collecting the extracts for his *Moral and Instructive Sentiments* (1755). He was engaged in an intellectual, Sterne in an emotional, pastime. Sterne writes:

'In the meantime we will philosophise and sentimentalise—the last word is a bright invention of the moment, which was written for your's and Dr. Johnson's service—and you shall sit in my study and take a peep into the world as into a showbox and amuse yourself as I present the pictures to your imagination. Thus will I teach you to love its follies, to pity its errors and detest its injustice—and I will introduce you among the rest to some tender-hearted damsel on whose cheeks some bitter affliction has placed a tear, and having heard her story you shall take a white handkerchief from your pocket and wipe the moisture from her eyes and your own.'⁴

He uses the word 'sentiment' in a sense of his own:

'I myself must ever have some dulcinea in my head—it harmonises the soul—and in those cases I first endeavour to make the lady believe so, or rather, I begin first to make myself believe that I am in love—but I carry on my affairs quite in the French way, sentimentally—*l'amour*, say they, *n'est rien sans sentiment*—Now notwithstanding they make such a pother about the word, they have no precise idea annex'd to it.'⁵

¹ *Sir Charles Grandison*, 1902, vol. vi, Letter xlv.

² Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ed. Birkbeck Hill, vol. ii, p. 175.

³ *Correspondence*, ed. Barbauld, ii. 286, July 15, 1753.

⁴ *Original Letters*, 1788, p. 14.

⁵ *Letters*, ed. by his daughter, 1776, p. 139 (May 23, 1765).

To Sterne 'sentiment' suggested a pleasant philandering with emotion. He loved to savour delicate sensations: he was an epicure in feeling. Richardson, on the other hand, was more keenly interested in minute problems of conscience, and, as a moralist, he distrusted the indulgence of the emotions. His heroines are 'sententious' rather than 'sentimental'. They are guided by those three graces of the eighteenth century, delicacy, decorum, and punctilio.

The fact that Richardson and Sterne use the same word to describe such different things, shows that the meaning of 'sentimental' was not yet fixed. Walpole, writing in 1752, uses the epithet in a sense different from either. The younger Crébillon, when requested to sit for his portrait, demanded a fee of sixteen guineas. The artist, whom Walpole had asked to procure it, retaliated by offering to sell the portrait to Crébillon for the sum suggested. Horace Walpole writes: 'I am still *sentimental* enough to flatter myself, that a man who could beg sixteen guineas will not give them, so I may still have my picture.'¹ He underlines the word, as if conscious that it is an expression not sanctioned by common usage. He probably means that he trusts his intuitions about human nature. In the Prologue to *Polly Honeycombe*, performed at Drury Lane in 1760, George Colman seems to use the word in its modern sense:

Cassandra's folios are no longer read,
See two neat pocket-volumes in their stead!
And then so *sentimental* is the style,
So chaste, yet so bewitching all the while;
Plot and elopement, passion, rape, and rapture
The total sum of ev'ry dear, dear, chapter.

Henry Brooke in *The Fool of Quality* (1766) distinguishes between 'physical' and 'sentimental' beauty. Yet when *The Sentimental Journey* appeared, in 1768, the title was not allowed to pass without protest. So late as 1773 John Wesley challenges it in his *Journal*:²

¹ To Horace Mann, July 27, 1752.

² Standard Edition, vol. v, p. 445.

'I casually took a volume of what is called *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*. Sentimental! what is that? It is not English; he might as well say *Continental*. It is not sense. It conveys no determinate idea; yet one fool makes many. And this nonsensical word (who would believe it?) is become a fashionable one! However, the book agrees full well with the title, for one is as queer as the other. For oddity, uncouthness, and unlikeness to all the world beside, I suppose, the writer is without a rival.'

The term acquired quickly a hint of contempt. Sheridan, in the Prologue to *The Rivals* (1774), ridicules

The goddess of the woful countenance,
The sentimental Muse;

and in *The Critic* (1779), Mr. Sneer speaks of 'a style which they have lately tried to run down, the true sentimental'. Although Sir Peter Teazle regards the title, a 'man of sentiment' as an honourable one, Lady Sneerwell, in *The School for Scandal* (1777), intends no compliment when she calls Joseph Surface a 'sentimental knave'. Originally bestowed as a term of praise, it was seized upon by the enemy and applied in derision. It retains a tinge of blame to this day. The 'uncouth' word of 1772 had become so thoroughly acclimatized by 1816 that Scott unwittingly placed it on the lips of a soldier of the Seventeenth Century.

The history of the word 'sensibility' is closely associated with that of 'sentimental'. The Oxford Dictionary notices it as rare before the middle of the Eighteenth Century. Before that period it is usually applied to physical sensations, although Addison uses it in reference to both emotional and bodily susceptibility.¹ Like 'sentiment', 'sensibility' came from France, where it was cultivated as a fine art about half a century before it became fashionable in England.² Richardson uses it frequently to indicate delicacy of feeling, swiftness of response to the emotions of love and pity. Miss Lennox uses it in her *Female Quixote* (1752), and Dr. Johnson's *Dictionary* (1755) gives 'quickness of perception, delicacy', among the meanings attached to the word. There are many

¹ *Spectator*, No. 231 (1711).

² See Saintsbury, *History of the French Novel*, vol. i, pp. 428 ff.

attempts to define it, but devotees of the quality are generally reduced to declaring it too elusive for definition. Perhaps Sterne, with his genius for self-revelation, described it most clearly when he explained his temperament to his French admirer, Suard :

‘Sterne attribuaît la première cause de ce qu’on appelait son originalité à une de ces organisations où prédomine le principe sacré qui forme l’âme, cette flamme immortelle qui nourrit la vie et la dévore, qui exalte et varie subitement toutes les sensations, et qu’on appelle imagination, sensibilité, suivant qu’elle représente sous les pinceaux d’un écrivain ou des tableaux ou des passions.’¹

During the latter half of the Eighteenth Century it came to be regarded as essential to emotional respectability. It led to a form of spiritual snobbery. The moralists of the period were keenly alive to its dangers, if it were allowed to run riot, uncontrolled by the will and judgement, and the satirists attempted to laugh its affectations out of countenance. For the exaggerated form of ‘sensibilité’ the French coined the term *sensiblerie*, which has no precise equivalent in English. As what was represented by the word ‘sensitivity’ began to be disfavoured, the term itself fell out of use. It is now much more rarely applied to emotions than to physical sensations. The reason for this change may be illustrated in the history of the novel, where sentiment and sensibility flourished side by side, and became almost indistinguishable. The term ‘sensible’ in the sense of ‘reasonable’ was stigmatized as ‘low’ in Dr. Johnson’s day.

Although the words which describe them are new, sentiment and sensibility are as old as human nature. The desire to be moved by fictitious sorrows is a healthy instinct which has sought satisfaction in every age. The folk-tale of the princess in the power of an ogre, the ballad of the maiden’s ghost haunting her lover, both satisfy a natural craving. The need for an emotional outlet was acknowledged frankly by the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists. The age which produced *Dr. Faustus* and *The Broken Heart* had no self-con-

¹ Garat, *Mémoires historiques sur la vie de M. Suard*, 1820, pp. 148-9.

scious mistrust of feelings. For those beyond the reach of the playhouses there was the pedlar's pack with its 'sad tales and very piteous' and its ballads of 'doleful matter'. In the late Seventeenth Century and in the early Eighteenth Century, however, formal literature made little provision for the emotional as distinct from the intellectual reader, although sentiment was not wholly despised on the stage. Women like Dorothy Osborne and Mrs. Pepys, who both had an insatiable appetite for romance, took refuge in the ponderous folios of the French heroic romance. *Artamène ou le Grand Cyrus* is to be found with a pin stuck through one of the middle leaves in the lady's library described by Addison in *The Spectator*. In 1732 Mrs. Pendarves (afterwards Mrs. Delany) was reading Mme de Scudéry's *Clélie*, and a collection of 'delectable histories' from Killala fair, including *Parismus and Parismenos*, *The Seven Champions*, and *Valentine and Orson*, but twenty years later she records her impressions of Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett. She was one of many women who gladly abandoned the romance in favour of the newly founded novel. That Mrs. Delany was a woman of 'sensibility' is indicated not only by her enthusiasm for Richardson, but by her complaint that Fielding's *Amelia* neither makes one laugh nor cry. 'There are some dismal scenes described, but there is something wanting to make them touching.'¹ Before the publication of *Pamela*, Mrs. Aphra Behn and Mrs. Eliza Haywood had endeavoured to clip the wings of romance and to bring it nearer earth. Mrs. Behn's *Oroonoko* and *The Fair Jilt* and Mrs. Haywood's 'little performances' describe remarkable adventures, but such as might conceivably happen to some one below the rank of a princess, living in so prosaic a country as England. There is ample provision for the 'sensible' in the chapters 'in which our heroine is in great distress'. Miss Martha Buskbody, the mantle-maker of Gandercleugh, whom Scott takes into his confidence at the close of *Old Mortality*, declared *Jenny and Jemmy Jessamy* (1753) 'pathos itself'; but this story, and *Betsy Thoughtless*, which was read by

¹ *Autobiography*, 1861, vol. iii, p. 79.

Fanny Burney, were both written after Mrs. Haywood had come under the influence of Richardson.

Translations from the French were widely read in the first half of the Eighteenth Century. Madame de la Fayette's *Princesse de Clèves* was translated as early as 1688. It was read in her youth by the grandmother of Miss Harriet Byron in *Sir Charles Grandison*, and Mrs. Shirley never ceased to be grateful to a friend who drew her attention to the fact that the whole foundation of the lady's distresses was an idle one, and that the story was written 'with dangerous eloquence'. Nor did Mrs. Shirley approve of the earlier French heroic romances, which she regarded as too remote from life. She envied the younger generation their privilege of being brought up on *The Spectator*.

Towards the middle of the Eighteenth Century the romances of Marivaux and of Crébillon *fils* began to be fashionable in England. Gray once affirmed lightly that it was his idea of paradise to read eternal new romances by these authors.¹ The translation of Crébillon's *Sopha*, an Arabian story which delighted Horace Walpole,² was in its eighteenth edition in 1801. The preface to *Les Égarements du Cœur et de l'Esprit* (1736), which was translated into English in 1751 by Dr. Michael Clancy, suggests that romance, so despised by people of sense, might 'become the standard of useful writing' if it were made to represent human life and expose vice and folly. Crébillon accordingly weaves a web of scandalous intrigue ending in a reformation. It was the adventures of Meilcour in *Les Égarements* that the *fille de chambre* in *A Sentimental Journey* bought at the bookseller's in the Quai de Conti, although Miss Clara Reeve in her *Progress of Romance* (1785) maintains that she purchased a book of meditations, with the same title, compiled by some pious person to counteract the poison of Crébillon's story. The wife of Crabbe's Preceptor Husband began her orgy of romance-reading with 'Wanderings of a Heart'. Marivaux's *Vie de Marianne*, with its insistence on fine shades of feeling, appeared in 1736-42, and

¹ *Letters*, April, 1742.

² *Letters*, Feb. 11, 1742.

no doubt attracted those who hung spellbound over *Pamela*. The French novel of sensibility, to which Professor Saintsbury devotes a long and invaluable chapter in his *History of the French Novel*, developed earlier than the English, and was affected profoundly by the influence of Richardson and Sterne in the latter half of the century. The novels of Richardson were rendered into French by L'Abbé Prévost, the author of *Manon Lescaut*, a story which it has been suggested may have had some slight influence on Mrs. Opie's *Simple Story*.¹ Paris was as much excited as London by Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey*. Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse* would have taken a different form if he had not been familiar with *Clarissa*; and the French romance in its turn inspired not only Goethe's *Leiden des jungen Werther* but Henry Mackenzie's *Julia de Roubigné*. The wave of sensibility which swept over England, France, and Germany resulted in an interchange of influences which it would be no easy task to estimate, but there is little evidence that the rise of sensibility in England was directly due to French example.

Sentimentalism had shown itself in the drama of the Eighteenth Century, before it found a new channel in the novel. Addison's *Drummer* (1716) and Steele's *Conscious Lovers* (1722) are among the earlier examples. Mr. Allardyce Nicoll in his *Eighteenth Century Drama, 1700-50*, notices that, although sentimentalism increased in fiction and poetry during the seventeen-forties, there were more sentimental comedies produced in the thirties. The *comédie larmoyante* of France, which had been influenced by English drama, reacted in its turn on our stage, helping to produce the 'muse of the woful countenance' against whom Goldsmith and Sheridan directed their attack. The satirists did not succeed in thrusting their victim from the field, and sentimental comedy persisted into the Nineteenth Century. Dr. Aikin,² discussing 'moral cant' in 1823, complains that the tone of the sentimental comedies is still followed, but 'with the addition of caricature and a most unnatural combination of qualities, so that nothing is

¹ *A Simple Story*, ed. G. L. Strachey, 1908, Introduction.

² *Memoir of Dr. Aikin*, ed. Lucy Aikin, 1823, vol. ii, p. 451.

more common among the *dramatis personae* than generous sharpers and benevolent banditti'.

In the middle of the Eighteenth Century, as poetry showed signs of quickened emotions, it began to reach a wider circle of readers. A taste for introspective verse was an almost invariable accompaniment of sensibility. Every heroine possessed a copy of Thomson's *Seasons*, and the story of Lavinia in *Autumn* was found deeply affecting. Sombre reflections from Young's *Night Thoughts* (1742) are often quoted as chapter mottoes by the romantic novelists. Mrs. Radcliffe's heroines not only read verses but write them. They throw off rapidly a sonnet to the sunset or the nocturnal gale. Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, Gray's *Elegy*, and the poems of Cowper, although he despised

New-fangled sentiment, the boasted grace
Of those who never feel in the right place,

appeal in different ways to Pity. The vague melancholy of 'Ossian's' white-armed heroines charmed both readers and writers of romance. That the poems of Burns delighted sentimentalists is indicated in the ecstatic fervour of Miss Austen's Sir Edward Denham: 'Oh! there is pathos to madden one. If ever there was a man who *felt*, it was Burns.' Scott, he adds, is 'Tender, Elegant, Descriptive—but Tame'.¹ For the diffusion of sentiment, in novels and in poetry, the circulating library was the convenient centre. Fancourt, the first planter of the 'evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge', had established 'The Gentlemen and Ladies' Growing and Circulating Library' in London before the middle of the Eighteenth Century.² The demand for romances after the advent of Richardson outran the supply. Lane, of the Minerva Press, soon rode about in a carriage and pair with two footmen in cockades.³

Richardson knew from personal experience that the 'workings of the human heart', revealed to him by the village girls whose letters he wrote in his boyhood, were of more absorbing

¹ *Sanditon*, ch. vii.

² See *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

³ *Recollections of the Table Talk of Samuel Rogers*, 1903, p. 108.

interest than the shadowy love-affairs of Mme de Scudéry's Oroondates. He saw that *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* were experiments in the right direction. Addison, and more particularly the man of sentiment, Steele, had touched the hearts while improving the morals of their readers. Richardson hoped in *Pamela* to

'introduce a new species of writing, that might possibly turn young people into a course of reading different from the pomp and parade of romance-writing, and, dismissing the improbable and the marvellous with which novels generally abound, might tend to promote the cause of religion and virtue'.

His novel was based on a story from real life, but it bears a superficial resemblance to Marivaux's *Vie de Marianne*. He could not read French, and the English translation appeared rather later than *Pamela* (1740), but he had no doubt heard of the story. The popularity of Richardson's first novel was due to his direct appeal to simple emotions. He analyses patiently the feelings and thoughts of Pamela, he describes minutely all the moves and countermoves, he takes a feminine interest in her round-eared caps and her mittens. Except that she has an unusual gift for letter-writing, Pamela is an ordinary country-girl. She has been well brought up and instructed in the morality of her class. She is in love with her persecutor and uses all her wiles to win him on honourable terms. The secret of the story's power lies in its natural ease. In *Clarissa* (1748) Richardson moves into a higher grade of society to find his heroine, but the groundwork of the story is the same. The excitement rises out of a long-suspended flight and pursuit. Richardson, having discovered his mastery of pathos in *Pamela*, is determined to wring the last drop of pity from his readers in *Clarissa*. The most ardent protests would not persuade him to forgo his catastrophe. He enjoys his extravagant pathos and knows that his readers enjoy it. He was not deceived by their plea for mercy. But we are sometimes inclined to ask, as Dr. Johnson did concerning a later novel of sensibility, Mrs. Sheridan's *Sidney Biddulph* (1761), whether an author has a right to make his readers

suffer so much. There is much genuine feeling in his description of Clarissa's noble endurance; but the pathos of Richardson overreaches itself in his death-bed scenes. He becomes preoccupied with the arrangement of a theatrical setting and loses the solemnity of death itself. We are repelled by the deliberate attempt to exploit our capacity for emotion.¹

In *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753) he felt it was wise to turn to another kind of pathos. This description, in the story of Clementina, of a mind disordered by the struggle between love and religion, shows dignity and restraint. But Clementina's history is an episode only in the novel. The centre-piece is *the good man*, Sir Charles; and, in drawing his ideal gentleman, Richardson betrays his preference for the man of sensibility. 'How affecting are the visible emotions of a manly heart', and 'So much goodness, so much sensibility, so much compassion . . . never dwelt together in a heart so manly'. He explains to Dr. Bartlett that his apparent calm is misleading: 'I have a heart too susceptible for my own peace, though I endeavour to conceal from others those painful sensibilities which they cannot relieve.' He has, we are told, 'the most delicate of human minds'. Sir Charles is endowed with every virtue, every grace, but the basis of his character is his sensibility. This noble and benevolent creature is tortured by distress, as Richardson callously confesses in a letter, 'to make *sport* for the tender-hearted'.² His sorrows gave even lively Colley Cibber, who in his plays shows his love of sensibility, a 'handkerchiefly' feeling,³ but Sir Charles surmounts everything. He awaits the issue with quiet self-control and is ready to marry Clementina or Harriet, as Providence may dispose. Richardson is no romantic. His admiration was reserved for the

douce folk, that live by rule,
Grave, tideless-blooded, calm and cool.

¹ But cf. Mrs. Barbauld, *Inquiry into those Kinds of Distress which Excite Agreeable Sensations* (Works, 1825, vol. ii).

² *Correspondence*, ed. Barbauld, 1804, iv. 12.

³ *Ibid.*, ii. 177.

It was the cautious prudence of Richardson that won him favour with the moralists who feared the dangerous influence of Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse* or Goethe's *Sorrows of Werther*. They were reassured by such views as those of Charlotte Grandison on marriage :

‘ Mild, sedate convenience is better than a stark, staring mad passion. The wall-climbers, the hedge and ditch-leapers, the river-forders, the window-droppers always find reason to think so. . . . Passion is transitory ; but discretion which never boils over, gives durable happiness.’

Richardson, in fact, was an admirable ‘ parent’s assistant ’.

John Wesley himself took under his protection and abridged *The Fool of Quality* (1766),¹ a novel of sensibility by Henry Brooke, which was clearly inspired by *Sir Charles Grandison*. The author was a kindly Irishman, educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and in the Temple, as ‘ Quixotic as the hero of his novel—a little man, neat as a waxwork, with an oval face, ruddy complexion, and large eyes full of fire’. The hero, Harry, Earl of Moreland, is introduced to us in childhood, and is educated according to the principles of *Émile* (1762). He is naturally benevolent, and sheds a shower of tears on the slightest provocation. One of the most ludicrous scenes is one in which a brutal schoolmaster is overcome by the magnanimity of his former pupil. This scene and that in which the officers of the law, ‘ hardened in hourly acts of insolence and inhumanity’, drop a ‘ tear of still compassion’, before taking Arabella to Newgate, outrival Mackenzie’s notorious description of the press-gang in tears. These orgies of emotion have gone out of fashion, but did not strike Wesley as excessive. He says, ‘ The strokes are so delicately fine, the touches so easy, natural and affecting, that I know not who can survey it with tearless eyes, unless he has a heart of stone’. The religious revival, which coincided with the vogue of sensibility, possibly helped to stimulate the popularity of stories inculcating the religion of the heart. Brooke had evidently read Fielding and Smollett as well as Richardson. He adopts the devices of the picaresque novel, enlivening his

¹ Ed. Baker (Routledge’s *Early Novelists*).

story with the adventures of the high road, and turns them to a moral issue. In spite of the chaotic disorder of the story, its endless digressions on religion, politics, social economy, physiognomy, *The Fool of Quality* is much more readable than many books which are shorter and more skilfully arranged. Brooke's obvious sincerity and belief in his idealistic theories carry us over many absurdities. He was severely blamed for his fanaticism by some of his reviewers, and Clara Reeve quoted with approval: 'It will be a favourite with only Behmenites, Herrnhuters, Methodists, Hutchinsonians, and some Roman Catholics.'

Henry Brooke's *Juliet Grenville, or the History of the Human Heart*, is a worthless novel unredeemed by the more masculine energy of *The Fool of Quality*, whose hero can knock down an enemy as easily as he can shed a sympathetic tear. His literary aim may perhaps best be defined in the *Prologue* which he wrote for More's *Foundling* (1748):

He forms a Model of a virtuous sort,
And gives you more of Moral than of Sport;
He rather aims to draw the melting sigh,
Or steal the pitying tear from Beauty's eye,
To touch the strings that humanise our kind,
Man's sweetest strain, the Musick of the Mind.

His views were similar to those of the philosopher, Shaftesbury, who advocated our bringing into harmony the different impulses which stir the heart, by directing our feelings towards our fellow men. He believed, like Shaftesbury, that happiness comes from within, and that the happiness which we procure for others reacts on ourselves. Mackenzie in *The Man of Feeling* was also imbued with the ethical ideals of Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* (1711), and Hutcheson's *Inquiry into Beauty and Virtue* (1725) and *System of Moral Philosophy* (1755), where the joy and self-approval which arise from the fulfilment of an involuntary desire to help others are again insisted upon. The novelists, like Brooke, who aim at awakening the social sympathies, lead on to the novelists and reformers of the Nineteenth Century who go a step farther and expose social evils which could be relieved by new legislation. Charles Kingsley not only found *The Fool of Quality* worth

reprinting but praised it lavishly, and Ruskin would probably have found himself in close sympathy with its ideals.

Brooke's *Fool of Quality* appeared in the same decade as Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, but was too early to be influenced by it. It would be difficult to find two men more unlike, although both were devotees of sensibility. Brooke was an altruist with a rudimentary sense of humour, Sterne an egoist with a whimsical wit and fancy. Sensibility was one of many ingredients in that strange farrago, *Tristram Shandy*. My uncle Toby, 'one of the finest compliments ever paid to human nature', as Hazlitt remarked, is the simple-hearted natural man, instinctively moved to pity at the sight of distress: 'Gently, with faithful Trim behind thee, didst thou amble round the little circle of thy pleasures, jostling no creature in thy way; for each one's sorrow thou hadst a tear—for each man's need thou hadst a shilling.' The incidental touches of pathos in Sterne are more moving than his studied scenes like the story of Le Fever or the Recording Angel's tear. The artistry of that pretty trifle, the story of Maria, is too apparent, though it was founded on a real incident. In the *Sentimental Journey* the by-play with the lady at the Remise Door, the cry of the encaged starling, and the lament over the dead ass are spoilt by their self-consciousness, in spite of Sterne's delicacy and lightness of touch. The blending of tenderness and humour in the story of the ass and the macaroon is in Sterne's best vein. His sensibility is so individual a thing, arising directly from his own peculiar temperament, that its spirit is difficult to recapture. It exercised an irresistible fascination on his contemporaries, who copied his devices while his spirit eluded them. It was Sterne who taught the men and women of the Eighteenth Century what an exquisite pleasure might be derived from feeling the pulse of their emotions.

Sensibility was not only cultivated by those with sensitive nerves and dreamy habits. Mackenzie,¹ who published the far-famed *Man of Feeling* in 1771, is thus described by Scott in his *Journal*:²

¹ *Works*, 8 vols., 1808.

² Dec., 1825.

'No man is less known from his writings. We would suppose a retired, modest, somewhat affected man, with a white handkerchief and a sigh ready for every sentiment. No such thing. H. M. is as alert as a contracting tailor's needle in every sort of business—a politician and a sportsman—shoots and fishes in a sort even to this day—and is the life of the company in anecdote and fun.'

Yet this spirited sportsman, inspired by Sterne, did not scruple to lead his hero, Harley, through a series of heart-rending scenes and finally kill him with joy on hearing that his love for Miss Walton is returned. The style of *The Man of Feeling*, intimate, familiar, and abrupt, is modelled on that of Sterne, and the 'sentiments' are in his manner.

For this gentle book of sentimental pity, Lamb had a 'sneaking fondness', and, with *Tristram Shandy*, it was a 'bosom-favourite' of Burns. In spite of the outward resemblances to Sterne, the book has much more in common with the spiritual tone of *The Fool of Quality*, which was probably familiar to Mackenzie. The title of *The Man of Feeling* laid it open to ridicule, and it has undeservedly won a reputation as one of the worst examples of the genre.

In *Julia de Roubigné*, which was inspired by *La Nouvelle Héloïse* and in its turn inspired Lamb's *Rosamund Gray*, the hero Savillon deprecates the affectation of sentiment. One of the letters in *The Mirror* is an imaginary epistle, in the manner of Addison, from Leontius, inquiring whether there is not danger in pushing the qualities of sentiment and sensibility too far.¹ In a disquisition on novel-writing he discusses the dangers of 'enthusiasm' in sentiment.² Mackenzie, who was interested in the philosophical side of the matter, would have agreed with Coleridge,³ 'On such meagre diet as feelings, evaporated embryos in their progress to birth, no moral being ever becomes healthy.'

Although the influence of Rousseau encouraged the growth of sensibility in England, it also helped to bring it into disfavour. There were enthusiasts like Hazlitt who read

¹ No. 101.

² *Lounger*, No. 20.

³ *Anima Poetae*.

La Nouvelle Héloïse in 1798 over a cold chicken and a bottle of sherry in the inn of Llangollen, and Jane Welsh,¹ who in her youth swore gaily that she had given up the idea of matrimony in despair of finding a St. Preux, and would die a maid in an elegant little garret. There were, on the other hand, readers who regarded Rousseau's sensibility, revealed in *Les Confessions* and in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, as morbid and disordered. Among these may be mentioned Thomas Green, who, in his *Diary of a Lover of Literature* (1810), speaks with grave consternation of his seductive but pernicious visions. The *Anti-Jacobin* also blamed Rousseau for the vagaries of the 'sweet child of sickly fancy'. There was the same division of opinion about Goethe's *Sorrows of Werther*. Miss Anne Seward waxes poetical over the 'pale suicide's devoted head'; while, when a translation was printed in 1785, in *The Crier*, a Bristol periodical, it was thought necessary to add a paper pointing out that it encouraged tumultuous passions instead of fortifying its readers against them. But both these works were eagerly devoured by those who laid claim to feeling.

In the novels of this period sensibility is often blended with some other motive. The tale of terror, which arouses pity as well as fear, was a formidable rival of the pathetic story. Mrs. Radcliffe's romances retained the heroine with an 'expression of pensive melancholy' or a 'smile softly clouded by sorrow' and wrought on her nerves by superstitious horror. In *A Simple Story* Mrs. Inchbald illustrated the 'effects of an improper education' on a girl of excessive sensibility. Because of her imperfections, Miss Milner is much more interesting and life-like than that pallid waxwork, her daughter, who observes the emotional etiquette prescribed for the sentimental heroine with painful exactitude. In *Nature and Art* the scene in which, as a judge, a man condemns the very woman he had seduced shows considerable command of pathos.

Miss Jane Porter converted the popular hero Wallace into a Grandison of exquisite sensibility in *The Scottish Chiefs* (1810), over which Thackeray wept copiously in his

¹ *Early Letters*, ed. Ritchie, 1889, pp. 29-36.

boyhood. Fanny Burney in *Evelina* relieved the 'delicate distresses' of Evelina and Orville by her lively 'character-mongering'. Miss Ferrier in *The Inheritance* produced a curious hybrid by crossing sensibility with caricature: her heroine, whom she tries to lecture out of her romantic folly, is jostled by characters who might have strayed out of Smollett. In Godwin's tale of mystery, *Caleb Williams*, Falkland's false sense of honour is a result of the prevailing malady. Unless we take to the high-road with Fielding and Smollett it is difficult to escape from it.

The extremities to which the indulgence in fine shades of feeling led its devotees are illustrated in the minor writers who followed the prevailing mode. The author of an anonymous novel, *The Correspondents*, remarks in 1775, 'Sensibility . . . is a fashionable and almost threadbare topic. Much has been written, much is every day said about it, and numbers affect to possess it, who have no other claim than thinking it a recommendation.' The novels of sensibility appear in so many different disguises that they almost defy classification, but they fall mainly into two groups, those which are approved by the moralists and those which are condemned. Among the stories singled out for approval in Miss Clara Reeve's dialogue is *The Delicate Distress*, or the *Genuine Letters of Henry and Frances* (1757), by Mrs. Griffiths. Even that severe judge, Miss Reeve, regards its morals as unexceptionable and the most fastidious sentimentalist could hardly find fault with the refinement of its sensibilities. The heroine soon announces: 'I have from my Infancy been used to a fatal delicacy: Fatal indeed to me, as it has enervated every Faculty of my Soul, and superadded a thousand tender weaknesses to the weakest of the Weaker Sex.' She tells her lover: 'I almost despair of ever making you sensible of the delicacy of my sentiments,' and, for fear lest he wound her susceptibility, she writes: 'I beg henceforward your Quills may be drawn from the pinion of the softly cooing dove.' It was for *The Delicate Distress* that Miss Lydia Languish inquired tenderly, when her maid returned from the circulating library, and Miss Cherry Wilkinson was reading it when her father, following

the precedent in *Don Quixote*, ordered a conflagration of all the romances in the house. Another favourite was *The Tears of Sensibility*, a translation of the French of Baculaud d'Arnaud, an admirer of Richardson, who combined amusement with instruction. This book, which was rendered into English by John Murdoch, the friend of Burns, in 1773, occurs in Lydia Languish's list and was read by the young lady in *Cælebs in Search of a Wife* (1808), who, when questioned about Virgil, blushing admitted she had never heard of such a person. There is no story of this name in the twelve volumes of *Œuvres de Baculaud d'Arnaud* (1815) in the British Museum. It may perhaps be conjectured that the alluring title, on which Canning comments in *The Microcosm*, was a 'free' translation, devised by Murdoch or his publishers, of *Épreuves du Sentiment*, the heading under which d'Arnaud includes several of his shorter tales. In *The Miseries of Human Life* (1806), by Samuel Sensitive and Timothy Testy, one of the 'miseries' is that of opening a parcel from the circulating library and finding that, instead of the books ordered, it contains *Delicate Sensibility*, *Disguises of the Heart*, *Errors of Tenderness*, and other fashionable novels. An advertisement of *Beauties of Sterne* at the end of Mrs. Helme's *Louisa; or the Cottage on the Moor* (1787), is addressed to Hearts of Sensibility. The novels which excited suspicion among the sober-minded were those 'flowery pages of sublime distress', read by Belinda Waters till

She sighs for pity, and her sorrows flow
From the dark eyelash on the page below.

Writers like Mrs. Regina Roche allowed their heroines no respite from their 'soul-distressing fears'. Miss Amanda Malvina Fitzalan in *The Children of the Abbey* (1798) illustrates admirably the type of heroine, adored by those who patronized the circulating library at the close of the Eighteenth Century. Like many heroines she is bereft of her mother in infancy and early pursued by an infamous lover. She is sent into Wales to recover her health in a picturesque cottage, where she occupies herself with reading at the foot of a moss-

covered tree, singing little airs and wiping away the starting tear. Lord Mortimer, by the overturning of his phaeton, an old device which Miss Austen uses in *Sanditon*, is brought to the same spot. 'His person strikingly elegant; seducing sweetness dwelt in his smile; his soul was naturally the seat of every virtue.' He serenades her with a lute and frequently reads her 'some elegant and pathetic piece of poetry, in a voice whose harmony sunk deep into her heart'. He asks, 'Where could I find such softness yet such sensibility, such sweetness, yet such animation?' But the course of true love is interrupted by many misunderstandings. Amanda swoons at least as often as the heroine in Miss Cuthbertson's novel, from which Macaulay collected twenty-seven separate faints. She becomes a governess, first in a school, and then in a Gothic abbey with a deserted wing, where the torments of superstition are added to those of sensibility. Mrs. Roche was writing in the same decade as Mrs. Radcliffe, and the ghastly form with the emaciated hand and a hollow voice proves to be a penitent sinner, Lady Dunreath. At length, 'faint but pursuing', Amanda sinks into the extended arms of her bridegroom.

From novels like *The Children of the Abbey* to parody there is but a short step, and Jane Austen evidently had this romantic story in her mind as well as *The Mysteries of Udolpho* when she was writing *Northanger Abbey*. One of Mrs. Roche's stories *Clermont* is included in the list 'all horrid' supplied to Isabella Thorp by 'a Miss Andrews, one of the sweetest creatures in the world'. That Jane Austen had steeped herself in sensibility is clear from the recently published parody, *Love and Freindship*, finished in 1791. Her mockery is more boisterous and high-spirited and less subtle than in *Northanger Abbey* and *Sense and Sensibility*, but the two friends, who faint alternately on a sofa, overcome by the pathos of the meeting between Edward and Augustus, are only a shade more ridiculous than some of the sentimental heroines of the period.

In *Sense and Sensibility*, Jane Austen approaches the theme of *Love and Freindship* with a more mature and skilful irony.

Marianne Dashwood has a naturally romantic temperament. It is an agony to her to hear Colonel Brandon read Cowper's poetry with 'impenetrable calmness'. She fears he is devoid of 'taste', an inevitable accompaniment of sensibility, because Elinor's music and drawing do not excite in him a 'rapturous delight'. Yet because of her faults Marianne is more lovable than the prudent Elinor, and she retains our sympathy when Jane Austen dismisses her, in spite of her contrition, with unrelenting irony:

'Marianne Dashwood was born to an extraordinary fate. She was born to overcome an affection formed so late in life as at seventeen, and with no sentiment superior to strong esteem and lively friendship, voluntarily to give her hand to another, and that other, a man who had suffered no less than herself under the event of a former attachment, whom, two years before, she had considered too old to be married—and who still sought the constitutional safeguard of a flannel waistcoat.'

In *Northanger Abbey*, Catherine Morland has only acquired sensibility by studying the novels of Mrs. Radcliffe. She has no natural gift for it. She is clearly intended as a refreshing contrast to the conventional heroines derided by Crabbe,

creatures borrow'd and again convey'd
From book to book—the shadows of a shade.

In the recently published fragment *Sanditon*, which Jane Austen was writing when she died in 1817, she satirizes in Sir Edward Denham both Lovelace and the Man of Feeling:

'He began, in a tone of great taste and Feeling, to talk of the Sea and the Sea-shore—and ran with Energy through all the usual phrases employed in praise of their Sublimity, and descriptive of the undescribable Emotions they excite in the Mind of Sensibility. All were eagerly and fluently touched;—rather commonplace perhaps—but doing very well from the lips of a handsome Sir Edward,—and she could not but think him a Man of Feeling—till he began to stagger her by the number of his Quotations and the bewilderment of some of his sentences.'

His confused raptures about Scott, Burns, Montgomery, and Campbell baffle Miss Charlotte, and his extravagant compli-

ments strike her as 'downright silly'. She is unsure of his morals and sums him up tersely in her own mind :

'He seemed very sentimental, very full of some Feelings or other, and very much addicted to all the newest-fashioned hard words—had not a very clear brain, she presumed, and talked a good deal by rote.'

Before *Sense and Sensibility* was published in 1811, but not before it was written in letter-form as *Elinor and Marianne*, Miss Edgeworth had attempted a brief satire on the sentimental heroine in one of her *Moral Tales*, *Angelina, ou L'Amie Inconnue* (1801). She describes a romantic young lady of sixteen, engaged in a search for an unknown friend, Araminta, whose letters with their 'garnish-tinselled wands—shackle-scorning Reason—isolation of the heart—soul-rending eloquence' resemble in style the conversation of Miss Austen's Sir Edward. Araminta, whom Angelina finds, after many trials, in Bristol, proves to be a slatternly Mrs. Hodges, who 'does not cut bread and butter with the celebrated grace of Charlotte in *The Sorrows of Werther*'. To complete her cure, after the shattering of her illusions, Lady Frances places in her hands Mrs. Lennox's *Arabella, or the Female Quixote* (1752). This satire, deriding the heroine whose brain is turned by romances of chivalry, may have been inspired by Marivaux's *Pharsamond*, translated into English in 1750, as well as by *Don Quixote*. In spite of her severity in *Angelina*, Miss Edgeworth had a taste for romantic fiction; she was a reader of Richardson and of Mrs. Radcliffe and was so deeply moved by the heroine of Mrs. Inchbald's, *Simple Story*, that she made her impatient with the 'coldness of that stick or stone, Belinda'.¹

Neither Jane Austen nor Maria Edgeworth was naturally an enemy of the circulating library. Both read novels with undisguised enjoyment, but they were driven to distrust emotion by the votaries of 'sensibility'. Even Mrs. Radcliffe, who adopts the woman of feeling for her own, realized the danger of cultivating the art. M. St. Aubert, the father of Emily, in *Udolpho* warns his daughter solemnly on his death-bed against

¹ *Letters*, Dec., 1809.

'priding herself on the gracefulness of sensibility, the romantic error of amiable minds', and Emily herself assures her Aunt that it is a quality more to be feared than admired.

In Barrett's *Heroine, or the Adventures of Cherubina* (1813),¹ it is clearly the author's intention to make so vigorous an onslaught that the 'Selinas, Evelinas, and Malvinas, who faint and blush and weep through four half-bound octavos' shall be humbled to the dust. The plot is an extravaganza, crammed with high-flown, mock-romantic episodes. The heroine, Miss Cherry Wilkinson, deserts her real father, a worthy farmer, to look for more aristocratic parents, and her remarkable adventures are described in a series of letters to her governess. She 'slips on a spangled muslin', practises tripping, gliding, flitting and tottering with great success. She acquires the art of 'apt repartee and elegant vituperation'. She is well aware of her role: 'To be thin, innocent, and lyrical: to bind and unbind her hair: in a word to be the most miserable creature that ever augmented a brook with tears, these, my friend, are the glories of a heroine.' She loves *Ossian*, 'it is so sublime, so bewildered, so full of a blue and white melancholy, of ghosts and the four elements', and has a considerable acquaintance with romantic poetry, including Scott and Byron, as well as romantic fiction. The caricature is entertaining in itself, and would probably be enjoyed by those who are unfamiliar with the romances ridiculed, but a preliminary course of a few of the stories Barrett names adds considerably to its piquancy.

When Scott in 1814 wrote his Introduction to *Waverley*, he passed in review the different types of novel then fashionable, including the sentimental tale and its heroine 'with a profusion of auburn hair and a harp, the soft solace of her solitary hours'. Scott decided to avoid all the old patterns, and to weave novels out of the stuff of real life. Some of his heroines, as for instance the niece of Redgauntlet, belong to the same lineage as the Eighteenth Century heroines, but Jeanie Deans, the most admirable and the most skilfully drawn of Scott's women, is a daring contrast to the traditional

¹ Ed. Raleigh, 1909.

figure. The Waverley Novels do not harp on a single string. They appeal to a variety of emotions, including the sense of humour. Their castles are solidly built enough to withstand the shock of laughter, which would shatter the frail fabric of the Gothic abbey or the rustic cot of the sentimental heroine.

Although the popularity of the Waverley Novels affected the sales of the novels of sensibility and the tale of terror, the vogue of Byron was probably still more responsible for their decline. Although he affected to despise 'sickly sensibility', the Byronic hero was a glorified man of feeling, with a dash of devilry in his composition. His 'fierce dilating eye', inherited from Mrs. Radcliffe's villains, was more magnetic and compelling than the 'suffused orb' of sensibility. His deeply lined countenance was undisputed evidence of a stupendous capacity for emotion. The granddaughter of Lydia Languish no doubt found an outlet for her sensibility in *Lara* and *The Corsair*. The growth of the romantic revival generally, with its recognition of the individual soul, its renewed feeling for natural beauty, its love of the picturesque past, helped to create new channels for the emotions. The craze for sensibility, one phase of a wider movement, died down as the movement expanded, although it lingered on well into the Nineteenth Century. In its extreme forms it defeated its own ends, but in its intention it was as necessary a reaction from the age of prose and reason as Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*.

The temperament which is apt to regard delicate sensibilities as a mark of distinction is common to all centuries. Chaucer recognized the type in the Prioress, Shakespeare in Jaques, 'weeping and commenting upon the sobbing deer', Meredith in those devotees of the Fine Feelings and the Nice Shades, the Miss Poles. The sentimentalists are easily to be distinguished from the poets and artists, or from those who, as Hume discerns, are 'naturally subject to a certain delicacy of passion, which makes their enjoyments more lively and their sorrows more pungent than those of men of cool and sedate tempers'. It is no difficult task for the novelist to satisfy the needs of those who cultivate or exaggerate their

sensibility. Since the Comic Spirit rarely abides with them, they are not critical of the devices whereby the craftsman plays upon their emotions. Content with the luxury of pathos, they do not insist upon aesthetic pleasure. By its very nature, the novel of sensibility often lies outside the realm of art. Occasionally, as in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, it finds its place among the classics by beauty of style and a delicate poise of sentiment and humour.

EDITH BIRKHEAD.

THIS WORLD'S IDEAS OF THE NEXT

MOST of the visions discussed in the following pages have already been noticed by Wright, Fritzsche, d'Ancona, or Dods.¹ But this literature reveals so many unexplored passages in the past of our race, and reveals so curious a phase in the struggle towards a higher culture, that it is worth reviewing and discussing from a fresh point of view. Certain specimens of ancient and medieval literature resemble fossils or deposits in archaeological strata. In themselves they are inartistic, incomplete, or insignificant. Yet considered in connexion with evolution they may widen our knowledge of human nature, or strengthen our confidence on what it can achieve. Man's now discarded ideas of Heaven and Hell belong to that category.

It was not till the dawn of the Christian era that vision-literature of this type found its true scope. A new dream of human greatness appears to have been gradually arising amid the later stages of classical culture, and the tendency gradually found poetic or figurative expression in the varied portrayal of Hades. This hope was nothing less than the belief that mortals could actually aspire to become the equals of the gods. It was actually conceived to be possible that human beings by dint of thought and contemplation might not only rise for a time to the divine level, but might even become of the same substance (*ὁμοούσιος*) and enjoy the same kind of immortality. The Gospel of St. John had taught that Divine Reason, a part of God, had entered a mortal body; so all who believed profoundly in this mystery were considered to be already

¹ *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, 1844; *Die Lat. Vis. des Mittelalters bis zur Mitte des 12. Jahrhunderts* in *Romanische Forschungen*, III and IV, Erlangen, 1887; *I Precursori di Dante: Forerunners of Dante*, Edinb., 1903.

in direct communication with God. By and by the Holy Spirit or Comforter (*παράκλητος*) would enter those thus prepared, and the union would be complete. This conviction was strengthened by Oriental syncretism and Babylonian myths, and reached its climax among the sect which Irenaeus in *Adversus Haereses* named gnostics (*γνωστικοί*). Men like Basilides, Carpocrates, Valentinius, and Heracleon recognized to the full the existence of evil and the incompleteness of the world, but they maintained that the seeds of divine perfection were within us, and needed only the *γνώσις θεοῦ* to complete the lost union with God. Even Clement, the bishop of Rome, speaks of *γνώσις* as a secret conferring supernatural power.

Such dreams and ambitions found expression in the legend of Christ's descent into Hades. It is not suggested that this doctrine either derived its origin or received its first sanction from gnosticism. It is more likely that the crucifixion of our Lord appealed to many as a kind of 'riddance' ceremony or, coming at the verge of the spring season, may often have presented itself as an act of life-transference; the transfusion of human energy to the earth, which was thus revitalized and prompted to renew its growths. It is at any rate significant that during the three days' absence of Christ's spirit to the lower world, his corpse was believed to remain in the grave, though in earlier legends, as in the case of Elijah, Enoch, Hercules, and Romulus, the deified hero was carried bodily to heaven. But to the imagination of idealists, this process of sympathetic magic grew into something much more inspiring. Besides containing the powers of growth, the earth was also supposed to hold the powers of death and of evil; and as the divine spirit confronted these enemies of man at a time when Neoplatonism, Christianity, and Gnosticism were accepted, a great victory was believed to be achieved. The transfusion of Christ's life to the fields ended in the conquest of the Great Adversary. It was this idea which inspired the fantasy probably composed A. D. 200-250, which Tischendorf has aptly named *Descensus Christi ad Inferos*, and to which a kind of introduction was added in about the

mid Fourth Century and then named *The Gospel of Nicodemus*.¹ The dramatic qualities of the story have often been admired, but the character of Christ himself is more significant. He does not come down to Hades like Hercules, Orpheus, or even Aeneas, under the guidance or with the permission of some special power. He enters like an ordinary mortal as if vanquished by death. He does not return to the upper air like Eurydice, Castor and Pollux, or Protesilaus, as a special privilege for a limited period. He wins his way out by the sheer superiority of his Godhead. The most impressive moments of the story are those when Hell confesses his utter defeat.

Never was the legend of the god in disguise put to a more magnificent use; but in order to understand the significance of the situation we must remember what ideas of death had been formed up to that time. For the most part men seem to have brought themselves to picture Hades with its Tartarus and Elysium as part of one much greater theocratic scheme. In the Homeric poems the deity of the Underworld is recognized as the more or less friendly compeer of Zeus and Poseidon,² and others, perhaps Pelasgian traditions, add lesser deputy gods and goddesses such as Hecate and Tisiphone, who are subordinate but not opposed to the higher powers in Olympus. In northern mythology we learn that the All-father cast Hel into Nifheim and gave her power over the nine worlds.³ In both classical and Norse mythology the powers of death were further reduced by the trust reposed in the impartial and immutable fates. Men seem to have shrunk from facing the god of death in his own right. At times he was even idealized as a beautiful youth with an inverted torch.⁴ We get only glimpses of the Thanatos who was called so often by Philoctetes⁵ and came unbidden to Alcestis; perhaps his first appearance being under the guise of the blood-stained and reckless Ares,

¹ *Erl. Schr.*, 'Die Pilatus-Acten kritisch untersucht', von Rich. Adel. Lipsius. Kiel, 1871.

² *Il.* xv. 187-9.

³ *Gylfaginning*, xxxiv.

⁴ Lessing, *Wie die Alten den Tod gebildet. Eine Untersuchung*, 1769.

⁵ *Soph. Philoct.* 797-8; *Eur. Alc.* 24 ff.

defeated by Athene the goddess of war.¹ If we look for a time when human beings seem at last to have overcome all horror at the thought of death, we must wait till the *Gospel of Nicodemus*. Here the humiliation of the demon is complete; he becomes a king stripped of his kingdom, the mock of angels and even of men.

There is nothing to compare with this victory in all classical literature. It is true that Plato's three wonderful myths² explain how human virtue and nobility are continually renewed and reinforced on earth by the long and painful purgations which souls must undergo in death. But it is difficult to believe that these descriptions are more than a myth of rejuvenation in the moral world. Just as the earth dies and is renewed every year, so by a process infinitely more leisurely and complex, human excellence is maintained. Virgil³ seems hardly more convinced or convincing. A wonderful procession of heroes issues from the jaws of death, but they are spirits which are yet to be. Although he follows Plato in describing the purgations of Hades, he seems to feel that we save little from the funeral pyre except our regrets. Many funeral inscriptions bear witness to the continued belief in a future life, but not to the triumph over death. The less educated classes seem to have dreaded Tartarus as the visualization of all their fears;⁴ as the centre and symbol of all that was uncivilized and destructive.⁵ There seems from the age of Pericles onwards to have been a movement against Thanatophobia,⁶ but philosophers who take refuge in agnosticism or logic are seldom influential or representative. This first harrowing of Hell in *Nicodemus* is a triumph of a very different kind. In fact, Christ brings the dead with him

¹ *Il.* vi. Hyginus, *Fab.* 60, tells of Death the same story as Dione applies to Ares (*Il.* v. 385 ff.).

² *Gorgias* 523; *Phaedo* 110; *Rep.* (x.) 614.

³ *Aen.* vi.

⁴ *Lucr.* iii, esp. 791-1023; *Cic. Tusc.* i. 10 and 11.

⁵ *Theog.* 664 ff.; *Aesch. Eum.* 72 ff., *Ovid, Metam.* iv. 434, v. 357, vii. 179.

⁶ *Aristoph. Frogs*; *Lucr.* iii; *Cic. Tusc.* i; *Serv.* vi. 134; *Polyb.* vi. 56; *Epict.* iii. 13; *Marc. Aur.* vi. 28.

to heaven, leading Adam by the hand. Apparently the composer of this prose epic, and no doubt many of his readers, believed that death had really been abolished. Amongst all the later despondencies and controversies of the Middle Ages, this ambitious hope was never quite lost sight of. At least two versions of the story were attempted in Anglo-Saxon. Some believed that the conquest was repeated every year. Ansellus Scolasticus recounts how Christ was seen to descend from the cross one Easter-day and was followed by a monk to Hades, whence amid the despairing howls of the fiends the Saviour rescues the captive souls, and with music and singing, angels conduct them into heaven.¹ In the Thirteenth Century we find that the harrowing of Hell is still familiar to the Miracle plays; Dante believed in it:² and after Langland had spent a life-time puzzling over the way to Truth and the apparent conflict between the active and the contemplative life, he eventually found relief from his melancholy in the thought of this supernatural victory.³

Once filled with these hopes, it is surprising how ready men became to imagine for themselves a spacious future beyond the grave. The *Visio Sancti Pauli* in the Fourth Century is a striking illustration of the tendency. Like many another enlightened student since the days of Plato, the author believes men to be guided by the light of divine reason, and endowed with the power of selecting and controlling their actions, and he still retains the ancient idea that every mortal is attended by his *ōnd*,⁴ *genius*, or perhaps *manis*.⁵ But, no doubt, influenced by Oriental speculations, he pictures these guardian angels as our one remaining bond with the divinity, the means by which God watches with paternal solicitude and influences our otherwise free movements. So he imagines that at sunset the spirits present themselves, as in the *Book of Job*, before the

¹ *Poésies pop. latines antérieures*, M. G. du Ménil, Paris, 1843, pp. 200-17.

² *Inf.* iv. 52-63.

³ B text, Passus xviii. 258 ff.

⁴ According to *Fjolsvinnsmal*.

⁵ G. Warde Fowler, *Religious Experiences of the Roman People*, chap. xvii.

eternal throne, and discuss with the Father the doings of men. St. Paul is then wafted in a vision to the next world. His impression of Heaven is made sensible to our imagination by gorgeous Oriental imagery, but what he perceives most clearly and admires most profoundly is the justice and wisdom of the Godhead. The author is endeavouring to visualize that sacred quality *The Truth*, which Christ promised his disciples, and which afterwards so often perplexed theologians. So he pictures a judgement seat before which every defect of character meets with its true valuation, however much misunderstood on earth. For instance, as the Saint looks across Lake Acheron to the City of God, a walled town with twelve towers, as in *Revelation*, he sees the proud of heart gathered under a huge tree which bears no fruit. There they must wait till the Lord enters the city at the end of the world, because, however pious, their one sin made their other virtues barren. When the visionary is ushered into Heaven and gazes on the tree of life, the Virgins, the patriarchs, the prophets with Noah, Enoch, and Elias, greet him as a friend and wish him God-speed. In fact, the charm of Heaven consists in its spirit of mildness and fellowship and in the intercourse with men of piety and miraculous power, and it is the contrast with this blessedness which inspires the writer to depict the punishment of evil-doers. The sinners' penalties are all the heavier because they have had so many opportunities to repentance, and have so often come into contact with the sublime beauty of heavenly things. When Deianira at last realized the full enormity of her crime, she called on Juppiter to invent special torments worthy of her deed.¹ So here, the moralist, relieved from the restrictions of experience and of probability, has discovered that by inventing penalties you can express the loathsome nature of sin itself. He has gone yet farther. In Plutarch's description of the vision of Thesprotius² we find, perhaps, the first rudimentary attempt at analysing and explaining different sins by the nature of their punishment. The author of *Visio S. Pauli* may have followed his lead, but was more probably obeying his own

¹ Seneca, *Herc. Oet.* 847-55.

² *Moralia*.

inspiration, when he made each penalty a humiliating and anguished repetition of the crime. Thus slanderers are forced to eat their own tongues.

Vision literature of this type gives the freest play to the intellect. As the moralist is concerned with the simplified world of shadows, he can put problems in their most elemental forms, and as the whole narrative bears the authority of a revelation, he can propound solutions with a more than human impressiveness. So we shall find from the earliest to the latest visions, that these descriptive adventures became essentially the allegories or visualizations of some belief or doctrine; almost the epics of dogmatism. Such a development being continuous needs no special illustration at this point, but it should also be noticed that the arts of expression had to grow and expand in order to contain these far-reaching ideas and impetuous enthusiasms. The *Book of Revelation* in the First Century is, of course, the most fruitful source of Christian rhetoric, and its influence is to be found everywhere in the *Book of Enoch*¹ in the Second Century. It is interesting also to note that, from whatever source, the Icelanders agreed with eastern visionaries in imagining Heaven to contain the place called 'Broad-gleaming' (Breidablik) and 'Glittering' (Glitnir).² Individual illustrations are even more remarkable. The author of *Apocalypse of John* declared that as big a stone as a man of thirty years can roll over into an abyss, ever falling for twenty years, would not arrive at the bottom of Hades. St. Antony had a vision of the devil as a huge black giant, whose head reached the clouds, and as the souls of men flew past him he struck down the sinful ones into a vast lake at his feet.³ Bishop Salvius, late in the Sixth Century, saw the sun, moon, stars, and clouds beneath him and then entered the dazzling portal of a vast dwelling paved with gold and silver. The immensity of the abode was indescribable. When conducted into the presence of God, he found himself faced by a tremendous concentration of light, and

¹ e. g. xix. 9-23.

² *Gylfaginning*, xvii.

³ *Palladii Helenopolitani episcopi Hist. Lausiaca*, cap. 28.

heard a voice like the distant roar of water.¹ Martyrs and confessors greeted him, and he was enveloped by a perfume which assuaged all hunger and thirst.² The mercy and mildness of God are illustrated with no less aptness and eloquence. When St. Paul's friend, St. Carpus, thought he saw two heathen tottering on the brink of an abyss, out of which serpents and demons reached upwards, and when he put out his hand to shove them in, behold, Jesus descended from Heaven and asked to be immolated for the second time in their place.

This experience is related by Dionysius Areopagita³ in the first half of the Sixth Century, and gives us some indication of the line along which vision literature might have developed. But, in the meantime, the fall of the ancient world had profoundly altered the course of civilization. There runs through Greek literature a profound conviction in the helplessness and worthlessness of man as compared with the gods. In Homer this feeling finds expression in emphasizing the swiftness, the certainty of death, and the practical annihilation which it brings. In Hesiod the moralist dwells rather on the laboriousness of life, and in Herodotus on the folly and stupidity of men in power. Through all three there runs an ever-increasing sense of degeneracy from an older and more god-like type. The suppression of republican government in imperial Rome completed this long tradition of disillusionment. From the Seventh Century B. C. to the Second A. D. a great effort was made to counteract the doctrine of self-contempt. Ancient practices and beliefs (whether Greek or Oriental in origin) associated with the worship of Demeter, Orpheus, and Dionysius were cultivated to prove that men underwent purification and ennoblement after death, and could anticipate the transformation in this life. Such mystery cults undoubtedly influenced the early Christian dream of deification which we have just discussed, but with the advent of the Dark Ages humanists and visionaries returned to this immemorial tradition of wretchedness and degeneracy, and as men always seek to

¹ Cf. *Rev.* xiv. 2.

² Greg. de Tours, *Hist. Frank.* vii. 1.

³ Ed. Corderius, 1755-6, vol. i, pp. 608-9.

visualize their despondencies no less than their enthusiasms, they established and developed the doctrine of original sin. This belief, sanctioned by two Biblical texts,¹ and first formulated in the Third Century by Tertullian's traducianism,² was definitely asserted and riveted on Christendom by St. Augustin. The spirited revolt of Pelagius failed, and, from the Council of Arausio (529 A. D.) to the Seventeenth Century, this doctrine (the theological reincarnation of a prehistoric sentiment) inspired some of the best and most thoughtful literature, either by sympathy or by antipathy.

The dogma seems particularly to have impressed the northern invaders or their descendants who were for the first time laying aside paganism, and beginning to realize all that their past life and traditions involved. While their emotions were thus stirred, they seemed to have found that visions of the next world were the most satisfying outlet to their imaginations. Some of the most significant have been recorded in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, and of these, the vision vouchsafed to Fursey is justly regarded as the best. The composer "is inspired by the promise 'ibunt sancti de uirtute in uirtutem et uidebitur deus deorum in Sion'. That is to say, he is no mere terrorist; he realizes the principle so beneficial in the later Middle Ages that a man who had gained mastery over his own words and deeds, and by prolonged study and meditation had learned all that could be known of God as he is manifested on this earth, should then by dint of holiness win to the next stage of seeing beyond this world into what happens after death. So this is a vision of Heaven and not of Hell. But the outlook is very different from that of the earlier visions. What now most impresses the saint is the way evil and malignant spirits beset the course of those journeying towards Heaven, and try to frustrate their progress by repeated accusations. Again, while soaring to the heights, he is bidden to look down and beholds the world 'quasi uallem tenebrosam subter se in imo positam', and, hard by, four fires burning in

¹ *Rom.* vii. 19, 23; *Ps.* li. 5.

² *De Carne Christi* (tradux animi tradux peccati).

³ *Hist. eccl.* iii. 19.

the air. These four conflagrations represent the four besetting sins of the world, and are destined one day to destroy the earth, and though the visionary and his guide pass through them unscathed, the accusations of spiteful spirits still pursue him. Heaven has little more to offer him than edifying discourse, so deeply is his mind preoccupied by the menace of sin. On his return the conflagration opens to let him pass, but as a last greeting the demons fling the soul of a victim at Furseus, who, by the contact, is scorched on his shoulder and jaw. The spirit had been a sinner, and so the scar remains on Furseus till his dying day.

This vision has a certain philosophical tendency. There is less said about particular sins than about the sinful tendencies of life, the half-and-half nature of humanity; the precariousness of the human soul always conterminous with guilt. But most visions of this period differ, in that they aim at horrifying into godliness. Classical traditions, of which Dieterich¹ has collected traces, may have helped to kindle their imagination. Some pictures merely raise a smile in the modern reader, but others show genuine insight. For instance, Gregory the Great added a new terror to death by frightening mortals with the prospect of a test. He tells² how a soldier, dying of the plague, beheld a bridge which led over a foul river exhaling stench and fog. On the farther shore there were meadows decked with sweet-smelling flowers, yet no soul knew, when he set foot on the bridge, whether he would reach the other side, for those unworthy of Heaven fell into the loathsome stream. Even when this hazard had been evaded, the initiate was not free from the dread of detection. Those admitted to the celestial meadows built themselves dwellings with golden tiles, which represent their acts of charity. But as sensuality, being a vice of the body, stains an otherwise clear spirit, and darkens all its bright actions, so a pestilential vapour rises from the river and enshrouds the golden dwellings of those who were guilty of fleshly lusts. But it is the precarious journey across the bridge which oppresses the imagination like a nightmare.

¹ *Nekyia*, Lpz., 1893.

² *Dialog.* iv. 36.

The idea of a passage now becomes a feature of such visions. Bonifatius tells the Abbess Eadburga¹ how a monk in Wenlok monastery saw a beam thrown across a fiery stream which all had to cross. The sin-stained fell in and then continued their progress cleansed, or, according to another revelation,² those who fell in remained immersed till the last judgement day, unless released by progress or divine interposition. Besides this hint of purgatory, we have a glance at the waiting-place of the righteous. It was a land covered with flowers. From it led a path to a more beautiful Heaven; thence to another yet more beautiful, and so to the most beautiful of all. Fritzsche, quoting Hübschmann,³ suggests that these eschatologists were thinking of ancient Persian mythology, and would then consider their interpretations confirmed by Christ's words, 'Straight is the gate and narrow is the way'. But doctrinaires of this period would have been equally impressed by the noticeable absence of any bridge in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, and it is just as likely that Fursey or Bede or Boniface or even Gregory were not unacquainted with the bridge of northern mythology named Bifröst leading from earth to the Heaven-crag (Himinbjörg) at the end of Heaven in *Gylfaginning*,⁴ or the passage which Thorkill traversed when he entered Ugarthilocus's hideous abode.⁵ But in any case the significance of the figure is not in its source, but in the application. It symbolizes admirably the precarious position of man; his accessibility to insidious attacks; and shows how little time he has to cherish a dream of heavenly beauty and divine goodness. It also suggests how few, if any, are absolutely cut off from the hope of escaping the pains of Hell. Perhaps it is for this reason that Dante alludes, though rather confusedly, to the existence of a bridge, but finds that in his world of clearly defined dogmas and classified sins the passage is broken and abolished.⁶

¹ Ep. x, written before 717.

² Ep. cxii.

³ *Die Persische Lehre von Jenseits und Jüngsten Gericht (Jahrbücher für protest. Theol., 5^{er} Jahrgang, Lpz., 1877).*

⁴ xiii and xvii.

⁵ Saxo, viii, p. 431 (165).

⁶ *Inf.* xviii. 16-18, xxiii. 33-8.

The depressing consciousness of sin, which is so noticeable in the visions recorded by Bede and Gregory, has also clouded the *Visio Baranti*,¹ which is otherwise one of the most charming human documents of the Middle Ages. Nothing could be more pleasing than the way the brethren rally round the dying man, offering their spiritual aid in his extremity. So he passes into a trance while they remain to pray. It is noticeable that these visions seem sometimes to have been inspired by a text which has caught the writer's imagination. In this case it is the promise, 'In my father's house are many mansions', though it should be remembered that Valhal² had five hundred and forty portals; so he pictures Heaven as full of doors leading into different chambers. Behind each of the first three he finds some class of saint who has won Heaven by innocence, but the chamber within the fourth is filled with such intense brilliance that he turns away dazzled. During the whole of this wonderful adventure, the traveller and his guide have been dogged by demons. During the first stage of his trance, when his spirit had lain paralysed, caught between life and death, they had tormented him. Even when he reached Paradise they would not relinquish their hoped-for prey, till St. Peter beat them off. The visionary would fain shut his eyes to the prospect of Hell, but he feels forced to warn the brethren of its presence, though rather than describe its terrors, he explains that the smoke and fog obscured his vision, and he adds a sublime touch to relieve the impression. The damned who have a single good action to their credit are granted in the sixth hour a portion of manna from Heaven to sustain them in their agony.

This graceful and humanized fantasy found but few echoes in the Eighth or Ninth Centuries. The period which began with the death of Charlemagne and corresponds with the first visits of the Danes to England, is rightly regarded as one of the most barren of literature in the history of Europe. But the age was not barren in the study of what interested it most—the understanding and frustrating of death. From

¹ *Deutschlands Geschichtesquellen*, i. 227.

² *Grímnismál*, xxiii, *Gylfaginning*, xl

this point of view the *Visio Wettini*¹ has its own significance. The story begins with the record of a human being's last day on earth, and the reader must imagine that the saints and the fiends are gathering in two opposing armies in the hope of capturing his soul. This background of spiritual agencies is thrown into relief by a series of highly dramatic scenes. Finally, the devil himself appears in the garb of a cleric and tries to fill the dying man with terror at his approaching dissolution. At last an angel in streaming red drives away these birds of ill-omen; Wettin awakes, implores the brethren to sing psalms for his welfare, and again falls asleep. What dreams will bring him comfort in his need? An angel appears and carries him away through marble mountains to the fiery stream in which mortals, who once enjoyed respect, and especially priests and monks, undergo a purgatory for their hidden sins. Then he reaches a vast wall of indescribable beauty, built with glittering arches. It encircles Heaven; and when he has entered, he is again warned of his approaching death, and all the saints are invoked to supplicate the Almighty for his soul. Each in turn arises, his golden crown on his head, throws himself down before the throne and begs forgiveness for Wettin's sins. Then come the martyrs and then the Holy Maidens, nor is the blessed service of intercession relinquished till the Virgin herself has interceded.

Thus this vision is the complete imaginative expression of what the *Visio Baronti* suggests, that Death and Evil must be faced, not as Beowulf and Sifrit faced their monsters, but in serried ranks. Pachomius had first revealed this truth to the East, but it was not till St. Benedict had made trial of both kinds of life that the West changed the ideal of the hermit for that of the coenobite. As Laurentius Gallus said long afterwards, 'Hit ne may naȝt by ȝet ȝe bene of vele guode men; ne is y-herd.'² But Wettin's vision looks yet further and discovers, or rather reminds the brethren, that the dying soldier of Christ has on his side all those who were

¹ Recorded in prose by Abbot Heito, and in hexameters by Walahfrid: *Poetae latini aevi Carolini* (E. Duemmler), ii, pp. 268-75, 301-33.

² Transl. by Don Michel, *Ayenbite of Inwyȝt*, fol. 68 b.

preparing for the struggle, and all those who have themselves victoriously striven with the same enemy. About the same time or some ten years later, Prudentius of Troyes (835-61) tells that it was revealed to a priest¹ that the souls of the righteous offered supplication every day for the sins of their weaker brothers. Without this intercession, the race would long ago have been destroyed. But of course the truth is revealed to him in an allegory. He is led to a place covered with beautiful buildings, and on entering the church he finds a number of boys engaged in the obscure and priestly office of reading books. The lines are alternately composed of black and red letters, and the visionary learns that the black are the good deeds, the red the evil, and the readers are the souls of the righteous.

The great imaginative effort of this period is the vision granted to Anscar, Archbishop of Bremen, and recorded by Rimbart.² The dreams are worth consideration because they contain an ideal of purity and a study of piety hardly capable of expression in any other kind of literature. While still a little boy, Anscar finds himself in a slimy miry region and sees his mother, who had recently died, walking with others along a pleasant path near by. He strives to reach her, but is prevented by the mud. Then, in heavenly beauty, the Virgin appears and warns him to lay aside all childishness and sloth, if he would ever rejoin his mother. So the boy devotes himself to a life of piety and self-sacrifice, and years afterwards he was granted the opportunity of accomplishing his purgation while still alive, so that he might be qualified to behold the wonders of Heaven with the eyes of the flesh. Thus by revelation he learns that Paradise is not so much a source of joy and repose as a place where the longing for righteousness has free play. The essence of that existence is so spiritual, that the visionary cannot penetrate to its true significance. As far as can be perceived by the senses of the flesh, the centre of Heaven appears to be an intense light

¹ *Visio cujusdam religiosi praebiteri de terra Anglorum*. See *Annales Bertiniani*, year 839.

² c. A. D. 876, rec. Waitz caps. 2 5.

which cannot be approached yet does not dazzle, to which the saints eagerly bend their gaze, and from which they derive their glory. Undoubtedly the visionary was chiefly inspired by the text which Laurentius paraphrased, 'þet is þe blissinge of angels and of halȝen of paradis. Þet yȝy god ine þe face | yknaue enne God ine þri persones.'¹ As Anscar bowed low before this brilliant burning holiness a voice proclaimed that he had been singled out for martyrdom, and so, with mingled feelings, the visionary returned to earth.

Thus by the Eleventh Century this curious and abundant literature had found its scope and range. Visions had proved themselves to be the best concrete expression of the idea of holiness, of the desire for effort towards perfection, of the consciousness of the immense inheritance of barbarian dreads and longings which must be suppressed or etherealized. It was probably imagined that all men would have enjoyed such revelations had they not fallen in the scale of creation through Adam's sin. And yet the modern reader cannot help feeling that the visions which we have so far discussed embrace only the monk's point of view. They may illustrate a spirited attempt to redirect human ambition and energy towards the true paths of progress, but the godliness inculcated is after all a 'cloistered virtue'. Even the well-known voyage of St. Brandan is no exception. An Eleventh-Century biographer of this Sixth-Century saint tells how he embarks with fourteen others in search of *terra promissionis*. No need to add that the crew are monks. They see many wonders. They find that the angels condemned to eternal vagrancy for remaining neutral in Satan's rebellion are allowed a brief repose each Easter-day on a beautiful island. They see the barren isolated rock on which Judas enjoys a respite from his tortures. At last, after seven years' wandering, the explorers reach an enormous island, shrouded in darkness, and within its confines lies hidden the promised land, a country of eternal day and ever blooming fruit. No student of the original will deny that this charming narrative admirably develops the ideal of divine mercy—those touches of pity, that dignified relenting even at

¹ *Agenbite of Inweyt*, fol. 76 a.

the moment of imposing eternal justice—which constitutes the true humanism of the Middle Ages. The ideal exercised more influence than is sometimes supposed. A sermon of the Twelfth or Thirteenth Century¹ declares of Sunday 'On þon deie þa engles of heofene ham iblissieð, forði þe þa erming saulen habbeð rest of heore pine', and tells how St. Michael and St. Paul went down to Hell, and after seeing the horror of torments, begged the Lord to grant relief to the damned every Sunday. It must also be noted that the author of the *Voyage* is a man of wide reading and imagination. As a dweller of the *insula doctorum et sanctorum*, he may have known something of the voyage of the Maeldun and perhaps of some version of the *Odyssey*, and even so exacting a moralist as Alcuin² could hardly have objected to these spirited heathen tales when coupled with such pious edification. And yet, when the student begins to assimilate the visionary's outlook and range of sympathy, he must feel as if he were surveying a landscape from an archer's loophole. The view is not so narrow as he had supposed, thanks to the shape of the aperture, but owing to the distance it is too much like a miniature. It appears that a few steps will take the traveller across the water-logged valley, over the stream, through the tangled wood, and so to the top of the cliff on the opposite side. So simple, even if arduous, was the way to Heaven.

The explanation is that sometime in the Eleventh Century we reach a period in which the problem of life was solved and human beings saw their way clearly. The warrior caste had found its proper sphere in feudalism and in the crusades. Compare *Beowulf* with *Chanson de Roland*. In the former, despite over seventy possible allusions to Christianity, the hero looks for no other reward than the gratitude of Hygelac, and has no other support than reliance on his own strength and fortitude.³ In the Norman epic, the warriors enjoy a prospect such as has never been vouchsafed to mortals before or since. After a career such as an Homeric warrior might envy for its zest in the splendours of equipment and the triumphs of the

¹ In *Diebus Dominicis*. E.E.T.S., *Old Engl. Homilies*, 1st series.

² *Mon. Germ., Epist. Carol.*, ii. 124.

³ Vide ll. 1534-7.

battle-field, they passed to the immortality of Heaven, leaving their names to the mortality of earth. The spirituality was no less fortunate. Anselm had composed *Cur Deus Homo*. Monasticism had taught them to prepare for the gift of grace by a life of strenuous activity and self-denial, aided by each other's prayers and example. Thus men of action felt the influence of Heaven, and men of religion did not shrink from contact with the world. The two types of this era are St. Louis and St. Bernard. We should expect the obsession of original sin to have faded away from men's thoughts. Life might still have seemed to contemporaries to be as immeasurably far from perfection as it does at the present time, but surely a balance had been struck between aspiration and achievement. Men had discovered the ways to advance towards the realization of their ideals. Their problem must have appeared, in the words of the apostle, to be a 'collectacio adversus rectores tenebrarum' rather than against themselves. So the sense of corporate failure and of hereditary taint ought to have vanished, and life ought to have continued to be as simple as it appears to be in these monkish visions.

This is not the place to discuss how and why the world again lost its way. It is enough to note that as feudalism suffered from the after-effects of the crusades, and as monachism realized the continual difficulty of maintaining poverty and singleness of aim, the failure of man to maintain even his own high level became glaring. So the consciousness of original sin again settled on the race, and thoughtful men, of whatever rank or denomination, confessed that they must look yet further, if they were to find the kingdom of God on earth. This problem was complicated by the new spirit of scepticism and scientific inquiry, which made itself felt at the beginning of the Thirteenth Century, largely under the auspices of Frederic II.¹ Many thoughtful and idealistic humanists, who were just as eager for the truth as Averroës, Avicenna, Juda ben Salomo, or Michael Scot, nevertheless refused to believe that the divine spirit could be discovered in

¹ Gebhart, E., *Italie Mystique*, iv. 4.

his works. As Rolle declared God *inscibile est et indocibile*,¹ they felt that the investigation of nature could leave only a misleading impression of the ethereal and all-pervasive spirit behind phenomena. So it is not surprising that Dante placed both Frederic and Scot in the *Inferno*,² and that long afterwards Pascal, Jeremy Taylor, and Milton denied that knowledge could lead to Truth.³ On the other hand, they clung to the belief that they still had left in them the power of Reason, which, though originally the cause of the Fall, was still the one link with the divine. In the words of Dan Jon Gaytryge, 'He made skiffwyse creatours Angelle and man, of witt and wysdom to knawe God Almyghtyn, and, thorowe paire knawynge, leofe Hym and serue Hym.' By the concentrated exercise of this faculty they hoped to see far more deeply into God's essence than by experiments in metals, measurements of the distance of the stars, or the anatomizing of the human body. The *Speculum S. Edmundi*, composed in the middle of the Thirteenth Century, is a good example of how this insight might be cultivated. It must be remembered that this age had none of the appliances of modern research, but that no epoch was so well equipped to meditate on the greatness and universality of God and on the vileness of man. As St. Bernard said, 'Te quia corpore non queo pectore saepe penetro.'⁴ By such efforts of the intellect and the imagination they hoped to get as near as possible to God and to come directly into touch with the divine influence, 'for ofte es better a gud thoghte in haly meditacyon þan many wordes sayd in prayere' says the author of *The Abbaye of S. Spirit*. So only could mortals prepare to receive grace and counteract the effects of original sin, which seemed again to be weighing so heavily on the human race.

Visions of Heaven and Hell still proved to be the most congenial exercise for this state of mind, and there were special reasons why men should continue to cultivate them.

¹ *Incend. Amor.*, lib. i, cap. vi.

² *Inf.* x. 119, xx. 115.

³ *Pensées*, i. 1, xiii. 1 and 2; *Holy Living*, iv, § 1; *Paradise Lost*, vii. 118-24, viii. 167-8, 194-7, xi. 86-9.

⁴ *De Contemptu Mundi*, i.

The early enthusiasms of Christians had led their descendants into a strange error. They believed in the interaction of soul and body being so close that the spirit could endow the flesh with its qualities or again the flesh impregnate the spirit. Thus when they had persuaded themselves that death had been conquered and that the soul only slept, they believed that this immortality must be communicated to the corpse also. The practice or the reports of embalming must have added to this ambitious hope, and Bede's History records many instances of the body being preserved in all its freshness by the purity of the spirit. But as time went on, and other signs pointed to the decadence of man, it became only too obvious that bodies were devoured by worms. Well might St. Edmund, though he believed in the kinship of man with God,¹ declare 'Fyrste, als vn-to þi body; þou erte now vylere þan any mukke; þou was getyn of sa vile matire and sa gret fylthe, þat it es schame for to nevyynn and abhomyacyon for to thynke; þou sall be delyuerde to tades and to neddyrs for to ete'.² The sight of corpses thus hideously disfigured reminded the devotionalist of what the souls must at the same time be suffering, for it was believed that the greatest joys and sorrows of this world were often mere counterparts or manifestations of what was passing in Heaven or Hell.³ Besides, visions of Heaven and especially of Hell were of the nature of revelations and served, no doubt, as an offset or compensation to the unlawful prying of alchemists and magicians. From the earliest times it was believed that the secrets of the underworld should not be revealed. It is recorded with horror and surprise in the *Iliad*⁴ how the brazen realm was once rent open. In the *Odyssey*⁵ it is confessed that no deity in his proper shape will allow himself to be spied on. Virgil prays for special permission to disclose the mysteries which were revealed to Aeneas,⁶ and so does Theseus after returning from his infernal adventure.⁷ In

¹ *Speculum*, xvii.

² *Ibid.* ii. Mid Fourteenth-Century transl.

³ *Caesarius von Heisterbach*, i. 22 and 32.

⁴ *xx.* 57-66.

⁵ *x.* 573.

⁶ *Aen.* vi. 264-7.

⁷ *Sen. Herc. Fur.* 658-61.

*Revelation*¹ we learn that the pit was sealed till the last judgement day, and both Leucius and Carinus² and Bishop Salvius called for writing materials because they durst not speak of what they had seen. St. Paul was supposed to have been ravished to the third Heaven, but what was there revealed to him were 'archana quae non licet homini loqui'.³ By what right, then, did mortals come to know these secrets? As a concession to their helplessness. From the Twelfth Century onwards it was felt more and more fully that this life was too superficial and too full of deceptive appearances to allow pious men to direct their minds aright. In fact, therein lay the chief problem of the later Middle Ages. No man would have experienced difficulty in regaining union with God had he been able to see things as they really are. These visions were considered to be revelations to explain the mystery of evil and the dazzling triumph of holiness. They put the truth before the votary with preternatural clearness. So there was good reason for the advice which Laurentius Gallus⁴ gave: 'panne yef þou wylt ywyte huet is guod and huet is knead: guo out of þi ȝelue. Guo out of þe wordle . lierne to sterue . todel þine ȝaule uram þe bodye . be þoȝte . ȝend þine herte into þe opre wordle: þet is to heuene. into helle | into purgatore: þer þou sselt yȝy: huet is guod and huet is knead.' But generally it seems to have been some particularly pious man who was allowed to penetrate the secrets of the underworld and to reveal them to his fellows. Richard Rolle, looking back no doubt over a far greater collection of revelations that has survived, recognizes two kinds of vision. One in which the theolept is ravished out of the body, as was St. Paul, the other, a higher and more perfect experience when the initiate pierces the veil and perceives the truth by sheer power of contemplation.⁵ In either case he believed that insight into these visions brought wisdom.⁶

¹ xx. 1-3.

² *Desc. Christ. ad Inf.* (Lat. version), i (17).

³ *Officium de S. Richardo de Hampole.*

⁴ *Op. cit.* as translated into Kentish dialect.

⁵ *Divina contemplatio sed numquam corporalis regiminis subtraccio, Inc. Amor.*, ii. 7.

⁶ *Perspiciacia in sapientiae spectacula, De Emend. Vit.* xii.

These newer and more intellectual tendencies first become noticeable in the *Visio Fulberti*,¹ in which a French nobleman dreams that his soul and body are sundered by death and enter upon a debate on the vexed and complicated question of mutual responsibility for sin. In the end two terrible demons appear and hale both the disputants to Hell. Yet the reader's last impression is not one of horror; it is rather a glimpse of an ideal which might have been, of the intellect according with the soul and of both uniting to ennoble the body. However, the more speculative mood did not find full expression till *Visio Alberichi*² was produced in 1129. The son of a nobleman, while still a boy, falls into a trance and is conducted into the next world. The author seems anxious to keep close to tradition. We meet the huge serpent of Norse legend, who swallows its victims like insects. We cross a bridge, which the righteous easily traverse; but, when the wicked reach the middle, the path narrows to a thread and they fall wallowing into the stream, till their sins are washed away. The potency of original sin is so abundantly recognized that children one year old, even though baptized, have to suffer for seven days on burning coals. Nor, on the other hand, is the vision darkened by the fatalism of the Sixteenth Century. No one is left to suffer in Hell for all eternity, except Judas, Annas, Caiaphas, and Herod. An angel catches the tears which one sinner sheds, and when the Devil appeared at his couch and produced the book of his offences, they are poured on to the pages and the writing disappears. Again there is the usual irony in the punishments. For instance, the medieval system of fasts and penances was entitled '*scala peccatorum*,'³ so those who neglected these impositions must now climb a red-hot ladder, one round for each day of the year. But the real significance of the vision arises from the skill with which the author adapts the medieval practice of making the penalty the symbol of the crime. When, for

¹ M^{éril}, *Poésies pop. lat.*, Paris, 1843, pp. 217-31.

² *Dante-Ausgabe*, Padua, 1882, v, pp. 287-328.

³ *Pis* is alle sinfulle monne leddre þat hes sculen in to heouene stizen. *Sermo in Marcum*, viii. 34. E. E. T. S., *Old Engl. Hom.*, 1st series.

example, St. Louis convicted a goldsmith of blasphemy, Joinville tells us that he exposed the man in public with pig's guts wound round the mouth which had uttered such foulness, and Froissart¹ describes how Sir Hugh Spencer was made to feel the pretentiousness and absurdity of his rebellion by the guise under which he was led through England. These and many other such methods seem crude to us, but they had in them one merit: they brought home to the spectators and often to the offender the vileness of the crime, and sometimes compelled him to feel thus late the shame which ought to have withheld him from its commission. When applied to moral transgressions, such a system opened endless vistas to the imagination. An earlier vision had related how women guilty of abortion were compelled to listen to the reproaches of their unborn children. The author pays this episode the compliment of preserving it, and then goes on to devise or recall other torments which strike home to the criminal's conscience. Tyrants, scorched in fire, must listen continually to the outcries of their subjects. Murderers are condemned to carry attached to them a demon in the shape of their victim. Thieves, whose hands were once so busy, are now weighted down with iron chains. The initiated is afterwards allowed to visit Heaven, but the spectacle, largely based on *Revelation*, cannot have proved very edifying even for his contemporaries. The author is at his best when explaining the penalties. In this period, descriptions are often purely terrifying, sometimes with hardly a pretence at divine inspiration. For instance, in *Sawles Warde*, Prudence sends to the soul, which is represented as a house, the lank and livid messenger fear, who gives the inmates the most blood-curdling and hair-raising description of Hell: 'nawt tah efter pat it is . for pat ne mei na tunge tellen . ah efter pat ich mes ant con . per towart ich chulle readien.' Albert does not rely on such crude effects. Nor again does he describe penalties in the spirit which made Bertrand de Bern exclaim 'così s'osserva in me lo contrapasso'.² The writer illustrates the purifying virtue of suffering. The idea of purgatory had

¹ *Chron.* xii.² *Inf.* xxviii. 142.

been hinted at as early as Drihthelm, who learnt that the victim's lot is alleviated by the prayers of the living, but it is not till the *Visio Alberichi* that the moral effect of purgatorial punishments is seen. For instance, in one region the visionary finds that sinners flee through a tract of thorn-bushes, pursued by the Devil mounted on a dragon and wielding a viper as scourge. Under such horrible conditions they now experience in breathless terror the loathing with which sin ought to have inspired them during life.

Such are the harsh but salutary punishments of purgatory. Whoever wishes to know the true joys of Heaven, he will find them in the story of the Irish knight Oeneus or Owain. In 1140 Henricus Salteriensis tells how this warrior, as a penance, resolved to explore the ominous chasm known as the Purgatory of St. Patrick.¹ There is hardly a terror known to medieval demonology which the adventurer was not called upon to encounter, but these appalling manifestations are employed only to test his courage. When his spirit is thus cleansed by fear, the true revelation comes. He passes through a bejewelled door set in a wall, and, for the first time in medieval culture, a mortal realizes what man would have become had the original sin never been committed. He meets bishops, abbots, monks, and elders; much of their glory, as described, is borrowed from the growing splendour of cathedral worship, but one more distinctive touch shows how Heaven continues, yet transcends, earth. They all wear the kind of dress which they wore on earth, so that their rank can easily be recognized. The quality and colour of their garments vary according to their spiritual merit, just as one star outshines another. All have undergone the tortures of purgatory, and now they repose in meadows covered with flowers and fruit trees, and every day the divine spirit descends on them like a flame. One day they will be permitted to enter God's presence in the highest Heaven and thus the 'scale or ladder of creation' will be consummated as was at first designed.

¹ *Florilegium Insulae Sanctorum*. . . . Thomas Massinghamus. Parisiis, 1634, pp. 86-109.

Except, of course, for the *Divina Commedia*, the stories of Albert and Owain are unmatched in Hades-literature for religious insight and refinement of feeling. *Visio Tundali* is certainly better known, and surpasses them in graphic detail. The adventure might well be termed an Odyssey of Death, and the night-mare horrors which the knight has to witness, and in some cases to undergo in retribution for his sins, impress themselves even now in a way that is unforgettable. Before this terrible experience Tundal had been a man of the world, handsome and courageous, but pleasure-loving; and we may well believe the monkish scribe at St. Paul's convent, Ratisbon, that on returning to life, the knight resolved to lead a more pious life. But though permitted to enjoy a sight of Heaven and even to view the nine orders of angels, Tundal cannot have found much edification in these revelations. If his soul was saved, it was only by fear, and for that reason his vision is not to be compared with those which we have discussed more fully.

The last three hundred years of the Middle Ages add little that is positively new to the accepted ideas of the next world. Visions and revelations are produced in greater numbers, and with the multiplication of homilies, *exempla*, debates, fabliaux, the allusions to Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory become too frequent to be counted, much less classified. But on the whole it may be said that the age of scholastic learning and mysticism was content to accept on tradition the principles, while infinitely varying the details. Men were learning in every generation to express themselves more fully in sculpture, painting, and the drama, as well as in words, and these new arts necessarily imposed their own limitations. They helped men to think in symbols and to appeal to the senses. Hence, on the one hand, the frequency of cauldrons, dragons' mouths, tiny naked dolls for souls, horned and tailed goblins, and on the other hand, aureoles, wings, and musical instruments. Many of the descriptions of Purgatory and Paradise, most of which seem so graphic though conventional, are to be taken allegorically. As Hilton says:¹ 'It may be felid and perceyved

¹ *Angels' Song*.

in a saule, bot it may not be schewed.' Or in the words of Caesarius von Heisterbach:¹ 'Quae incorporea non nisi per corporea corporis narrare posse.' Oddly enough Cicero² pronounces a similar opinion on a similar subject. Some experts seem to be occupied by such speculations as the distance of Heaven from Hell, or the structure and disposition of the infernal circles, or the arrangement of phenomena into threes, fives, and sevens, to correspond with theological dogmas or perhaps out of respect for the mystic power of numbers. A surprisingly large number seems, like the author of *Pearl*, to be affected by the heresy of Jovinian, and nearly all dwell on the theological distinction between Paradise and Purgatory as opposed to Heaven and Hell. The most humanistic have begun to lay aside mythological exaggeration, and appeal to the sentiments by mirroring what we might expect to meet with in this life, whether with fears or hopes. Thus the author of *The Prycke of Conscience* not only finds in Purgatory the cares and despondencies of this world, but even the actual diseases (perhaps suggested by the *Aeneid*), and touched with the same realistic spirit as is found in the account of Niflheim in *Gylfaginning*, xxxiv. In an age when sewers annoyed the air and the evil smell of a city could be sensed miles away, it is not surprising that filth becomes more and more a punishment of Purgatory. The monk of Evesham found 'that the greuys pain of that same stenche ys more intollerable and paynfulle than any other peynys that synners sofryn'.³ The same visionary fills Heaven with the sound of bells,⁴ and Caesarius brings in an almost romantic touch of mariolatry when he describes 'angelorum domina ultro omnem aestimationem radians' who calls the new-comer to her and embraces him as a mother would.⁵

So it would seem at first sight that the later stages of medieval culture were not really congenial to the development of this type. Yet the greatest of all visionaries appeared as late as the beginning of the Fourteenth Century, and though his eminence is won and retained by sheer poetic genius, yet

¹ iii. 14.² *Tusc. Disp.* i. 16. 37.³ Cap. xxvii.⁴ Cap. lxii.⁵ iii. 75.

it is impossible to agree with Croce that the theme and form of his poetry were a positive hindrance to its excellence and that the age had no influence on his inspiration. Dante achieved greatness partly because he realized that the greatest of all adventures must have a hero, and though the *Inferno* begins with mock-modest disclaimers, the reader has no difficulty in discovering that the hero is Dante himself. We have here no master of heroic deeds, but all that has been said in this essay will make clear what type of man was needed to visit the next world—he must be the master of moral power and immense aspirations. Hades-visions are the proper epics of the intellectual hero.

The need of such a type can easily be traced in pre-Christian literature. If many stories of infernal adventure have disappeared or lost their original meaning it must often have been because they are connected with figures like Hercules, Orpheus, Theseus, or Pirithous, who used brute force or magic to win some victory over the eternal powers. Even Odysseus is no exception. His mission to the lower world was only to consult Teiresias; he displays no other quality than courage; he brings back no treasure of wisdom but only the memory of some friends and kinsfolk and the guidance of a dubious prophecy. The first character worthy to acquire insight into the next world is Scipio.¹ He is qualified to look into the inner purposes of God because he comprehends the divine origin of patriotism and administrative ambition. The other character is Aeneas. He is rightly regarded by modern students as an inadequate man of arms, and *Aeneid*, vi (as we have contended) may not reveal much hope of immortality. But Aeneas himself is nevertheless qualified by his melancholy, reflectiveness, and study of divine purpose to understand the mysteries of the next world, and so his vision is the most impressive in ancient literature. The same is true of Gormo. Saxo's words are explicit, though the old Dane never dreamt that he was thereby recording the passing of the heroic age and the dawn of intellectual supremacy.

‘Hic enim, nouum audacie genus complexus, hereditarium

¹ *Somnium Scipionis*.

fortitudinis spiritum scrutande rerum mature uestigiis quam armis excolere maluit, utque alios regum ardor bellicus, ita ipsum cognoscendorum mirabilium, quecumque uel experimento deprehensa uel rumore uulgata fuerant, prae cordialis stimulabat auditas.'¹

With the dawn of Christianity the search for the intellectual hero is continued or renewed. Apart from superficial imitations, this is the real link between classical and medieval vision-literature. The idea of a God conquering death is infinitely inspiring; as we have seen, the idea was too life-giving to be lost; yet there can be no doubt that Christ cannot endue the qualities of an earthly hero, and so all the harrowings of Hell lack power. Another writer has tried St. Paul. His authority is one vague allusion,² but his real sanction is the feeling that the Apostle was the kind of man whose piety, insight, and enthusiasm would give full value to the revelation. As monasticism developed and the corporate spirit of each house grew strong, there is a tendency among the recorders of visions to attribute their descriptions to some brother, or familiar of the house, and no doubt much of the significance of some visions is lost, because we do not know what memories of this or that character were treasured. The Twelfth Century witnessed a widening and intensifying of vision-literature, and an interesting attempt to couple such experiences with men of action and power, such as Owain, Albert, and Tundal. Apparently the intention was to emphasize the tremendous and unfamiliar test of their courage and the particular mercy of God, as these were the types who most needed salvation.³ Yet it cannot be denied that the experiences would have seemed more impressive if the visionaries had more capacity for thought. One feels at once how much greater were the possibilities, when one contemplates the noble spirit of Hermödr undertaking the adventurous voyage necessary to find Baldr in 'Hel'.⁴ Again Wright has noticed the quite obvious resemblance of these visions to fairy stories, especially of knights or travellers who

¹ VIII. lxxxv^b (p. 420).

³ See *Owayne Miles*.

² 2 Cor. xii. 2-4.

⁴ *Gylfaginning*, xlix.

trespass on to enchanted ground, and he cites the example of *Thomas and the Elf Queen*.¹ This atmosphere of mysterious adventure is always bound to be attractive. Schiller² felt its spell when he described the diver's descent into the caverns beneath the surface. But when dealing with the lower world, romance can only import episodes which are more effective above ground. The lotus-eaters, Polyphemus, Circe, and Scylla, are all the kind of beings which have been met with in the next world, yet Homer was far too wise to put them in Hades or on Olympus.

The Hades-vision must be an adventure into hidden knowledge which can be gained only by men who have earned the privilege. That is why we need

Clerkes that can of lare
If that thaire cunyng will declare ;³

and of such, Dante himself, being the embodiment of medieval civilization, has proved the most appropriate example. In the *Inferno* he studies the different gradations of sin. He weighs their nature and comparative badness as illustrated by their punishments. Nay more, he sees down into the mystery of evil, the forces of disintegration and lawlessness, the anti-reason which is symbolized by monsters and finds expression in the obstinacy and insensate fury of sinners. In *Purgatorio* he studies the power of the human will and the mysterious cleansing influence of suffering. In *Paradiso* he comes into contact with the fruits of pure contemplation and mysticism. So we are led to the intuitive comprehension of God and to the ultimate reunion, in thought, with the source from which man has drifted, drawn aside by the influence of original sin.

H. V. ROUTH.

¹ *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, 1844, chap. iv.

² *Der Tauffer*.

³ *De Spiritu Guidonis*.

CHAPMAN'S ETHICAL THOUGHT

But as the illustration of the sun
Should be attempted by the erring stars
They failed to search his deep and treasured heart;
The cause was since they wanted the fit key
Of nature in their downright strength of art
With Poesy, to open Poesy.

WE have seen of late many books designed to explain to us the conditions, spiritual as well as material, in which the ancient world of Palestine, of Greece, of Rome, and of Medieval Europe moved. But the inner life of the age of Elizabeth, only three centuries distant, and the experience of men of our own race, is far less intelligible to us. Scholars have done much to elucidate a mass of allusions to the minutiae of daily life; we can make a picture of that life, but we do not understand how a true Elizabethan felt in the inner chambers of his heart. Shakespeare is of little use to us as an interpreter, partly because of his universality, partly because he is curiously silent on some subjects. We go to him direct for our spiritual food expecting him like a god to understand our need and give us what we can take, and he has an answer for most of the 'uses of our lives'; but when we ask him what he believed of Eternity, of immortality, whether he doubted or was certain, there is no reply. 'The rest is silence.'

With him as well as with the other writers the dramatic character of the age is a grave obstacle to our understanding. We can never substitute Elizabethan authors for the persons of their imaginations: they seem to have had a power of forgetting their own identity and entering into other souls, which is foreign to us. It is possible that the anonymity which shrouds so much of the great art of the Middle Ages really covers anonymity of soul: that men's minds differed from each other only in the degree in which they shared in the common

inspiration. By the Seventeenth Century individuality has reached its full flower, and men write down the secrets of their inner lives for their own remembrance or the enlightenment of others, because they realize their own inevitable uniqueness. The Elizabethans stand at the crossways: what we call the dramatic nature of their genius is the expression of that fact.

The age was possibly really lacking in spiritual experience. It is remarkable that there is no expression of religious doubt in the drama. It is true that censorship on such a point might have been severe. But Hamlet was allowed to wonder whether there were any dreams in the sleep of death, and Claudio to cry: 'Ay, but to die and go we know not where.' That no emotional point should have been made of religious doubt in such a character as Hamlet is very curious. Again, is it a proof of the external nature of even Shakespeare's drawing of women that religious thought never shows in them? or is it a proof that the Protestant reaction against mysticism had had a deadening effect? It is perhaps worth noting that Donne, who was one of the early explorers of the secret paths of the mind, had been educated as a Roman Catholic.

We are accustomed to think of the culture of the age as based on the study of the classics. This should form a link with that of our own time; but the particular classics studied were not those which form the foundations of modern thought, and the Elizabethans' interpretation of them was deflected by the influence of the Neo-Platonic and Hermetic writings. It is doubtful, for example, whether any but really profound scholars had read anything of Plato himself. No editions or translations of him appeared in England in the period. The Middle Ages had been much influenced by the *Timaeus* (cf. Professor Burnet's lecture to the English Association), but Plutarch's account of the dialogue was probably the source of information for most Elizabethans. It has been assumed too easily that the study of Aristotle led only to the scholastic logic, for it was the *Ethics* which appeared again and again in English editions at the turn of the century; and echoes of its almost mystic close are to be found in the poets' discussions of the relative value of the active and the contemplative life

(see e. g. Daniel's *Musophilus*), and in the grand opening of the Scottish *Shorter Catechism*: 'man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever.' The perception of such an ecstasy had been prepared for by the study, perhaps of Plotinus, but certainly of the *Hermetica*¹ published by Ficino in a Latin translation in 1471 and republished twenty-one times before 1641. There was no English edition before Casaubon's in 1614, and the book would therefore not reach any but scholars who could afford to travel, or who were permitted to read in University Libraries or in those of great nobles. Nevertheless its influence was wide.

More generally accessible were the moral writings of Plutarch and of Seneca. The latter was the chief transmitter of the Stoic ideal of character, insomuch that the term 'Senecal man' is used, for example by Chapman, as the equivalent of 'philosophical'. Thus he concludes the eulogy of Clermont D'Ambois with the words :

In short this Senecal man is found in him,
He may with Heaven's immortal powers compare,
To whom the day and fortune equal are ;
Come fair or foul, whatever chance can fall,
Fix'd in himself, he still is one to all.
(*Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*, IV. 4.)

But the precepts of Seneca were on the whole parallel to those of Christian ethics and failed to inspire the poets. On the other hand, in Plutarch's *Lives*, in Xenophon's *Kyropaideia*, and finally in Homer, the age found moral standards which differed from those inculcated by the Church, and which combined with the most influential book of all—Cicero's *De Officiis*—to set up an inner conflict, and so prepared the way for a richer synthesis. It is the Cicero and the phrases connected with his doctrine that are apt to be most misleading to a modern reader, chiefly because of a change of emphasis ; and a sketch of what such an Elizabethan as Chapman appears to have culled from him must be given here.

¹ Introduction to the *Hermetica* by Walter Scott, Clarendon Press, 1924.

The fundamental idea of Cicero's ethics is that of decorum. 'We¹ must realize that we are invested, as it were by nature, with two characters: one of those is universal, arising from the fact of our all alike being endowed with reason and with that superiority which lifts us above the brutes. From this all morality and propriety are derived, and upon it depends the rational method of ascertaining our duty. The other character is the one assigned to individuals in particular.' He goes on to describe numbers of dissimilar famous men, including among them men who 'will stoop to anything, truckle to anybody, if so they may gain their ends'. Such dissimilarities are 'not in the least to be criticized. . . . For we must so act as not to oppose the universal laws of human nature, but while safeguarding those to follow the bent of our own particular nature. . . . Decorum can be nothing more than uniform consistency in the course of our life as a whole . . . and this uniform consistency one could not maintain by copying the personal traits of others . . . we ought not to introduce anything foreign into our actions or our life in general . . . the more peculiarly his own a man's character is, the better it fits him.' This idea of the value of the unique personality and therefore of the supreme importance of consistency appealed to the Elizabethans. It is the origin of the Humours—not as satirized by Jonson, but as approved both by him and by the fashionable world of his early contemporaries. A man's Humour was properly speaking the inner core of his particular identity. To act consistently with it was so much his duty that even crimes might be condoned. In Chapman's *Blind Beggar of Alexandria* the hero says, as he puts on the disguise of a Count of violent temper :

Come gird this pistol closely to my side,
 By which I make men fear my Humour still,
 And have slain two or three, as 'twere my mood,
 When I have done it most advisedly,
 To rid them, as they were my heavy foes. (I.1.)

¹ The translation is that of Walter Miller in the Loeb Classical Library, p. 109.

Fashionable fops tried to develop such a Humour, and according to Jonson could get no further than wearing some particular article of dress.

The *De Officiis* was read in the higher forms of grammar schools and was familiar to people whose reading in other classics was too slight to give the requisite background. Its central doctrine was naturally attractive to a dramatic age, and we find echoes of it frequently. The climax of moral depravity, the mark of complete chaos in the drama of the time, is the confounding of the qualities of men and beasts. That is the point of Antony's exclamation :

O Judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts
And men have lost their reason.

(*Julius Caesar*, III.)

But the *De Officiis* was the ethical basis also of a great scholar like Chapman. A tendency to use the most familiar authority was a characteristic of the age, and Chapman shares it as he shares so much else. It has been pointed out that the mythological notes in *The Shadow of Night*, and his mythology generally, are taken bodily from the *Mythologiae* of Niccolo Conti, a mere manual.¹ Chapman must have read the original sources ; but he prefers the second-hand, because he is so essentially of his age. It is because of this limitation that he has been so much neglected ; for like all philosophical poets he has a special vocabulary and key-ideas, and these are at first unfamiliar to us. But this limitation makes him a fit interpreter of the inner life of his time to us. He does not transcend it as Shakespeare does, and he appeals to us because he is limited as we are limited. He is interested above all in his own ethical problem. Because they are a vital part of that problem he uses crudely new ideas which have not yet been refined to the purposes of art. He introduces clumsily allusions to contemporary history and politics. On the other hand, he shares with Spenser the medieval tendency to regard the phenomenal world as an allegory of the spiritual. Like

¹ See F. L. Schoell, 'Mythologues italiens et poètes élisabethains,' in *Rev. de la Litt. comparée*, Jan.-Mar., 1924.

Spenser, he superimposes layer upon layer of allegory, a political, a moral, and a poetic or philosophical. The political allegory disconcerts and chills the imagination of a modern reader, but the idea of truth as a diamond of many facets appealed to the semi-medieval mind of the Elizabethans. Any statement that could be interpreted in several dimensions gained thereby the solidity of life.

In one respect only he was not of the age. His genius was undramatic: it was merely his material needs which drove him to the form. He is the only Elizabethan who has left a considerable body of subjective poetry which is not lyrical. Moreover, his dramas show his personal feelings as those of no great dramatist do. Indeed it would be possible to make from his works a fairly complete list of the things a dramatist should avoid. He allows his ghosts to join in general conversation. He makes the hero of his greatest play horribly afraid of death. He outrages our feelings as he must have done those of contemporaries by defending the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. He uses the formula of the Revenge Play, and by thrusting his ideal man into the part of hero he breaks the form to pieces: his death has no relation to the vengeance at all. All his tragic plots are apt to seem trivial or melodramatic, because so unconnected with, so inappropriate to, the spiritual experience of the characters. In his plays he touches the subjects, and leases for a time the habitations, of his contemporaries with a curious effect of transient and alien dwelling, because the dramatic medium is so utterly uncongenial to him.

It has been said above that he was a child of his age; but that was one of transition, and Chapman has the unrest of rival ideas never quite resolved into harmony. It is typical of him that he treats the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* like sacred writings, and expects to find in them an answer to his own moral problems. He probably believed, like Blake, that he was inspired by the soul of Homer. The description of his vision in *The Tears of Peace* is very vivid, and allusions of the time as well as scattered passages all through his works make it probable that he claimed openly such inspiration. It is

not certain but probable that Chapman was the poet 'by spirits taught to write' of Shakespeare's sonnets. The apparition in *The Tears of Peace* is of 'a most grave and goodly person'. The poet 'brake into a trance' and became like Homer 'an only soul'; and so obtained 'Such boldness by the sense he did control, That I set look to look, and soul to soul. I viewed him at his brightest though alas With all acknowledgement of what he was Beyond what I found habited in me.' He asks the apparition who he is, and is told 'that spirit Elysian that . . . did thy bosom fill . . . with such a flood of soul', 'on the Hill next Hitchin's left hand'. The particular description of the place looks like an attempt to express the literal truth of the experience.

There is probably in it a reminiscence of the relation of Dante to Virgil; but the tone is rather that of the opening vision of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, so that Homer becomes like 'Poimandres, the mind of the Sovereignty',¹ and it is because he treats Homer as more than a prophet that he looks for a moral meaning in his works, and thence is led to prefer the *Odyssey* to the *Iliad*; as we see in his Epistle Dedictory to Somerset of the translation of that poem. 'That your Lordship may in his face take view of his mind, the first word of his Iliads is *μῆνιν*, wrath; the first word of his Odysseys *ἄνδρα*, man: contracting in either word his each work's proposition. In one *predominant perturbation*; in the other *over-ruling wisdom*. In one, the body's fervour and fashion of outward fortitude to all possible height of heroical action; in the other the mind's constant, and unconquered empire, unbroken, unaltered, with any most insolent and tyrannous affliction.' Byron, the most interesting of Chapman's creations, is modelled on Achilles and represents 'the body's fervour'; Clermont D'Ambois, whom he believed to be his favourite, exhibits 'the mind's constant and unconquered empire'.

The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois was a failure on the stage, and justly so; but, like Hamlet, it stands in a very special relation to its author's inner life. Its interest lies in the hero's

¹ *Corpus Hermeticum*, Libellus I, ed. Scott.

soliloquies and the long and frequently irrelevant ethical discussions. These are introduced not as symptoms of the hero's disease but for the moral idea they depict. It is true that the destruction of both the Guise and Clermont is due to the fact that they discuss 'philosophy' when they should have been unravelling the plots against them; but what is in Hamlet an intellectual and emotional entanglement from which he finds it next to impossible to withdraw himself, and is in the circumstances something of a moral defect, appears in Clermont as a virtue, although one inevitably dangerous to him. Chapman seems to have coined the word 'manless' to express utter worthlessness, lacking in the essential humane qualities. By that he means, in the first place, and in common with all the writers of his time, lacking in that which distinguishes man from the brutes, namely reason or judgement. But his second meaning, although derived from Cicero, is rather more peculiar to himself. By 'manless' he means chiefly 'lacking in a consistent and unique personality'. He describes such men as 'stuffing' with

Stolen ends their manless breasts
Sticks, rags, and mud—they seem mere puttock's nests.
(Tears of Peace.)

Now in both these senses Clermont is the opposite to 'manless'.¹ His 'judgement' is constantly praised. Guise tells us:

He hath the crown of man, and all his parts,
Which learning is: and that so true and virtuous
That it gives power to do as well as say
Whatever fits a most accomplished man.

(Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois, II. i.)

He disapproves of any attempt to 'pass beyond the place to which his birth . . . ties him'. His conception of virtuous action includes artistic completeness.

I know 'tis better
To live with little, and to keep within
A man's own strength still, and in man's true end,
Than run a *mix'd course*— *(Ibid., III. iv.)*

¹ The phrase is again probably a reflection of the *Hermetica* (cf. Libellus I. 13 a in Scott's edition).

that is, one not consistent with the man's own character. He advises the Guise not to engage in any enterprise, however good its purpose, which may not be achieved, and that by lawful means :

Make not your forward spirit in virtue's right
A property for vice, by thrusting on
Further than all your powers can fetch you off.
It is enough your will is infinite

Avarice of all is ever nothing's Father. (Ibid., v. i.)

The ghost, however, who overhears him, reproves him because with all his 'holiness of life and learning' he lays so much stress on the material present. It is the spiritually congruous that should give us the hint to conduct. But on the whole Clermont rather than his brother's ghost appears to be right. The spiritually congruous will also match the 'main sway of the universe', the course of outward events.

Chapman has destroyed the unity of the plot by making Clermont's gift for friendship his crowning grace, so that he commits suicide rather than survive the Guise. Friendship had been treated as a virtue by Aristotle : indeed he says several times that 'to be a friend is to be the same thing as a good man'. It is obvious that a society founded on the individualistic morality would require some cement to keep it together, and the quality which Aristotle regarded as the highest was no doubt a more positive form of the capacity for living in a community. The relationship may have been somewhat foreign to his own personality, for he is curiously inclined to repeat himself when talking on the subject, as if he did not fully comprehend it. It is probable that the Elizabethans scarcely saw the connexion ; and there are echoes of the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus* in their treatment of the subject, and some confusion. Chapman entitles a poem *Of Friendship*, but writes on the subject of a good man, while he safeguards himself by explaining that he is giving advice how to choose friends.

The Renaissance and Reformation had destroyed the highways of emotions and morals, and men were back in a chaos

more confusing than mere savagery. The Elizabethans give the impression that they could control their passions at their will, but that they did not always feel sure which they should control and which spur to greater activity. It is a fact that friendship, including the relation of brothers, is the emotional motive of the best early Elizabethan drama. The relation of the friends in Shakespeare's sonnet-sequence is more important than the love-story. Spenser discusses whether the love between parents and children, between man and woman, or between friend and friend is the most powerful and sacred, and decides in favour of the last in the case of men. Romantic and on the whole illicit love had been the chief subject of medieval poetry, and it was perhaps partly in reaction against this that friendship seemed at one time likely to become the chief emotional experience of Elizabethan literature and so of the modern world. Chapman's attitude in this matter stamps him clearly as belonging to a period of transition. The plot in one of his comedies, *M. D'Olive*, turns on the very natural suspicion of the husband that the ardent but Platonic relation between his wife and his friend was really a guilty one. Chapman makes it clear, it is true, that he was mistaken, and that it was a serious though momentary lapse on the part of the husband so to asperse so spiritual a passion. But the very remarkable passage in the Byron play in which the Queen and the King's Mistress have a public reconciliation and the author apparently regards the Mistress as having the most to forgive, and the fact that both Bussy and the ideal Clermont have mistresses in no such innocent sense, show that Chapman's views were on the whole like those of the medieval romance writers. He seems to have felt a need of passion to call all his powers into play.

I tell thee Love is Nature's second sun,
Causing a spring of virtues where he shines ;

and

Brings forth in [man] the honourable fruits
Of valour, wit, virtue and haughty thoughts,
Brave resolution, and divine discourse.

(*All Fools*, I. i.)

In the finest natures of all, however, the purest passion is that between friends, 'when love kindles any knowing spirit it ends in virtue and effects divine, and is in friendship chaste and masculine'. (*Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*, v. i.)

Byron is Chapman's greatest creation, and he deserves careful study, for he is of the very essence of the Renaissance. He is a soldier of genius, as brave as a lion, and his personality is on a Titanic scale. Unless we accept the greatness he is merely ridiculous. Perhaps the Elizabethans differed most from the men of the Twentieth Century in their power of appreciating abstract greatness. We admire greatness of intellect or of skill, but just as many people have no ear for music, so we of this tremendous age have rarely any perception of 'that breath and finer spirit' of personality which constitutes the sublime in character. Its chief element—if anything so spiritual can be said to have elements—is an overflowing vitality. Chapman shows us a man with the spirit of eternal youth and yet with none of that transience of bloom which gives youth its charm and pathos. His arrogance is much the same as that of Bussy D'Ambois, and the careful touches in the early part of *Bussy D'Ambois* seem to belong more properly to Byron than to that melodramatic hero. It is as if Chapman had embodied in a piece of stage jobbery a study for the later play. Bussy, taken as a whole, has been made by one of 'Nature's journeymen': Byron is both more convincing and much more attractive. The great passage, in which it is argued that ambition is in Bussy a virtue, because it is due to the urging of that inner core of personality which seeks its proper food, belongs to Byron, and explains at once the tragedy of his unrest and that of his creator.

His great heart will not down, 'tis like the sea,
That partly by his own internal heat,
Partly the stars' daily and nightly motion,
Their heat and light, and partly of the place
The divers frames, but chiefly by the moon,
Bristled with surges, never will be won,

.

To make retreat into his settled home,
Till he be crown'd with his own quiet foam.

(*Bussy D'Ambois*, I. ii.)

Chapman has endowed him with imagination, and he is tempted not so much by material wealth and power as by the desire for the intoxication of dreams, the excitement of a struggle with giant forces for the rewards of fairyland. Savoy seduces him by creating round him the mirage of a world of fantastic beauty. Before his first entrance at Savoy's Court, servants appear spreading carpets—

Spread here this history of Cataline,
That earth may seem to bring forth Roman Spirits
Even to his genial feet, and her dark breast
Be made the clear glass of his shining graces ;
We'll make his feet so tender they shall gall
In all paths but to empire.

(*Byron's Conspiracy*, I. ii.)

Then, as Byron appears, music is heard so that he half believes that his presence causes it :

they follow all my steps with music
As if my feet were numerous, and trod sounds
Out of the centre with Apollo's virtue,
That out of everything his each part touched
Struck musical accents: wheresoe'er I go
They hide the earth from me with coverings rich,
To make me think that I am here in Heaven.

(*Ibid.*, I. ii.)

The luxury does not enervate, it excites him and raises an almost spiritual ardour, that prescience of Divine glory which is the special faculty of the saintly seer—

What place is this, what air, what region,
In which a man may hear the harmony
Of all things moving?

Hymen marries here
Their ends and uses, and makes me his Temple.
Hath any man been blessed and yet lived?
The blood burns in my veins ; I stand on change,
And shall dissolve in changing; 'tis so full
Of pleasure not to be contain'd in flesh :

To fear a violent good abuseth goodness,
 'Tis immortality to die aspiring,
 As if a man were taken quick to Heaven;
 What will not hold perfection, let it burst.

(Ibid., i. ii.)

The play resembles the second part of *Tamburlaine*, because the tragic satisfaction depends on the illustration of life by its opposite, death. In the last long scene of the play the agony of Byron enhances our sense of the value of this our physical being. Secure in the inward affirmation of himself, he had believed no Court would dare to condemn him, and from the moment of hearing the verdict he lives in transports of fury against his doom and of hopes of reprieve. A modern dramatist who expected his audience to admire Byron would not dare to give, as Chapman does, every throb of hope for mercy and every access of horror that comes as the hope dies. But the Elizabethan, by the violence of the struggle, expresses the intensity of the opposing forces of life and death. Chapman's view seems to be that, while this fury is evil in itself, the excitement is a necessary condition of the final purgation of Byron's soul. He is, as it were, anatomizing the process by which such an intensely human personality reaches its consummation and apotheosis. Byron is an Elizabethan Hercules Furens laying aside his mortality in an agony of flame. Vidame prays:

O real Goodness, if thou be a power,
 And not a word alone in humane uses,
 Appear out of this angry conflagration,
 Where this great captain, thy late temple burns
 And turn his vicious fury to thy flame.

(*Byron's Tragedy*, v. iii.)

His prayer is answered, and we get the true tragic relief, when in his swirl of passion Byron reaches a sort of boiling calm—

Horror of death! Let me alone in peace
 And leave my soul to me . . .

I feel her free
 How she doth rouse and like a falcon stretch

Her silver wings, as threatening Death with death
At whom I joyfully will cast her off.

fly, fly, commanding soul,
And on thy wings for this thy body's breath,
Bear the eternal victory of Death! (Ibid., v. iv.)

Chapman's central idea is that 'best men are long in making', because a rich sensuous equipment, to serve as an organ of communication with the physical universe, is a mark of the 'complete man'; and such equipment the soul must learn how to use. Therefore such a man, 'much less esteemed' than the shallower type,

is long before he can
The passage clear, betwixt his soul and sense,
And of his body gain such eminence,
That all his organs open are, and fit
To serve their Empress; . . . [but] th' other man of wit
At first is served with all their instruments:
Open they are and full . . . and forth there flies
Flashes from him, thick as the meteor'd skies
Like which he looks, and up draws all men's eyes,
Even to amaze; yet like those meteors
(Only in air impress'd) away he soars
His organs shut; and 'twixt his life and soul,
Sues a divorce alive. (Of Friendship.)

We are learning a certain poetic reverence for the physical side of the universe; to the Twentieth Century the senses rather than the intellect seem to be the vehicle of the unseen reality. Matter, magnified till we see it as a net like that of Shelley's 'love-sick Fairy', has become a mystic substance since it eludes our grasp; and we turn from the cosmos of philosophic thought to catch the memories of bodily thrills pregnant with the secrets of being. There is something in this that links us with the Elizabethans, and it is a curious fact that W. H. Hudson, the naturalist-prose-poet, shares some of his experiences with Chapman. For example, Hudson tells us that a high wind always brought him a feeling of almost physical inspiration. Chapman says that the 'Elysian spirit' of Homer was brought upon him in a 'sweet gale'. Hudson's *Hind in Richmond Park* is a prose version of

Chapman's *Ovid's Banquet of Sense*. Hudson himself connects the Elizabethan Willoughby's conjecture, that the white colour of certain arctic creatures is due to 'an intuition of snow' with a vivid realization of the naked elements of nature, 'penetrative, special, individual as if the quality of the thing itself had entered into us, changing us, affecting body and mind'. However that may be, Willoughby's suggestion is proof of his perturbation in presence, even in anticipation of any intense sense-stimulus. Great keenness of sense is the peculiar gift of the Elizabethans, and supplied perhaps the place of the subtleties of spiritual experience. That they had just emerged from a world which regarded the phenomenal as an allegory of the spiritual, helped to concentrate their attention on physical detail. Thus they received, as we can scarcely doubt, from a world richer in colour, more delicate and disparate in sound and fragrance than ours, sensations which they could not disentangle from the experiences of the more intellectual being. We should remember this when we study with a faint disgust such poems as *Venus and Adonis* or Chapman's *Ovid's Banquet of Sense*. To the Elizabethan—'Gentle and noble are their tempers framed That can be quicken'd with perfumes and sounds'.

The Banquet of Sense is Elizabethan because of a certain superficially clear narrative. It is curious that the age used narrative poetry on classical subjects, mythical or otherwise, to record the impressions of the senses. The story is always short enough to be told in a few sentences: the aim of the poet is a series of elaborate pictures. Chapman's subject is the sublimation of the senses, and the first stage is to put the experience into the aesthetic world by means of the names of Ovid and Julia. Beyond this there is the possibility that Julia is merely a name for what Shelley called Intellectual Beauty. We become aware of this 'living Beauty' through the senses, and Chapman is giving us a delicate discrimination of the various moods of that intercourse between the intellectual and the physical which is properly the subject of aesthetics. His purpose is to reach a spiritual ecstasy by means of the senses, thus justifying his glorification of them.

The sense is given us to excite the mind,
 And that can never be by sense excited,
 But first the sense must her contentment find,
 We, therefore, must procure the sense delighted,
 That so the soul may use her faculty.

(*Ovid's Banquet of Sense.*)

The framework of what is, then, a philosophical poem is shortly this. Ovid, newly in love with Julia, daughter of Augustus Caesar, finds his way into the garden in which is her bathing pool. Here, hidden behind a leafy screen, he hears her sing to her lute and perceives the fragrance of her bath. Then growing bolder he first presses forward to a spot where he can see where 'she lay at length, like an immortal soul At endless rest in blest Elysium', and then revealing himself is allowed to kiss and finally touch her with his hand. The five senses being thus satisfied the poem ends. The description of the way in which the sensuous experience passes into a joy of soul is most interesting and convincing in the case of the first two. This may be partly due to our limitations of sympathy, but Chapman always distrusted somewhat the sense of sight. There is the essence of *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* in the description of how 'Ovid sold his freedom for a look'. Beauty is fleeting and fragile and leaves unsatisfied yearning:

This beauty's fair is an enchantment made
 By nature's witchcraft, tempting men to buy
 With endless shows, what endlessly will fade,
 Yet promise chapmen all eternity. (Ibid.)

Chapman speaks in the preface of the 'Energia or clearness of representation, required in absolute poems', and explains that such clearness does not mean obviousness, but that like a great painter a poet must not only make known whom he represents but 'limn, give lustre, shadow and heightening'. This 'lustre' of the two first senses the poet does convey to us. We realize how the 'purifying rapture' rears his spirits to their highest function so that his 'flesh fades and into spirit turns'. Without this 'golden' traffic as of 'Attic bees' the soul would be poor and light as a dry husk.

In one of his dedications Chapman speaks of poetry as 'this three men's catch, This little Soul's pulse Poesy';¹ and the three men seem to be sense, soul, and intellect. Just as the melody has to be caught from one and another and each in turn seems to hold the predominant note, so it is with poetry: without any one of the three the melody would be lost. Moreover, in Chapman's thought Poetry and the moral ideal are identified, while the term 'true learning' seems to be almost indifferently used for either. Further, intellect or 'mind' is apparently the highest part of the man, while 'soul' corresponds to what we should call imagination. In the *Banquet* he has a passage describing the birth of Julia's poem. The lines were 'first conceived in her mental womb', which he explains in a note is the senses; 'and nourished with her soul's discursive fire' until 'they grow into the power of her thought'. *Ovid's Banquet* is the poem in which the function of the senses is celebrated and described. In *The Shadow of Night*, his earliest poem, he seems to be trying to lead us along that cloudy unbeaten path by which what is most poetic in him finds its secret way. *The Coronet for his Mistress Philosophy* and the *Tears of Peace* are devoted particularly to the part played by mind. Perhaps for our purpose the second, the way of what he means by 'the soul', is most interesting. If we can trace it we shall know something of the inner life of the Elizabethans, the world in which thought is brought to the birth, catch a glimpse of the palpitating restless sea of semi-conscious experience.

For Chapman's chief value for us is that almost alone of Elizabethans he is conscious of the way in which his inner life answered to external stimulus—the mysteriousness of night, the cold unfriendliness of day, music, fragrance; and he attempts in his poetry to express that inner experience. Now, in the expression of the inner life, association takes the place of design. Such a poem as *The Shadow of Night* is a colour scheme, a dream-fugue. You cannot give a logical explanation why the poet passes from one point to another, because you

¹ *Andromeda Liberata*.

cannot explain why moonlight should at one moment touch you with a sense of fantastic peace; at another, with chill dread as of the infinite past, desolate, august; and again awaken in you a sense of austere and lovely purity. You pass from one experience to the other as the eye travels through the gradations of colour at sunset. There is continuity and relation, but there is not a logical argument. But logical argument we can find in other Elizabethans, and more often than not it leaves us cold. Between us and them there is a great gulf fixed—one so great that they sometimes seem to move like marionettes, aping our passions with the triteness and the exaggeration of insincerity.

Chapman's poetic fatherland is a land of darkness, inchoate, shadowy. At night his too keen and grosser senses are blinded, and his whole inner being wakens and responds to the murmurs of that infinite universe that day had hidden. He feels the relaxation of tension that comes with broad daylight as a muffling of the soul. Again and again in his verse day appears as sensual, evil: 'Morning came And burned up all things sacred with her flame.' Night will 'loose his waking soul', so that, like a falcon towering 'in her highest pitch, she may control The Court of Skill, compact of mystery Waiting but franchisement and memory To reach all secrets'. He seeks that quality in night that makes beliefs seem possible, which in the crude daylight lose their power. In this attitude he was unusual. To the Elizabethans generally night was the symbol of evil. Even to Shakespeare night—unless moonlit—was the fellow-conspirator of crime, with a curious effect of substance—'thick night' is his most common term. But to Chapman night is the time of spiritual forces, the mother of the Eumenides bringing not opportunity but terror to the evil-doer.

It is curious that no poet should have made a study of the effect on our minds of one idea or object presented to them at different times of the day and night. Coleridge speaks of 'the poetry of nature'—the magic which moonlight or any sudden change of light can throw over a well-known landscape. But it is not merely effects of light such as these, or the appeal to

the eye, though that is important. The hour of the day, by which we mean an infinite assemblage of associations, a delicate cobweb of memories, of physical reactions, of aesthetic perceptions, transmutes subtly but completely the relation between our minds and any experience mental or objective presented to it. Chapman's *Hymnus in Noctem* and its sequel the *Hymnus in Cynthia*, forming together the one poem called significantly *The Shadow of Night*, is an attempt to give a presentment of those forces as they played on his own poetic temperament. It is only an attempt, not altogether successful, to handle the impalpable texture woven by intercourse of the personality with all these impersonal abstractions. It would be difficult even for a contemporary, perhaps, to follow through all its windings a poem whose links are the succession of moods in the poet's mind. We can only hope to track a few of the more important, but these may bring us within sight, as it were, of the matrix of his thought.

The *Hymnus in Cynthia* is the more interesting of the two. He addresses the moon as the 'Night's fair soul', and explains in a note that by this he means that she is the purest part of night. It is natural, therefore, that the *Hymnus in Cynthia* should contain the finest poetry and the expression of the inner shrine of his spiritual experience. Both poems are best understood as a sort of musical composition. In the first there are two main themes. Night is celebrated as the protectress of the oppressed: 'Her trusty shadows succour men dismay'd.' She 'frees men's necks from servile labour's load'. She does not give happiness, but the peace of sublime and hopeless grief, and is 'Sorrow's dear sovereign and the Queen of rest'. She is adored as the 'Rich-taper'd sanctuary of the blest, Palace of truth, made all of tears and rest'. The other theme is that of mystery, of infinity. The poet touches the chord of primeval chaos. He knows that 'no pen can anything eternal write That is not steep'd in Humours of the Night'. He distinguishes this creative darkness from the Stepmother, Night of the mind, and too much space is given to the description of this discordant confusion. Chapman found inspiring and solemnizing the physical darkness, beneath whose 'soft and peaceful

covert... Treasures unknown and more unprized 'are hidden; but obscurity of mind was hateful to him. It is true that he feels himself at times unable to give full and perfect expression to the poetry that was in him, and is aware apparently that his contemporaries called him obscure. But it is the expression not the conception that is at fault. Writing to his 'admired and soul-loved friend, Master of all essential and true knowledge M. Harriots', he wishes that his eye

could pierce
 Into that chaos whence this stifled verse
 By violence breaks; where glow-worm-like doth shine
 In nights of sorrow, this hid soul of mine;
 And how her genuine forms struggle for birth,
 Under the claws of this foul panther earth.

We see from this figure at once the consciousness of the inspiring quality of physical night and the sense that creation came to him out of a thick cloud, as it were, of feeling and unarticulated thought.¹

The pageant of night at the end of the first part sets the key for the *Hymnus in Cythiam*:

See now ascends the glorious bride of brides,
 Nuptials and triumphs glittering by her sides,
 Juno and Hymen do her train adorn,
 Ten thousand torches round about them borne:
 Dumb silence mounted on the Cyprian star,
 With becks rebukes the winds before his car,
 When she advanced, beats down with cloudy mace
 The feeble light to black Saturnius' palace:
 Behind her with a brace of silver hinds,
 In ivory chariot swifter than the winds,
 Great Hyperion's horned daughter drawn
 Enchantress-like deck'd in disparent lawn,

¹ It seems probable that the constantly recurring struggle in Chapman's mind between the good and the evil of the senses and their object the physical world, is due intellectually to his reading of the *Hermetica*. 'The Hermetic Writings', says Dean Inge, 'are of no philosophical value, since they swarm with flagrant contradictions. The World is the Son of God and also the sum of all evil,' etc. Chapman tries, I suggest, to reconcile the contradictions, not so much logically as by reference to his own interior life.

Circled with charms and incantations,
That ride high spirits and outrageous passions :
Music and mood she loves, but love she hates.

(*Hymnus in Noctem.*)

The last three lines give the note. To Chapman night and the cold impersonal light of the moon brought a sense of vastness, of primeval life, inchoate, Titanic, not akin to us. He dreams fearfully of a future 'when Night's dark robes . . . shall celebrate thy changes funeral', and he brings the trepidations of ancient peoples to give a wild solemnity to her aspect :

The Romans set sweet music to her charms,
To raise thy stoopings, with her airy arms :
Used loud resoundings with auspicious brass :
Held torches up to Heaven, and flaming glass,
Made a whole forest but a burning eye,
T' admire thy mournful partings with the sky.
The Macedonians were so stricken dead
With skillless horror of thy changes dread ;
They wanted hearts to lift up sounds or fires,
Or eyes to heaven ; but used their funeral tyres
Trembled, and wept. (*Hymnus in Cynthia.*)

But the rest of the poem dwells on the cold purity and unearthly ardour of the moon. He has forgotten the half-savage terror of the opening stanzas, and is trying to express a sense of ecstasy untouched by sexual passion. He is transported by that radiance of dead worlds to one of pure poetry—'the walks Where in her heavenly magic moods she stalks'. There she begets by 'powerful charms, delightful servitors Of flames and shadows, mists and meteors'. She builds an 'Elysian Palace' and conjures Form to 'make that blissful court of hers to shine' 'With all accomplishment of architect, That not the eye of Phoebus could detect'. For moonlight obliterating colour—merely to Chapman 'the proper object of a human eye' and 'the feeble image' of 'virtuous light'—gives the forms a certain translucency. We see them as having a kind of glowing darkness. It is difficult to catch the full value of Chapman's conception. His mood is not unlike that of Keats in the *Ode to a Nightingale*, but while Keats' moonlit world is a wood with 'verdurous glooms and winding

mossy ways', Chapman seems inspired by some Venetian palace rising wrought and delicate from the sea. Shelley, writing in Italy, gives his Witch of Atlas just such a dwelling built on water.

Shelley's Witch, for all his protestations, is clearly the Spirit of Poetry. In *Mont Blanc* he speaks of 'the still cave of the Witch Poesy'. Similarly Chapman's Cynthia, we are told, 'figures' in her 'face the forces of the mind', and, like the Witch, she creates a being who must 'tame the cares and toils of Earth'. The name of the nymph Euthimya occurs again (spelled Euthymia) in the sub-title of *The Tears of Peace*, where it is equivalent either to 'Human Love' (the 'sustaining Love' of the *Adonais*) or to Peace. The nymph here seems to be Poetry created by the influence of the moon and representing her in the day. She has power to turn herself into every shape, and is hunted as a wild beast by hounds who bear the names of those of Acteon. Now the idea that Acteon's hounds are thoughts or desires which devour the heart that nourished them occurs in one of Daniel's sonnets. It may have been a commonplace of Elizabethan thought, and must at least have been sufficiently familiar, one supposes, to afford a key to Chapman's meaning. All day the hounds chase the nymph fruitlessly, as the poet's thoughts, yearning, pursue poetry or his ideal. With the night comes peace. The allegory of the cruel obstacles encountered by the hounds seems to be connected with the autobiographical passages in *The Tears of Peace*.

That poem, Chapman's most intimate expression of his conscious inner life, is linked to *The Shadow of Night* by its numerous references to the evil effect of day. 'The gaudy, vulgar light Burns up my good thoughts, form'd in temperate night.' The agony of his search is simply, even movingly, expressed. Night had given him confidence of salvation, but he is

still being persuaded by the shameless light
That these are dreams of my retired night,
That all my reading, writing, all my pains
Are serious trifles and the idle veins
Of an unthrifty angel that deludes
My simple fancy. (*The Tears of Peace.*)

The poem is an allegory. The Vision of Homer tears down the cloud that hides the real world of ideas from the poet's eyes, and he sees Peace bearing Human Love to his funeral. He appeals to her to know the nature of true peace and how it may be attained, and a long dialogue ensues. Her answer is that true learning 'makes all life's vain war cease'. At first one inclines to conclude that by 'learning' he means philosophy, and, by philosophy, that Stoic acceptance of whatever the Supreme Ruler of the World may have decreed, which accounts for our loose use of the term 'philosophical'. This is undoubtedly an element in his conception. When Clermont is praised as the 'Senecal Man' it is chiefly for such a philosophical calm. We should sometimes best understand Chapman's meaning by translating 'culture'. It controls

the rudeness of the blood and makes it noble,
Or hath chief means high birthright to redouble
In making manners soft, and manlike mild
Not suffering humanes to run proud or wild. (Ibid.)

This, however, is an incidental effect. We must take 'learning' in a sense more exact if we are to understand what is characteristic in the doctrine not merely of Chapman but of his age. When the poet and the goddess Peace agree on the contempt into which Learning has fallen, it is clear that the word has its usual modern sense, and the demand that 'th' act of learning . . . should difference set 'Twixt all men's worths, and make the mean or great As Learning is or mean or great in them', is of the very essence of the Renaissance, and explains why Ascham's account of the 'true notes of the best wits for learning in a child' seems to have been taken (at least by Lyly) as a description of the ideal youth. No doubt something is due to Plato's aristocracy of philosophers. Learning, then, in the first instance, is simply scholarship of the right sort, and the supreme importance attached to it is due chiefly to a consciousness of the mental states of ardent pursuit of knowledge. It looks as if Chapman had started from the Triad of Plotinus, but modified it according to his own inner experience.¹

¹ See *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, by W. R. Inge, vol. i, pp. 122, 123: 'There are two fundamental triads in Plotinus. One of these is the

At the beginning of their dialogue Peace ironically reproaches the poet, because, she says, thou

Fillst all thy actions with strife what to think,
Thy brain with air and scatterest it with ink,
Of which thou makest weeds for thy soul to wear.
(Ibid.)

Learning, therefore, appears to be intense, original thought. Its purpose is to arrive at the knowledge of the individual ideal, 'the weed of the soul', and through that at the knowledge of God. The evils which this Hercules of Learning is to conquer include

Unquiet, wicked thoughts, unnumber'd passions
Poorness of counsels, hourly fluctuations,
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Impotent wills to goodness, appetites
That never will be bridled.
(Ibid.)

Thus what we should regard as purely moral evils are placed side by side with intellectual poverty and lack of determined character. Chapman abhors barrenness or commonplaceness of mind just as he abhors brutal passion. Learning is the 'soul's actual frame'. Like a gnomon in the sun it should give 'rules to all the circles' of the inner life.

It makes men know that they, of all things born
Beneath the silver moon and golden morn,
Being only forms of God, should only fix
One form of life to those forms; and not mix
With beasts in forms of their lives.
(Ibid.)

The 'composed man' of Chapman's ideal is not a placid character. He is 'composed' as an elaborate work of art

Trinity of Divine Principles—the Abstract . . . Spirit . . . and Soul . . . ; the other is the tripartite division of man into Spirit, Soul and body.' It is with the second of these that Chapman is concerned. Dean Inge goes on later: 'In their objective aspect, Body, Soul and Spirit are, respectively, the world as perceived by the senses . . . ; the world interpreted by the mind as a spatial and temporal order, and the spiritual world.' The organs which perceive the world under these three aspects are the bodily senses, discursive thought (*διάνοια*), and spiritual perception or intuitive knowledge (*νόησις*). Chapman sometimes seems to confound the functions of *διάνοια* and *νόησις*.

is composed, having, like that, an intimate idea permeating every detail, but too ardent to be fully expressed in the earthly medium. The poet can claim: 'th' anticipations given me naturally I have with all my study, art and prayer Fitted to every object and affair My life presented.' Intense thought is necessary to the discovery of the ideal; but it attains it not directly, but by setting up some mysterious parallel process. Chapman knows something of the old mystery of life, of its bonds of kinship and connexion, of the way in which the vital spark is generated. 'Simile ad eandem explicat' he writes of his eerie parable:

As when a man in summer evenings,
Something before sunset, when shadows be
Rack'd with his stooping, to the highest degree
His shadow climbs the trees, and scales a hill,
While he goes on the beaten passage still.

(Hymnus in Cyntiam.)

The intensity of the intellectual operation attunes him to the spiritual vision; but the ideal itself has the delicate elusiveness of his own image of the shadows of sun-beams reflected from 'high billows' on a wall. Just so the fleeting, lucent loveliness of the ideal is made visible by some such juxtaposition and interaction. The consummation of the moral life is a tense calm, 'an all-seeing trance and band of sense', 'from which his soul will never rise', and in which he beholds this 'beam of God'.

JANET SPENS.

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